



Sharon Harvey, Education and Training Officer

## Building research capacity

AOP budgeted expenditure in 2005–06	\$2,563,000
Actual expenditure in 2005–06	\$2,908,586*
Expenditure in 2004–05	\$2,565,098
Expenditure in 2003–04	\$2,465,634
Proportion of total ACIAR expenditure 2005–06	5.2%

\* Increase expenditure associated with increases in university fees for John Allwright Fellowship program, an increase in the number of Fellowships awarded reflecting high quality pool of candidates and synchronisation of payments with AusAID

### Key performance indicators

### Performance 2005–06

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least six training courses on participatory action research, research management and experimental design and analysis successfully run</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved. Ten short training courses involving seven different training providers were delivered in partner countries during 2005–06:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>International Course on participation in extension: farmer-led approaches</i> (Philippines). Seven Philippines project staff took part.</li> <li><i>Leadership for Asian women in Agricultural R&amp;D</i> (Philippines) Participants included six project leaders from Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines.</li> <li><i>Participatory approaches to agricultural research and extension</i> (Philippines). Ten ACIAR scientists from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam took part.</li> <li><i>Writing scientific papers in English</i> (Vietnam)</li> <li><i>Reinforcing the social and community dimensions of ACIAR projects to deliver livelihood impacts</i> (Lao PDR, Indonesia). Three workshops for 65 scientists held in Lao PDR and in Indonesia.</li> <li><i>Evaluation training for agricultural research projects</i> (Papua New Guinea), attended by 24 ACIAR project staff.</li> <li><i>Experimental design data analysis and interpretation</i> (Vietnam). The training was aimed at improving practical skills in data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation.</li> <li><i>Commercialization of biotechnology crops in Asia</i> (Philippines). ACIAR sponsored six Vietnamese participants on this course.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of the returnees Small Project scheme identifies at least eight former fellows whose ACIAR-funded small grants significantly benefited their institute</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved. Twelve of the 18 returnees surveyed used the funds for research within their country and to purchase equipment. This contributed to developing the research capacity of the institution and, in several cases, led to tangible scientific and community impacts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least seven students successfully complete postgraduate awards, including two from the Pacific</li> </ul>	<p>Achieved. Twelve students have successfully completed postgraduate awards in 2005–06, including students from Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.</p>

### Position

The central objective of ACIAR's training program is to build the research capacity of agricultural research institutions in key partner countries by providing both discipline-specific and some broader training opportunities.

### **Project-specific training**

ACIAR only supports training that relates directly to its projects. The training program focuses on specialised training activities provided through its postgraduate and research management fellowships and short courses targeting specific issues. Training opportunities arising as a component of ACIAR-funded projects are not included in the budget figures shown above. The majority of training provided by ACIAR takes place within individual research projects through 'on-the-job' training, where either developing-country scientists visit Australia or Australian specialists visit partner countries to work together. At its inception, each ACIAR project is designed to include capacity-building through formal and informal training, to enable project personnel from partner countries to engage in the full range of activities. Formal courses may be built into the project. They may provide training in a particular research methodology or develop social science research skills. Often they develop essential skills in computing or scientific communication. Informal training varies according to the type of project, the ability of the project team and the opportunities that arise.



*John Dillion Fellowship Recipients for 2006 at Parliament House, Canberra. From left Nyima Tashi (Tibet, PR China), Delia Catacutan (Philippines), Wen Shilin (PR China), Anju Gaur (India), Angelito Carpio (Philippines)*

### **Achievements**

Training managed and funded by the ACIAR training program falls into four categories: the first representing by far the main area of expenditure:

- postgraduate fellowships (John Allwright Fellowship Scheme);
- research management training (John Dillon Memorial Fellowship);
- short-term cross-discipline training courses for developing-country staff involved ACIAR projects; and
- training courses provided through the ATSE Crawford Fund for staff on ACIAR-funded projects.

Capacity-building is important for all of ACIAR's developing-country partners, but especially so for the newer, poorer, partner countries. There is a particular emphasis on training for ACIAR project scientists from Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islands, poorer parts of Indonesia, East Timor, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. ACIAR's cross-program training courses are presented by both public- and private-sector providers.

### **Postgraduate fellowships**

John Allwright Fellowships are awarded to developing-country project scientists who are actively involved in an ACIAR project. These Fellowships are awarded for study at Australian universities to undertake Postgraduate Diploma, Masters or PhD training, with the student's research project forming a discrete topic related to, but not part of, the existing ACIAR project. While individual awardees benefit from the scheme, partner-country institutions are the key targets. In 2006–07 fellowships will be available to scientists and economists from Papua New Guinea, ACIAR's six Pacific Island partners, East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, western China and the Republic of South Africa.

### **Returnee small project awards**

Small grants of up to \$10,000 are available for successful John Allwright Fellows after they have completed postgraduate studies and returned to relevant employment in their home countries. The follow-on funding scheme provides for an activity which continues, or is related to, the research done within an ACIAR project associated with postgraduate work. These grants for former John Allwright Fellows are primarily aimed at developing small-scale research projects in the returnee's institution, which may catalyse longer-term support.

In 2005–06 four small projects totalling \$33,498 were awarded. A survey of the Small Projects Grants Scheme was undertaken and resulted in a publication entitled *Building on the John Allwright Fellowship Scheme – a survey of the small grants scheme for former fellows*. Two-thirds of the returnees surveyed used the funds for research within their country and/or to purchase equipment. This contributed to developing the research capacity of the institution and, in several cases, led to tangible scientific and community impacts.

In 2005–06 \$1.54 million was expended on the John Allwright Fellowship Scheme, with 57 active fellowships representing 14 countries. During this time 13 fellows successfully completed their studies and 15 new candidates – from Fiji, India, Indonesia, Laos, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Vietnam – commenced at eight universities in Australia. ACIAR, with co-investment from AusAID, has taken measures to increase the size of the John Allwright Fellowship Scheme, with the aim of maintaining over 60 active fellowships during 2006–07. A meeting of new Fellows is held annually at ACIAR headquarters and provides training in science communication and writing research papers while providing an opportunity for networking.

### **John Allwright Alumni Association**

Former John Allwright Fellows, who have completed their studies in Australia, are an important part of the ACIAR network. Many play valuable roles after returning to their home countries in maintaining strong linkages between Australian and partner-country institutions. Several former Fellows now lead or play key roles in ACIAR projects and, in recent years, many have received returnee small project grants. ACIAR has formalised its relationships with its former Fellows through the establishment of a 'John Allwright Alumni Association'. Through the Association former fellows:

- receive an email newsletter with information on ACIAR programs, project and training activities, and other key ACIAR events including information on projects under development in their country. Two issues of the newsletter were published in 2005–06;
- receive by airmail, copies of relevant corporate publications such as the Annual Operational Plan, Country Profiles and the Annual Report, and information on new technical publications;
- provide assistance in the delivery of training courses for ACIAR project scientists in their home country;
- contribute to the quality of information and its analysis in the external impact assessments commissioned by ACIAR; and
- attend major ACIAR events held in partner countries.

### **John Dillon Memorial Fellowships**

John Dillon Fellowships provide an opportunity for agricultural scientists and economists from ACIAR partner countries to develop leadership skills in the area of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies. They achieve this through exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best-practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy-making. The scheme is highly selective, and since the program's inception in 2002 there have been 19 Fellowships from approximately 150 applications. During February/March 2006 five John Dillon Fellows (from India, Philippines and China) each visited Australia for approximately five weeks. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon Alexander Downer MP again met with the Fellows at Parliament House.

### **Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development**

ACIAR continues to provide assignments for the AusAID-funded Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development scheme (AYADs), where young Australians spend a period of between three and 12 months assisting on a development activity in a partner country. During 2005–06 there were 11 Youth Ambassadors who gained international experience working in developing countries on ACIAR projects.



Six AYADs successfully completed assignments, which included work on smallholder forestry (Philippines), mixed species plantations for increased timber production (Vietnam), rainfed farming systems for the western Loess Plateau of Gansu Province in China, and dairy beef extension in Tibet AR, China.

At 30 June 2006 there were five active Youth Ambassadors involved in ACIAR projects in Laos, Western China, Indonesia and Vietnam.

### **ATSE Crawford Fund fellowships, training courses and master classes**

In 2005–06, total funding to the ATSE Crawford Fund through ACIAR was \$852,077, comprising management of an Australian Government allocation of \$680,000 and \$172,077 from ACIAR for joint training activities. The Crawford Fund also attracted contributions from State Governments and the private sector. In 2005–06 the Crawford Fund conducted several short-term training activities associated with ACIAR projects, including a Master Class in CGE (Economic Policy) Modelling with 32 participants from Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam (held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok). Other training courses associated with ACIAR projects included:

- Postharvest Technology Workshop – Diseases of Fruit, Diseases of Vegetables, held in Sri Lanka, October 2005 (Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries);
- Modelling rice-wheat cropping systems of the Indo-Gangetic Plains, held in Nepal, December 2005 (CSIRO Land and Water);
- Integrated rural development in eastern Indonesia, held in Indonesia, April 2006 (Charles Darwin University);
- Success with Lucerne in China, held in Western China, June 2006 (South Australian Research and Development Institute).

These activities also helped ensure ACIAR research results were more widely applied in developing countries, since in some cases they gave ACIAR project leaders the opportunity to instruct scientists from countries other than those where their projects are situated. The Crawford Fund also sponsors short-term training fellowships. In 2005–06 the Fund sponsored 12 fellowships to enable members of ACIAR project teams to undertake training activities in Australia for up to three months.

## Cross-program training

In 2005–06 ACIAR, in consultation with its partners, moved to a more focused and integrated program of activities for staff associated with active ACIAR projects, rather than running short courses in isolation. Themes included 'assisting in the development of a modern agricultural R&D system' (Laos and Cambodia), 'linking research to farmer application' (Indonesia and the Philippines) and 'participating in the international scientific community' (Vietnam). Courses that included participation of selected ACIAR project scientists in regionally delivered courses were also undertaken. Cross-program training courses (4–21 days in duration) undertaken in 2005–06 include:

- *International course on participation in extension: farmer-led approaches* (Philippines)  
ACIAR sponsored seven Philippines project staff on this course designed to advance rural development through improved agricultural extension practices. The course was delivered by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Silang, Cavite, Philippines and took place in September/October 2005.
- *Leadership for Asian women in agricultural R&D* (Philippines)  
This course took place at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Los Baños, Philippines during November 2005 and participants included six female project leaders from Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines. The course was designed to develop their personal leadership skills and to make them more effective agents of change in the agriculture sector.
- *Participatory approaches to agricultural research and extension* (Philippines)  
A second course held by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Los Baños, Philippines in November/December 2005 was attended by 10 scientists from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The main objective of the training was to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in the effective application of participatory research and extension to accelerate the adoption of appropriate and improved rice-based technologies.
- *Writing scientific papers in English* (Vietnam)  
The second of two short courses in scientific communication for ACIAR project scientists took place in Vietnam in January/February 2006, with training delivered by the University of Western Sydney. The course aims to extend the English language and writing skills of Vietnamese scientists and assist them to publish in international journals.
- *Reinforcing the social and community dimensions of ACIAR projects to deliver livelihood impacts* (Lao PDR, Indonesia)  
Three workshops for 65 scientists involved in ACIAR projects were held in Lao PDR at Vientiane and in Indonesia in Java and Bali during January and June 2006. The training, conducted by Charles Sturt University, aimed to enhance the outcomes of ACIAR projects by reinforcing the social and community research knowledge and skills of key project staff.
- *Evaluation training for agricultural research projects* (Papua New Guinea)  
In May/June 2006 this 'hands-on' training course was held in Lae, Papua New Guinea. It was attended by 24 ACIAR project staff, who learnt how to create an evaluation plan for projects and use the evaluation findings.
- *Experimental design data analysis and interpretation* (Vietnam)  
A course in experimental design, data analysis and interpretation was conducted by the University of Queensland for Vietnam project scientists in late June 2006. The training aimed to improve practical skills in data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation.
- *Commercialisation of biotechnology crops in Asia* (Philippines)  
A training course facilitated by Asian BioBusiness was conducted in Manila in June 2006. ACIAR sponsored six participants on this course to gain a comprehensive in-depth understanding of the principles, approach, regulatory requirements and stewardship requirements for commercialising a biotechnology seed product for widespread farmer adoption.