

COOPERATION STRATEGY
BETWEEN
THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
AND
THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (ACIAR)
FOR THE PERIOD 2026-2035

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (MAE) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) (hereinafter referred to collectively as "the Parties"),

Recognising the longstanding and successful partnership between Viet Nam and Australia in agricultural research, innovation and sustainable rural development through ACIAR over more than three decades;

Reaffirming that science, technology, innovation, and international cooperation are fundamental drivers for transforming agriculture and food systems towards greater productivity, sustainability, resilience, competitiveness and environmental responsibility;

Guided by the Viet Nam-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the Australia - Viet Nam Development Partnership Plan 2025 - 2030, the Memorandum of Understanding between MAE and ACIAR signed in 2024, ACIAR - Vietnam Research Collaboration Strategy 2017 - 2027 and other relevant bilateral cooperation frameworks;

Recognising Australia's internationally respected strengths in agricultural science, innovation, digital agriculture, biosecurity, climate-resilient production systems, natural resource management, and environmental research, together with Viet Nam's comparative advantages in tropical agriculture, biodiversity, agricultural value chains and its strong commitment to green growth, climate resilience, and sustainable development;

Sharing the common aspiration to strengthen a long-term strategic partnership that generates practical research outcomes, accelerates innovation and technology adoption, supports evidence-based policy development, and contributes to sustainable agricultural and environmental development that benefit smallholder farmers in Vietnam;

Have reached the following Cooperation Strategy for the period 2026-2035.

I. VISION

By 2035, the Parties aspire to establish a leading strategic partnership in agricultural research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, supporting sustainable agriculture, responsible natural resource use, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and inclusive rural development in Viet Nam and Australia, while contributing to regional food security and sustainable development.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. Overall Objective

To strengthen the strategic partnership between MAE and ACIAR through collaborative research, innovation, knowledge exchange, and technical cooperation, contributing to sustainable agricultural transformation, efficient and responsible natural resource use, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and improved livelihoods in Viet Nam.

2. Specific Objectives

a) Maintain and expand long-term partnerships in agricultural research, innovation and knowledge exchange between Australian and Vietnamese institutions.

b) Improve the livelihoods, incomes, resilience and economic opportunities of smallholder farmers, rural communities and vulnerable groups, contributing to poverty reduction and inclusive rural development in Viet Nam.

c) Promote the development, adaptation, demonstration and adoption of advanced technologies, including digital technologies, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and other emerging innovations, to improve productivity, sustainability and resilience.

d) Support the development of climate-resilient, low-emission and sustainable food systems through science-based solutions, innovation and advance circular economy, bioeconomy.

e) Promote sustainable management and responsible use of land, water, forests, aquatic resources and biodiversity through collaborative research and innovation.

f) Support the implementation of the Parties' relevant international commitments relating to climate change, biodiversity conservation,

sustainable development and greenhouse gas emission reduction, consistent with each Party's respective mandates, priorities and applicable laws.

g) Strengthen research excellence, institutional capacity, evidence-informed policymaking and innovation ecosystems through collaborative research, data, knowledge sharing and strategic partnerships.

h) Develop high-quality human resources and strengthen the participation of women, youth, early-career researchers and vulnerable groups in research, innovation and sustainable development.

i) Enhance the contribution of Viet Nam and Australia to regional and international cooperation by promoting research partnerships, innovation networks and knowledge sharing for sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems.

III. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

Cooperation under this Strategy shall be guided by the following principles:

1. Equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit

Cooperation shall be conducted on the basis of equality, mutual respect, mutual benefit, and recognition of each Party's respective mandates, comparative advantages and development priorities, with the view that Viet Nam is transitioning from donor-recipient to a co-investor status.

2. Compliance with applicable laws and cooperation frameworks

All cooperation activities shall be implemented in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations and procedures of each Party, and be aligned with relevant bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation frameworks.

3. Partnership, innovation and knowledge sharing

The Parties will promote collaborative research, innovation, knowledge exchange, technology dissemination and long-term institutional partnerships that generate practical and mutually beneficial outcomes.

4. Demand-driven and resource-based cooperation

Cooperation priorities and activities shall be jointly determined, taking into account the needs, available resources, comparative strengths, and strategic priorities of each Party.

5. Sustainability and responsible innovation

Cooperation should promote sustainable agricultural and food systems, responsible natural resource management, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and innovation, taking into account internationally

recognised good practices, including relevant Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) approaches where appropriate.

6. Inclusiveness

Research cooperations under this Strategy will look to improve the livelihood of smallholder farmers and rural communities, with on-going considerations of gender equality and social inclusion. Meaningful participation of women, youth, early-career researchers, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups should be promoted, where appropriate, across cooperation activities.

7. Transparency and accountability

Cooperation activities should be implemented in a transparent, accountable and results-oriented manner, with due regard to scientific integrity and responsible use of resources.

8. Non-legally binding nature

This Strategy reflects the common intentions of the Parties and does not create legally binding rights or obligations, financial commitments, or obligations under domestic or international law.

Any specific cooperation activities shall be subject to specific arrangements, mutual consent, the availability of resources and the applicable laws, regulations and procedures of each Party.

IV. AREAS OF COOPERATION – RESEARCH THEMES

1. Theme 1: Sustainable, Low-emission and Circular Agricultural Systems

The Parties will promote collaborative research and innovation to accelerate the transition towards sustainable, climate-resilient and low-emission agricultural systems by:

a) Advancing climate-smart and regenerative approaches across crops, livestock, forestry and aquaculture systems including smallholders and vulnerable communities;

b) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including methane emissions, through improved smallholders farming systems, technologies and management practices;

c) Promoting circular economy and bioeconomy approaches by reducing losses and waste, improving the reuse and valorisation of agricultural by-products, and supporting resource-efficient production;

d) Strengthening soil health, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and sustainable landscape management;

e) supporting science-based approaches for carbon management, carbon sequestration and other nature-based solutions, where appropriate.

2. Theme 2: Digital Agriculture, Advanced Technologies and Innovation for Smallholders

The Parties will work to strengthen research collaboration on emerging technologies and innovation to improve productivity, sustainability and resilience for smallholders by:

a) Promoting digital agriculture, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, Internet of Things (IoT), data platforms and decision-support systems for smallholder farming systems;

b) Advancing biotechnology, genomics, advanced breeding technologies and genetic resource management for resilient smallholder crop, livestock, forestry and aquatic production systems;

c) Supporting technology demonstration, validation and responsible adoption of innovative solutions suitable for local conditions;

d) Strengthening smallholder digital traceability, biosecurity monitoring, greenhouse gas Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems and evidence generation; and

e) Encouraging innovation partnerships involving research institutions, universities, the private sector and farming communities.

3. Theme 3: One Health, Biosecurity and Sustainable Food Systems

The Parties will strengthen interdisciplinary research under the One Health approach by:

a) Improving surveillance, preparedness and management of transboundary, zoonotic and emerging diseases;

b) Strengthening biosecurity throughout agricultural value chains;

c) Supporting antimicrobial resistance prevention and responsible use of veterinary medicines and agricultural inputs;

d) Improving food safety, quality assurance and traceability systems; and

e) Promoting healthy, resilient and sustainable food systems through science, innovation and risk-based management.

4. Theme 4: Inclusive Value Chains, Rural Livelihoods and Market Innovation

The Parties will promote inclusive and market-oriented agricultural development by:

- a) Improving sustainable value chains, value addition and post-harvest innovation;
- b) Strengthening collaboration among producers, cooperatives, agribusinesses, research institutions, enterprises and other stakeholders;
- c) Improving market access, product quality, traceability and sustainability performance;
- d) Supporting inclusive livelihood opportunities for women, youth, ethnic minorities, vulnerable groups, forest-dependent communities and rural communities; and
- e) Encouraging innovation that enhances competitiveness, resilience and shared prosperity across agricultural value chains.

5. Theme 5: Climate Adaptation, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Resilience

The Parties will strengthen collaborative research to enhance climate resilience and sustainable resource management by:

- a) Improving climate adaptation strategies for smallholder crops, livestock, aquaculture, forestry and coastal production systems;
- b) Supporting integrated management of land, water and other natural resources through science-based approaches;
- c) Promoting ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and resilient landscapes;
- d) Strengthening community resilience to climate change and natural hazards; and
- e) Developing locally appropriate adaptation and resilience solutions for priority geographical areas.

6. Theme 6: Research Excellence, Policy Innovation and Knowledge Partnerships

The Parties will strengthen long-term institutional cooperation by:

- a) Supporting collaborative research, scientific excellence and interdisciplinary partnerships;
- b) Strengthening research capacity through expert exchanges, scholarships, training and researcher mobility;
- c) Promoting evidence-informed policymaking through research, policy dialogue and knowledge exchange;

d) Facilitating responsible technology dissemination and the translation of research outcomes into practical applications, where appropriate;

e) Strengthening innovation networks connecting government agencies, research organisations, universities, industry, local authorities and international partners; and

f) Encouraging open knowledge exchange, scientific communication and collaborative learning.

V. GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

Cooperation activities under this Strategy may be implemented throughout Viet Nam, taking into account national priorities, research needs and available resources. Without limiting future cooperation opportunities, the Parties identify the following priority geographical areas:

1. Coastal Areas

Research and innovation to strengthen sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, marine resources, blue economy development, coastal resilience and community livelihoods.

2. Mountainous Areas

Research supporting sustainable livelihoods, climate-resilient farming systems, agroforestry, biodiversity conservation and improved market participation for ethnic minorities and upland communities.

3. Red River Delta and Mekong Delta

Research to strengthen climate adaptation, sustainable agricultural production, water resource management, low-emission farming systems and resilient food production.

VI. FORM OF COOPERATION

The two Parties will implement cooperation by facilitating research partnerships with research institutes, universities, businesses, local authorities, and other relevant partners to support research projects and capacity development.

VII. COORDINATION MECHANISM

1. The Parties designate their respective focal points to facilitate communication, coordination and implementation of this Strategy.

2. The Parties will establish a Joint Working Group (JWG), The JWG will meet annually to review progress, identify emerging priorities and facilitate coordination of cooperation activities.

3. The Parties encourage the preparation of indicative annual or multi-year cooperation priorities, as appropriate, to guide implementation of this Strategy.

4. Partnership dialogues or coordination meetings will be organised periodically, by mutual consent and taking turns every two years, to exchange information, review progress and explore new cooperation opportunities.

5. The Parties may undertake a mid-term review around 2030 and a final review in 2035 to assess implementation, capture lessons learned and consider future cooperation.

6. Evaluation of outcomes will be based on appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators, mutually agreed upon by both parties and aligned with each side's resources and regulations.

VIII. FOCAL POINTS

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Environment - Viet Nam:

International Cooperation Department, MAE.

2. ACIAR:

ACIAR Viet Nam Country Office.

IX. RESOURCES

Cooperation activities under this Strategy will be implemented subject to the availability of financial, technical and human resources of the Parties in accordance with the principles of co-funding and mutual contribution.

The Parties may mobilise support from development cooperation programs, research institutions, universities, development partners, international organisations, the private sector, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations and procedures of each Party.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Viet Nam shall, within its functions, duties and authority, facilitate and coordinate the implementation of cooperation activities under this Strategy in accordance with the laws and regulations of Viet Nam.

Opportunities for collaborative investment and resource mobilisation may be explored by the participating organisations, where appropriate, subject

to mutual agreement, the availability of resources, and the applicable laws and procedures of each Party.

Financial arrangements, responsibilities and implementation modalities for specific programmes or projects shall be separately determined and agreed upon by the participating organisations in accordance with the applicable laws and procedures of each Party.

X. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, DATA AND PUBLICATIONS

The management, ownership, use and dissemination of intellectual property, research data, scientific publications and other research outputs arising from specific cooperation activities under this Strategy shall be governed by separate agreements between the participating organisations and implemented in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations and policies of each Party.

The Parties encourage the timely sharing of scientific knowledge and research findings, while respecting intellectual property rights, confidentiality requirements, research ethics and legitimate commercial interests.

XI. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This Cooperation Strategy provides a non-legally binding framework for strengthening cooperation between the Parties for the period 2026–2035.

2. Cooperation activities under this Strategy shall be implemented through separate programmes, projects, arrangements or other mutually agreed cooperation mechanisms, subject to the applicable laws, regulations and procedures of each Party.

3. Nothing in this Strategy shall be interpreted as creating legally binding obligations, financial commitments, or rights under domestic or international law.

4. This Strategy does not affect the rights or obligations of either Party arising from other bilateral or multilateral arrangements to which they are participants.

5. Any differences regarding the interpretation or implementation of this Strategy shall be resolved amicably through consultations between the Parties.

6. This Strategy may be revised or updated at any time by mutual written consent (including via email, where relevant) of the Parties.

7. This Strategy shall commence on the date of signature.