

STATEMENT OF INTENT

(Based on Statement of Expectations received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in September 2008)

ACIAR formally commits to meeting the expectations of the Minister. This will be achieved through the following key performance indicators for each expectation.

Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent

Statement of expectation	Statement of intent: Key performance indicators
<p>1. Contribute to assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formulating research programs for identifying or finding solutions to agricultural programs of developing countries • commissioning research that will foster agricultural development in partner countries and enhance the capacity of partner countries to undertake agricultural research • funding research with a focus on achieving poverty reduction through community impacts, on a sustainable basis and in line with stakeholder priorities • fostering partnerships with relevant multilateral research providers, focusing on the CGIAR research centres. 	<p>1. ACIAR will contribute to the development and delivery of the government's aid agenda. ACIAR's contribution will focus on the imperative of designing and facilitating research initiatives to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainable agricultural practices/policies to achieve outcomes at a community level. This will be measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear evidence of alignment of ACIAR country priorities and plans with the single whole-of-government development framework • feedback from senior government sources in partner countries and Australian Heads of Mission that demonstrates ACIAR research programs are appropriately targeted and valued in these countries • application of agreed investment programs and targets in partner countries, including capacity-building partnerships with overseas researchers • a 'best practice' program of ex post Project Impact Evaluation that (through independent professional analysis) demonstrates positive net economic returns from ACIAR project investments • use of adoption studies to measure uptake of larger projects.
<p>2. Support the acceleration of economic growth, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening rural development through targeted research • improving access to the results and benefits of ACIAR's work to farmers, policy makers and natural resource managers • aligning ACIAR country strategies with whole-of-government country development, AusAID rural development strategies and partner country development priorities. 	<p>2. Improved agricultural practices and technologies have recently been underlined by the World Bank as essential and powerful components of development in most developing countries. ACIAR research will focus on both productivity enhancement and knowledge transfer to accelerate economic growth in the region. Action will be taken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give high priority to participation by partner countries in up-to-date priority setting and project delivery • ensure that at least 40 per cent of research projects are designed with a potential to deliver significant farm level or policy maker impacts within five years of completion • ensure that all commissioned projects are designed with in-built adoption pathways including the involvement of extension agencies, private industry and NGOs in ACIAR's program where appropriate.

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<p>3. Contribute to investing in people and deliver better education by developing the skills of partner-country research scientists through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building the capacity of agriculture research institutions and personnel in partner countries including via specialised training activities • inclusion of capacity-building provisions in relevant research projects • improved monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building impacts. 	<p>3. Building the capacity of agricultural research institutes in partner countries will be a key ACIAR priority including specialised training activities and informal or on-the-job capacity-enhancement provisions. Progress will be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an expansion in the number of postgraduate (John Allwright) Fellowships and evidence of an increased number of returnees in leadership positions in partner countries • evidence of the relevance and value of project-related training and training courses • new alliance/s for the delivery of cross-program and other in-country training to meet specific requirements (e.g. Pacific island countries) • demonstrated high-quality applicants for in-depth research management training in Australia (John Dillon Fellows).
<p>4. Strive to maximise the effectiveness of aid delivered by Australia through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring an adoption focus in program delivery • active attention to agreed aid effectiveness principles (such as the Paris Declaration and Millennium Development Goals) including partner-country involvement; alignment of priorities with partner countries; harmonisation with other donors and mutual accountability for programs and development results • undertaking independent reviews as part of ACIAR's Impact Assessment Program • contributing to reporting on the performance of the aid program, particularly through the annual program reports for countries, regions and relevant themes consistent with the aid program's Performance Assessment and Evaluation policy • involvement of partner-country and multilateral partners in impact evaluation activities. 	<p>4. ACIAR will continue to work on improving aid effectiveness primarily through closer interaction with partner countries, including consultation and joint strategy development and measurement of results. These initiatives will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fostering development of supportive policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks • engaging in fewer but larger integrated projects aligned to stakeholder priorities and Australian comparative advantage in research • commission at least five independent assessments of project impacts on a thematic, program or country basis • undertake adoption studies of projects above \$400,000 three years after completion • projects over \$750,000 being subject to an independent end-of-project review, and the results of such reviews reported to the Commission • ACIAR's Impact Assessment Program working closely with the AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness to achieve suitable linkages • demonstrated involvement of partner-country and multilateral partners in impact evaluation activities including capacity building for developing-country partners in evaluation methodology.
<p>5. Deliver an active and diverse communications program to achieve best practice in disseminating agricultural research information by:</p>	<p>5. ACIAR will undertake a wider range of public awareness activities to communicate the results of research to a range of stakeholders and audiences. A key message will be that ACIAR develops research projects to reflect national</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that communication and extension are integral to program delivery • ensuring that information on project achievements, adoption and impacts are readily available to stakeholder groups and the wider community in Australia and partner countries. 	<p>research strengths and priorities and mutual advantage with partner countries. Action will be taken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all commissioned projects have annual progress reports and final reports that are accessible on www.aciar.gov.au • ensure that our corporate stakeholder documentation covering our Annual Operational Plan, Annual Report and Impact Evaluations are timely and of high quality • deliver an effective and timely program of communication of research outputs, including both electronic and paper publications, suitable workshops and conference papers, and briefs for developing country policy makers, where appropriate • conduct public awareness activities in conjunction with AusAID, Crawford Fund and the Minister's office • provide evidence of continuing demand for, and appreciation of, ACIAR's scientific and corporate publications.
<p>6. Ensure that communication and reporting arrangements are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep me fully informed of ACIAR's activities • ensure my approval of proposed investments in new partner countries or in post-conflict/post-disaster situations • consult on the formulation of new Corporate Plans and Annual Operational Plans and Budgets for my approval • provide timely information to the Secretary of DFAT and Director General of AusAID in parallel with information provided to me to reinforce DFAT's role as the principle source of advice to me on portfolio policy and program delivery matters. 	<p>6. ACIAR undertakes to implement high-quality and timely ministerial briefings across all relevant activities. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification and briefing to the Minister in a timely fashion of all 'significant events' where the ACIAR Chief Executive Officer (CEO) accepts it as his/her responsibility to advise on events that will be judged as significant by the Minister • provision of monthly ACIAR operational reports to Minister and Parliamentary Secretary • submission for approval of proposals on planned investments in new partner countries or in post-conflict/post-disaster situations • submission of draft Corporate Plans to the Minister for approval, outlining consultation processes used in their development • submission of draft Annual Operational Plans and Budgets for approval after consultation with the Portfolio Department and AusAID • ministerial meetings with the Commission and the Policy Advisory Council at appropriate times each year • continuing and consistent communications with the Secretary of DFAT and Director General of AusAID including provision of commission meeting papers and ministerial briefing papers, and discussion of key policy issues as required. Participate in quarterly coordination meetings.
<p>7. Support Australian rural industries by</p>	<p>7. Support for Australian rural industries will be secured</p>

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<p>ensuring that mutual gains are secured from ACIAR's offshore research activities which can benefit partner countries and Australian agriculture and agricultural R&D potential.</p>	<p>through project selection that assists Australian agricultural scientists to use their skills for the benefit of developing countries as well as Australia. This will include matters of mutual concern such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our capacity to respond to biosecurity threats from the region • the ability of Australian researchers to access plant genetic resources held by international centres supported by ACIAR • environmental and sustainability priorities ranging from water and soil degradation management to biodiversity and climate change responses • the identification and measurement of Australian project benefits through ACIAR's Impact Evaluation Program.
<p>8. Ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, particularly in administering the <i>Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982</i> (and the ACIAR Amendment Act 2007) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective and timely advice to me from the ACIAR Commission on strategic directions; forward planning program implementation and resource allocations; country strategies; and other matters as requested. 	<p>8. ACIAR will continue to address not only enabling legislation but also ongoing developments in the Government's wider policy and legislative agenda that have implications for ACIAR in a whole-of-government context. This will include compliance with all relevant government legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range and process of Commission advice to be clarified and implemented.
<p>9. Manage financial matters in a prudent, efficient and effective manner, in accordance with legislative requirements under the <i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i>, the Finance Minister's Orders, and the <i>ACIAR Act 1982</i>.</p>	<p>9. Financial management will be an ongoing area of managerial and governance performance receiving priority attention. Systems and structures will be regularly reviewed to secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective financial management • maintenance and regular review of the Chief Executive Instructions • unqualified audits on the end-of-year financial statements • an active and independent internal audit committee.
<p>10. Maintain high standards of corporate governance, including in risk management, and foster a culture of continuous improvement throughout the organisation.</p>	<p>10. Corporate governance will be continuously reviewed and assessed by both internal and external authorities to achieve the highest possible standards and accountabilities. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a "no exception" benchmark on the parallel advisory mechanisms • ensure that our corporate stakeholder documentation covering our Annual Operational Plan, Annual Report,

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	<p>Impact Evaluations are timely and high quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timely reviews of risk and financial management strategies and performance reports to the Audit Committee and Commission meetings; ensure staff commitment and participation in governance and risk management objectives • continuous improvement fostered through simplification and streamlining of administrative processes, improved internal and external communications, and fostering a culture of seeking practical impacts from research as reflected in adoption rates.
<p>11. Promote and uphold the Australian Public Service (APS) values and APS Code of Conduct and ACIAR's Service Charter.</p>	<p>11. As a federal government statutory authority ACIAR will be fully committed to all APS values and codes of conduct. ACIAR commits to effective monitoring to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct of ACIAR staff in a manner consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct • active promulgation of all policies and guidelines, including the APS Code of Conduct and ACIAR Service Charter to all staff via the ACIAR intranet and during staff workshops.
<p>12. Develop key performance indicators to reflect and measure ACIAR's success in meeting these expectations, and present that material in regular reports to me, consolidated into an annual report each year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with clear cross-references to Australia's development assistance policies and research capabilities • addressing the Australian Government's research priorities. 	<p>12. ACIAR will re-examine its performance indicators on an annual basis or more frequently if necessary to maintain up-to-date and effective performance guidelines for the organisation. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the ACIAR research program in each country (in consultation with partner countries), multilateral programs, education and training activities, and corporate programs • achievements against KPIs being reported in ACIAR Annual Reports to the Minister for subsequent parliamentary tabling and public release • reports to the government National Research Priorities Committee when requested on achievements related to the National Research Priorities • regular working contact with wider Australian agricultural and research agencies to ensure ACIAR is contributing in a cohesive and timely manner to national research objectives.