



General Manager, Research

Job Information Pack

Position Number:	0004
Classification:	SES Band 1
Section:	Research
Location:	Forrest, ACT
Employment Type:	Non-ongoing, Specified Term for up to 5 years

About ACIAR

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research ([ACIAR](#)) is a globally unique organisation operating in a dynamic and complex environment under the *Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982*. ACIAR is a [statutory](#) (non-corporate) agency within the Australian Government's Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio. Our headquarters are in Forrest (Canberra). Further information on our current projects, programs and priorities can be found at <https://www.aciar.gov.au/>.

ACIAR fosters international agricultural research-for-development partnerships between researchers, governments, civil society and the private sector. These partnerships aim to improve food security, reduce poverty and enhance environmental sustainability in partner countries.

ACIAR-supported research and capacity development programs contribute significantly to [Australia's International Development Policy](#), enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, building community resilience and increasing science and policy skills of individuals and organisations in partner countries and in Australia.

In 2026, ACIAR is refreshing its 10-year Strategy [ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–27](#). This process is expected to be completed by early 2027.

About the position

The General Manager, Research (GMR) is part of ACIAR's Executive team, which also includes the General Manager Partnerships and the General Manager Corporate. The Executive team is led by the Chief Executive Officer and works together to ensure that ACIAR delivers on its core mandate of brokering, funding and managing partnerships and investments that catalyse more productive, sustainable and resilient food and farming systems for the benefit of developing countries and Australia.

The GMR leads a team that consists of Research Program Managers and staff who collectively deliver research and capacity building programs aligned with ACIAR's investment framework and country/regional priorities. The role also positions ACIAR as a valued and influential partner within Australia's agricultural innovation system and across international research-for-development networks.

The GMR is responsible for ensuring ACIAR’s research and capacity development investments are strategically targeted, high quality and aligned with Australia’s development policy, ACIAR’s strategic direction and partner country priorities. The role also positions ACIAR as a valued and influential partner within Australia’s agricultural innovation system and across international research-for-development networks.

The role requires collaborative leadership across research, partnerships and corporate functions, and strong engagement with domestic and international stakeholders. The GMR is expected to model APS values and behaviours, exercise sound judgement in complex environments, and help build a safe, inclusive, high-performing and innovative agency.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

The General Manager, Research is responsible for providing strategic leadership across ACIAR’s research portfolio and contributing to whole-of-agency outcomes as a member of the Executive team.

1. Shape strategic thinking (*SES WLS: “Shapes strategic thinking”*)
Provide strategic leadership as a member of the Executive by:
 - Delivering authoritative, evidence-based and forward-looking advice to the CEO and Executive on research strategy, priorities and trade-offs
 - Anticipating emerging issues, risks and opportunities in international agricultural development and innovation systems
 - Integrating insights from across ACIAR and external stakeholders to inform whole-of-agency strategy
 - Contributing to collective Executive decision-making and organisational direction
2. Achieve results through high-impact portfolio leadership (*SES WLS: “Achieves results”*)
Lead ACIAR’s research and capacity development portfolio to deliver measurable development impact by:
 - Setting clear priorities, performance expectations, and success measures for the Research Branch
 - Ensuring a coherent, high-quality portfolio aligned to strategic objectives and delivering value for money
 - Driving continuous improvement, innovation, and evidence-based decision-making across programs
 - Maintaining accountability for outcomes while enabling delivery through empowered teams
3. Drive strategic alignment and investment coherence (*SES WLS: “Shapes strategic thinking” + “Achieves results”*)
Ensure ACIAR’s investments are targeted and aligned by:
 - Maintaining strong alignment with Australia’s international development policy, ACIAR’s investment framework, and partner country priorities
 - Exercising oversight of major investments to ensure strategic fit, coherence, and prioritisation across the portfolio
 - Making and advising on complex trade-offs between competing priorities, risks and resource constraints
4. Cultivate organisational capability and leadership (*SES WLS: “Cultivates productive working relationships” + “Achieves results”*)
Build a high-performing and future-capable Research Branch by:
 - Setting a clear vision, direction, and shared purpose for the Branch

- Developing leadership capability and empowering staff through appropriate delegation and accountability
 - Fostering a culture of collaboration, learning, inclusion, and continuous improvement
 - Ensuring organisational structures and ways of working support delivery of strategic outcomes
5. Lead external engagement and influence systems (*SES WLS: “Cultivates productive working relationships”*)
Represent and position ACIAR as a trusted and influential partner by:
- Building and sustaining senior relationships across the Australian and international agricultural innovation system
 - Influencing stakeholders to align effort, leverage capability and maximise development impact
 - Identifying and shaping strategic partnerships and system-level opportunities
 - Representing ACIAR in high-level forums and negotiations
6. Steward public resources (*SES WLS: “Achieves results” + “Exemplifies integrity”*)
Ensure effective and responsible stewardship of public resources by:
- Overseeing portfolio-level financial management and investment prioritisation
 - Ensuring compliance with legislative, policy and partner requirements
 - Promoting disciplined, transparent, and accountable decision-making
 - Managing risk proactively, balancing innovation with accountability
7. Model whole-of-agency leadership (*SES WLS: “Cultivates productive relationships” + “Communicates with influence”*)
Drive integration and collaboration across ACIAR by:
- Working collaboratively across Research, Partnerships and Corporate functions to deliver organisational priorities
 - Contributing to governance, corporate initiatives, and shared accountability for agency performance
 - Promoting cooperation and alignment across teams and functions
8. Exemplify integrity and leadership (*SES WLS: “Exemplifies integrity”*)
Demonstrate personal and professional leadership by:
- Upholding APS Values, Employment Principles, and ethical standards
 - Demonstrating courage, sound judgement, and resilience in complex and ambiguous environments
 - Leading with authenticity, transparency, and accountability
 - Creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace

Eligibility

- **Australian Citizenship** - our successful candidate must be an Australian citizen at the time an offer of employment is made
- **Security clearance** - our successful candidate may be required to obtain and maintain a Negative Vetting 1 security clearance
- **Mandatory qualifications/experience:**
 - A PhD in a relevant discipline, or equivalent;

- Extensive experience in research management in a developing country context;
- An understanding of the potential for research partnerships to actively contribute to poverty alleviation, improve food security, address risks arising from climate change and support inclusive sustainable economic development in the Indo-Pacific region;
- A proven, internationally competitive research track record relevant to ACIAR's portfolio, coupled with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary research methodologies across natural, physical, and social sciences, as well as expertise in research monitoring and evaluation methods and tools; and
- Significant experience in driving research and innovation with sustainable impact in complex environments, utilising advanced portfolio analysis and management tools to navigate and optimise research outcomes.

Contact

For information regarding the recruitment process, please contact HRsupport@aciar.gov.au or call 02 6217 0500. Enquiries specific to the role may be directed, in confidence, to the Chief Executive Officer via the Executive Assistant at Jackie.Madasu@aciar.gov.au or call 02 6217 0548.

Capability Requirements

In addition to meeting the [Work Level Standards](#) for the SES Band 1 classification and adhering to [the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours](#) and [SES performance leadership framework](#) the following criteria also apply:

1. Shapes Strategic Thinking -

Demonstrated ability to:

- Provide authoritative strategic advice on international agricultural research for development, including setting priorities across regions, sectors, and themes
- Synthesize scientific, development and policy insights to inform ACIAR's research investment decisions and portfolio direction
- Anticipate emerging global and regional challenges (e.g. food security, climate change, biosecurity) and position ACIAR's investments accordingly
- Navigate complex trade-offs between scientific quality, development impact, partner priorities, and Australian Government policy

2. Achieves Results (through research and development impact)

Demonstrated ability to:

- Lead the delivery of high-impact research and/or development portfolios, translating strategy into measurable outcomes
- Oversee the design and implementation of research programs, partnerships or investments that deliver tangible benefits for partner countries
- Drive continuous improvement in program quality, evaluation and impact assessment
- Allocate resources effectively to maximise the development impact and value for money of public investment

3. **Cultivates Productive Working Relationships** (partnership-driven model)

Demonstrated ability to:

- Build and sustain high-level relationships with research institutions, governments, industry, and international partners
- Work effectively across cultures and jurisdictions, including in low- and middle-income country contexts
- Influence and align diverse stakeholders (e.g. Australian research organisations, partner country agencies, donors) to achieve shared outcomes
- Foster collaboration across disciplines and organisations to deliver impact through partnerships, consistent with ACIAR's model

4. **Exemplifies Personal Drive and Integrity** (public sector + development context)

Demonstrated ability to:

- Uphold APS Values while managing complex, high-stakes international investments and partnerships
- Exercise sound judgement in balancing development objectives, diplomatic considerations, and research integrity
- Provide frank, evidence-based advice and demonstrate courage in decision-making
- Promote a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace and partnership environment, including in cross-cultural settings

5. **Communicates with Influence** (technical + policy + international audiences)

Demonstrated ability to:

- Communicate complex scientific, development and policy issues clearly to senior decision-makers, researchers, and international stakeholders
- Represent the organisation credibly in high-level domestic and international forums
- Translate technical research insights into strategic advice and compelling narratives about impact
- Build alignment across stakeholders through clear, persuasive and culturally aware communication

6. **Role/ACIAR specific Experience**

This role requires:

- Deep understanding of agricultural research systems and/or international development practice
- Ability to operate at the intersection of science, policy, and diplomacy
- Strong commitment to partnership-based approaches and capacity development
- Experience managing or influencing complex, multi-country or cross-institutional programs

What we need from you

- Tell us in 2 pages or less why you are the right person, what you can offer, and how your skills, knowledge, experience, and qualification are relevant to the role. Note: You can upload your “pitch” as an attachment or include the Cover Letter section of the job application.
- Try not to duplicate information that can already be found in your resume but do highlight any specific examples or achievements that will demonstrate your ability to perform the role.

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- Please attach a concise resume to your application which clearly outlines your work experience, educational qualifications, and relevant skills.
 - In the application form you will need to provide the details of two referees who can attest and validate your credentials and suitability for the role.

NB: All ACIAR employees demonstrate a commitment to the APS Code of Conduct and Values, as well as to workplace diversity and occupational health and safety. It is also expected that ACIAR employees will have appropriate cross-cultural sensitivities.