Australian Government

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research





Job information pack

Senior Program Officer, Research

Make a difference in the world. Work at ACIAR

Position Number:	0048
Classification:	APS Level 6
Salary:	$100,354 – 111,701 plus 15.4% superannuation
Branch:	Research
Location:	Canberra, ACT
Employment Type:	Non-ongoing/Ongoing

Support us to grow food efficiently, improve human nutrition, empower women and girls, reduce poverty, and manage natural resources sustainably.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is a statutory agency within the Australian Government's Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio. It operates under the *Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982*.

ACIAR invests in collaborative research and knowledge-sharing partnerships to improve the livelihoods and resilience of smallholder farming, fishing and forestry communities in Africa, South Asia and the Indo-Pacific. We work with governments and institutions to grow food more efficiently, increase food system resilience, improve human nutrition, empower women and girls, reduce poverty, and manage natural resources sustainably. Our partnerships prioritise economic, social and environmental benefits for partner countries, and contribute to the development of our international and Australian partner institutions' research, policy and leadership capabilities. Further information on our current projects, programs and priorities can be found at https://www.aciar.gov.au/.

While ACIAR is supportive of flexible working arrangements, this position requires face-to-face contact at our headquarters in Canberra.

About this exciting opportunity

ACIAR is a small agency with a domestic and international focus. It comprises three branches: Research, Partnerships and Corporate. Senior Program Support Officers and Project Support Officers are based in the Research Branch. The Research Branch is at the core of ACIAR's mission to improve livelihoods, food security and natural resource management through international agricultural research partnerships. The branch develops and manages ACIAR's research portfolio, working with Australian and partner-country researchers, governments and institutions to deliver high-quality, collaborative research for development. Through its science programs and capacity development activities, the Research Branch generates knowledge, innovation and practical solutions that address agricultural, environmental and food system challenges across the Indo-Pacific region.

A career in ACIAR's Research team offers a unique opportunity to contribute to meaningful international agricultural research for development capacity in a collaborative and supportive environment. If you're passionate about making a difference, want to be part of a branch that drives positive change, interested in

pushing technical and policy boundaries, and value working within a talented and respected team, we encourage you to apply.

This position reports to the Director, Research Integration and Co-ordination and works within a small collaborative team.

The Senior Program Officer (SPO) manages program administration, supervises and mentors Project Support Officers (PSOs), and fosters internal engagement to support the effective delivery of research projects and organisational priorities. The SPO provides technical expertise and guidance to the PSO cohort and external stakeholders, promoting collaboration, consistency, quality assurance, and continuous improvement across project activities.

The SPO is responsible for ensuring that work is undertaken in accordance with relevant Commonwealth legislation, policies, and frameworks, including the *Public Service Act 1999*, and demonstrates behaviours consistent with the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct. The SPO works with integrity, accountability, respect, impartiality, and a commitment to stewardship, while maintaining high standards of ethical decision-making and professionalism.

The SPO plays a key role in business improvement initiatives, supports effective governance and risk management practices, and contributes to a positive and inclusive workplace culture. The role promotes teamwork, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning across the Research Branch, while ensuring compliance with legislative, regulatory, and organisational requirements and delivering outcomes that uphold public trust and confidence in the Australian Public Service.

Senior Program Officer

DUTIES INCLUDE

Under the direction of the Director, Research, Integration and Coordination, the SPOr will be required to:

1. Provide end-to-end program management and coordination services, including, but not limited to:
    a. Supervise staff ensuring an effective high performing team by providing ongoing people management, on the job training, actively mentoring and continual support across the team. Manage staffing matters and change management within the team to ensure staff engagement and fostering a positive team culture.
    b. Manage and monitor project actions to ensure delivery of project investments, including preparing high level responses to complex correspondence and ensuring quality assurance.
    c. Assist in the development, monitoring and reporting of operating budgets in conjunction with the Director and Finance Team.
    d. Maintain stakeholder satisfaction by providing specialist technical expertise, advice and support in program management ensuring consistency and alignment with policy and procedure.
    e. Facilitate engagement across ACIAR and with external stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of projects, acknowledging cultural sensitivities and complexities.

f. Initiate ongoing business process and program improvements and manage the implementation of changes to ensure these are embedded in ongoing business practices.

g. Oversee the preparation of contractual documentation in accordance with Australian government legislation and ACIAR policy guidelines and manage research contract variations.

h. Provide high level contract, financial and administrative support through administrative research and data analysis to contribute to reporting requirements, documents and briefs related to the program.

i. Provide quality assurance and efficiency of work practices, including liaising with internal stakeholders and ensuring project information is accurately available in ACIAR's information systems in accordance with policies and procedures.

j. Identify and implement opportunities to improve systems, processes, procedures, and ways of working to enhance program delivery, strengthening effectiveness, efficiency and stakeholder experience.

Eligibility

- Australian Citizenship - our successful candidate must be an Australian citizen.
- Security clearance - our successful candidate will be required to obtain and maintain a Baseline security clearance.
- Mandatory experience – our successful candidate will possess experience in managing project support activities and have the ability to train and mentor other project support officers.

Contact

After reading this "*Job information pack*" should you require additional information about the role, you may contact Dr Steven Crimp by email on steven.crimp@aciar.gov.au.

Capability Requirements

Our successful Senior Program Officer will possess:

1. Strong program management skills, including the ability to manage contractors and delivery partners, coordinate multiple activities simultaneously, monitor performance against agreed deliverables, and ensure quality outcomes are achieved within established timeframes.
2. Highly developed stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills, with the ability to establish productive working partnerships with contractors, researchers, government representatives, delivery partners, alumni and internal stakeholders.
3. Strong understanding of effective program and project management and the ability to interpret and apply policy and procedural frameworks.

4. Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare high-quality briefing material, reports, speeches, correspondence and program documentation, and present information clearly to a range of audiences.
5. Demonstrated ability to understand financial management systems and databases and competent in using Microsoft office applications including Excel and SharePoint.
6. Considerable experience in drafting and finalisation of contracts, as well as offering strategic advice on research investments, adhering to government legislation and organisational policies.
7. Exceptional leadership capabilities evident in training, mentoring and fostering a collaborative work environment, enhancing team effectiveness and productivity.
8. Demonstrated ability to manage staff, monitor workloads, develop a high performing team and provide on the job training aligned with APS legislative requirements.
9. Demonstrated systems thinking capability, including the ability to understand interdependencies across programs and stakeholders, identify opportunities for collaboration and improvement, and contribute to integrated approaches that maximise outcomes across research investments.
10. Well-developed organisational skills, sound judgement and the ability to work independently while contributing positively to a collaborative and high-performing matrix team environment.

What we need from you

Tell us in 1000 words or less why you are the right person, what you can offer, and how your skills, knowledge, experience, and qualification are relevant to the role.

Please note there are two options for uploading your pitch; you can input your pitch into the covering letter textbox or upload as an attachment (PDF preferred).

Try not to duplicate information that can already be found in your resume but do highlight any specific examples or achievements that will demonstrate your ability to perform the role. Please attach a concise resume (PDF preferred) which clearly outlines your work experience, educational qualifications, and relevant skills.

Please also provide two referees who can attest and validate your credentials and suitability for the role.

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