

Background

- 2.1 The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is a statutory authority that operates as part of the Australian Government's development cooperation programs. The Centre encourages Australia's agricultural scientists to use their skills for the benefit of developing countries and Australia. ACIAR operates in five international regions: Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands; Indonesia, East Timor and the Philippines; Mekong countries and China; South and West Asia; and Africa.
- 2.2 ACIAR forms part of Australia's international aid program, which is managed primarily by AusAID. In 2011, the Australian Government commissioned an independent review of Australia's aid policy, responding through the statement *An Effective Aid Program for Australia – Making a real difference – Delivering Real Results*.¹ This refocused Australia's aid program by prescribing five strategic goals that are consistent with the aims of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals:
- saving lives,
 - promoting opportunities for all,
 - sustainable economic development,
 - effective governance, and

1 AusAID, *An Effective Aid Program for Australia – Making a real difference – Delivering real results* (7 June 2013) <
http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Pages/5621_9774_1073_3040_2380.aspx>

- humanitarian and disaster response.²
- 2.3 The review also resulted in a range of changes to how Australia's international aid program is implemented. The primary impact on ACIAR was a change in its governance structure through amending its enabling legislation, the *Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research Act 1982* (the ACIAR Act). The change in governance resulted in the establishment of the Commission for International Agricultural Research to oversee ACIAR and to provide advice to the Minister on relevant ACIAR activities.³
- 2.4 ACIARs key functions include:
- commissioning research into improving sustainable agricultural production in developing countries;
 - funding project related training;
 - communicating the results of funded research;
 - conducting and funding development activities related to research programs;
 - administering the Australian Government's contribution to the International Agricultural Research Centres.⁴
- 2.5 It is important to note that the ACIAR Act does not authorise the ACIAR to conduct research on behalf of the Commonwealth. As a result, its work is conducted through collaborative research.
- 2.6 The ACIARs current work program is broad and varied. Its work falls into the following categories:
- Research programs,
 - Aid Program Initiatives,
 - Impact Assessment, and
 - Food security.
- 2.7 Each of these categories is briefly expanded upon below.

2 AusAID, *An Effective Aid Program for Australia* (7 June 2013)

<<http://www.aid.gov.au/makediff/pages/aid-policy.aspx>>

3 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, Corporate Governance (4 June 2013)

<http://aciarc.gov.au/corporate_governance>

4 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *About Us* (4 June 2013)

<<http://aciarc.gov.au/aboutus>>

Research programs

- 2.8 Research and development programs conducted by ACIAR develop, monitor and evaluate a range of projects in the areas of:
- Livestock and fisheries
 - Crops
 - Natural resource management
 - Economic and social sciences
- 2.9 Multilateral research and development stems from ACIAR's core funding to International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs) and also from funding individual projects.⁵

Aid Program Initiatives

- 2.10 ACIAR works in partnership with other countries to deliver its contribution to Australia's aid program. Some strategic partnerships are funded via the *Overseas Development Assistance – Food Security through Rural Development* initiative, while others may be delivered in partnership with AusAID. Currently, there are a number of initiatives being undertaken:
- *Australia Pakistan Agriculture Sector Linkages Program Phase 2, 2010-2015*: collaboration between Australia and Pakistan to improve livelihood systems for the rural poor with a focus on the mango, citrus and dairy sectors.⁶
 - *Rice-based Systems Research Program*: concentrates on rice-based food security in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Bangladesh through boosting rice yields, improving livestock production and the increasing the capacity of individuals and institutions.⁷
 - *Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume cropping systems for food security in Eastern and Southern Africa (SIMLESA) Program*: addresses the

5 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Research Programs* (4 June 2013), <<http://aciar.gov.au/ResearchPrograms>>

6 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Australia Pakistan Agriculture Sector Linkages Program Phase 2, 2010 – 2015* (4 June 2013) <<http://aciar.gov.au/aslp>>

7 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Rice-based Systems Research Program* (12 June 2013) <<http://aciar.gov.au/RSR>>

improvement of yields of maize and legumes in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania through international collaboration with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).⁸

Impact Assessment Program

2.11 ACIAR conducts assessments of the impact of the research that it funds, in particular, it works to quantify its return on investment. These assessments are used to provide accountability to stakeholders along with improved decision making capability for future investment and to provide research training.⁹ Currently three forms of assessment are used:

- *Economic assessments*: published in the *ACIARs Impact Assessment Series*. These assessments, undertaken by independent economists include analysis of project adoption and project outputs, impact assessments and qualitative assessment of the social and environmental impact of projects.¹⁰
- *Adoption studies*: conducted 3 - 4 years after a project has been completed measure how a project has made a difference at the scientific and community levels. If no discernible differences are identified, the reasons for this are sought.¹¹
- *Impact pathway analysis*: traces the pathway to change 'from research outputs (the deliverables), to outcomes (use of the deliverables by the next and final users), to impact (the ultimate change in social, economic and/or environmental conditions that occurs with widespread adoption)'.¹²

8 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *SIMLESA Program* (4 June 2013) <<http://aciarc.gov.au/simlesa>>

9 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Measuring impact* (4 June 2013) <http://aciarc.gov.au/measuring_impact>

10 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Measuring impact* (4 June 2013) <http://aciarc.gov.au/measuring_impact>

11 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Measuring impact* (4 June 2013) <http://aciarc.gov.au/measuring_impact>

12 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Measuring impact* (4 June 2013) <http://aciarc.gov.au/measuring_impact>

Food Security

2.12 ACIAR's work has a significant emphasis on food security, particularly in the area of improving food security for countries under its mandate through international partnerships. This work is undertaken through a range of dedicated centres and international collaborations, as detailed below.

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs)

2.13 ACIAR works through CGIAR, a global partnership 'dedicated to reducing rural poverty, increasing food security, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring more sustainable management of natural resources'.¹³ CGIAR has a range of research programs that are carried out by a global network of 15 IARCs. CGIAR's research programs include:

- dryland cereals;
- grain legumes;
- livestock and fish;
- maize;
- rice;
- roots, tubers and bananas;
- wheat;
- climate change, agriculture and food security;
- forests, trees and agroforestry;
- water, land and ecosystems;
- integrated systems for the humid tropics;
- aquatic agricultural systems;
- dryland systems;
- policies, institutions and markets;
- agriculture for nutrition and health; and

13 Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs), Who we are (4 June 2013)
<<http://www.cgiar.org/who-we-are/>>

- managing and sustaining crop collections.¹⁴

Australian International Food Security Centre (AIFSC)

- 2.14 The AIFSC sits within ACIAR. With offices in Canberra and Nairobi, its goal is to help smallholder farmers and other poor households access sufficient, accessible and nutritious food by providing linkages to agricultural innovation. AIFSC also aims to facilitate market access through the reduction of economic and policy barriers.¹⁵
- 2.15 The AIFSC has a ten year strategy which identifies priority areas of focus. These key areas are:
- sustainable and productive farming systems;
 - food markets, value chains and social systems;
 - food nutrition and safety;
 - communications and knowledge management; and
 - education, training and capacity building.¹⁶
- 2.16 The AIFSC currently conducts a range of projects associated with its operations:
- Identifying socioeconomic constraints to and incentives for faster technology adoption: Pathways to sustainable intensification in eastern and southern Africa.
 - ‘Trees for Food Security’ - Improving sustainable productivity in farming systems and evergreen agriculture in eastern Africa.
 - Farm power and conservation agriculture for sustainable intensification.
 - A traffic light soil water sensor for resource poor farmers.¹⁷

14 Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs), Who we are (4 June 2013) <<http://www.cgiar.org/who-we-are/>>

15 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Australian International Food Security Centre* (4 June 2013) <<http://aciarc.gov.au/aifsc/>>

16 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Australian International Food Security Centre* (4 June 2013) <<http://aciarc.gov.au/aifsc/>>

17 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, *Australian International Food Security Centre* (4 June 2013) <<http://aciarc.gov.au/aifsc/>>