



Australian Government
Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research

ACIAR

CORPORATE
PLAN
2022–23



About ACIAR

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is the Australian Government's specialist agricultural research-for-development agency.

ACIAR is established by the *Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982* (the ACIAR Act), as amended. It is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act) and a statutory agency under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

ACIAR is an agency of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio and contributes to Australia's development assistance program. ACIAR operates solely on budget appropriation from Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The executive management governance structure is headed by a Chief Executive Officer, who reports directly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The [ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027](#) guides the agency, consistent with the ACIAR purpose under the enabling legislation and reflecting the Australian Government's foreign policy framework and the United Nations' Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.



Australian Government
**Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research**

I, Colin Andrew Campbell, as the accountable authority of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), present the ACIAR Corporate Plan 2022–23, which covers the reporting periods of 2022–23 to 2025–26, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'ACampbell'.

Andrew Campbell
Chief Executive Officer
26 Aug 2022



Agricultural innovation is a strategic national capability that the Australian Government, through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), mobilises to build international research partnerships that improve food security, food system resilience and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the Indo-Pacific region.

Throughout 2022, ACIAR is celebrating the achievements and impacts of 40 years of agricultural research-for-development. At the outset of 2022, ACIAR released a 2-part assessment of 40 years of research. The quantitative assessment demonstrated a total benefit of \$64 billion dollars, with a \$3.7 billion benefit to Australia. The qualitative assessment identified the key design, management and practice principles that support effective translation of research knowledge into development outcomes.

The study gives us confidence that our well-established but continually evolving research partnership model is delivering against our vision and mission. The ACIAR business model of brokering science partnerships in agriculture, fisheries and forestry between the Australian innovation system and our neighbours in the Indo-Pacific region remains as relevant today as it was when ACIAR was established in 1982.

Over the life of this corporate plan, the 'how' of our work may evolve faster than in any previous period, but the 'why' and the 'what' are enduring.

Andrew Campbell
Chief Executive Officer, ACIAR





Introduction

Australia is a world leader in agricultural innovation. This is a strategic national capability that the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is able to mobilise to build international research partnerships to improve food security, food system resilience and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, fishers and foresters in the Indo-Pacific region.

A compelling element of Australian soft power in our region comes from tackling shared challenges with partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region through agricultural research collaboration. Australia is well equipped to play a leading role within our region and globally – disproportionate to the size of our population and our economy.

As an agency of the Australian Government, ACIAR works with regional partners to tackle the intersecting and complex challenges of growing more food, improving human nutrition and reducing poverty while using less land, water and energy. At the same time, while striving for more productive and sustainable agriculture, we must adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Our work reflects Australian Government policy imperatives articulated in the:

- » Australian Government's official development assistance program
- » Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- » Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Our mission is to achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, for the benefit of developing countries and Australia, through international agricultural research partnerships.

ACIAR brokers and supports collaborative international research partnerships to improve livelihoods in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors in the Indo-Pacific region, while emphasising individual and institutional capacity building and opportunities for development led by the private sector. Diversity and flexibility are key to our work, but it is equally important that all programs, projects and partners are working towards common objectives and goals.

The **ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027** sets out 6 high-level strategic objectives that guide our partnerships, programs and projects. These objectives are consistent with the purpose stated in our enabling legislation and reflect the policy imperatives of the Australian Government. Of these objectives, 3 build knowledge to underpin crucial development objectives and 3 ensure that our work is equitable, inclusive and empowering.

The ACIAR Corporate Plan 2022–23 outlines how we will deliver on our 6 high-level objectives, as set out in the **ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027**, to achieve our purpose and mission. Over the 4 years covered by this corporate plan (2022–2026), we will continue to build the partnerships, knowledge and capacity required to achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems in the Indo-Pacific region, in the context of a changing climate, and the most recent global challenge, the COVID19 pandemic.

Building back better after COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health and economic crisis that will disrupt the lives and livelihoods of diverse communities around the world for years to come. The pandemic has amplified existing vulnerabilities and exposed new risks in food systems at local, national and regional levels. It has exacerbated rural poverty and food security, as well as impacted livelihoods – for women in particular.

The pandemic has transformed our modes of operation. The most notable changes were with the ACIAR Country Network, who were instrumental in working with in-country partners to maintain and implement field work, and initiate in-country capacity building programs, when travel restrictions limited Australian-based activities.

However, after more than two years of little or no travel and with international borders open again, ACIAR staff, Australian researchers working on ACIAR-funded projects and participants in capacity building programs are travelling again. We will continue to foster positive changes to our operating models that came about during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased decision-making and leadership by in-country partners. We also plan to embrace the relationship and operational benefits that come from international travel by researchers between Australia and partner countries to engage face-to-face, and travel to Australia by scientists from partner countries for hands on training in our capacity building activities.

Capacity building is an intrinsic factor in many of the research projects we broker and support. In 2022–23, ACIAR will continue to strengthen formal and informal capacity-building activities. Learning from our experiences during the pandemic, we will continue to deliver our fellowships and activities in ways modified and adapted, some online and some in country, to ensure success.

In early 2022, the Commission for International Agricultural Research commissioned a mid-term review of progress against the objectives of the **ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027** to assess if the strategy remains fit for purpose, especially given the significant change to the ACIAR operating environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2022–23, ACIAR will consider and implement the recommendations of the review, with an immediate focus on transferring a proportion of research investment from single issue or single discipline projects, to transdisciplinary and cross-program initiatives. We will also start work to maximise synergies between our multilateral and bilateral investments, by developing innovative partnerships with multilateral agricultural research-for-development institutions, such as but not limited to the CGIAR. We will also produce and release a refreshed version of the **ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027**.



Planning for the next 4 years:

The year ahead sees 2 influential changes within ACIAR. Firstly, in response to the mid-term review of progress against the 10-year strategy, we will implement 5 strategic change initiatives, and secondly, with the current CEO's appointment ending in July 2023, a new CEO will take up the reins. However, our focus on growing the knowledge base for farming and food systems, and in turn, improving livelihoods of smallholder farmers, fishers and foresters in our partner countries will continue unabated through our 3 key areas of operation:

1. **Global research collaborations** – We develop and foster partnerships and relationships with other international research and development agencies, the most significant being CGIAR. We also develop and foster partnerships with development donors and the private sector to pursue shared goals and ensure that ACIAR-funded research results are implemented at scale.
2. **Bilateral and regional research projects** – We generate knowledge from ACIAR projects and programs to empower smallholder farmers, extension agents, scientists and policymakers to take on the intersecting challenges of growing more and healthier food and reducing poverty while using less land, water and energy.
3. **Scientific and policy capacity-building activities** – We identify and establish opportunities for individuals and institutions in partner countries to boost technical, policy and management skills in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and management of land and water resources.

In 2022–23, ACIAR will continue to develop long-term agreements for research collaboration with partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Mostly, these agreements define a program of research collaboration that is geographically and thematically tailored to the agricultural development needs of the partner country. Some of these agreements also detail options for countries as their science capability increases and their innovation systems mature. We will continue to maintain country offices in 10 countries and consolidate the functions of our newest, country office in Dili, Timor-Leste.

Continuous review and improvement

ACIAR has a long-standing tradition of assessing the impact of our research investments. Systemic ex post economic impact assessments have been conducted on research investments commissioned from the late 1980s through to the present day. The impact of our work is monitored at project and portfolio level, to understand the impact of our achievements and guide future investment.

Reflecting our ethos of ongoing reflection and improvement, during 2022–23 ACIAR will start addressing recommendations arising from a mid-term review of our 10-year strategy. We have the challenge of developing longer-term transformational and transdisciplinary research programs, while developing innovative partnerships and greater investments with CGIAR and other global organisations, to respond to major issues of concern in our region.

As outlined in the [ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027](#), we continue to build the organisational learning culture, broaden the range of impacts ACIAR reports on and improve our ability to assess and communicate performance and results at the portfolio level. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisory Panel established in 2021 is playing a critical role in the development and implementation of the ACIAR performance and results framework and evaluation protocols.

Recognising the centrality of gender equity and equality and of inclusive approaches to diversity across all stages of the research cycle, we look forward to releasing the ACIAR Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2027. The plan will provide a road map to scale up and integrate gender equity and social inclusion into all aspects of ACIAR research, capacity building and outreach programs.

Opportunities ahead

In the international arena, ACIAR is a highly respected partner in agricultural research-for-development. The year ahead presents several opportunities for ACIAR to contribute and influence global discussions on food security and climate change, including the 27th session of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP 27). ACIAR plans to share tangible examples of game-changing Australian innovation and investment that, with the right partnerships in place, can be scaled for significant impact globally.

Australia's support for international agricultural research centres was embedded in our enabling legislation, and funding to these centres is managed by ACIAR. During 2022–23, ACIAR will continue its involvement with CGIAR, the world's largest agricultural innovation network, dedicated to reducing rural poverty, increasing food and nutrition security for human health and improving natural resource systems and ecosystem services. Notably in November 2022, we will host the 17th meeting of the CGIAR System Council, bringing together the largest gathering of global agricultural research leaders this year.

Despite Australia being a partner and investor in the CGIAR since 1971, this will be the first time we have hosted a meeting of the peak body. Taking advantage of the gathering in Brisbane, we have aligned the System Council meeting with the TropAg International Agriculture Conference and will further capitalise on these events and the presence of global experts in Australia with the Commission for International Agricultural Research hosting a 3-part dialogue series on food security and food systems transformation in the Indo-Pacific.

Looking ahead, we will continue to strengthen and broaden our 9-year relationship with our sister organisation in Canada, the International Development Research Centre, through co-investments in food security in Africa and a program on the critical issue of food loss, and in delivering a new program on the critical issue of zoonotic diseases in South-East Asia.





Purpose

The purpose of ACIAR is to contribute to reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of many in the Indo-Pacific region through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.

Our purpose reflects the commitment of the Australian Government to promote Australia's national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in our region, with a focus on economic diplomacy and women's economic empowerment. The work of ACIAR is part of Australia's broader development assistance program, supporting research collaboration while emphasising individual and institutional capacity building and private sector-led development, targeted at the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.

Our mission and vision are derived from purpose. We work with public and private research institutions to improve the productivity and sustainability of agricultural systems and the resilience of food systems in partner countries. International agricultural partnerships are at the heart of our work. Our partnership model and areas of work have evolved strategically since the establishment of ACIAR in 1982.

Our medium-term planning is guided by the **ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027**, which sets out 6 high-level strategic objectives to guide and inform our partnerships and research programs. These objectives are consistent with the Australian Government's official development assistance (ODA) policy and the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. Further, our work reflects Australian Government policy imperatives articulated in the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Our work provides smallholders, communities, government agencies and private enterprises with the knowledge and skills to improve livelihoods dependent on agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

The collaborative international programs and partnerships underpinning ACIAR-supported research also serve to improve Australian scientific capabilities and the productivity and sustainability of agricultural systems in Australia. Improved technologies and practices identified and developed through ACIAR research programs often address the shared challenges of all farmers in the Indo-Pacific region, Australia included.

Mission

To achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, for the benefit of developing countries and Australia, through international agricultural partnerships.

Vision

ACIAR looks to a world where poverty has been reduced and the livelihoods of many improved through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.

The purpose of ACIAR in relation to our enabling legislation and strategic objectives

<p>ENABLING LEGISLATION</p> <p><i>Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982</i></p>	<p>AUSTRALIAN AID POLICY</p> <p>Australian Aid </p>	<p>2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS </p>
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PURPOSE

To contribute to reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of many in the Indo-Pacific region through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research

ACIAR 10-YEAR STRATEGY 2018-2027

<p>ACIAR brokers and invests in research partnerships in developing countries in the Indo-Pacific region to build knowledge to support crucial development objectives</p>	<p>ACIAR works to ensure that its research-for-development programs are equitable, inclusive and empowering</p>
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

<p>1</p> <p>FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION</p>  <p>Improving food security and reducing poverty among smallholder farmers and rural communities</p>	<p>2</p> <p>NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE</p>  <p>Managing natural resources and producing food more sustainably, adapting to climate variability and mitigating climate change</p>	<p>3</p> <p>HUMAN HEALTH AND NUTRITION</p>  <p>Enhancing human nutrition and reducing risks to human health</p>	<p>4</p> <p>GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT</p>  <p>Improving gender equity and empowerment of women and girls</p>	<p>5</p> <p>INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS</p>  <p>Fostering more inclusive agrifood and forestry value chains, engaging the private sector where possible</p>	<p>6</p> <p>CAPACITY BUILDING</p>  <p>Building scientific and policy capability within our partner countries</p>
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Performance framework

Prepared as part of the Enhanced Commonwealth Performance Framework, this corporate plan is the primary planning document for ACIAR for the reporting periods of 2022–23 to 2025–26 and forms the basis for our annual performance statement.

The Australian Government seeks to achieve benefits for the Australian community (outcomes) primarily through programs delivered by government entities. Our work is framed by one Australian Government outcome and delivered through one Commonwealth program. This corporate plan sets out how ACIAR intends to achieve its purpose for the 4-year period of this plan.

Key activities

To achieve our purpose of contributing to the reduction of poverty and the improvement of livelihoods through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research, our work has 3 key activities.

Our key activities broadly remain similar to previous years' work; however, our programs and processes do undergo continual review, improvement and development to accommodate the changing environment in which we work. In particular, while ACIAR remains committed to its core business of activity and international partnerships, the way our work is conducted has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While researchers resume international travel to engage again face-to-face in partner countries, and scientists can travel to Australia again for hands on training in our capacity building activities, we will retain the online tools and options for virtual engagement.

For the period of this corporate plan, 2022–23 to 2025–26, ACIAR plans its functions and work in 3 key areas.

1. Global research collaborations
2. Bilateral and regional research projects
3. Scientific and policy capacity-building activities

The relationship between ACIAR Portfolio Budget Statements, Corporate Plan and Annual Performance Statement

Portfolio Budget Statements	Outcome 1	
	To achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, for the benefit of developing countries and Australia, through international agricultural research and training partnerships.	
	Program 1	
	<p>International agricultural research-for-development for more productive and sustainable agriculture</p> <p>ACIAR is an investor, broker, facilitator and manager of strategic partnerships in agricultural research for development, and an evaluator and communicator of research findings. The partnership model ensures that partner countries have input into and ownership of research priorities and the delivery of research programs. This approach maximises the relevance of the research undertaken and the likelihood that research outputs and findings will be used and will make a difference to those countries and to Australia. ACIAR has a well-established Impact Evaluation Program that helps us to refine our priorities, learn lessons from current and past projects, and report accurately to the Minister, the Parliament and the wider Australian public.</p>	
Corporate Plan	Purpose	
	To contribute to reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of many in the Indo-Pacific region through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.	
	Key activities	
	<p>To contribute to reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of many in the Indo-Pacific region through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research, we deliver programs in line with the ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027 through 3 key activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global research collaborations 2. Bilateral and regional research projects 3. Scientific and policy capacity-building activities 	
	Performance measures	Expected Performance Outcomes
	Through annual project progress reports, mid and end-project reviews, long-term outcome and impact evaluation, case studies (quantitative and qualitative), and financial activity indicators, as appropriate to each performance criteria, ACIAR will measure the extent to which these activities are:	All 3 key activities meeting or exceeding expectations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » exceeding expectations » meeting expectations » not meeting expectations 	
Annual Performance Statement	Reports achievement of outcomes set for performance measures	

1. Global research collaborations

Recognising that agricultural research is an international enterprise, ACIAR fosters and manages global research collaborations with multilateral partners ranging from international agricultural research centres through to privately funded foundations.

ACIAR manages Australia's investment in the international agricultural research system, as mandated by the ACIAR Act. The major investment is in CGIAR, the world's largest global agricultural innovation network that comprises 15 international agricultural research centres and 9,000 scientists, with a presence in 89 countries.

Australia is among the larger investors in CGIAR, with ACIAR staff involved in the highest levels of governance of the CGIAR system, and Australian scientists prominent in the leadership and governance of the 15 CGIAR centres. In addition to the CGIAR system, ACIAR also supports several other international-scale organisations and networks.

Our investment in these multilateral collaborations gives Australia 'a seat at the table'. Through these investments we seek to maintain a strong, innovative voice in international agricultural research and contribute to maintaining a coordinated partnership approach to addressing challenges in global food systems.

Additionally, ACIAR establishes programs with other investors in international agricultural research, from the public and private sectors. These partnerships may be built on shared design and management of programs between all contributing donors, such as the Cultivate Africa's Future Fund program (CultiAF) and the Food Loss and One Health Research Programs co-funded with Canada's International Development Research Centre. Alternatively, there are partnerships where a donor will co-fund an ACIAR project, and ACIAR is responsible for the management of the project, such as projects managed by ACIAR under a record of understanding with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

2. Bilateral and regional research projects

Our core business is to identify research priorities collaboratively with partner countries and broker research partnerships to use science and technology to address those priorities. The work of the ACIAR Research Programs, including bilateral and regional research projects is managed around key agricultural sectors (crops, fisheries, forestry, horticulture and livestock), as well as the science to sustain the resource base (soil and land management, water and climate change) and the science to generate economic and social benefit (agribusiness and social systems).

Our research portfolio evolves in response to new research opportunities enabled by new knowledge and technologies, and in response to new research and development imperatives. We work closely with our collaborators to determine and monitor the achievement of project milestones. The impact of our work is monitored at project and portfolio level, to understand the impact of our achievements and guide future investment.

Relationships with our collaborators and in-country partners change as the economic and social circumstances of smallholders and their communities change; as partner countries undergo rural transformation and urbanisation; and as partner countries develop more capability in agricultural, fisheries and forestry research. Similarly, our approach to research prioritisation and partnership brokering changes with time, to deliver research projects consistent with jointly agreed priorities, needs and capabilities. We continue to work closely with project teams to adapt how they work to deliver project outcomes in the context of continuing disruptions and challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Scientific and policy capacity-building activities

ACIAR facilitates formal and informal activities and opportunities to develop the scientific and policy capability of individuals and organisations involved in agricultural research-for-development in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Capacity Building Program comprises a diverse suite of activities such as supporting post-graduate studies, research and leadership skills development, as well as facilitating participation in industry events and networking opportunities. The Capacity Building Program contributes to the 10-year strategy and is implemented according to our Capacity Building Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework.

In the coming year, we will continue to deliver our core activities within the program, being flexible and adaptive as the impact of COVID-19 continues in the region. Where possible, we will provide face-to-face learning opportunities and build on our lessons learned to strengthen our online activities, through our ground-breaking platform, 'ACIAR Learn', a learning management system that provides training courses for ACIAR alumni and project staff. We will also review our program to further integrate with the research function of ACIAR, a key recommendation from the mid-term review. In 2022–2023, we will continue our John Allwright Fellowship (JAF) for postgraduate training, and for our John Dillon Fellowship (JDF), we will focus on Bangladesh, the Philippines and the Pacific region to strengthen organisational capability to undertake research. Our cohort of fellows in the Meryl Williams Fellowship (MWF), a program designed to support female agricultural researchers to take on greater leadership roles within their organisations, will come together for the first time to meet their mentors, network and continue their learning and leadership practice, after starting the fellowship online due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The Pacific Agriculture Scholarships and Support (PASS-CR) program provides higher degree research funding and academic support to postgraduate students in agriculture, fisheries and forestry at The University of the South Pacific and Fiji National University. In 2022–2023, the program will grow with a focus on direct support for supervisors and the addition of the climate resilience scheme, a small grant initiative that enables students to incorporate climate change dimensions to their research projects.

ACIAR develops trusted relationships throughout the region. It is these relationships that will allow for more effective capacity building approaches into the future. ACIAR is therefore proud to continue our longstanding partnership with The Crawford Fund. Through this partnership, workshops and networking events for scientists and farmers in developing countries are delivered. The partnership also provides for support to the next generation of agricultural researchers through the Researchers in Agriculture for International Development (RAID) group.

Additionally, ACIAR works with past fellows in their home countries to build strong alumni programs to support continuous learning and mentoring in agricultural research-for-development. In the coming year, the ACIAR alumni programs will be strengthened, with targeted engagement plans delivered in collaboration with ACIAR country offices, while bolstering ACIAR 360, our online alumni platform.

ACIAR regions and partner countries

Pacific

- 1 Fiji
- 2 Kiribati
- 3 Papua New Guinea
- 4 Samoa
- 5 Solomon Islands
- 6 Timor-Leste
- 7 Tonga
- 8 Vanuatu

South Asia

- 16 Bangladesh
- 17 India
- 18 Nepal
- 19 Pakistan
- 20 Sri Lanka

Eastern and Southern Africa

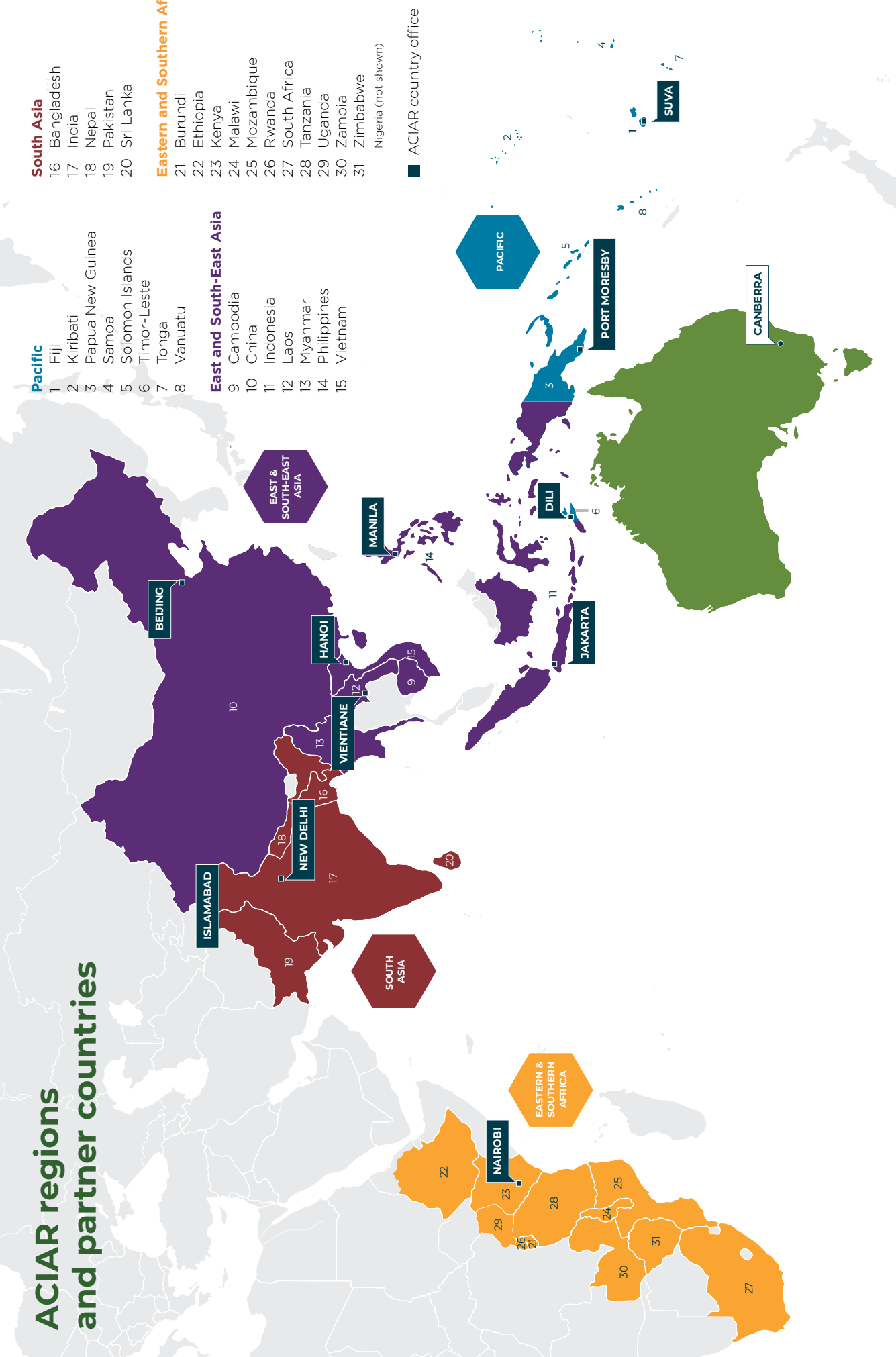
- 21 Burundi
- 22 Ethiopia
- 23 Kenya
- 24 Malawi
- 25 Mozambique
- 26 Rwanda
- 27 South Africa
- 28 Tanzania
- 29 Uganda
- 30 Zambia
- 31 Zimbabwe

East and South-East Asia

- 9 Cambodia
- 10 China
- 11 Indonesia
- 12 Laos
- 13 Myanmar
- 14 Philippines
- 15 Vietnam

■ ACIAR country office

Nigeria (not shown)





Operating context

Environment

Our operating environment is being reshaped by global-scale health and biosecurity crises, direct and indirect impacts of geopolitical tensions, and unprecedented weather events precipitated by a more variable climate. Our partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region continue to undergo rapid social, economic and political change. Overlaying this are very substantial health and economic challenges that our partner countries continue to face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global trends affecting our region include competing forces of globalisation versus trade protectionism and a shift in geo-political power that is without precedent in Australia's modern history. Interwoven with social, economic and political change at global and regional levels, our partner countries grapple with the complex and intersecting challenges of growing more food and reducing poverty, while using less land, water and energy. Factors that have a direct influence on these challenges include major technological advances in food production, rising urbanisation, increasing globalisation of agri-food chains, climate change, increasing challenges to food safety and biosecurity, and a natural resource base under great stress.

Geo-political tensions are having significant impacts on food supply chains and food security, particularly through reduced wheat and fertiliser exports: this in turn directly affects ACIAR partner countries. These challenges are intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and supply shocks across the global food system reflected in increased process and decreased food security.

Understanding that we operate in a challenging and dynamic environment and acknowledging there are unique research priorities within each country, ACIAR actively maintains strong in-country partnerships to ensure we can respond to the rapidly changing regional and local challenges and opportunities.

Our international relationships are managed by our in-country staff at 11 locations in our working region. These staff monitor our key partnerships and have plans in place to recalibrate them as key agencies respond to pandemic and value chain restrictions.

When addressing high-level change in our working environment, ACIAR seeks counsel from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is advised on these matters by the Commission for International Agricultural Research and the Policy Advisory Council. In 2022–23, ACIAR will operate in 32 countries, in 4 regions:

- » Pacific
- » East and South-East Asia
- » South Asia
- » Eastern and Southern Africa.

For the reporting periods covered by this corporate plan, 2022–23 to 2025–26, there are specific features and issues that will shape the operating environment within our regions, which are highlighted in the following sections of this plan. However, beyond the pandemic across all regions, ACIAR will need to devise and test innovative modalities for collaboration.

Pacific

Australia's commitment to a more ambitious and intensified engagement with the Pacific region, as part of the Pacific Step-up, emphasises the importance of our ongoing and diverse program within the region. Key to that is a renewed partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) through which ACIAR supports SPC to deliver strategic regional public goods. These include SPC stewarding the biennial Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry as the premier event drawing global attention to agriculture and forestry in the Pacific region. The Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry provides a forum to showcase recent research and development achievements, create opportunities for regional and international collaboration and bring together regional leaders around implications and opportunities for supporting policy.

Through the period of this corporate plan, ACIAR will start implementing new 10-year strategies for working with the Pacific region. Key features of the plan are listed below.

- » Improving food and nutritional security remains a high priority for all countries in the region. Additionally, the triple burden of food insecurity, malnutrition and a high prevalence of nutrition-related diseases is a new priority for ACIAR.
- » Understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and COVID19 on food systems resilience and livelihood security is an increasing priority for many countries in the region.
- » Supporting the strengthening of regional biosecurity capabilities to support the growth of import replacement and export markets, food security and biodiversity conservation.
- » Enabling inter-country collaboration through regional projects, capacity building and supporting a stronger forum for exchange of ideas and experiences through Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry.
- » Implementing a long-term capacity-building strategy targeted at building skills in the sciences related to agriculture is a priority.

ACIAR will develop new 10-year strategies for research collaboration with Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries.

East and South-East Asia

The East and South-East Asia region is transforming rapidly – economically, socially and politically. Many of our partner countries in the region are developing research capability that creates an opportunity for – indeed necessitates – substantially transformed partnerships with ACIAR, with a strong emphasis on significant co-investment and possibilities for trilateral collaboration within the region. This operating environment brings into focus a number of features for ACIAR.

- » Capitalising on market opportunities that can transform smallholder systems as the region undergoes rapid urbanisation and globalisation of agrifood chains.
- » Challenging issues related to acute poverty still affect some countries and some regions within countries. These issues require very specific targeting for research collaboration between those partner countries and ACIAR.
- » Understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change on food systems and livelihood security is a very high priority for all partner countries in the region.
- » Enabling regional research collaboration through specific projects and supporting the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (APAARI).

During the period of this corporate plan, ACIAR will continue to explore opportunities for trilateral research collaborations with China.

South Asia

South Asia has the highest concentration of poor people in the world, with more than 500 million people living in extreme poverty. Half of the population of the region depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture remains the key driver of economic growth in most countries and is under threat from a declining natural resource base, especially soils and water, and climate change. This operating environment brings into focus a number of features for ACIAR.

- » Understanding and addressing the impacts of climate change on food systems and livelihood security is an increasing priority for partner countries in the region.
- » Developing sustainable and equitable water management systems at the farm, community and institutional level is an ongoing priority for partner countries in South Asia.
- » Sustainable agricultural intensification, climate resilience, and soil and water management issues continue to be a priority of partner countries, and a focus of ACIAR collaborations in the region.

During the period of this corporate plan, ACIAR will continue implementing a new 10-year strategy with Bangladesh.

Eastern and Southern Africa

Agriculture typically accounts for 30–40% of the GDP of African countries and more than 70% of the continent's poor live in rural areas. While agriculture remains a key driver of the economic growth required to deliver economic transformation for the rural poor, growth in productivity and production have broadly stagnated in the past decade. Unlocking the potential of Africa's agricultural and food systems requires substantial investment in the agriculture sector and in research to provide the knowledge that underpins growth in agricultural productivity, especially for commercialising smallholder farming.

The ACIAR program with Africa contributes to agricultural research-for-development knowledge in the region – an area receiving less support from many of the major development organisations. Key features of the region during the period of this plan are as follows:

- » Australian dryland and irrigated farming systems and science are highly relevant to much of Africa.
- » Finance to agriculture is flowing but impacts are slowed by a lack of investment in the innovation needed to unlock the potential of smallholder agriculture.
- » Sustainable crop and livestock systems, addressing the impacts of climate change, plant biosecurity and stimulating commercial options for smallholder farmers are a priority in this region.
- » Co-investment with development partners, notably the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), remains a feature of ACIAR work within the region.

Capability

ACIAR aims to be a valued broker and partner in agricultural research through close working relationships with stakeholders and through the provision of timely and consistent funding support. We promote the development and coordination of regional, national and international agricultural research systems in the Indo-Pacific region.

Since 1982, ACIAR has contributed significantly to improving the productivity and sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems in our region. ACIAR maintains and builds on this success through 4 distinct areas of operation.

Each area functions in a unique way but with a common goal of engaging with partners to achieve our purpose. The investment and design of projects, programs and partnerships that make up the ACIAR research portfolio are guided by our high-level strategic objectives and tested against our performance criteria and targets (ACIAR Portfolio Budget Statement 2022–23). Activities are conceived, planned and implemented as a result of consultation and input from 4 operational areas, which are:

- A.** Multilateral Collaborations
- B.** Country Partnerships
- C.** Research Programs
- D.** Capacity Building Program

These are supported by:

- E.** Outreach
- F.** Corporate Services

A. Multilateral Collaborations

Agricultural research is an international enterprise. Australia draws heavily on new knowledge from across the global agricultural innovation system, as well as making our own distinctive contribution to that knowledge base. Our Multilateral Collaborations program builds and manages partnerships with a range of international organisations, institutes and associations engaged in agricultural research and in the delivery of global and regional public goods.

The program implements one of our mandated roles of funding and supporting international agricultural research centres. Multilateral Collaborations manage and develop our partnerships with a range of international and regional organisations – **CGIAR** being the primary one. ACIAR will continue to work with partners whose aims and investments align with Australian Government objectives, such as government, private sector and donor organisations, to manage regional programs that enhance knowledge and capacity in partner countries.

B. Country Partnerships

Our Country Partnerships area manages the strategic relationships we have with overseas partner countries and research agencies. This is done largely through 11 country offices across the Indo-Pacific region. These offices (all led by locally engaged staff) support the development and regular recalibration of our bilateral regional relationships. Our in-country office teams play an increasingly important role in enabling research on the ground, providing logistical support for Australian researchers in country, and keeping abreast of emerging local issues that have implications for Australian aid policy and ACIAR research investments at country and regional scales.

The strength of our partnership model is maintained through regular strategy discussions with country partners, consultation with Australian, regional and international development agencies, and continued support of the strategic capabilities of our network of country offices. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, ACIAR will refresh and recalibrate all our key partnerships to ensure that we are responsive to the new dynamics that each agency finds itself in following the pandemic. ACIAR maintains active communication with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and its Heads of Mission, Ambassadors and High Commissioners in partner countries, to ensure alignment with and relevance to Australia's broader development initiatives and objectives.

C. Research Programs

Our 6 strategic objectives guide the ACIAR Research Programs to ensure we achieve our mission of more productive and sustainable agricultural systems. In order to design and implement a successful research program, our experienced Research Program Managers work with partners to ensure the best possible research is designed to address priority issues. Due to their experience, our Research Program Managers have extensive networks within the industry and bring together the most effective teams to carry out the research. Annually, we work with some 360 organisations on approximately 180 projects, to address challenges and opportunities.

An important aspect of ACIAR work lies in strategically planning and measuring the impact of our investment in research. Our Portfolio Planning and Impact Evaluation Program is responsible for ongoing development of organisation-wide performance frameworks, and medium-term and long-term evaluation of our investments. We implement both formal and informal processes to review, assess and learn from the work we do throughout the Indo-Pacific region. This learning builds individual and institutional knowledge from project outputs, as well as enhancing our understanding and our experience to enable continual improvement of the programs that ACIAR develops and supports.

D. Capacity Building Program

Our Capacity Building Program works with individuals and organisations in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance scientific research management and policy capability. The program develops and facilitates post-graduate and mid-career capacity building activities, that support increased capability, skills, knowledge and understanding to undertake agricultural research, and implement the findings, to contribute to our high-level strategic objectives. While most of the capacity-building activities are well established, feedback and review are essential to ensure our work meets the changing needs and circumstances of our partners. During 2022–23, we will continue to deliver our core capacity-building activities, being flexible and adaptive as the impact of COVID-19 continues. Where possible, we will return to face-to-face learning opportunities and build on our lessons learned to strengthen our online platforms. We will also review our program to further integrate with the research function of ACIAR, a recommendation from the mid-term review of the [ACIAR 10-Year Strategy 2018–2027](#).

E. Outreach

Outreach increases the understanding of the impact of Australia's aid investment through ACIAR. Many platforms and channels are used to ensure that audiences in Australia and our partner countries can access, understand and use the outputs of ACIAR-supported projects and programs.

Our outreach strategy maintains its focus on stakeholders, both international and domestic. Tailored communication products and programs extend results of research to targeted groups of decision makers and potential donors in partner countries, the research community and decision makers. Through our website and enhanced social media channels, ACIAR communicates more broadly using video and photography, as well as through improved reports, information sheets and publications. ACIAR connects with key stakeholders through face-to-face and online events.

F. Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides the underpinning business systems and frameworks from 5 departments: Human Resources; Finance, Procurement and Legal; Business Systems; and Overseas Corporate Management.

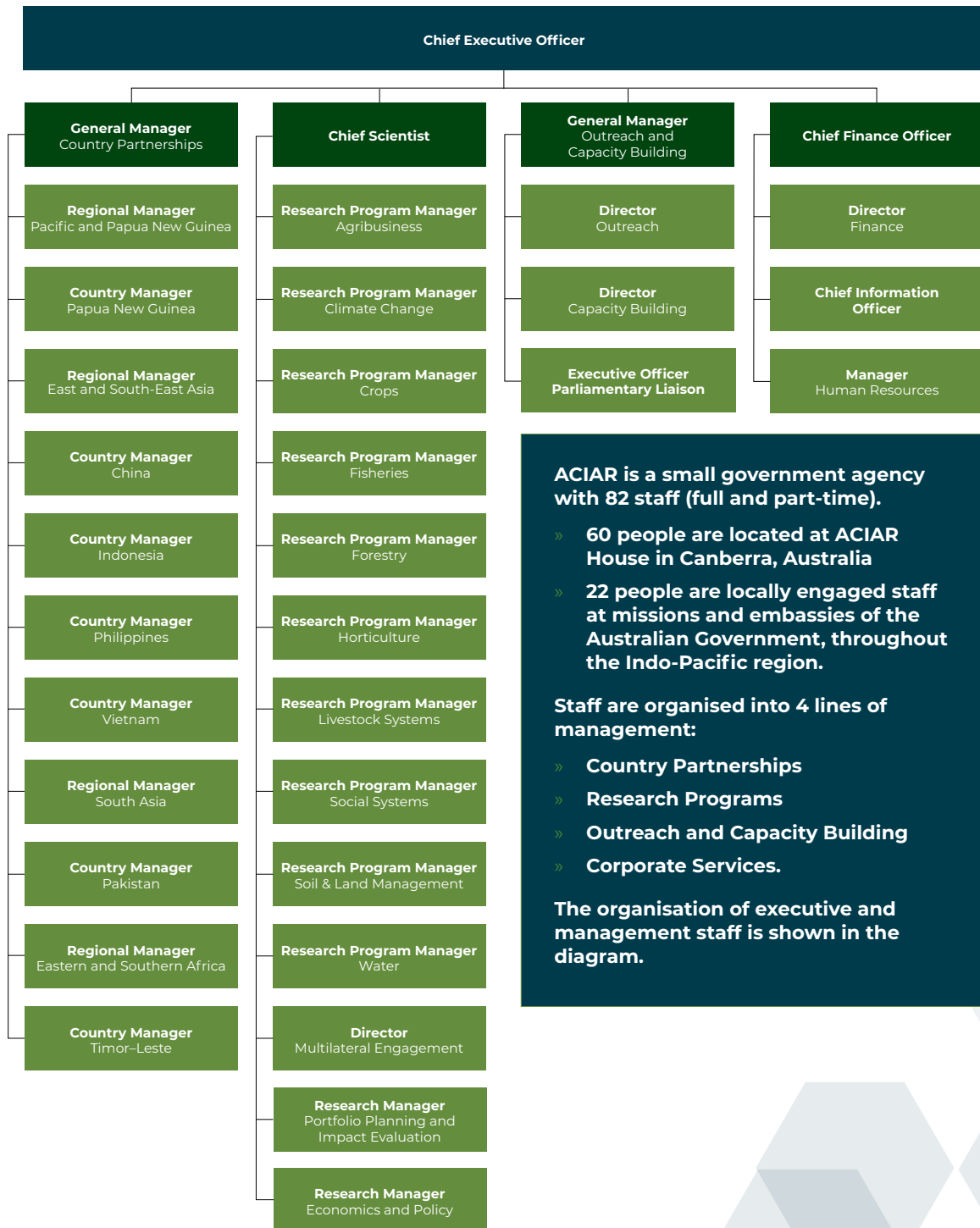
Our capability depends on the values and diversity of individuals within the organisation. Within the workplace, the way staff work, and the development of workplace culture and diversity, are influenced by our values of impartiality, commitment to service, accountability, and respectful and ethical conduct. These values demonstrate our commitment to upholding the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

We will encompass the ACIAR workplace priorities through the ongoing continuous review of Human Resources Policies (including post Enterprise Agreement Bargaining updates) and the Work Health and Safety Framework, consulting with all staff to build an inclusive and consultative culture where staff value diversity and have a voice in the process of how systems are governed within ACIAR. We will continue to encourage development through our individual development, planning and evaluations scheme and engage with young professionals through direct involvement in research projects and early career positions for agricultural graduates in ACIAR.

Continuous enhancements and development of our information and communication technology platform enables global collaboration between staff, research partners and stakeholders. The platform integrates program, project, partnership, finance, procurement, communication and stakeholder management into a single system that enables ACIAR to deliver more effectively and efficient project procurement and management.

Organisational structure

- as at 1 July 2022



Risk management

Risk oversight and management systems are essential for ACIAR functions and operations, underpinning the achievement of its purpose. ACIAR ensures that its activities are delivered within the original scope, on schedule and budget, to a high quality, and in a way that reduces the likelihood of preventable risks being realised.

The nature of research and our operating environment mean there are substantial risks that need to be managed. The ACIAR Risk Management Policy and Plan 2021–24 identifies the key strategic risks to ACIAR delivering on its objectives, and outlines measures to mitigate these risks. This is a rolling document that is reviewed 6 months prior to its expiry and updated for another 3-year cycle.

The key strategic risks that may prevent ACIAR achieving its objectives are identified as:

1. The safety of our people is compromised due to threats posed in our operational environments, including pandemics, conflict and civil disturbance.
2. Personnel and project activities severely impacted by global pandemic (or similar global catastrophe), including disruptions to global networks, travel and logistics. Despite the roll-out of vaccine programs in many nations, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to continue in the medium term, with the potential to delay or significantly disrupt research programs.
3. Ineffective management of ACIAR relationships, including those with the Foreign Minister's Office, the Secretary and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), research partners, including those with existing and new partners, lead to poor working relationships and impact the ability to effectively deliver the ACIAR mandate.
4. A significant cyber security incident results in the loss and/or exposure of sensitive information or the loss of business-critical systems.
5. Absence of adequate records management systems. Poor information management and recordkeeping practices constrain ability to fulfil organisational priorities and legal obligations.

Risk registers are developed, maintained and owned by key functional groups within the agency. Risk registers are reviewed quarterly by the Executive and the Audit Committee and updated as necessary.

Noting ongoing investment in systems and processes, and investment in capabilities across the incountry office network, ACIAR has appropriate internal controls in place for the oversight and management of risks, based on sound judgment and the best information available. This supports our capacity to identify, manage and derive maximum benefits from new challenges and opportunities in international agricultural research partnerships.

All ACIAR staff are accountable for good risk management in their workplace and base their approach on an understanding of the likelihood and consequence of risks being realised when considering the impact of uncertainty on delivering ACIAR objectives.

Deteriorating security situations in some countries, generally or in localised regions, present risks for the viability of ACIAR-funded research collaborations. These risks will be actively monitored and managed.

ACIAR will continue to invest in the capability of ACIAR staff to ensure that they are able to manage risk, and that they can engage external expertise when required to assist in effectively managing risks. ACIAR also maintains an active internal audit program to continue to improve its approach to risk management.

Partnerships and engagement

ACIAR is a broker, investor and manager of strategic partnerships that build knowledge and capacity in agricultural research-for-development. To achieve our purpose, we are advised by and work with a diverse range of stakeholders and partners in Australia and in more than 30 countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Area of partnerships and engagement	Partners and stakeholders
We engage with experts and governments to ensure our work is attuned to the needs of our partner countries, embracing new methods and in step with Australian Government policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade » Commission for International Agricultural Research » Policy Advisory Council
We establish partnerships with Australian and international organisations to jointly address shared priorities in agricultural research-for-development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Australian Government departments, universities » International research-for-development agencies » International agricultural research centres » Private-sector and not-for-profit foundations
We commission technical experts to implement our research portfolio and capacity building programs, according to well-defined priorities and well-developed project scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Universities » CSIRO » State and federal government departments » Private-sector specialists and consultant
We facilitate the delivery of new knowledge and technologies via our commissioned research partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Smallholder farmers in partner countries » Small and medium community-based enterprises in partner countries » Australian agricultural industries and farmers
We communicate project news and results to extend the reach of our work, and increase understanding of the impact of Australia's investment in agricultural research-for-development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Project and program partners » Industry peak bodies » Australian public » International public

Our performance

Our core business is to manage long-term relationships and identify research priorities collaboratively with our partner countries, alongside brokering research partnerships and commissioning research to tackle those priorities.

Throughout the period of this corporate plan, ACIAR will manage projects and establish relationships and programs that contribute to the achievement of our targets in our 3 key areas of work.

1. Global research collaborations
2. Bilateral and regional research projects
3. Scientific and policy capacity-building activities

The impact of ACIAR projects, programs and partnerships is complex to measure, as it involves technological and sociological changes in diverse partner countries, which may be realised over many years, even decades, after the original research investment.

ACIAR manages and monitors its investments in research and partnerships to maximise impact and returns. We have a well-established approach for reviewing the performance of research projects, assessing adoption of research results and the subsequent impact at a project level. Together, these enable us to monitor progress and performance across the portfolio, help refine our priorities, learn lessons from current and past projects, and report accurately to our Minister, the Parliament and the Australian public.

The following sections set out the performance measures and annual outcomes for each area of our work that contribute to our annual performance within the Enhanced Commonwealth Performance Framework.

1. Global research collaborations

Our work in global research collaborations enhances Australia's global reputation as a constructive development partner and positions Australia to positively influence the international agricultural research agenda.

Work in this area is achieved mainly through:

- » management of Australia's investment in the international agricultural research system, chief among which is CGIAR, as mandated by the ACIAR Act
- » establishment and management of multilateral partnerships with public and private organisations, to facilitate shared objectives or vision.

Our performance is measured by our influence as a funder, through ACIAR representation on governance bodies of our multilateral partners, and the mutual respect and commitment demonstrated in our multilateral partnerships.

Key performance measures for global research collaborations, 2022–23 to 2025–26

Area monitored	Performance indicator	Annual target
Influence as a donor	% of supported multilateral research collaborations in which ACIAR is represented on a governance body	Rated as exceeding expectations: ACIAR was influential in supporting effective multi-lateral research governance through all supported research collaborations
Mutual respect and commitment	% of multilateral financial contributions delivered by the end of the financial year	Rated as meeting expectations: Partnership management processes ensured timely financial acquittal of public funds
	% of agreed reporting products submitted within agreed time frames	Rated as meeting expectations: Partnership management processes ensured timely receipt of agreed deliverables
	% of multilateral financial contributions delivered within an acceptable range of variation from previous financial year	Rated as meeting expectations: ACIAR provided consistent support for global public goods, research, infrastructure and capacity

2. Bilateral and regional research projects

Agricultural research facilitated and implemented by ACIAR and partner countries has benefits at the farm, regional and national levels, and benefits for smallholders, communities, and industries. In any one year, there will be approximately 200 ACIAR-supported bilateral and regional research projects underway in the Indo-Pacific region. The research is led by commissioned organisations (universities, CSIRO, state government agencies or private firms) and/or international agricultural research centres, and is a collaboration between project leaders and in-country organisations.

Our performance is measured at the project level through targets for project management and delivery of intended outputs within the project term. We also measure the contribution of our investment to development outcomes, several years after the conclusion of the project.

Key performance measures for bilateral and regional research projects, 2022–23 to 2025–26

Area monitored	Performance indicator	Annual target
Project management	% of annual deliverables submitted on schedule	Rated as meeting expectations: Project management practices ensured timely financial acquittal of public funds
	% of annual and final reports submitted on schedule	Rated as meeting expectations: Project management practices ensured timely delivery of commissioned work
Delivery of intended project objectives	% of projects concluded during the financial year that rated as good quality or above on the effectiveness criteria in final project reviews	Rated as meeting expectations: The research portfolio effectively delivered agreed end of project outcomes
	% of projects concluded during the financial year that rated as good quality or above on the gender equity criteria in final project reviews	Rated as meeting expectations: The research portfolio effectively responded to the different needs of women and girls
Contribution to development outcomes	% of outcome evaluations completed during the financial year showing evidence of contribution to intended development outcomes	Rated as meeting expectations: Evidence shows that the research contributed to development outcomes
	% of long-term economic impact assessments completed during the financial year showing benefit–cost ratio of 3:1 or above	Rated as meeting expectations: Evidence shows that the funded research improved productivity

3. Scientific and policy capacity building

Our work in the capacity building program develops and facilitates a process of strengthening the skills, knowledge and understanding of individuals, organisations and systems to undertake agricultural research to advance ACIAR objectives and development outcomes. To do this, we work with implementation partners to deliver formal and informal capacity building activities and project-based opportunities for individuals, organisations and institutions.

Our performance is measured at the project level through targets for project management and delivery of intended outputs within the project term. We also measure the contribution of our investment to development outcomes, several years after the conclusion of the project.

Key performance measures for scientific and policy capacity-building activities, 2022–23 to 2025–26

Area monitored	Performance measure	Annual outcome
Project management	% of annual deliverables submitted on schedule	Rated as meeting expectations Project management practices ensured quality, timely delivery of program activities
	% of total participants identifying as women	Rated as meeting expectations Selection processes ensured balanced participation of all genders
Delivery of intended project objectives	% of total program participants successfully completing	Rated as meeting expectations Research and management qualifications of participants enhanced as expected
	% of participants who self-assess their experience of the program as satisfactory or above at completion	Rated as meeting expectations Program participant experience improves Australia's people-to-people linkages
Contribution to development outcomes	% of total program alumni profiled in qualitative case-studies annually who are engaged in relevant sectors	Rated as meeting expectations Research and management qualifications developed by the program retained within partner system as expected
	% of total program alumni profiled in qualitative case-studies annually who self-assess the program as a significant contribution to career development	Rated as meeting expectations Program contribution to participant career development assessed as significant

List of requirements

This corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- » subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act
- » the PGPA Rule 2014.

The following table details the requirements met by the ACIAR Corporate Plan 2022–23 and the page references for each requirement.

Requirement	Page(s)
Introduction	3
» Statement of preparation	2
» Reporting period for which the plan is prepared	2
» Reporting periods covered by the plan	2
Purposes	8
Key activities	11
Operating context	15
» Environment	15
» Capability	18
» Risk management	22
» Partnerships and engagement	23
Performance	24

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