DFAT New International Development Policy

Submission from the Crawford Fund

*Despite the proof positive from benefit-cost analyses finding a ratio of 10:1 on investment, and the less quantifiable social, environmental and diplomatic benefits in-country and to Australia of investing in international agricultural research for development (Ag4Dev), the proportion of Australia’s development-assistance budget it receives is only around 2.5 per cent. We firmly believe it is in Australia’s interests to increase the proportion of its development-assistance budget invested in Ag4Dev.*

The Crawford Fund has recently undertaken two major reviews of the benefits accruing to development partners and Australia from Australia’s investment on international agricultural research.

The key findings are:

* Economic returns on investment range between a minimum of $3 to $10 for every dollar invested.
* Global and Australian investment in the international research centres of CGIAR has seen a return of US$600 billion for an investment of US$60 billion.
* Investment in international agricultural R&D has enabled us to adequately feed 5 billion more people over the last 60 years, and has reduced the proportion of the hungry and malnourished.
* Investing in agricultural development has been shown by the World Bank to be the best way to reduce poverty and raise the GDP of the world’s poorest countries.
* Collaborative research to increase overseas capacity to tackle food and nutritional security and natural resource management also increases Australian scientists’ knowledge and capabilities.
* Access to new plant varieties through Australian investment in the international research centres has maintained the economic competitiveness of Australian farmers.
* Australian investment has facilitated the development of sustainable agricultural industries, gender equity, adaptation to pest and disease threats, and helped countries meet UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, Australian agricultural science is world leading in similar environments to that found across much of the tropics and subtropics in developing countries. Our contribution in this area globally has enabled the adequate feeding and nutrition of 5 billion more people now than were alive in 1960. Our input across the Indo-Pacific and East Africa, to date has also delivered significant soft power outcomes.

Whilst the data presented in the two reports is evidence-based and presents a compelling case for increased investment in international agricultural research, the share of the ODA budget devoted to this area has declined over the last 20 years in real terms. This decline is reducing the chances that we will maintain global food security in terms of plant and animal breeding advances, pest and disease resistance and will also impact on a declining natural resource base including soils, clean water and biodiversity.

At a time when we are facing the three Cs, climate change, Covid and conflict, it is critical that we invest more in helping developing countries deliver food and nutrition security.

An increase in the ODA budget devoted to this area is in our view critical if we are going to meet global food

security requirements as the population increases to 10 billion by 2050.

**John Anderson AC Dr Colin Chartres**

Chair and Past Deputy Prime Minister CEO

(hyperlinks to reports)

**Summary of Reports**

[**Doing Well by Doing Good**](https://www.crawfordfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Crawford-Fund-4-page_Doing-well-by-doing-good.pdf)

[**Agricultural R&D 2010-2020: Doing Well by Doing Good Report**](https://www.crawfordfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Doing-Well-by-Doing-Good_Illud-Est-report.pdf)  
Produced by John Mullen, Julien de Meyer, Caroline Lemerle, Garry Griffith and Bill Malcolm, 2022

[**The Benefits to Australia and to the Global Community from Investing in International Agricultural Research and Development**](https://www.crawfordfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Doing-Well-by-Doing-Good_Alluvium-report.pdf)  
Produced by Alluvium International (Dr Neil Byron, Dr Jan Edwards, Mette Kirk and Steve Charlton-Henderson), 2022

Or visit:

https://www.crawfordfund.org/why-agriculture-for-development/resources-and-downloads/