

Research and development programs

Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries	17
Indonesia, East Timor and the Philippines	37
Mekong countries and China	59
South and West Asia	88
Sub-Saharan Africa	103

ACIAR will provide an expanded level of funding in 2010–11 for both bilateral and multilateral programs and projects. Details of this increased level of allocations are outlined in the ‘Highlights’ section of this AOP.

The bilateral programs comprise all projects involving Australian and developing-country research institutions in which an Australian organisation is commissioned to lead the project. Multilateral projects are led by the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs).

Both bilateral and multilateral programs are operated by region and country, based on five regions—Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries; Indonesia, East Timor and the Philippines; Mekong countries and China; South and West Asia; and Sub-Saharan Africa. This regional division corresponds to the new ACIAR management structure. The extension of ACIAR’s research engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa beyond the current projects in the Republic of South Africa represents a significant program development for implementation in 2010–11 and beyond.

In all cases the priorities for research and development (R&D) collaboration are presented at the country level, and project proposals are designed to address the partner-country national priorities. This joint approach and collaborative undertakings between Australian and developing-country scientists facilitate joint ownership, research harmonisation and collaborative management for results. This is in accordance with key principles in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). In 2010–11 ACIAR will further enhance its role and performance in this respect through continued formal and informal consultations with partner countries in both priority setting and project selection processes.

Gender in agricultural research and development

Equity issues have been identified in multiple aid policies and papers. The promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of women is identified in the third of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as fundamental to development. Gender issues impact on all aspects of society and culture—from economic growth to the health and wellbeing of the overall population.

Despite the importance of gender equity, discrimination against women is pervasive. The destructive effects can be seen in lower global literacy skills in women, high regional infant and maternal mortality rates, poor representation in government at local and national levels, and the high percentage of violence against girls and women worldwide.

In agriculture the negative impact of gender inequality has been seen in reduced agricultural productivity and the undermining of development agendas.

Ignoring the roles and relations of the genders in agriculture and development can produce food and nutrition insecurity through poorly designed projects that omit essential contributions and results.

Two approaches to improve gender equity will be assessed in 2010–11. One approach involves raising gender to a ‘program’ or ‘country’ level and dealing with it strategically in identifying our R&D priorities. Alternatively, or conjunctly, ACIAR can capture gender equity at the administrative level during project design, implementation and impact assessment. Both approaches are valid—it will be a judgment call as to which is more appropriate in different contexts.

Regardless of the project/program context, ACIAR will learn from its dealings with gender R&D issues and feed these back into future program/project design.

In 2010–11 a new ‘Gender Impacts’ subheading will be added to the project proposal template under ‘Community Impacts’. A checklist of questions to assist with addressing gender issues at the two stages of project design (preliminary and full) follows.

Preliminary proposal

- » What are the **roles of women and men within the scope of the project** (both in the target agricultural systems and in project implementation)?
- » Is there **potential for the project to improve the lives of women involved in agriculture** through targeted research and communication activities? Are there constraints for farming women in accessing or participating in the key agricultural and production resources and services within the scope of this project?
- » Is there **potential for the project to improve the involvement of women in project implementation**?

These questions are deliberately broad and overarching at the preliminary stage of a project’s design. The details of the design are incorporated at the full proposal stage, which is where additional gender questions will be added to guide the provision of more-specific and in-depth information.

Full proposal

- » Is there a need for the project to gather disaggregated demographic data on women? If yes, how would this happen?
- » How will the project determine if there are **specific opportunities for targeting research and communication activities** towards women? If constraints emerge, how will it address these to enable women to better participate in development of new technologies, and their dissemination and evaluation?
- » How will the project **address any constraints that limit access or participation by women** in the key agricultural and production resources and services within the scope of this project?
- » How will the project progressively **monitor outcomes** of these targeted activities?

Once a project has been approved and commences, the various approaches to and intended impacts on gender equity will be monitored to ensure that the project continues to consider the implications of the project activities on the roles and responsibilities of household members. Again, ACIAR has the structure in place to make it a simple matter to incorporate gender as a

priority. All ACIAR projects are required, under project standard conditions, to submit an annual report on the progress of the project against its stated objectives. As with the design template, the annual report template can be altered to ensure that gender remains a priority throughout the project.

Annual report template

- » **Are the activities and outcomes that targeted understanding gender in the project design being realised?** If not, what are the reasons? Can further steps be taken to make sure the needs of all participants are addressed?
- » **Have new gender-related activities and/or opportunities been discovered that were not foreseen at project design?** Have new strategies been proposed for addressing these as the project progresses? Are these strategies feasible within the current scope and constraints of the project?

ACIAR has two stages to assess the impact of project activities on smallholder practices—i) project final reviews, conducted either immediately prior to or immediately following project conclusion; and ii) impact and adoption assessment, conducted a number of years after a project has finished. As with each prior stage, there are already reporting and assessment protocols in place, to which gender equity can easily be added.

Final report, Research Program Manager analysis, end of project review and impact assessment methodology

- » **How were the roles and livelihoods of women and men affected throughout the duration of the project?** How did the outcomes of the project impact differently on women and men (e.g. labour, income, role)? Were there impacts on their other tasks and responsibilities? In determining the impact of project activities, what individuals, groups or organisations were consulted? Is the impact sustainable without further action from outside researchers and project staff?
- » **Were the gender-specific activities and outcomes that were targeted in the project design realised?** If not, what are the reasons?
- » **Did new gender-related activities and/or opportunities emerge that were not foreseen at project design?** Did the project identify, characterise and respond to these opportunities?

The questions listed here are a starting point, to be built on and modified as ACIAR learns more specifically how best to go about achieving gender equity from within



At a lentil field day in Bangladesh

the program portfolio. Within the process, structures and templates ACIAR has in place currently, they are easily integrated into any new project to help ensure that ACIAR's impact on gender equity in the communities with which our projects work is a positive one.

ACIAR policy statement on biotechnology

ACIAR endorses the use of biotechnology (including genetic engineering) as a valid tool in the quest for improved global food security and for reducing the environmental footprint of terrestrial food production. It can potentially make a significant contribution to characteristics needed in crops produced in developing countries. Such characteristics include increased crop yields and tolerance to stresses; improved processing, and postharvest quality and storage life; and improved nutritional quality. Engineered herbicide resistance in crops can also reduce labour costs, while introduction of insect tolerance can bring farmer health and environmental benefits through reduced insecticide requirements.

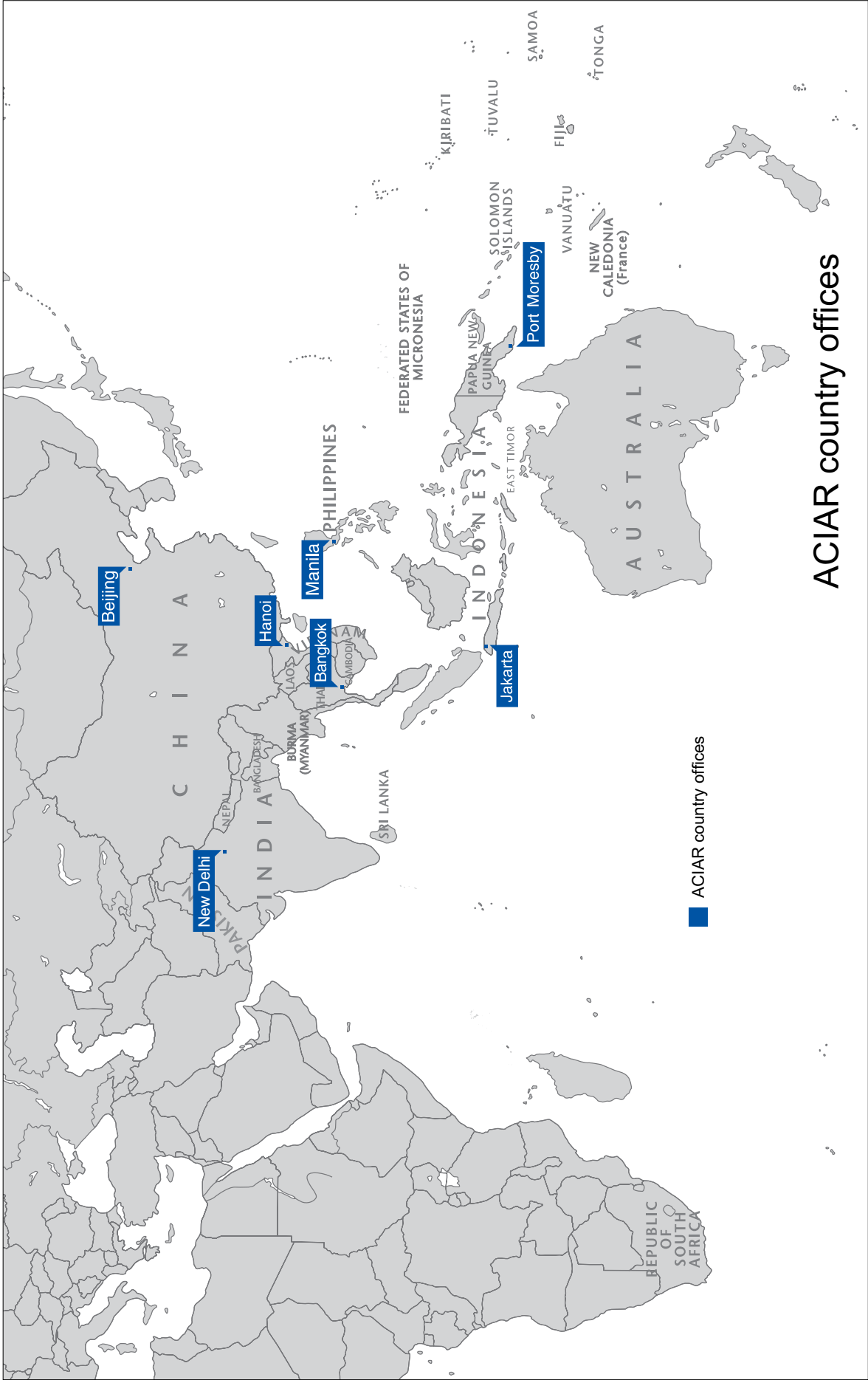
ACIAR recognises that crop genetic engineering is not a 'silver bullet' but, rather, one of a set of approaches in the development of improved crop varieties. ACIAR will support genetically modified approaches on a case-by-case basis for the manipulation of traits that are of major importance but are unable to be modified efficiently by conventional plant breeding.

Collaborative projects involving genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will be initiated at the specific request of the particular ACIAR partner country. Proposed projects involving GMOs will be in keeping with the outcome of formal consultations with or agreed priorities

of the partner country. Before agreement to collaborate, approval of relevant government policymakers and regulatory authorities (as well as the research partners) must be secured.

Technologies will be developed and tested only in countries where effective biosafety, regulatory and enforcement systems for the use of the GMOs are in force. These systems will be established before research commences and will address risks to the environment, human health and food safety. They will also be in keeping with federal laws and regulations in Australia (*Gene Technology Act 2000*) and the partner countries, as well as relevant international conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. Before collaborative research can commence, the Australian Government requires that biosafety systems are in place that satisfy s.160 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It also applies to work funded by the aid program and carried out overseas, and may apply to some Australian domestic research. The EPBC Act states that, unless funding agencies are assured that there is no significant environmental risk from project operations, they are required to obtain advice and, if necessary, approval from the Commonwealth Environment Minister before the project can proceed.

ACIAR is committed to collaboration with partners and links with extension systems to ensure that improved varieties and technologies are disseminated. Impact pathways are just as important for the subsequent adoption of genetically modified crop technologies as for the products of conventional plant breeding.



ACIAR country offices

■ ACIAR country offices