



ACIAR

IN VIETNAM



Learning from 40 years of
agricultural and rural policy

PAGE 15

The road ahead for Vietnam's
smallholder farmers

PAGE 17

Smarter investment for
Vietnam's agriculture future

PAGE 19

Contents



- 3 Editorial note
- NEWS
 - 4 ACIAR Vietnam program 2026 - 2027: 21 active and pipeline projects
 - 6 New research partnership on climate-smart premium rice value chains in the Mekong Delta
 - 8 Strengthening climate-smart livestock research links between Africa and Asia
- NEWS AROUND THE EMBASSY
 - 9 Australia–Vietnam partnership boosts regional biosecurity
- EXPERT INSIGHTS
 - 10 AI for agriculture, with agriculture: co-designing AI decision support
 - 12 Orientation for Vietnam’s agriculture and environment development
- PROJECT UPDATES
 - 15 Learning from 40 years of agricultural and rural policy in Vietnam: what’s next?
 - 17 The road ahead for Vietnam’s smallholder farmers
 - 19 Smarter investment for Vietnam’s agriculture future
 - 21 Strengthening market access for smallholder fruit farmers in Northwest Vietnam
 - 23 Opportunities and challenges in Vietnam’s medicinal plant sector
 - 25 Research network for Asia’s sustainable cassava industry
 - 27 Remote sensing and water accounting support agricultural water management in Vietnam
 - 28 Developing profitable chicken production systems for Southeast Asian farmers
 - 30 Linking farmers for better beef chain governance
 - 31 Advancing mangrove-based agribusiness for a sustainable Mekong Delta
 - 33 Small nutrients, big impact: why micronutrients matter in grouper farming
 - 35 From research to a scalable development of mabé pearls
 - 36 Science, partnerships and policy reduce emerging forest pest risks in Southeast Asia
 - 38 From the sky to soil health: a survey of coffee-based systems
- CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
 - 40 Welcome home, Thanh Hai!
 - 41 Meryl Williams Fellows – where are they now?
 - 41 Enrol in ACIAR Learn 2026
- ACIAR PEOPLE
 - 42 Interview with a researcher
 - 43 Interview with a farmer
 - 44 New staff
- PHOTO NEWS
 - 45 Partnerships in action
- FARM TO FORK
 - 47 Oyster soup with pineapple and tomato

Front and back cover: ACIAR

Editorial note

Dear valued readers,

We are pleased to present the latest edition of the ACIAR in Vietnam Newsletter, which showcases recent achievements and ongoing collaboration between ACIAR and our Vietnamese partners.

As Vietnam's agricultural sector faces increasing pressures from climate change, resource constraints and changing market demands, the need for practical, inclusive and locally grounded innovation has never been greater.

Vietnam is entering a critical phase of agricultural transformation. National ambitions relating to green growth, Net Zero emissions, climate resilience and higher-value production are creating significant opportunities but also raising important questions about how to ensure smallholder farmers can sustainably adapt to and benefit from this transition.

This edition brings together stories that reflect both the challenges and opportunities shaping Vietnam's agriculture, from exploring pathways for Vietnam's future farmers and reflecting on 40 years of agricultural and rural policies since 'Doi Moi' to co-designing AI applications with farmers.

Across all these stories runs a common theme: sustainable agricultural transformation is ultimately a collective effort. It requires strong partnerships between researchers, farmers, governments and communities, alongside a willingness to learn, adapt and innovate together over time.

We hope this edition offers useful insights into the people, ideas and collaborations that are contributing to a more resilient, productive and sustainable future for agriculture in Vietnam.

As always, please share with us your thoughts on the issues and ideas for future collaborations via aciarvietnam@aciar.gov.au.

We look forward to hearing from you!

ACIAR Vietnam Team



ACIAR Vietnam program 2026 – 2027: 21 active and pipeline projects

Agribusiness | 5

- Food loss in the Pangasius catfish value chain of the Mekong River Basin (CS/2020/209).
- Integrating smallholder households and farm production systems into commercial beef supply chains in Vietnam (AGB/2020/189).
- Digital monitoring of VietGAP compliance for high-value domestic markets and potential export in smallholder fruit value chains from the northwest of Vietnam (AGB/2022/144).
- Understanding markets, value chains and production constraints for medicinal plants in Vietnam (AGB/2025/101).
- Strengthening a climate-smart premium rice value chain with smallholders in the Mekong Delta (AGB/2025/154).

Fisheries | 5

- Addressing key technical bottlenecks in the grouper supply chain in Vietnam and Australia through manufactured feed and hatchery developments to improve SME sector profitability (FIS/2022/148).
- Potential for tropical abalone aquaculture in Vietnam (FIS/2024/125).
- Continued momentum towards a cultured mabé pearl and pearl-based livelihoods sector in Vietnam (FIS/2024/131).
- Supporting development of the mabé pearl sector in Khánh Hòa, Vietnam (FIS/2025/117).
- FishTech Plus: Growing capacity of Mekong subregion countries to implement technical fisheries solutions into river development programs (FIS/2024/141).

Livestock systems | 1

- Asian Chicken Genetic Gains (AsCGG): A platform for exploring, testing, delivering and improving chickens for enhanced livelihood outcomes in South East Asia (LS/2019/142).



Forestry | 2

- Managing risk in South East Asian forest biosecurity (FST/2018/179).
- Developing an effective forest health and biosecurity network in South East Asia (FST/2020/123).



Social Systems | 2

- Vietnam's smallholder farmers: challenges and opportunities for a sustainable future. (SSS/2024/108).
- Scaling low-emission rice in Vietnam through circular economy innovation (SSS/2025/146).



Soil and land management | 3

- Assessment of soil condition for coffee, pepper and fruit tree production in the five provinces of the Central Highlands of Vietnam (SLAM/2023/142).
- Defining the potential for mangrove-based agribusiness transformation in the coastal Mekong Delta (CLIM/2023/190).
- Expanding climate resilient farming systems in Vietnam's Mekong River Delta region (SLAM/2025/144).



Water | 1

- Understanding the role of remote sensing in supporting agricultural water management in South East Asia (WAC/2023/117).



Crops | 2

- Disease-resilient and sustainable cassava production systems in the Mekong region (CROP/2022/110).
- Enabling high-quality low-emissions rice (HQLER) in Vietnam using real-time remote sensing-based field-level monitoring tools (CROP/2025/143).



Australian Ambassador, H.E Ms Gillian Bird, SunRice Group CEO Mr Paul Serra and the Mekong Rice project team touring Lap Vo Mill in March 2026. Photo: ACIAR.

New research partnership on climate-smart premium rice value chains in the Mekong Delta

ACIAR, in partnership with the University of Queensland (UQ) and SunRice Group, announced a mutual commitment to extend their research partnership to strengthen climate-smart rice production in the Mekong Delta in March 2026.

With in-principle terms incorporating a A\$1 million co-investment (approx. VND18 billion), this new activity will support Vietnamese smallholder farmers to address the increasing climate vulnerabilities and meet premium export market standards. It will deliver gender-inclusive, climate-smart capacity building for farmer cooperatives, helping them refine their post-harvest efficiency and traceability to supply premium buyers.

It will also advance ongoing breeding innovation to develop high-quality, climate-resilient rice varieties ready for commercialisation.

Australian Ambassador to Vietnam HE Ms Gillian Bird emphasised the significance of the partnership during her first visit to the Mekong Delta and SunRice's Lap Vo Mill in Dong Thap Province in March:

'This initiative exemplifies the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Australia and Vietnam, where we strongly support Vietnam's

sustainable economic growth and innovation in the agriculture sector. It's great to see how a rigorous public-private partnership between ACIAR and the SunRice Group can use science to drive economic growth and also reduce emissions.'

SunRice Group CEO and Managing Director, Mr Paul Serra, said partnering with ACIAR and the University of Queensland over the past 4 years has delivered concrete achievements in Vietnam by increasing the supply of compliant rice, improving farmers' capability and profitability and reducing production costs. This new activity also aligns with the objectives of Vietnam's One Million Hectares of Low Emission, High Quality Rice Initiative.

'These successes, along with the adoption of sustainable rice growing practices in the Mekong, demonstrate how multidisciplinary research can help deliver practical solutions. This new initiative



Ambassador Gillian Bird announcing the new project during her first visit to Lap Vo Mill. Photo: ACIAR

will focus on scaling these outcomes, and the development of premium fragrant long grain varieties suited to SunRice's high value branded markets, while also addressing climate risks and increasingly stringent market requirements – which we know are two areas of growing concern around the world.'

ACIAR has been working closely with the Vietnamese Government since 1993, and this new activity will reflect the strength of the Australia–Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and our shared commitment to sustainable agriculture and gender equity agendas.

Acting ACIAR CEO Dr Nick Austin reconfirmed ACIAR's commitment to working with Vietnam to address its priorities and to continue developing locally led initiatives for the benefit of the Vietnamese people.

'ACIAR is pleased to see the positive results from our previous public-private partnership project improving the income and livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Partnering with SunRice gives farmers commercial adoption pathways for high-value export markets, while moving to sustainable farming practices.'

Led by the University of Queensland, this new project will be in partnership with An Giang University, Can Tho University, Cuu Long Rice Research Institute and Ricegrowers Vietnam – a member of SunRice Group.

The University of Queensland Project Leader, Professor Jaquie Mitchell, said the project's success was underpinned by the strength of its diverse team, bringing together experts from both the private and public sectors across multiple disciplines from Vietnam and Australia.

'From the outset, we believed this partnership had the potential to deliver real impact for both commercialisation and sustainability, and it's gratifying to see our research demonstrate the benefits across the value chain, particularly for smallholder farmers. We're excited to continue building on this collaboration and to deliver even greater benefits for the farming communities in the Mekong region.'



Mekong Delta farmers adopting sustainable farming practice to meet high-quality export markets' requirements through the Mekong Rice initiative funded by ACIAR and SunRice from 2022-2025. Photo provided by the project team.

Strengthening climate-smart livestock research links between Africa and Asia

By Chi Nguyen, Nasser Yao, Hung Nguyen and Anthony Whitbread, ILRI

Scientists and livestock experts from Africa and Southeast Asia gathered in Hanoi in March 2026 to strengthen collaboration and share practical solutions for climate-resilient livestock systems through the Africa-Asia Biosciences Challenge Funds (AABCF) initiative.



Fellows visiting the Ba Vi Cattle and Forage Research Center and the MONCADA Frozen Semen Research and Production Station in Vietnam. Photo: ILRI.

Implemented by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in partnership with the University of Queensland (UQ) and the University of Melbourne (UoM), the initiative supports scientists and institutions working on sustainable livestock systems across Africa and Asia.

Sixteen early- and mid-career scientists from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos took part in a three-month research and training program linked to the BecA-ILRI Hub. Fellows gained hands-on experience in diagnostics, genomics, data analysis, and climate-smart livestock approaches while building regional research networks.

A key highlight was the AABCF Regional Workshop on climate-smart livestock operations held in Hanoi from 23–27 March 2026. Fellows, scientists, government officials and regional partners exchanged experiences on animal health, low-emission livestock systems and sustainable livestock transformation. The workshop also connected fellows with policymakers, researchers, development partners and the private sector. Participants also attended the regional conference on 'Sustainable livestock transformation for food systems in Asia and the Pacific' hosted by ILRI in Hanoi.

'The fellowship gave me valuable exposure to new laboratory techniques, climate-smart breed selection and regional collaboration. Beyond the technical skills, I learned how scientists from different countries are addressing similar livestock and climate challenges,'

said Menghak Phem, Cambodia Agriculture Science Academia.

Throughout the week, participants explored topics including methane reduction, livestock genetics, nutrition, animal disease surveillance and data-driven livestock management. Experts from ILRI, UQ and UoM shared case studies from Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia, while fellows discussed how these approaches could be adapted in their home countries.

Dr Ngo Thi Kim Cuc, Deputy Director General of the Vietnam Institute of Animal and Veterinary Sciences (VIAVS), emphasised that *'The knowledge and experience gained through this program will not only benefit individual fellows but also strengthen institutional capacity and contribute to national livestock development priorities.'*

Fellows from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia also presented research on One Health, livestock diseases, resource recycling, black soldier fly and genetics. Discussions highlighted the need for more Southeast Asia specific data on livestock gas emissions, with ILRI and regional partners expressing interest in strengthening future collaboration in this area.

The program also included site visits to the Ba Vi Cattle and Forage Research Center and the MONCADA Frozen Semen Research and Production Station under the Vietnam Institute of Animal and Veterinary Sciences (VIAVS). Delegates observed practical applications of forage development, feed formulation and genetic improvement technologies supporting more sustainable livestock production systems in Vietnam.

Australia–Vietnam partnership boosts regional biosecurity

By Monica Finlayson, Agriculture Counsellor, Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Biosecurity is not only a national responsibility, but a shared global one.

Late last year, as part of Australia's ongoing efforts to strengthen regional biosecurity capability, members of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) travelled to Vietnam to deliver workshops and technical training. The activities highlighted Australia and Vietnam's shared commitment to biosecurity, safe agricultural trade and regulatory cooperation.

These activities were supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Southeast Asia and Australia Government Partnerships program.

In November, DAFF's International Capacity Development team joined experts from Vietnam's Plant Production and Protection Department and CABI, an international research organisation, in Hanoi to deliver a technical workshop on National Pest Surveillance Information Systems.

The workshop explored practical approaches to planning and coordinating national and regional plant pest surveillance systems, including methods to support accurate pest status reporting in line with international standards.

It also gave Vietnam and Australia an opportunity to share experiences, discuss challenges and

build confidence in using surveillance information management tools and systems.

The following month, DAFF's Compliance Partnerships Program again worked with Vietnam's Plant Production and Protection Department to deliver a 2-week program of fumigation training, compliance verification and technical mentoring under the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme.

The program was designed to strengthen regulatory capability and support consistent application of Australia's biosecurity requirements across Vietnam's fumigation industry. It included targeted methyl bromide fumigation training for government and industry participants, along with a train-the-trainer workshop to help Vietnam deliver ongoing in-country training and build lasting capability.

Australia and Vietnam will continue working together to strengthen biosecurity practices, support secure agricultural trade and maintain a trusted bilateral partnership that delivers lasting benefits for both countries and the broader region.

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Fumigation training as part of the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme. Photo: DAFF.

AI for agriculture, with agriculture: co-designing AI decision support

By Sarah Hartman, CSIRO Technology

Dr Sarah Hartman, from Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), recently spoke to ACIAR staff about how AI can help design agricultural solutions. Here, she provides expert insight into how AI could be used to shape agriculture development in Vietnam.



In Vietnam, agriculture plays a vital role in livelihoods, food security and exports, while facing pressure from climate change, unpredictable weather and rising input costs. Artificial intelligence—computer systems that learn from data to help people make decisions—is increasingly used to detect pests and diseases, predict yields, assess climate risks, support supply chains and optimise farm operations.

The question for Vietnam is not whether AI will be used in agriculture, but how it can be used in collaboration with farmers, agronomists and

policymakers to accelerate learning and improve decision-making.

Data is powerful, but only if it fits the task

The early 21st century saw the rapid datafication of almost every aspect of society, enabling a shift from basic data analytics to increasingly powerful AI systems that integrate large volumes of information. This has expanded what is technically possible, but not always practically useful.

Compared to many countries, Vietnam performs strongly on the timeliness and spatial granularity of its agricultural census data. However, this data is only 'moderately transparent' with room to improve data accessibility, interoperability and reuse – factors that matter for turning data into practical agricultural decision support (Kebede et al. 2024)¹.

Southeast Asian nations also report some of the most optimistic opinions globally about the future of AI and its ability to change lives (Stanford University, 2026)². This creates both an opportunity and a responsibility for developing useful, trustworthy AI.

Responsible AI is a sociotechnical challenge

Achieving meaningful scientific and societal benefit from AI requires a Responsible, Application-Driven (RAD) approach³. This approach focuses on context-aware co-design of AI with end users. In agriculture, this translates to:

- designing tools that consider the unique nuances, opportunities, and legal and ethical considerations of the agricultural challenge
- advancing the explainability of modelling methods

¹Kebede et al. (2024), 'Assessing and addressing the global state of food production data scarcity'

²Stanford University (2026), 'Artificial Intelligence Index Report'

³Sarah Hartman et al. (2025), 'Position: We Need Responsible, Application-Driven (RAD) AI Research'

- developing systems iteratively, using digital testbeds to surface risks and unintended consequences early, ensuring AI is responsible, scalable and built for the real world.

Why co-design matters

Many digital tools fail because they are designed far from the realities of farming. This is why co-design—transdisciplinary teams working closely with farmers, extension staff and researchers—is essential.

At CSIRO Technology, we study the co-design process itself to understand how working alongside users improves usability and trust in AI crop growth tools.

Co-design helps ensure that tools match real decision points during the growing season, use clear language and familiar concepts, and show uncertainty in a way that is useful for navigating risk.

For Vietnam, where farming systems are diverse and often small scale, co-design can help align new technology with local knowledge, institutions and systems.

Democratising crop models

One area where the RAD approach is particularly valuable is crop modelling. Many farm decisions—such as when to plant, how much fertiliser to apply or how to respond to changing weather—are made under uncertainty. AI can assist by allowing users to explore ‘what if’ scenarios, showing how different choices may play out under different weather conditions and interventions.

We are co-designing an AI based crop growth emulator: a model trained to mimic APSIM, an established mechanistic model. The emulator is designed to allow for dynamic interactions that also provide confidence intervals – critical for decisions made under uncertainty. When co-design with users, such tools can support climate responsive decision making during the season, more efficient use of inputs, and clearer discussions between farmers and advisers. Importantly, they are not intended to replace expertise, but to support human judgement, and especially to help navigate complex scenarios before they arise on-farm.

Learning from boundaries, not just success

Our ongoing co-design work shows that value lies in boundaries as much as in capabilities. Feedback like ‘I would not use this’ is just as informative



Sometimes this is not about maximising yield. It may be about planning logistics so a farmer can attend a daughter’s wedding. A truly powerful AI solution fits into the realities and requirements of human life.



Dr. Sarah Hartman at CSIRO's AgCatalyst event, November 2024. Photo provided by the author.

as describing a capability as ‘extremely useful’, because both reveal the boundary conditions of fit for purpose AI.

Stakeholders consistently tell us they are excited about AI’s capabilities, but frame its role as supporting, not replacing, human judgement, particularly for the most uncertain moments of farming. As one AgTech provider observed, the system ‘needs to assist with in-season decision making as they are often the hardest decisions.’

When designed well, these systems also become learning tools. ‘What if’ scenarios help new learners understand what will happen without needing to live through it first.

Ultimately, the real promises of AI in agriculture lie not simply in prediction or optimisation, but in building systems that learn with people, support their decisions and fit the realities of farming life.

Orientation for Vietnam's agriculture and environment development

Tran Cong Thang, Institute for Strategy and Policy for Agriculture and Environment (ISPAE)



Photo: ACIAR

In the context of increasing climate change, global economic uncertainty and growing pressure for more sustainable development, Vietnam's agriculture and environment sector is entering a new transition phase. In this article, Dr Tran Cong Thang, the Director of ACIAR partner organisation ISPAE, will share his insights on the next development phase where Vietnam will focus on balancing growth and resilience in the agriculture sector, effectively managing natural resources and supporting green and low-emission transition.

In recent years, Vietnam's agriculture sector has remained a pillar of the national economy. Besides ensuring national food security, the sector also plays an important role in economic growth, social stability, environmental protection and enhancing Vietnam's position in international markets.

Currently, the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector accounts for around 11.64% of the country's GDP (2025) and provides employment for approximately 25.7% of the employed labour force. Agricultural production continues to expand, with around 9 million farming households, more than 22,500 agricultural cooperatives, 101 cooperative

alliances and nearly 20,000 enterprises operating in the sector. This provides an important foundation for promoting modern, efficient and sustainable agricultural development.

A highly resilient and adaptable sector

One of the most notable achievements of Vietnam's agriculture sector has been its ability to maintain stable growth over many consecutive years. In recent years, the sector recorded an average annual growth rate of approximately 3.74%, contributing 8.71% to the total added value growth of the national economy; in 2025 alone, this growth rate reached 3.78%. At a time when many sectors have been significantly affected by the global economic slowdown, these results demonstrate the sector's strong resilience and adaptability.

This performance reflects not only the sector's capacity but also recent changes in the governance and development orientation.

Integrated management of agriculture, resources and the environment

Over the past two years, Vietnam has introduced major changes in governance structures and development orientation, with significant implications for the agriculture sector.

A key development was the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment through the integration of related sectors to strengthen coordination in natural resource management, environmental protection and sustainable agricultural development.

Following the merger, the administrative structure was substantially streamlined, with approximately 45% fewer administrative units and more than 37% fewer public service units.

This restructuring reflects Vietnam's evolving development mindset: agricultural development is strongly linked to natural resource management, environmental protection and climate change adaptation. The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment now oversees a broad range of areas, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water resources, land management, environment, climate change, seas and islands. This integrated approach is expected to improve policy coordination and promote more sustainable, cross-sectoral and regional development.

Balancing growth and environmental protection

Vietnam's agriculture and environment sector is facing increasing challenges such as pressure

to sustain high economic growth, resource overexploitation risks, environmental pollution and growing demand for green production from global markets.

In response, Vietnam has clearly defined its agricultural development orientation (2026-2030) towards 'green, efficient, sustainable and low-emission' model.

The major socio-economic goals include:

- annual agricultural GDP growth of around 4%
- annual growth in agricultural, forestry and fisheries exports of 10–12%
- rural incomes increasing by 2.5–3 times compared to 2020 levels, while
- virtually eliminating poverty by 2030.

In parallel, a range of environmental and climate adaptation targets have been identified, including:

- maintaining forest coverage of above 42%
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 15.8%
- increasing rural solid waste treatment rates to 85%
- expanding marine protected areas while restoring degraded natural ecosystems.

Protecting natural resources and biodiversity

Vietnam has now identified key priorities related to the environment in its development strategy, including completing national planning frameworks, strengthening natural resource monitoring and implementing international climate commitments.

The government prioritises effective management, utilisation and conservation of natural resources while restoring critical ecosystems to ensure water security and protect biodiversity.

Environmental protection efforts are strengthened through proactive pollution prevention, tighter environmental control, and improvements in environmental quality in line with international standards.

Change to support large-scale, high-value production

In parallel with restructuring governance, Vietnam is also introducing major strategic directions, particularly in science and technology, international integration, private sector development and institutional reform.

The consolidation of provincial and commune-level administrative units is also creating additional

opportunities for economic development. Greater decentralisation and delegation of authority to local governments across most sectors is expected to improve governance efficiency, reduce transaction costs and create more favourable conditions for businesses and citizens.

These changes present significant opportunities for the agriculture sector, including land consolidation, large-scale production, high-tech agriculture, digital transformation, and added values.

Facing emerging challenges

In delivering its ambitious goals, Vietnam also needs to strengthen its capacity to respond to non-traditional and emerging global uncertainty. For example, one of the most emerging, disruptive events, is the global political conflict and the US's tariffs. The Russia-Ukraine and US-Iran conflicts have significantly impacted the agriculture sector, disrupting the value chain, exports, and increasing the input costs, impacting farmers and enterprises' benefits.

To help farmers navigate through this uncertainty, the government has introduced timely policies and supporting packages to stabilise input costs, such as reducing import tax on gas, petrol and their input materials, reducing value-added tax by 2% on a wide range of commodities used by farmers and businesses.

Farmers are at the heart of the development process

People, especially farmers, are placed at the centre of the development process.

Vietnam's new development approach emphasises agriculture, farmers and rural areas as an integrated whole. Farmers are at the centre and the key actor of development; rural areas are strategic development spaces; and agriculture remains national competitiveness.

International cooperation

Looking ahead, international cooperation will continue to play an important role in the development of Vietnam's agriculture sector. Vietnam aims to expand cooperation in areas such as high-tech agriculture, green transition, climate change adaptation, natural resource management, digital transformation and sustainable value chain development. International organisations such as ACIAR can become strategic partners in policy advisory services, scientific research, technology transfer, human resource development, sustainable agricultural models and food system transformation suited to Vietnam's conditions.

Vietnam's agriculture and environment sector is entering a new phase of development marked by both significant opportunities and major challenges. Building on past achievements and strong commitments to institutional reform, technological innovation growth model, infrastructure investment and human capital development, the sector will continue to play a central role in the national economy while also driving the country's green and sustainable future.

Photo: ACIAR





Photo: Can Tho University.

Learning from 40 years of agricultural and rural policy in Vietnam: what's next?

By Tiho Anceev, Gordon McAulau, Dong Wang, Chi Nguyen, Trang Truong,
Tran Cong Thang and Nguyen Chi Trung
ACIAR project: SSS/2023/138

ACIAR-supported research shows that Vietnam's next phase of agricultural reform should prioritise more targeted, coordinated policy packages that build on proven gains in the past 40 years, especially through land reforms and rural development, while better addressing local constraints and smallholder needs.

Vietnam's agriculture is one of the world's most striking success stories. Since the Doi Moi reforms in 1986, the sector has moved from food shortages and low productivity to a globally competitive producer of key commodities.

The next phase, however, is more challenging. Productivity growth has slowed, the policy environment has become more complex, and many smallholders, especially women, ethnic minorities, and households in remote areas, still struggle to fully benefit from new opportunities. Understanding which policies work, and for whom, is essential as Vietnam prepares for the next, critical stage of development.

A recent ACIAR-supported project, led by the University of Sydney in collaboration with Vietnam's Institute of Strategy and Policy for

Agriculture and Environment (ISPAE) and other government partners, has taken a long-term view of policy effectiveness over the past four decades.

Rather than assessing individual policies, the research mapped how a combination of policies—across land, credit, investment, extension, cooperatives, rural development and poverty reduction, and national and sectoral strategic plans—have worked over successive five-year cycles. Findings are already informing discussions for Vietnam’s 2026–2030 agriculture development strategy.

What has worked consistently

Over four decades, land policy reforms and integrated rural development efforts have shown the most reliable links to improved agricultural outcomes. These policies have boosted productivity growth, reduced poverty and, to a lesser extent, improved the incomes of rural communities.

Strategic planning has also become increasingly important over time, as reforms mature and stronger coordination across programs has been essential to sustain gains and avoid fragmentation.

What works differently depending on context

The evidence also shows that policy impacts vary significantly depending on place, timing, sub-sector, and the intended beneficiaries.

Investment incentives, for example, have often struggled to translate into productivity and income gains. Similarly, credit policies have mixed impacts, frequently helping households manage shocks and smooth consumption rather than driving long-term improvements in technology adoption or farm management.

Farmers’ priorities help explain some of these findings. Households engaged in capital-intensive activities such as livestock, fisheries and forestry tend to prioritise access to credits. In contrast, smallholders and households engaged in labour-intensive production place greater importance on land access and land-market policies. ‘One-size-fits-all’ policies can miss these distinctions.

What takes time, but matters

Capacity building policies, including extension services, cooperatives, technology transfer and training, can reduce poverty and increase incomes, but their impacts often emerge gradually.

Demand for training is strongly shaped by experience: households that have already received training are more likely to seek further support. This suggests that well-designed capability programs can generate cumulative benefits over time, as skills and confidence increase.

Looking ahead: better policy design

Taken together, what does this mean for the next wave of reform? The project’s findings suggest that the way forward is to have fewer, more focused policies that are designed as coordinated packages—sequenced and tailored to local constraints—rather than a growing list of standalone policy instruments.

Key priorities include reducing land-market frictions for those excluded from land transactions, enabling greater flexibility in cropping choice, redesigning finance and investment to better support technology adoption and smallholder inclusion, and scaling up extension, cooperatives and training models where they have proven effective.

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The road ahead for Vietnam's smallholder farmers

By Nguyen Le Hoa

ACIAR Project: SSS/2024/108



ISPAE researchers interviewing farmers. June 2025. Photo: ISPAE.

As Vietnam advances toward modern, climate-smart agriculture, understanding how to support smallholders is vital for inclusive, sustainable growth. Collaborative research, supported by ACIAR and conducted by the Institute of Strategy and Policy for Agriculture and Environment (ISPAE) and the University of Canberra, has explored practical pathways to strengthen livelihoods and resilience for Vietnam's future farmers.

Agriculture remains a pillar of Vietnam's economy, contributing over 3% annual growth in recent years. The sector supplies food and raw materials, and generated export revenues of about US\$70 billion in 2025.

Smallholder farmers, who make up nearly 90% of the country's 9 million farming households, are central to these achievements. Yet most farms remain tiny and fragmented, with limited access to finance, markets and technology.

Increasing pressures on the backbone of Vietnam's agriculture

On average, each household cultivates less than one hectare of land, often divided into several small plots. This fragmentation makes it difficult to adopt mechanisation and digital tools, reducing the competitiveness of Vietnamese agricultural products in global markets.

Meanwhile, Vietnam's rural population is ageing, with the average age of agricultural labour rising to



The biggest challenge is not land or technology—it is people. Investing in human capital determines whether smallholders can adapt, innovate, and stay resilient

Dr Tran Duc Vien, Agricultural policy expert



above 50. Most rural workers have not received formal vocational training, and only about 6% have a university degree.

Limited business linkage is another hard constraint. While evidence shows that farmers who participate in production linkages achieve higher yields and incomes, less than 3% of smallholders have direct links to agribusinesses, and only one-quarter are members of cooperatives. Many rural households lack savings to invest in modern equipment or buffer against climate shocks.

Climate change is already intensifying floods, droughts and salinity, particularly in the Mekong Delta and central coastal regions. Natural disasters and disease outbreaks have affected about 73% of rural households in recent years. Most rely on their own resources to cope, often by reducing consumption or selling assets—strategies that ultimately undermine long-term resilience.

Policy implications and the road ahead

Addressing these challenges will require coordinated efforts across government, research institutions, businesses and farming communities. These findings have informed policy recommendations to scale up farmer linkages, expand vocational training and support inclusive financing mechanisms for smallholders.

The research suggests three strategic directions for the future of Vietnam's smallholders:

1. Invest in people: Expand agricultural education, vocational training and digital literacy to enhance human capital and promote innovation.
2. Enable self-investment: Strengthen access to affordable finance, savings and insurance so that farmers can reinvest in production and manage risks.
3. Build strong organisations: Promote cooperatives, producer groups and agribusiness linkages to improve economies of scale, marketing power and value-chain integration.

With continued investment in science, research capacity and inclusive partnerships, smallholder farmers can become not only producers of food, but key actors in building a greener, smarter and more resilient agriculture for Vietnam.

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Researchers from ISPAE and University of Canberra discussing with agribusiness partners and farmers. January 2026. Photo: ISPAE.

Smarter investment for Vietnam's agriculture future

By Thang Do, Mai Nguyen, Lien Le, and Long Chu

A new ACIAR-funded research project reveals a paradoxical insight: although agriculture is consistently highlighted as a national priority in Vietnam, it remains a low-investment sector. This is striking given the sector's demonstrated capacity to generate substantial economic value and contribute to long-term growth.

Vietnam has set ambitious economic growth targets alongside commitments to sustainability. Strengthening the agricultural sector's performance will be key to achieving these goals, particularly given its role in supporting rural livelihoods.

To better understand how investment can deliver greater impact, researchers from the Australian National University (ANU) partnered with Vietnamese institutions to assess agricultural investment performance from 2020 to 2024 and to identify priorities for the future.

The project brought together key national agencies, including those affiliated with the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture and Environment, and the General Statistics Office, along with research and policy institutions.



Photo: ACIAR

Why is agriculture a smart investment?

Despite rapid industrialisation, agriculture remains a cornerstone of Vietnam's economy. Between 2020 and 2024, the sector contributed around 12–13 per cent of national GDP and supported up to 17 million jobs each year. Yet the research found that agriculture receives proportionally less investment than the rest of the economy relative to the value it creates. This pattern is seen across all provinces, and it matters because investment is key to driving productivity, innovation, and future growth.

What should change?

'Agriculture remains one of Vietnam's most strategic sectors, and better-targeted investment can generate strong economic and social returns.'

— Professor Chu Hoang Long, Project Leader, Australian National University

The research recommends gradually shifting investment towards more valuable and sustainable farming practices. This includes promoting green agriculture and low-emission production, improving the efficiency of water and fertiliser use, adopting modern technologies and automation, and encouraging circular approaches such as reusing rice straw and farm waste.

While the necessary technologies already exist, the greater challenge is creating the right conditions for farmers and businesses to adopt them at scale. This includes strengthening cooperatives and farmer-led business models, as well as developing financing approaches that combine public and private funding to attract greater investment into sustainable agriculture.

Unlocking billions in economic potential

Economic modelling suggests that increasing agricultural investment to match the economy-wide average over the next two decades could lift Vietnam's GDP by around 0.7 per cent by 2045, equivalent to roughly US\$10 billion in today's terms. This would not only strengthen national growth but also improve rural incomes and resilience.

'This study provides useful information for policymakers considering practical pathways for greener and more productive agriculture. Continued exchanges with international experts, including capacity-building opportunities for members of the National Assembly, would also be valuable as Vietnam advances this agenda.'

Dr Ta Dinh Thi, Deputy Chair of the Vietnam National Assembly's Science, Technology and Environment Committee

Research supporting policy at a critical time

The findings come at a timely moment as Vietnam reforms its public administration, updates investment priorities, and develops new approaches to green growth. There is a strong interest among Vietnamese stakeholders in practical recommendations that can help mobilise both public and private investment into agriculture.

This is where partnerships supported by ACIAR add real value, bringing together rigorous research, trusted relationships and practical solutions to address pressing policy challenges.

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Strengthening market access for smallholder fruit farmers in Northwest Vietnam

By Sophia Thach, Applied Horticultural Research
ACIAR Project: AGB/2022/144



Dr Nguyen Thi Thu Huong (FAVRI) providing technical support to Ban Chum Agricultural Cooperative. Photo: FAVRI.

Smallholder mango and dragon fruit farmers in Sơn La are adopting VietGAP-compliant practices and digital traceability tools to access higher-value domestic retail markets, as part of an ACIAR-supported project. While still in its early stages, the approach is demonstrating how improved food safety, traceability and branding can help smallholder farmers move beyond volatile spot markets and compete in more stable, premium supply chains.

Launched in September 2025, the project 'Digital monitoring of VietGAP compliance for high-value domestic markets and potential export in smallholder fruit value chains from Northwest Vietnam' aims to strengthen market access for smallholder fruit producers in Northwest Vietnam through VietGAP certification, digital traceability and stronger market links.

The challenge

Fruit production in Northwest Vietnam has expanded rapidly, but corresponding market development has not kept pace. In 2022, mango and dragon fruit production grew by 39% and 33%, respectively, contributing to domestic oversupply and farm-gate price declines of up to 50%.

Farmers frequently accept the price, being locked out of higher-value retail and export markets due to limited insights on market requirements, inconsistent fruit quality, limited post-harvest handling and food safety compliance, and weak traceability systems.

For premium buyers, food safety and product consistency are essential. For farmers, meeting these requirements is necessary to secure more stable and profitable markets.

Building foundations for market access

The project is working with 3 cooperatives—one mango and two dragon fruit—bringing together 20 farming households across 23.5 hectares in Son La Province. Participating farmers from Thai and Kinh ethnic groups have previous VietGAP certification or export experience.

Digital traceability supports this transition. Farmers have shown strong willingness and capability—from digital literacy to internet access—to adopt digital tools. The project is working with the traceability app partner to integrate VietGAP monitoring, GPS mapping and temperature logging into a single.

The project is also supporting cooperatives to strengthen their branding and market positioning. In April 2026, an on-farm workshop was held to explore how Son La fruit can differentiate itself through quality, terroir and producer stories, helping build a clearer value proposition for premium domestic retailers.

What has been most encouraging is the way the cooperatives are starting to work together—sharing knowledge, aligning harvests, and supporting one another. That peer-to-peer exchange is critical for building long-term capacity

*Liam-Southam-Rogers,
Applied Horticultural Research.*



Mango and dragon fruit cooperatives participating in the capacity building – marketing workshop in Son La in April 2026. Photo: FAVRI

Connecting farmers to premium markets

Engagement with supermarket retailers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is now underway. Seasonal difference between northern and southern production creates an opportunity for Son La mangoes to supply domestic markets during periods of lower southern output.

Buyers have also identified northern mango and dragon fruit as having superior flavour and quality attributes. By combining these competitive advantages with certification and traceability, the project aims to help cooperatives secure a stronger market proposition and more reliable commercial partnerships.

Cooperatives are showing strong uptake of digital traceability and VietGAP compliance, and meaningful market linkages are forming. This will build an important foundation for scaling inclusive, quality-assured value chains.

*Dr Nguyen Quoc Hung, In-country Project Leader,
Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute (FAVRI)*

Looking ahead

Farmers have now received VietGAP certification and are beginning to use the digital traceability app, enabling real-time produce information from farm to market. The project will continue to provide technical support for agronomic and post-harvest handling, focusing on reducing losses and improving the fruit's appearance and quality.

Together, these efforts are strengthening the Son La fruit brand and improving income for local smallholder farmers.

Learn more about the project by visiting www.sonlafruit.com.

Project partners

The project is led by Applied Horticultural Research (Australia) in partnership with the Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute (FAVRI), Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute (NOMAFSI), and Vietnam University of Agriculture (VNUA).

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Platycodon grandiflorum often used in traditional medicine to treat respiratory illnesses.
Photo: Dao Van Nui, NIMM

Opportunities and challenges in Vietnam’s medicinal plant sector

By Stephen Harper, Nguyen Thi Binh, Tran Minh Tien and Phan Thuy Hien
ACIAR Project: AGB/2025/101

An ACIAR-supported project activity is striving to understand the growing pressures in Vietnam’s tradition-rich medicinal plant sector, helping to shape the sector’s future development.

Medicinal plants have long been part of daily life in Vietnam, particularly for ethnic minority communities in remote mountainous areas, where access to modern healthcare can be limited. For many families, these plants are used not only for treatment but also as a source of income and a way to preserve cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge.

Vietnamese medicinal plants are not just products—they are heritage.

Mr Do Tien Sy, Sapa Branch Manager, Traphaco Company

Vietnam is home to more than 5,000 medicinal plant species, representing around 10–15% of the world’s known medicinal plants. Traditionally, these plants were collected from forests or grown in home gardens. However, growing demand for medicinal products is placing increasing pressure on natural ecosystems and supply chains.

Overharvesting has threatened some species in the wild, while Vietnam also remains heavily reliant on imported medicinal materials, raising concerns about quality, traceability and supply stability. At the



*The project team discussing cultivation of the Vietnamese medicinal plant *Ampelopsis cantoniensis* with Hà Nhi ethnic group and Traphaco representative. Photo: Stephen Harper, The University of Queensland.*

same time, the sector involves a complex network of collectors, farmers, traders, hospitals and processing companies, making it difficult to identify where the biggest constraints and opportunities lie.

Understanding how the sector works

A new ACIAR-funded research activity is working to better understand medicinal plant markets, value chains and production challenges in Vietnam. The project combines a literature review and field surveys involving farmers, collectors and traders in the Northwest region, including Sa Pa and Bac Ha in Lao Cai Province and Sin Ho and Muong Te in Lai Chau Province, to understand how medicinal plant systems currently operate and where improvements may be possible.

Five high-value medicinal plant species have been prioritised for the study based on their importance for biodiversity conservation, traditional medicine, value-added health products, and reducing dependence on imported medicinal materials.

Production challenges and roles

Farmers growing medicinal plants face many challenges, including poor planting materials, soil fertility, pests and diseases, and increasing climate variability. Even a short drought period can significantly affect production.

The project is also examining the roles of women and men across the value chain. While both are involved in production, women often play a leading role in trading and market activities.

Understanding these roles will help design more inclusive and effective development strategies for the sector.

Building knowledge for future development

The project also aims to strengthen research and development capacity and collaboration between Australian and Vietnamese partners. Researchers and early-career scientists are gaining experience in survey design, data analysis, and value chain assessment through fieldwork and data collection.

In the longer term, the project is expected to generate evidence that can support more sustainable and inclusive development of Vietnam's medicinal plant sector, including improved production systems, stronger supply chains, and better-informed future research and investment priorities.

Project partners

The project partners include the University of Queensland, the National Institute of Medicinal Materials, the Soil and Fertiliser Institute, and experts from the Vietnam Women's Union and the Vietnam National University of Agriculture.

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Research network for Asia's sustainable cassava industry

By Nguyen Ngoc Hung, Nguyen Ba Tung, Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, Vo Van Tuan, Cu Thi Le Thuy, Al Imran Malik, Jonathan Craig Newby, and Pham Thi Nhan
ACIAR Project: CROP/2022/110

The 'Asia Cassava Breeders and Disease Network 2026' (ACB-Net) meeting in Tay Ninh Province highlighted the growing need for regional collaboration to tackle disease and climate threats facing the cassava industry and millions of smallholders who depend on it.

Cassava plays an important role in food security, rural livelihoods, and industrial production across Asia. However, cassava-growing regions are facing increasingly severe disease outbreaks, such as Cassava Mosaic Disease (CMD), Cassava Witches' Broom Disease (CWBD) and Cassava Root Rot Disease (CRRD), which are significantly reducing yields and farmer incomes. As these threats continue to spread across borders, isolated national responses are no longer enough.

To strengthen regional collaboration, the ACB-Net meeting was held in Tay Ninh, Vietnam, in April 2026. Supported by ACIAR and co-organised by the Alliance of Biodiversity International & CIAT, the Institute of Agricultural Sciences for Southern Vietnam (IAS) and Tay Ninh Department of Agriculture and Environment, the event brought together over 60 delegates, including researchers from 12 countries, policymakers, processing industry representatives and cassava farmers.

Building a regional response

A major outcome of the meeting was the shift from isolated national programs to a unified regional strategy.

Researchers openly shared their breeding strategies, protocols and progress in developing improved cassava varieties that better meet farmer and market requirements.

Discussion also focused on how countries can collaborate more effectively by sharing germplasm, standardising disease screening methods and evaluation protocols and improving regional data sharing.

This collaboration means a country facing a new



The network participants visiting disease-resistant cassava breeding trials and interacting with local farmers, Tay Ninh Province. Photo: Pham Thi Nhan, Hung Loc Agricultural Research Center.



A cassava breeding trial in Lam Dong Province.
Photo: Nguyen Ngoc Hung, Hung Loc Agricultural Research Center.

disease outbreak can access information and disease-resistant cassava varieties that other countries in ACB-Net have already developed, helping reduce the time needed to respond to emerging threats.

The network also explored new approaches, including genomic selection and ‘precision breeding’ tools like gene-editing, to accelerate the development of improved cassava varieties, while maintaining traits valued by farmers and industry.

From research to farmers’ fields

The meeting also highlighted the importance of translating science into practical benefits for farmers. During a visit to local cassava fields and disease-resistant cassava variety trial fields under the ACIAR-funded ‘Disease-resilient and sustainable cassava production systems in the Mekong region’ (CROP/2022/110), researchers and farmers discussed the challenges currently facing cassava growers in Tay Ninh Province.

For many cassava farmers, a disease outbreak can wipe out not only one season’s income, but also planting materials needed for the next season.

I am very happy to see international experts working directly on my cassava field. What we need most right now are high-quality, disease-free cassava stems to plant for the next season without the fear of losing our crop to disease

Mr. Nguyen Thanh An, a local farmer in Tay Ninh.

Supporting the wider industry

Not only is cassava important for farmers’ livelihood, it is also a major industrial crop. Vietnam and Thailand are among the world’s leading cassava exporters, and processors require a stable supply of high-starch cassava to remain competitive.

The ACB-Net meeting therefore focused not only on disease resistance, but also on breeding varieties that suit different market segments and Target Product Profiles (TPPs), including food products, starch processing, and biofuel production.

By clearly understanding the market demands and farmers’ preferences, we can develop varieties that are not only resilient to emerging issues but also create benefits across the value chain. It is critical to use the best collective market intelligence and foresight to start breeding now for tomorrow.

Dr Jonathan Newby, Cassava Program Leader, CIAT

The ACB-Net 2026 meeting demonstrated how regional cooperation, supported by international partners like ACIAR and the CGIAR, can help strengthen Asia’s cassava industry through shared knowledge, coordinated research, and collective actions against emerging threats.

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Remote sensing and water accounting support agricultural water management in Vietnam

By Regina Souter, Do Thi Thuy Ha and Ha Thanh Lan
ACIAR Project: WAC/2023/117

Across Vietnam, water managers are facing increasing pressure from climate variability, groundwater stress and rapid land use change, but local water data remains limited.

The ACIAR funded research activity ‘Understanding the role of remote sensing and water accounting in supporting agricultural water management in Viet Nam’ explored whether remote sensing could help fill key data gaps and strengthen water accounting in areas with sparse ground-based monitoring.

From space to sub basins

Remote sensing uses satellite data to generate practical indicators such as evapotranspiration (water lost from soil and crops), rainfall deficits, changes in water storage and water productivity. When combined with water accounting—tracking how water enters, is used within and exits a system—these indicators can support annual and seasonal planning, water allocation and drought management at various basin levels.

A key innovation of the project was demonstrating that water accounting, traditionally applied at basin scale, can be downscaled using remote sensing to sub-basin and irrigation scheme levels, where day-to-day water management decisions are made.

These approaches were piloted in the Central

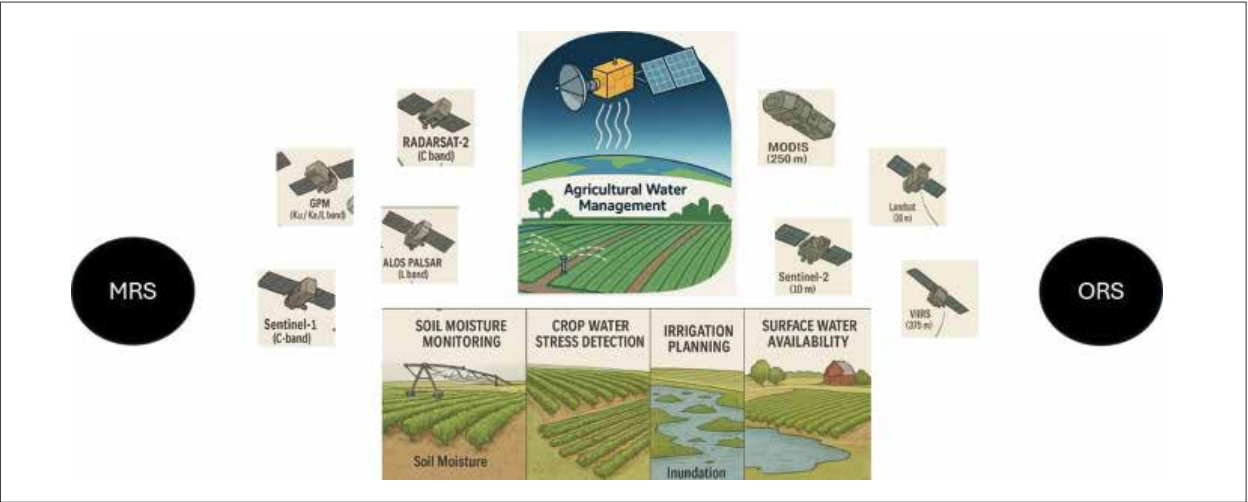
Highlands, including the Ban Don and Krong Buk sub basins and a local irrigation cluster.

Co-designing with water managers to ensure uptake

A key feature of the project was the strong engagement of water managers, including provincial officers, irrigation management companies and technical experts, throughout the research process. This user-centred approach strengthened ownership, relevance and the likelihood of uptake.

The tools generated in the project directly supported water managers in making concrete operational decisions, such as identifying drought hotspots, adjusting seasonal water allocations, tracking irrigation performance, and benchmarking across irrigation schemes.

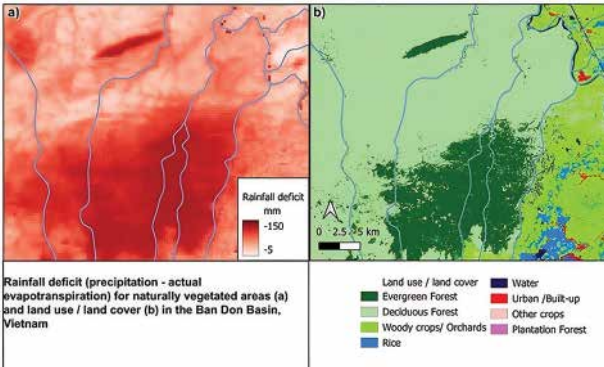
While stakeholders valued satellite based water data, they also highlighted limited technical capacity and the need for simpler tools and outputs, such as maps, dashboards and short bulletins. The project found that successful adoption depends not only on data quality, but also on whether tools match the practical needs and capacities of end users. Training and service-based delivery models may therefore be important for wider uptake.



Simplified water accounting framework to identify water flows at basin and subbasin scales. Image: A. Lillicrap.



Stakeholder workshop held in Central Highlands in September 2025. Photo: Project team.



Using remote sensing data to support identification of rainfall deficit areas in the Central Highlands. Image: A. Lillicrap.

Looking ahead

As Vietnam strengthens its agricultural water governance, combining satellite data with practical water accounting approaches offers a valuable opportunity to support more transparent and evidence based decisions. With continued investment in capacity development, coordination and practical tools, these approaches could play an important role in helping water managers make more timely and informed decisions under growing climate pressure.

Project partners

The project brought together researchers from the International WaterCentre (IWC) at Griffith University and the Institute of Water Resources Planning (IWRP), Ministry of Agriculture and Environment in Vietnam.

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Advancing mangrove-based agribusiness for a sustainable Mekong Delta

By Pham Thu Thuy and Tang Thi Kim Hong
ACIAR Project: CLIM/2023/190

Mangrove-based agribusiness has strong potential to support a more sustainable and climate-resilient Mekong Delta, particularly when linked with practical land-use planning, inclusive business models and emerging blue carbon initiatives.



The international workshop 'Towards an inclusive blue economy and climate-resilient Mekong Delta', co-organised by UNDP Vietnam, Flinders University, Nong Lam University, and the Institute of Public Policy (MAE) gathered 120 participants from government, women-led enterprises, scientists and development partners. Photo: UNDP.

These are among the insights from the ACIAR-funded research activity 'Defining the potential for mangrove-based agribusiness transformation in the coastal Mekong Delta', a collaboration between Flinders University and Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City, launched in 2024.

The activity aims to support the co-production of realistic, actionable visions for mangrove and land-use transitions in the Mekong Delta's increasingly inundated coastal zones. Working closely with Vietnamese policymakers, researchers, communities and development partners, the project explores how mangrove-based agribusiness, blue carbon and low-emission livelihood models can contribute to long-term climate adaptation and inclusive green growth.

Linking science, policy and practice

In March and April 2026, the project contributed to a series of national and regional dialogues on mangrove-based adaptation and blue carbon development in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and UNDP Vietnam.

The project shared evidence from global and Vietnamese experience on effective mangrove-based mitigation and adaptation strategies, while also identifying major knowledge gaps in blue carbon research and policy development. Discussions highlighted the need for stronger alignment between science, policy and local practices to support more inclusive and scalable blue economy initiatives.

The project also contributed practical inputs to help establish the technical working groups under

the National Blue Carbon Action Partnership, helping strengthen collaboration among government agencies, universities, businesses, development organisations and local communities.

Exploring inclusive business models

A major focus of the project is understanding how mangrove-based business models can support both environmental and livelihood outcomes.

Researchers studied examples of low-emission food systems, mangrove restoration initiatives and blue carbon projects from Vietnam and internationally, including lessons from Australia. It also explored barriers to investment, policy and regulatory gaps, and the growing role of private sector and community-based enterprises in scaling sustainable coastal livelihoods.

Attention has been given to the role of women-led and locally grounded enterprises, which are increasingly recognised as important actors in mangrove conservation and adaptation efforts.

Looking ahead

As climate pressures intensify across the Mekong Delta, the project is helping build the evidence base for more coordinated and inclusive approaches to coastal adaptation.

By connecting research, policy, finance, and local experience, the project aims to support practical pathways for mangrove-based agribusiness, blue carbon development and low-emission growth in Vietnam's coastal regions.

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Developing profitable chicken production systems for Southeast Asian farmers

By Hoa Hoang, Alula Alemayehu Assen, Wondmeneh Esatu, Mulugeta Yitayih Berhanu, Fred Unger, Hung Nguyen, Frank-Lawale Anuoluwapo, Ngo Thi Kim Cuc, Sothyra Tum, Vannaphone Phouthana, Phetmanyseng Xangsayasane and Chi Nguyen
ACIAR Project: LS/2019/142

A regional initiative is helping smallholder farmers in Southeast Asia raise chickens that are more productive, resilient and better suited to local farming systems and markets.

The Asian Chicken Genetic Gain (AsCGG) project, funded by ACIAR and led by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), entered a new four-year phase in 2025, following earlier work in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Scaling improved chicken breeds in Vietnam and Cambodia

In Vietnam, trials from the first phase showed that imported chicken breeds outperformed indigenous ones, producing up to 3 times as many eggs while remaining adaptable to local conditions. Farmers also reported improvements in income, household nutrition and women's participation in poultry production.

In Cambodia, the Participatory Indigenous Chicken Breeding Improvement Program (PICBIP), particularly for the Skouy chicken, has improved



growth, survival, and egg production, with hatchability exceeding 70%. Community-based breeding systems also helped strengthen local supply chains and income opportunities for farmers.

Building on these results, project partners met in October 2025 to identify priorities for the next phase, including scaling improved chicken genetics, strengthening biosecurity, improving market access, and integrating nutrition, gender and environmental considerations.

Supporting poultry sector development in Lao PDR

The project is also contributing to poultry sector development in Lao PDR, where low productivity, disease risks, and reliance on imports continue to constrain the sector. In October 2025, ACIAR supported a consultation workshop contributing to the development of Lao PDR's poultry development strategy for 2026-2035, focused on improving access to quality breeds, feed, vaccines, and veterinary services.

In March 2026, the AsCGG project was officially launched in Lao PDR at the National University of Laos, in conjunction with the visit of ACIAR Commissioners and leadership to celebrate 35 years of the Laos – Australia partnership in agricultural research.

The event brought together representatives from the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), National University of Laos, ILRI and ACIAR, including ACIAR Commission Chair Fiona Simson and ACIAR CEO Nick Austin.

The launch reflected a shared commitment to strengthening sustainable poultry production and improving livelihoods in Lao PDR and across the region through research, innovation and regional collaboration.

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Photo: ACIAR

Linking farmers for better beef chain governance

Ho Le Phi Khanh, Stephen Ives, Le Thi Thanh Huyen, Pham Van Hung,
Duong Nam Ha and Sarah Fischer
ACIAR Project: AGB/2020/189

In Nam Trach commune, Quang Tri Province, cattle farmers used to sell individually to traders with little knowledge of market demand or pricing. Today, through a farmer collaborative group linked directly with livestock companies, they are negotiating contracts, planning production and earning higher prices for both cattle and feed crops.

Cattle and green fodder production are important sources of income for many households in Nam Trach commune, Quang Tri province. However, most households raise cattle on a small scale. Production is scattered, and farmers often lack information about market demand, prices and buyer requirements. Mainly selling cattle through traders, farmers have little bargaining power. Feed supply is also unstable, especially during harsh weather, while limited knowledge of feed storage makes it difficult to maintain a consistent fodder supply.

To address these challenges, the project *'Integrating smallholder households and farm production systems into commercial beef supply chains in Vietnam'* has supported farmers in Nam Trach to organise production, improve technical skills and build stronger market links.



Strengthening farmers' bargaining power

The project has helped establish the Nam Trach Beef Fattening Collaborative Group, with 20 members. Farmers can share experiences, agree on production practices, and work collectively with buyers rather than individual households.

Members of the farmer group have received training in herd management, cattle fattening, feed use and liveweight monitoring. They have also gained a better understanding of market access, buyer demand, quality requirements and production in line with commercial contracts.

The group model has helped transform farmers from isolated producers into more reliable suppliers of beef cattle and animal feed, while giving them greater influence over production and sales decisions.

Improving cattle feed supply

The project also trained farmer group members in silage making and forage maize production, helping them secure more stable and nutritious feed supplies throughout the year.

As a result, farmer group members have become more active in preparing feed, reduced their reliance on natural feed sources and improved their cattle production efficiency.



Before, we mainly raised and sold cattle on our own, and it was difficult to understand the market. Since joining the farmer group, we have learned new techniques, organised production together and had the opportunity to work directly with businesses.

Ms Nguyen Thi Bich, member of the farmer group.



Creating new business opportunities

The collaborative group was then connected with livestock companies and large cattle farms in Quang Tri province and began supplying under formal contracts.

Through contract-based sales, farmers sold forage maize at VND 1,500 per kilogram, compared with VND 1,200 per kilogram previously. The group leader also established linkages with cattle traders to improve sales opportunities and secure better prices for members. This contributed to an increase in cattle selling prices for group members from VND 82,000 to VND 90,000 per kilogram, especially during a period of limited beef cattle supply in the market.

Beyond higher prices, the collaborative model has helped farmers gain stronger market awareness, improve production planning and build more stable business relationships, laying the foundation for a more organised and commercially oriented beef value chain in Quang Tri province.

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Small nutrients, big impact: why micronutrients matter in grouper farming

By Simon K. Das, Nguyen Van Nguyen, Rachel Neil, Khanh T.H. Le, and Leo Nankervis

ACIAR Project: FIS/2022/148



Juvenile hybrid grouper from the feeding trial. Photo: APOTEC, Vietnam.

The grouper farming industry in Vietnam is gradually heading toward a more sustainable future. Recent research and farmers' feedback show a growing willingness to shift from traditional trash-fish feeding to formulated pellet feeds, driven by environmental sustainability and more consistent performance. However, as this transition takes place, an important question is emerging: are these feeds providing everything the fish truly need?

For many farmers, growth is still the best way to measure success. If the fish are growing well, the feed is considered effective. But both farm observations and recent research suggest that the story is not always that simple. In some cases, fish grow well at first, but then they are weaker, less active or more prone to disease. This highlights a crucial point: growth alone does not always mean that fish are healthy overall.

Why micronutrients matter

This is where the less obvious part of nutrition becomes clear. In collaboration, the Tropical Aquafeed Innovations Lab at James Cook University, Australia and APOTEC Vietnam have been looking more closely at essential micronutrients, particularly vitamins C and E. Vitamin C is important for maintaining a strong immune system and healthy tissues, while vitamins C and E work together to protect cells from oxidative stress. These functions are especially



important in intensive farming systems, where fish experience frequent handling and fluctuating environmental conditions.

What the study found

To better understand how these nutrients affect fish performance, the team carried out a feeding trial in Southern Vietnam using hybrid grouper juveniles. The study used a crossed design, testing different combinations of vitamin C and vitamin E across 17 diets. Over a 63-day period, more than 2,500 fish were reared in replicated tank systems, growing from around 12 g to between 34 and 50 g. Instead of looking for a single optimal level, this approach explored how different vitamin combinations affected growth and survival.

Some diets supported consistent growth and high survival, while others led to slower growth or more variable outcomes between tanks. Interestingly, preliminary results indicated that the best performance did not come from the highest vitamin levels. Diets formulated with balanced nutrients, particularly those containing moderate levels of both vitamin C and vitamin E, performed better overall. In some cases, fish achieved higher weight gain with survival rates exceeding 90%. In contrast, vitamin-imbalanced diets led to slower development or less consistent survival, which shows how sensitive fish are to even modest dietary changes.

This finding is particularly important for farmers and the feed industry. It indicates that production challenges are not always linked to major components like protein or energy. Sometimes, they are driven by subtle imbalances that are not immediately visible. As more farmers adopt pellet

feeds, paying attention to these finer details will become increasingly important.

Supporting sustainable grouper aquaculture

This work is part of an ACIAR-funded project to develop sustainable grouper feeds to facilitate the transition away from trash fish. Pellet feeds offer a more environmentally sustainable alternative and can deliver consistent performance. However, these feeds must be formulated to meet the nutritional requirements of grouper and to promote overall well-being, optimal growth and health. By adjusting the levels of vitamins and other key nutrients, feeds can better support growth and health in hybrid grouper.

Sustainable aquaculture does not happen overnight. It changes over time, shaped by both farmer experience and scientific understanding. This study highlights that even small nutrients can make a big difference in helping farmers produce healthier fish, reduce risks and move towards more reliable and sustainable farming practices.

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From research to scalable development of mabé pearls

By Phung Bay and Thane Miltz
ACIAR Project: FIS/2024/131

Vietnam's long coastline offers strong potential for mabé pearl cultivation, yet the industry is still in early stages. Prior research showed that high-quality mabé pearls, also known as half-pearls, can be produced using a native winged oyster (*Pteria penguin*). But turning the promising research into a viable aquaculture industry requires more than technical success.

A new ACIAR-supported partnership between University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) and Vietnam Academy of Fishery Sciences (VAFIS) is helping to embed the research outcomes into commercial reality. The focus is developing practical farming systems that can be adopted widely.

Building practical farming protocols

Mabé pearl cultivation at scale requires a reliable supply of winged oysters. Although winged oysters are valued as seafood, wild harvests have been too unpredictable to sustain production. Scientists have resolved this constraint by successfully closing the winged oyster life cycle in captivity. Last year marked the first time farmed winged oysters were spawned successfully in Vietnam—an important milestone that opens the door to more stable and scalable production.

The next step is translating scientific knowledge into practical farming protocols that can be tested and refined with farmers in real farming conditions.

The project is now working with farmers in Khanh Hoa province to trial these approaches. Nha Trang ward in Khanh Hoa province provides a promising setting for this work, with tourism creating demand for pearls and value-added products. Initial feedback has been encouraging, with farmers of varying technical capacity and infrastructure able to apply the protocols successfully.

Creating new livelihood opportunities

Later this year, the project will undertake an economic assessment to better understand production costs, timeline and potential returns. This information will help farmers and businesses make more informed decisions, while also

identifying areas where further research could improve efficiency and reduce risks.

Although still at an early stage, the project has already taken an important step in moving mabé pearl cultivation from experimental research toward a novel aquaculture industry in Vietnam.

Beyond pearl farming itself, the industry could also create new livelihood opportunities through jewellery making, handicrafts and other value-added products, where local artists and small businesses can further enhance the value of the pearls after harvesting.



Left: Close-up of mabé pearls imbedded in the shell of the winged pearl oyster, *Pteria penguin*. Photo: Thane Miltz.



Right: Huynh Tien, a hatchery farm manager, samples larvae of the winged oyster, *Pteria penguin*, for assessment. Photo: Thane Miltz.

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Assoc Professor Simon Lawson (UniSC) demonstrating the bush blitz methodology to project partners in Hanoi. Photo: ACIAR.

Science, partnerships and policy reduce emerging forest pest risks in Southeast Asia

By Dao Ngoc Quang, Simon Lawson and Madaline Healey
ACIAR project: FST/2023/138

Viet Nam has around 4 million hectares of plantation forests, primarily Acacia and Eucalyptus, supporting both domestic and export markets. Much of these production are managed by smallholder farmers.

However, these forests are increasingly exposed to biosecurity risks. Invasive pests and diseases are driving widespread degradation. Climate change and cross-border trade and movement are accelerating pest spread and intensifying risks. With high connectivity across Southeast Asia, biosecurity failures in one country can quickly become a regional problem.

This is why the ACIAR-funded project *'Building a forest health and biosecurity network in Southeast Asia'* addressed forest biosecurity as a shared regional challenge, not a national one.

Led in Vietnam by the Forest Protection Research Centre (FPRC), under the Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences, the project brings together six countries—Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand.

From reactive control to early detection

In Vietnam and across the region, forest biosecurity systems have not kept pace with rising pest risks. The project aims to bring preparedness upfront, detecting risk early and sharing data appropriately.

At the central of these efforts is high-risk site surveillance (HRSS). HRSS are placed where pests are likely to enter, such as air and seaports, and near-border plantations. The traps help bring forestry, agriculture, and quarantine agencies together, through joint trap monitoring, diagnostics and data sharing.

In 2022, HRSS was established at Noi Bai International Airport and Dinh Vu Seaport (Haiphong) and later expanded to a pine plantation in Lang Son Province. Between 2023 and 2024, nearly 3,000 insect specimens were collected, representing around 40 species, including potential new invasive pests. Species identification and risk profiling, led by FPRC, using



Left: Dr Tran Xuan Hung, FPRC, sorting trap catch from the HRSS traps with colleagues from Indonesia and Laos.

Right: Cerambycid beetle captured in HRSS trap—longhorn beetles are important wood boring pests in forest systems. Photo: FPRC.

morphological and DNA based diagnostics, has informed risk assessments and management decisions.

Early detection has proven effective and cost efficient. The total operating costs across the three sites are around A\$ 80,000 (2022–2025), far lower than the cost of managing an established outbreak.

Forest biosecurity relies on regional collaboration

This project is built from a 2015 eucalypt pest biological control project (FST/2012/091), which showed that pest outbreaks were exacerbated by uneven regional detection and response capacity. Therefore, the project takes a collaborative approach: developing shared diagnostic capacity, surveillance systems and knowledge resources, which helps strengthen regional preparedness and responses.

Long term resilience requires governance

While technical gains are significant, long term forest resilience depends on supportive policy and governance frameworks. To strengthen links between science and policy, a series of science to policy dialogues were held across partner countries, showcasing project findings (including those of the sister ACIAR-funded project FST/2018/179) to identify knowledge gaps and policy challenges.

Across these countries, consistent challenges revealed unaligned reporting between growers

and the national system. Limited coordination across forestry, agriculture and quarantine agencies also led to fragmented data and reduced biosecurity effectiveness. These findings have informed a set of priority actions to support a sustainable regional forest biosecurity network.

What's next?

The next phase of the project will formalise governance arrangements to clarify roles and enable rapid responses to emerging threats. In Vietnam, priorities include:

- advancing climate and species risk modelling to inform biosecurity policy and practice
- developing a national forest biosecurity strategy that aligns legislation, agencies and stakeholders
- piloting surveillance, reporting, and extension models that work for smallholders.

At the regional level, embedding the network within ASEAN will support a harmonised and sustainable regional approach to forest biosecurity.

As forest threats intensify, the project demonstrates how science, regional cooperation, and local expertise can work together to reduce biosecurity risks and protect forest dependent communities.

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From the sky to soil health: a survey of coffee-based systems

By Laetitia Herrmann, Lambert Brau, Nguyễn Văn Long, Lê Quang Nam,
Nguyễn Thị Trà My, and Didier Lesueur
ACIAR Project: SLAM/2023/142

Decades of intensive coffee farming in the Central Highlands are degrading soil health and increasing soil-borne disease risks, but intercropping and soil biodiversity may offer pathways to more sustainable production.

Vietnam's Central Highlands produce most of the world's traded Robusta coffee, but decades of intensive farming are putting pressure on soil health, biodiversity and long-term productivity.

Extensive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has resulted in soil acidification and degradation and increasing soil-borne pests and diseases, threatening both coffee production and farmer livelihoods. To offset yield losses in coffee, farmers

have gradually been intercropping coffee with various trees, such as durian, avocado and black pepper, though little is known about how these systems affect soil health and soil-borne disease pressures.

The ACIAR-supported research activity 'Assessment of soil condition for coffee, pepper and fruit tree production in Vietnam's Central Highlands' involving Vietnamese, Australian and international research partners conducted a soil health survey across the five provinces in the region, using modern soil surveying techniques and covering physical, chemical and biological soil assessment.

Large-scale soil survey

Using satellite imagery, researchers identified main intercropping areas and selected sites with the most diverse cropping systems and various soil types for a deeper investigation of crop and soil health.



Researchers, local extension officer and farm owner discussing soil health and pest management in coffee–durian systems in Dak Lak Province in May 2025.
Photo: Didier Lesueur.



A coffee and black pepper system. Photo: Nguyen Van Long.

Across 375 surveyed farms, researchers identified 18 different coffee-based intercropping systems. Durian and black pepper were the most popular intercrops, followed by avocado, cashew, and macadamia.

Promising soil pathogen control methods

Soil and root analyses confirmed that the region is strongly impacted by soil pathogens (fungi, nematodes), regardless of the location and cropped species. However, the study found major differences in soil pathogen populations depending on crop combinations. Coffee intercropped with cashew or durian strongly increases the chance of reducing plant-parasitic nematode, while coffee-black pepper and coffee-avocado systems consistently showed the highest pathogen counts.

Coffee pathogen occurrences also varied by location, with Gia Lai being more severely

impacted by soil-borne pests and diseases (SBPD) than others. This may be linked to the long history and intensity of coffee cultivation in the province, compared to other provinces with less cultivated land and more forested areas.

Researchers also found that soil biodiversity may naturally suppress harmful pathogens and improve crop health. Agroecological practices, such as using organic amendments instead of chemical inputs, could help restore beneficial microorganisms (bacteria, fungi or other eukaryotes) and reduce pathogen pressure on crops.

Researchers have also been investigating the use of commercial bioinoculants containing beneficial microorganisms, with promising early results.

Looking ahead

For smallholder farmers in the Central Highlands, many of whom are ethnic minorities, maintaining soil health is becoming increasingly important for both productivity and long-term livelihoods. The project’s findings could help guide future agronomic recommendations and inform future research and development efforts in the region.

Project partners

Deakin University, Pepper Research and Development Center (PRDC) - Western Highlands Agriculture and Forestry Sciences Institute (WASI), The Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT).

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Mr Tran Quang Truong (PRDC) collecting soil samples in a coffee plantation system in Gia Lai Province in November 2024. Photo: Nguyen Van Long.

Meryl Williams Fellows – where are they now?

From research leadership to mentoring younger scientists, alumni from the 2025 Meryl Williams Fellowship ASEAN cohort are applying their experiences across Vietnam’s agricultural research sector.

Nguyen Thi Kim Phuong - *Lecturer, Can Tho University*



Phuong focuses on research and teaching while working with colleagues and stakeholders to support more sustainable agricultural practices.

She said MWF helped strengthen her communication, presentation and professional networking skills, while also giving her a clearer understanding of her strengths, values, and leadership style.

Since completing the fellowship, Phuong has become more proactive in research activities and collaboration. She also supports young researchers and students by sharing opportunities and encouraging greater participation in research.

Le Nhung - *Principal Researcher, Plant Protection Research Institute*



Dr Nhung focuses on research that contributes to food security and sustainable production systems in Vietnam.

Through the fellowship, she gained a deeper understanding of her strengths and became more confident in presenting ideas and contributing to strategic planning within her institution.

She has since taken a more active role in leading research initiatives, strengthening partnerships, and participating in interdisciplinary collaboration.

Hoang Thi Hue - *Head of Agricultural Biodiversity Department, Plant Resources Center of the National Crop Gene bank*



Hue says the fellowship strengthened both her technical expertise and leadership skills, while also expanding her international professional network.

After completing the program, she organised a seminar for colleagues at the Plant Resources Center to share lessons learned from the Australian Grains Genebank (AGG), including comparisons between Australian and Vietnamese gene bank systems.



Learn more about the MWF:

<https://www.aci-ar.gov.au/fellowships/meryl-williams-fellowship>.

Welcome home, Thanh Hai!



A three-generation family reunion in Australia during Hai's PhD study.

Nguyen Thi Thanh Hai is our most recent scholar to return from study in Australia supported by a John Allwright Fellowship (JAF), after undertaking a PhD at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Her research explored nitrogen flow from crop residues in agricultural systems.

Reflecting on her time in Australia, Hai said one of the most valuable aspects of the fellowship was the opportunity to participate in seminars, specialist workshops and international conferences.

'These experiences allowed me to exchange ideas with researchers and experts from different countries, broadening my scientific knowledge and understanding of global agricultural challenges and research collaboration,' she shared.

For Hai, the experience was also deeply personal.

'My children had the opportunity to experience the Australian education environment, while my parents were able to visit Australia and see the university and life here. We also created many special family memories through travelling and camping trips along the beautiful Australian coastline.'

'These experiences made the JAF journey not only an academic achievement, but also a meaningful and life-changing experience for my whole family,' she said.

Since 2005, ACIAR has supported 20 women to undertake Master's and PhD research in agricultural science under the John Allwright Fellowship.

Enrol in ACIAR Learn 2026

Are you an ACIAR alumnus or project partner? You may be eligible to enrol on the ACIAR Learn e-learning platform.

ACIAR Learn provides participants with access to high-quality research for development courses. The 2026 courses include mentoring skills, policy influencing skills, values-based leadership, and writing empirical journal articles. Some new courses launching later this year will also include live-facilitated sessions.

Visit <https://www.aciar.gov.au/aciarlearn> to register for ACIAR Learn and join a global online community of ACIAR partners keeping their skills up to date.

Interview with a researcher



Dr Bầy (standing, left) joining his colleagues and private partners in a demonstration of pearl-crafting techniques. Photo provided by the project team.

Meet Dr Phùng Bầy, who has been working alongside oyster farmers in Vietnam to trial mabé pearl culture, creating new livelihood opportunities for coastal communities.

Hello, Dr Bầy. Could you briefly introduce yourself to ACIAR readers?

Hello! I am Phùng Bầy, currently Deputy Director of the Centre for Aquatic Environment and Disease Research in Central Vietnam, under the Vietnam Academy of Fisheries. My work focuses on molluscs such as oysters, mussels, scallops, clams, cockles and pearl oysters. I joined the institute in 1997 and have since led several international collaborations with partners in the United States, Belgium and Australia.

When did you begin working with ACIAR, and what has impressed you most about ACIAR projects?

I began participating in ACIAR-funded projects in 2017. What has impressed me most is the opportunity to gain practical knowledge that can

be applied over the long term. By working with leading Australian experts, I have learned more rigorous scientific and professional approaches, and, above all, the importance of ensuring research is grounded in practice and supports livelihoods in Vietnam. Those experiences have been a strong source of motivation in my work.

What result from the Mabé Pearl project has excited you most so far?

I am especially pleased that the project has helped standardise the production protocols, from breeding through to mabé pearl culture. Together with processing and craftsmanship, this has enabled us to work with farmers to produce high-quality pearls that have been well received by the market.

Could you tell us about your future plans?

We plan to continue working with farmers and private-sector partners to strengthen and expand the production model, creating additional income opportunities for growers, craftsmen and pearl businesses. Together with our partners at the University of the Sunshine Coast, we also hope to add value at each stage of the production process and bring research results to communities and businesses as quickly as possible, so they can scale up the production and sales of mabé pearls.

If you had to choose one phrase to describe how you feel about working with ACIAR, what would it be, and why?

'Knowledge' and 'livelihoods'. Through collaborating with Australian partners on the mabé pearl project, I have not only strengthened my specialist knowledge but also developed more professional ways of working and a research mindset closely connected to real-world needs. That continues to motivate me to keep learning, grow professionally and contribute to the fisheries sector.

What do you most enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy listening to music, learning English, and chatting with colleagues and farmers about pearls.

Thank you very much. We wish you and the project every success in the years ahead.

Interview with a farmer



Mr Nam on his oyster farm in 2023. Photo: ACIAR

Let's meet Mr Le Van Nam, a fisherman who has worked with the ACIAR-supported pearl oyster farming project for nearly 10 years, to hear about the joy he has found through the project.

Hello Mr Nam. Could you introduce yourself to ACIAR readers?

My name is Le Van Nam, born in 1961, and I live in Nam Ninh Hoa Commune, Khanh Hoa Province. I have spent my whole life working at sea. When I was younger, I went offshore on small boats to catch shrimp and fish. As I got older, I moved closer to shore and started farming oysters and mussels on floating rafts, which I have been doing for the past 15 years.

When did you join the ACIAR project? What do you enjoy most about being involved?

I first learned about the ACIAR-supported pearl oyster farming project in 2016. I already had some experience farming pearl oysters, so the project team invited me to join.

The happiest time for me is always harvest season. On average, I harvest pearls every 10 to 12 months. Thanks to the guidance from the project staff, I learned how to implant the oysters and produce beautiful pearls myself, in many different shapes, such as stars and teardrops. It brings me great joy.

How has participating in the project changed your life?

This work now provides a very good income, accounting for around 80% of my earnings. Compared with when I only farmed oysters and mussels for sale, my income today is much better.

Pearl oyster farming is also fairly relaxed work and does not require too much labour, which suits someone my age. Pearl oysters are also quite adaptable and can survive in different weather conditions, so the work feels less risky.

Now, I work together with the project by raising broodstock oysters and transferring them to the researchers in Nha Trang, where they implant the oysters. Once the oysters are ready, I bring them back and continue growing them, which makes the work much easier for me.

Through the project, I have also had the chance to work with experts from Vietnam and Australia. The Australian experts taught me oyster implantation techniques, and I am very grateful for that.

Thank you very much, Mr Nam. We wish you good health and continued joy in pearl oyster farming every day.

Welcome new ACIAR staff



TS Jennifer Blair – *Research Program Manager, Fisheries*

Before joining ACIAR in 2025, Jennifer worked in the private sector as the Research and Development Manager for a tropical rock lobster aquaculture enterprise in North Queensland. She was an Associate Professor with James Cook University based in Singapore and Australia (2017–2020), focused on marine science and aquaculture education, with her research bridging fundamental science, industry needs and practical outcomes for seafood production. She has a PhD in Aquaculture from the University of Tasmania.



TS Nicholas Hogarth – *Research Program Manager, Forestry*

Nicholas has a multidisciplinary background and expertise in the environmental, social and economic dimensions of forestry with 20 years of international research, development and capacity-building experience in the Indo-Pacific and Africa. He has worked extensively across forest-farm mosaic landscapes, natural and planted forests, smallholder and community forestry, agroforestry, value chain development, and large-scale plantations and restoration. Before joining ACIAR in 2025, Nicholas worked with CIFOR-ICRAF and the University of Helsinki (2015–22). He has a PhD in forests and livelihoods in China from Charles Darwin University.



Đặng Thùy Trang – *Assistant Country Manager, Vietnam*

Trang has started with ACIAR since April 2026. She has more than 10 years of experience in the non-governmental organisation sector, focusing on water resource protection, waste reduction, and climate change adaptation. She holds an MSc in sustainable development from Macquarie University, awarded under the Australia Awards Scholarships program. In the next chapter of her career, she aims to apply her sustainable development perspective to support agricultural research, helping Vietnam's agriculture tackle climate change and contribute to the ambitious national goal of net-zero emissions. At the same time, she hopes to contribute to strengthening the partnership between Australia and Vietnam as an Australian Awards alumna.

Partnerships in action

Snapshots from recent events with ACIAR partners across Vietnam and the region.



35 years of Australia - Laos research collaboration. Congratulations to the ACIAR Laos team for successfully organising a series of events to celebrate 35 years of ACIAR-Laos agricultural research collaboration. Photo: ACIAR.



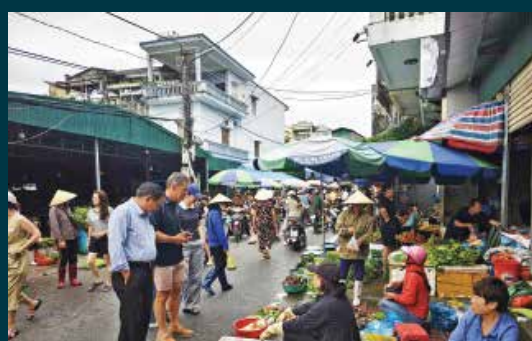
Farming under saline conditions. Partners reviewed achievements and lessons learned from the project 'Farmers' options for crop under saline conditions in the Mekong Delta'. March 2026. Photo: ACIAR.



Strengthening ties in Can Tho. Australian Ambassador H.E. Gillian Bird met and discussed bilateral cooperation with Can Tho People's Committee leaders. March 2026. Photo: Australian Consulate General.



Thai Nguyen Climate Park opening, April 2026. The new climate park will help raise awareness and adaptation capacity, especially among young people. Big congratulations to the Thai Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry University and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) for this achievement. Photo: Thai Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry University.



Abalone aquaculture study begins. Researchers explored tropical abalone aquaculture potential in Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, and Nha Trang. May 2026. Photo: VAFIS.



Reducing pangasius food loss. Project partners reviewed achievements and lessons learned from the project 'Food loss in the Pangasius value chain of the Mekong River Basin'. May 2026. Photo: An Giang University.



Celebrating 80 years of the Agriculture and Environment Newspaper (VAN).
Congratulations to the newspaper for 80 years of service and partnership. Photo: VAN.



Honouring medicinal research. Congratulating the National Institute for Medicinal Materials (NIMM) on the occasion of its 65th anniversary. Photo: NIMM.



Warmly welcome the new Australian Consul-General to begin her tenure in Ho Chi Minh City. Ms Kate Wallace presented her credentials to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. May 2026. Photo: Australian Embassy.



Partners for progress in agriculture and environment. Australian Ambassador H.E. Gillian Bird and the Minister of Agriculture and Environment, H.E. Trinh Viet Hung, reaffirmed enduring collaboration on agriculture and the environment. Photo: Australian Embassy.



John Allwright Fellow prepares for Australia. ACIAR John Allwright Fellow (2026) Cao Dinh An Giang (right) attended the Australian Awards pre-departure briefing in Hanoi. May 2026. Photo: ACIAR.



Joining hands to protect the environment. Congratulations to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment for the successful launch of the movement for a green, clean, beautiful Vietnam as part of a series of events in observance of World Environment Day, World Ocean Day, Action Month for Environment, and Vietnam Sea and Island Week 2026. Photo: Vietnam Agriculture and Nature News (VAN).

Oyster soup with pineapple and tomato

Ingredients

100 g	fresh oyster meat
1 litre	fish or chicken broth
70 g	pineapple
5 g	scallions
10 g	Vietnamese mint
3	tomatoes
3 cloves	red shallots
1 tbsp	lard
1 tsp	sugar
2 tbsp	fish sauce
1 tsp	salt

Method

- Cut the tomatoes into wedges. Slice red shallots. Slice pineapple.
- Preheat the pot at a medium-high temperature. When the pot is hot enough, add a tablespoon of lard into the pot. Add sliced red shallots and stir evenly.
- Add tomatoes and stir evenly until the tomatoes are soft.
- Add the fish or chicken broth into the pot and boil.
- Add pineapples and cook for 5 minutes.
- Put oyster meat into a strainer and put it into the boiling pot for 10 seconds. Remove the oyster and set aside in a bowl. It takes really short time for oyster to be cooked so it should not be left in boiling water for too long.
- Season the soup to taste with fish sauce, salt and sugar before ladling into the bowl containing the oysters. Then sprinkle sliced scallions and Vietnamese mint on top to decorate.

Recipe by Mr Pham Hong Nhiem from ACIAR project 'Enhancing bivalve production in northern Vietnam & Australia' (FIS/2010/100), refined by Chef Nguyen Manh Hung.
Photo: Vu Bao Khanh



The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is part of Australia's international development cooperation program. Its mission is to achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems for the benefit of developing countries and Australia. ACIAR commissions collaborative research between Australian and developing-country researchers in areas where Australia has special research competence. ACIAR also administers Australia's contribution to the international agricultural research centres.

ACIAR Vietnam is one of the 10 country/regional offices and we have been active in Vietnam since 1993.

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