Forestry Research Program Strategy

Global context/trends

The loss of forest cover continues, particularly in the developing world. An estimated 1.6 billion people rely on forests, for social and economic needs, and for environmental benefits. Demand for forest products is rising, and if not managed appropriately will result in further deforestation and unsustainable practices. Forests provide many environmental services including carbon sequestration, maintenance of water quality and biodiversity habitat.

The challenge is to enhance the role of trees in agricultural landscapes, achieve sustainable forest management and to develop value-adding industries to enhance environmental, social and economic values from forestry. Forest industries provide employment from planting, managing, and harvesting through to processing forest products.

International fit

Forestry has a role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and has the potential to enhance livelihoods for smallholder farmers and their communities, by growing trees, improving forest management and developing value-adding industries. Forests have a key role in climate change mitigation through the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism. The United Nations Forum on Forests defines four global objectives relating to forests:

» Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management

» Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits

» Increase significantly the area of sustainably managed forests, and

Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilise significantly-increased new and additional funding.

Research themes

Research themes	Priority research areas
Tree growing:	» Matching species to sites and purposes.
	» Germplasm conservation, improvement and distribution.
	» Plantation productivity and management.
	» Forest and landscape restoration.
	» Agroforestry and smallholder livelihoods.
	» Forest pests and diseases detection and management.
Sustainable forest management:	» Community forestry.
	» Forest management systems.
	» Reduced-impact logging.
	» Environmental services.
Efficient and sustainable forest industries:	» Efficient value–chains for wood and non-timber forest products.
	» Chain of custody systems.
	» Value-adding processing and product manufacture.
Climate change mitigation and adaptation:	» Reducing deforestation and forest degradation.
	» Carbon sequestration.
	» Resilience of trees and forest systems.
	» Management of fires.
	» Wood-based bioenergy.

Countries

Country	% of budget: active projects
Indonesia	20
Papua New Guinea	15
Pacific islands	13
Vietnam	13
Laos	12
Nepal	07
Eastern Africa	20

Delivery on corporate goals

ACIAR goal, to improve:	Contributions of projects in the Forestry program (examples)
Food and nutrition security.	» Enhanced food production using agroforestry systems. » Indirect contributions through enhanced incomes from forestry.
Productivity and resilience of crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries systems.	» Increased health and productivity of plantations. » Enhanced availability of improved tree germplasm. » Community forestry.
Smallholder and community livelihoods.	» Tree growing by smallholders and communities. » Value-adding processing of wood and non-timber products.
Animal and plant biosecurity.	» Detection and management of pests and diseases of trees, forests and wood products.
Sustainable interactions between agricultural and ecosystem services.	» Payments for environmental services. » Sustainable forest management. » Agroforestry and forest-landscape restoration.
Individual and institutional R&D capacity.	» Individual and organisational capacity building is a component of all projects.

Future focus

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) forestry program contributes to poverty alleviation and to sustainable forest management, providing social, economic and environmental benefits to partner countries and Australia. The research program focuses on aspects of forestry value chains that have good economic potential, and where the benefits will have early positive impacts on communities and smallholder livelihoods. Specifically, the forestry program aims to:

» Enhance the role of tree growing and forest management in improving subsistence lifestyles, smallholder and community livelihoods and sustainable land management

» Enhance the contribution of legal, sustainable and value-adding forest industries to economic development in partner countries, and

» Contribute to the Australian Government's development assistance and international forest-policy priorities, combating illegal logging and reducing deforestation.

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