

3

Country partnerships



Country partnerships

To maximise our effectiveness as an agricultural research-for-development agency, ACIAR builds and maintains partnerships with in-country agencies and organisations.

ACIAR has 11 Country Offices throughout the Indo-Pacific region. Staff located throughout the region make up the ACIAR Country Network, which develops and maintains the strategic directions of our investments with in-country partner agencies. The network manages relationships, communication, coordination and administration of activities within the countries in which our offices are located, and in neighbouring countries where we have no representative office.

The Country Network also supports partner research institutions to develop, establish and administer activity related to research collaboration and capacity building. Our Country Network is a vital link between Australian and international researchers and the relevant in-country research agencies.

Many of our country partnerships are undergoing rapid change as local research capacity grows. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely limited the participation of our partner agencies in research collaboration for 2 years. Both of these circumstances created an imperative for our Country Network to be ready to renegotiate relationships when partner agencies were ready. During the pandemic the network upskilled in partnership brokering and knowledge management, equipping our overseas staff with the necessary skills, tools and plans to re-engage with our partner agencies as quickly as possible. Re-engagement will be an important focus during 2022–23.

Over the next 2 years we plan to develop new long-term partnership strategies with Indonesia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Laos, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This will, however, be influenced by prevailing circumstances in each country.

ACIAR Country Offices

ACIAR Country Network staff are located in the offices of Australian high commissions or embassies in the following countries:

- » Pacific
 - Fiji (regional office)
 - Papua New Guinea
- » East and South-East Asia
 - Laos (regional office)
 - China
 - Indonesia
 - Myanmar*
 - Philippines
 - Timor-Leste
 - Vietnam
- » South Asia
 - India (regional office)
 - Pakistan
- » Eastern and Southern Africa
 - Kenya (regional office).

* There is one ACIAR staff member located in Myanmar, but the location is a remote site of the regional office in Laos, not an ACIAR Country Office.



ACIAR regional and country managers

Pacific



Ms Mai (Gay Maureen) Alagcan

Regional Manager, Pacific and Papua New Guinea

Ms Mai Alagcan is based in Suva, Fiji. Before joining the Pacific Region Office in 2021, Mai was Country Manager for ACIAR in the Philippines for 5 years. Prior to joining ACIAR, she was a Senior Program Officer on the Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Program for DFAT at the Australian Embassy in Manila. Mai also has worked in the Philippine public sector and has extensive professional and management experience on program development, policy analysis and monitoring and evaluation in the agriculture and fisheries sector. Mai has a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics from the University of the Philippines and a postgraduate certificate in regional development planning from the School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of the Philippines and Technical University of Dortmund in Germany.



Dr Norah Omot

Country Manager, Papua New Guinea

Dr Norah Omot is based in Port Moresby and joined ACIAR in 2022. She has worked with the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) in various roles since 2017, including as a coordinator of the ACIAR ASTI (Agricultural Science Technology Indicators) project, coordinating projects across Papua New Guinea, Fiji and 8 South-East Asia countries. Before working with APAARI, Norah worked with the Papua New Guinea National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) in varying roles, from Senior Scientist to Program Director. Norah holds a bachelor degree in Agricultural Science (Papua New Guinea University of Technology), a Master of Agriculture, Agricultural Economics (University of Sydney) and a Doctor of Philosophy, Economics (University of Canberra). Norah was awarded a John Dillon Fellowship in 2004.

East and South-East Asia



Ms Dulce Carandang Simmanivong

Regional Manager, East and South-East Asia

Ms Dulce Carandang Simmanivong is based in Vientiane, Laos, and is responsible for strategic oversight of the Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar country programs. Before joining ACIAR in 2015, Dulce managed the rural development portfolio of AusAID/DFAT for 6 years, working across sectors including financial inclusion, social protection, non-government organisation cooperation, mine action and rural livelihoods. Previously, she worked in program management positions with the UN and civil society organisations, including a farmers' alliance. Dulce's past work took her across north and South-East Asia. She earned both her degrees – a Bachelor of Arts (Communications) and a Master of Industrial/Organisational Psychology – at Ateneo de Manila University.



Mr Wang Guanglin

Country Manager, China

Mr Wang Guanglin is based in Beijing. He joined ACIAR in 1998 and became ACIAR Country Manager for China in 2011. Before joining ACIAR, Guanglin worked for 2 years at the Defence Section of the Australian Embassy in Beijing. Guanglin has a background in business administration and more than 20 years experience working on agriculture development in China. In his current role, he is exploring opportunities for ACIAR and China to work trilaterally with other countries on common opportunities and challenges in agriculture.



Ms Mirah Nuryati PSM

Country Manager, Indonesia

Ms Mirah Nuryati is based in Jakarta and has worked with ACIAR for 30 years. In this time, she has worked in the Indonesia office as an administrative officer, Stakeholder Relationship Manager and Assistant Country Manager, before taking on the role of Country Manager in 2015. Prior to working with ACIAR, Mirah spent 12 months with AIDAB/AusAID, within DFAT. Mirah is a graduate of the Tarakanita Communication and Secretary Academy in Jakarta. In 2007, Mirah was awarded an Australian Public Service Medal (PSM) for her contribution to strengthening ACIAR collaboration with relevant Indonesian ministries.



Ms Hazel Aniceto

Country Manager, the Philippines

Ms Hazel Aniceto is based in Manila and leads the country office team in the Philippines. Before joining ACIAR, Hazel was a Senior Technical Adviser with the USAID Science, Technology, Research, Innovation for Development Program. Among other previous roles, Hazel spent a significant part of her career as Portfolio Manager with AusAID and DFAT and in senior management roles with the private sector and various Overseas Development Assistance programs. Hazel has an economics degree from the University of the Philippines and a Diploma in Government conferred by the Australian Public Service Commission.



Mr Luis de Almeida

Country Manager, Timor-Leste

Mr Luis de Almeida is based in Dili and became the first ACIAR Country Manager in Timor-Leste in May 2022. Before taking on this role, Luis has worked continuously on ACIAR projects in Timor-Leste since 2003, as a researcher and technical coordinator. He worked with ACIAR commissioned organisations and collaborators, and across a range of projects, including the Seeds of Life project, which ran from 2000 until 2016. Luis was awarded a John Allwright Fellowship in 2012 to complete a Master of Agricultural Science at the University of Western Australia, specialising in genetics and plant breeding.



Ms Nguyen Thi Thanh An PSM

Country Manager, Vietnam

Ms Nguyen Thi Thanh An is based in Hanoi. She joined ACIAR in December 2007 as an Assistant Country Manager and became Country Manager in 2014. An has extensive experience as a professional communicator, working in both private and public sectors. She completed her master degree at University of Queensland in 2013, with a major in communications for development. An was awarded the Australian Public Service Medal in 2020 for her contribution to the development of the Australia-Vietnam relationship in agricultural research.



South Asia



Dr Pratibha Singh

Regional Manager, South Asia

Dr Pratibha Singh is based in New Delhi. She has more than 20 years of experience in crop research and technology management, including more than 10 years of research experience in molecular plant pathology of crops, including wheat, rice, corn and potato. Before joining ACIAR in 2018, Pratibha was head of the Technology Advancement Unit of the Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology for 8 years. Previously, she worked at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi; USDA – Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center; Cornell University; and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. She also worked as a scientist and Coordinator of Research Management System in a corporate biotech industry (E.I. DuPont India). Pratibha holds a Bachelor of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and a Master of Agriculture Biotechnology from G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, India, and a PhD in agriculture, with a major in plant pathology as a Monbusho Scholar, from Tottori University, Japan.



Dr Munawar Kazmi

Country Manager, Pakistan

Dr Munawar Kazmi is based in Islamabad. He joined ACIAR in 2010 and became Country Manager for Pakistan in 2015. Before joining ACIAR, he was a researcher at Pakistan's Agricultural Research Council. He completed his master's degree at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, and his PhD in plant pathology at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Kazmi's studies specialised in mango disease and farmer training. During more than 15 years as a research scientist, he published more than 40 peer-reviewed science articles. He is a trained facilitator and has worked extensively on the Farmer Field School approach, collaborating with national organisations and international agencies in Vietnam, Bangladesh, China, Thailand and Kyrgyzstan.

Eastern and Southern Africa



Dr Leah Ndungu

Regional Manager, Eastern and Southern Africa

Dr Leah Ndungu is based in Nairobi and has more than 20 years of experience managing research programs. Before joining ACIAR in 2017, Leah worked at the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa-International Livestock Research Institute Hub as a Partnership Coordinator, in a DFAT-funded research-for-development program focusing on food security. Previously, she was a Research Manager at the International Livestock Research Institute. Leah has also worked in the public sector as a research scientist in Kenya's national agricultural research system. She holds a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Nairobi, a master degree in veterinary science from Washington State University, USA, and a PhD in veterinary science with a specialisation in agricultural economics from the University of Pretoria, South Africa.