



Australian Government

Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research



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NEW APPROACHES IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH



Outline

- Australia's contributions to global food security – current and future
- Key elements of the Strategic Framework for International Agricultural Research
 - Why? Where? What? How?
- Partnerships - principles for longer term, enduring engagement with partners
- New ways of working to improve efficiency and effectiveness - 5 key findings
- Putting the Framework into effect in Africa

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Australia's contributions to global food security

- Australian food and agricultural production contributes globally to the diets of 60 million people per year
- When Australian investments in agricultural science, technology and training are taken into account, Australia contributes towards the diets of an order of magnitude more people - at least 400 million people per year

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Proposition

- The Australian government has committed to increase funding for international agricultural research
- Proposition
 - The numbers of poor people benefitting from Australian investments in international agricultural research, delivery of research results and education and training can be substantially increased by well targeted, increased investments in priority countries and regions, including in Africa

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A strategic framework

- Response to Government's aid policy statement
- Independent panel members
 - Prof Ian Chubb AC - Chief Scientist Australia and Panel Chair
 - Prof Peter Drysdale AM – Emeritus Professor of Economics, ANU
 - Prof Alan Robson AM - Vice Chancellor and Hackett Professor of Agriculture, UWA
 - Prof Jeffrey Sayer – Professor of Development Practice, JCU

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A strategic framework

- Terms of reference
 - Rationale (the why)
 - Geography (the where)
 - Themes (the what)
 - Modalities (the how)
- Wide consultation
 - Literature, submissions, workshops
- Defined timeframe
 - August to October 2011

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Why?

- Rationale for investing in international agricultural research
 - Food has no substitutes. Poorer people spend much more than 50% of their income on food
 - Improving agricultural productivity effective in reducing poverty and building local economies
 - Investments in agricultural research give high rates of return from increased productivity
 - Yet, decline in national and aid investments in international agricultural research. Why?

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Why?

- Investing in agricultural R&D serves three development objectives of Australian aid
 - Improving food security by investing to increase agricultural productivity
 - Improving incomes, employment and enterprise opportunities for poor people
 - Reducing the negative impacts of climate change and other environmental factors on poor people

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Why?

- Collaborative research also serves our national interest, by tangible benefits, such as
 - Improving Australian agricultural productivity
 - Conserving biodiversity
 - Strengthening biosecurity – protecting crops and livestock from exotic pests and diseases
- Intangible benefits of goodwill from scientists and students who study in Australia
 - Colombo Plan and other Australian scholarships

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Where?

- Much of Australia's aid will continue to be focused in our near neighbourhood of Asia and the Pacific
- Addressing emerging food security issues - such as those facing Africa - are also part of Australia's aid program, as a responsible global citizen

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What?

- Priority themes need to be identified jointly, matching developing country partners' needs and priorities with Australian capabilities
- Multidisciplinary and systems approaches are favoured to achieve development outcomes
- Policy and economic research also important to underpin partner governments' ability to deliver improved food security in their country

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How?

- Models and modalities for efficient and effective delivery
 - Must be flexible, accommodating lessons learnt from earlier programs and adapting to new circumstances
 - Partnerships with purpose are essential
 - More emphasis on building longer-term, enduring relationships with partner institutions in priority countries and regions.
 - Institutional and individual capacity needs to be built, at all levels

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Partnerships

- Principles for longer term, enduring partnerships
 - Jointly identify priority themes with partners, matching needs with capabilities
 - Establish new partnerships for specific purposes, agreed objectives and with measurable accountability to ensure partners achieve the agreed purpose (“fit for purpose”)
 - Ensure partners make a commitment and contributions, to increase the likelihood that partnerships achieve results in the priority developing countries



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Partnerships

- Principles for longer term, enduring partnerships
 - Include social sciences, to better understand social factors affecting new technology uptake and delivery
 - Enable farmers and livestock holders better access to local and regional markets - converts surplus production to increased income (money to buy medicine, pay school fees)
 - Include a training component—from TAFE-level certificate to PhD - with most of the training done in partner countries

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New ways of working

1. Team Australia

- Develop a more cohesive Australian effort in support of international agricultural research and its contributions to food security, poverty reduction
- Include in new partnerships a mix of support for capacity building, institution strengthening and research collaboration, tailored to the needs and priorities of particular countries or regions

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New ways of working

2. Institutional innovation

- Explore new ways to bring together Australian, developing country and international institutions, public- and private-sector partners in the financing, management and conduct of agricultural research
- Institutional arrangements need to be focused on the delivery of research results to improve food security
- Australian experiences with the CRCs offer modalities that may be applicable to developing countries and international agricultural research, with adaptation

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New ways of working

3. Joint program design

- Joint design by Australian and developing country partners is where new approaches can be explored and lessons learned to guide the priorities, deliverables and modalities of future partnerships
- Potential case studies
 - Large, high-priority countries in Asia
 - Small Pacific island nations
 - Africa, as a continent where national and regional priorities and institutions interface

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New ways of working

4. Global programs

- Increase Australian engagement
- Identify high-priority global programs in which Australia should participate, financially and scientifically, including the new CGIAR research programs (CRPs)
- Identify gaps in coverage of the global research agenda, by geography and content, which Australia may be able to help fill

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New ways of working

5. Communications and public awareness
 - Communicating the importance of science in international development, with both Australian and developing-countries' communities, is essential in building the case for continued support
 - Commissioning additional economic analysis on how investments in research lead towards increased agricultural productivity and enable many millions more people to move out of poverty would strengthen the analytical base and substantiate future Australian investments

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The framework in action

- Australian International Food Security Centre
 - “Team Australia”
 - Institutional innovation
 - Joint program design
 - Increased global engagement – CGIAR
 - Communications and public awareness

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A final word...

- Agricultural research alone is insufficient to reduce poverty and improve food security
- Also need
 - Economic policy
 - Extension, including use of new ICTs
 - Education and training
 - Rural Infrastructure – roads, water, etc
 - Interface of agricultural research with issues of energy, climate change, biodiversity, biosecurity

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Thank you

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