

Building capacity: training and education

Program management

Guidance on training priorities and awards is provided by a committee of senior staff, under the chairmanship of the Deputy CEO. The contact point for John Allwright (postgraduate) and John Dillon (research management) Fellowships is Mrs Sharon Harvey and for cross-program training, Mrs Stephanie Bennett.

Budget

	\$m
2005–06 actual	2.52
2006–07 estimate*	3.56
2007–08 budget*	4.56

*Includes AusAID funding: \$1.0 m (estimate 2006–07), \$2.0 m (budget 2007–08)

Key performance indicators (2007–08)

- Continued high quality of applicants for in-depth research management training in Australia (John Dillon Fellows), such that over 30 applications are received and at least six Fellowships are awarded
- New alliance/s for the delivery of cross-program and other training developed for Pacific Island countries
- Size of postgraduate (John Allwright Fellowship) program increased by a further 20%

Position and priorities

Building capacity of agricultural research institutes in partner countries is one of ACIAR's key priorities. The main priority of the program is to enhance the research capabilities of institutions and individuals involved in ACIAR projects. Much of this is done in individual projects through on-the-job training, where either developing-country scientists visit Australia or Australian specialists visit partner countries to present a training program.

ACIAR also offers several specialised training activities: John Allwright Fellowships, small grants for fellowship returnees, John Dillon Memorial Fellowships, and short-term cross-program training courses.

Postgraduate training

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to partner-country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported collaborative research projects to undertake postgraduate training, usually at the Masters or Doctoral level, at Australian universities. Studies focus on related areas to add value to the topic or theme of the ACIAR project in which the awardee is engaged, but do not directly form part of the project. Fellows are able to spend up to 50% of their project period on fieldwork in their home country. With the increased recognition by the Australian aid program of the capacity-building benefits provided to partner countries and the impact on Australia–regional relationships through support of postgraduate training in Australia, we will continue to be active in increasing the size of the postgraduate fellowship program during 2007–08.

In 2007–08, ACIAR project staff, who are citizens of PNG, selected Pacific Island countries (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Western China and the Republic of South Africa are eligible to apply for fellowships.

During 2007–08, ACIAR will support up to 90 John Allwright Fellowships, of which about 40 will be new awards. In 2005, ACIAR also commenced the support of a limited number of in-country postgraduate diploma and Masters degree awards linked to ACIAR projects and priority areas in Papua New Guinea.

Small grants are also available for John Allwright Fellows when they have completed postgraduate studies and returned to relevant employment in their home country. The follow-on funding scheme provides grants of up to \$10,000 for an activity that continues, or is related to, the ACIAR project research and their associated postgraduate work. The funding is primarily aimed at developing small-scale research projects in the returnee's institution, which may catalyse longer-term support and ongoing international collaboration. Since 2000, about 40 of these awards have been made.

John Allwright Alumni Association

ACIAR is maintaining linkages with all of the former students that we supported through the John Allwright Fellowship program, and who have now returned to their home countries, through the establishment of a 'John Allwright Alumni Association'. Alumni keep involved with ACIAR in many ways. Some have a leadership role in projects. Others have been invited to assist in the delivery of short ACIAR-sponsored in-country training courses. In 2006, alumni have been involved in assisting as tutors in a number of short training courses. JAF alumni are also invited to in-country functions including, among others, country consultations, training activities and impact assessment meetings. Alumni also receive an electronic newsletter three times annually, along with ACIAR corporate documents, Partners magazine and technical publications.

Research management training

John Dillon Fellowships provide a career development opportunity in Australia for outstanding mid-career agricultural scientists and economists from ACIAR partner countries. The aim is to develop the leadership skills of Fellows in the area of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies through exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy-making. ACIAR has awarded 26 Fellowships since the program's inception in 2002.

Cross-program training

Short-term 'cross-program' training activities in partner countries or, occasionally, Australia (for staff associated with active ACIAR projects) are also provided. Most of these activities are directly managed by ACIAR, but some activities are managed by the ATSE Crawford Fund (www.crawfordfund.org). The Crawford Fund also supports short technical training placements for developing-country scientists in Australia.

ACIAR's cross-program training courses are presented by both public and private sector providers. ACIAR welcomes proposals for training courses from both Australian and developing-country partners. Trainees in cross-program courses must be nationals of the partner countries in which the ACIAR projects are based. ACIAR will continue to give special priority during 2007–08 to the Mekong countries (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), Indonesia, Philippines, East Timor and PNG.

Based on advice from partner countries, ACIAR will give priority to the following areas for cross-program training courses:

- research management and priority-setting
- research methodology, including experimental design and data analysis
- commercialisation of research results
- research communication and scientific writing in English
- economics and social science for biophysical agricultural scientists
- agricultural extension for researchers, including participatory action research
- research evaluation and monitoring.



Recipients of the 2006 John Dillon Fellowship awards, Parliament House, Canberra.