

**Australian Government response to CBD notification 2008-130 –
Agricultural Biodiversity – call for submission of information**

1) Best practices concerning the issue of on-farm and *in situ* conservation of agricultural biodiversity (decision IX/1, para. 11): Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, are invited to provide examples of best practices regarding this subject.

From its establishment in 1992 to 30 June 2008, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP) has committed almost \$1 billion for activities targeted at the broad range of primary industries across Australia. These activities protect and improve the natural resource base and reduce off-farm impact for the benefit of all communities.

The NLP has been a major program to support the community landcare movement and improve natural resource management at the farm, regional and national level. The engagement of producers, who manage 60% of land and 70% of diverted water across a vast range of landscapes, is essential to obtain public environmental benefits from privately-owned land.

Under the NLP Community Support component, between 2003-04 and 2007-08, the Australian Government provided \$138 million for projects, many of which have resulted in outcomes which have benefited on-farm biodiversity.

Further information on the NLP Community Support component investments in each state and territory from 2003-04, including 2007-08 approvals, is available at: http://www.daff.gov.au/natural-resources/landcare/national_landcare_program

Sustainable farming is now also one of the six national priority areas of the Australian Government's recent 'Caring for our Country' initiative. Landcare is a vital component of this initiative and the Government has allocated funding of \$189.2 million for Landcare over the next five years.

Further information on the 'Caring for our Country' initiative is available at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/>

2) Lessons learned about the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, for consideration in climate change adaptation and mitigation planning and cross-sectoral planning in agricultural areas (decision IX/1, para. 27): Parties and other Governments, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, are invited to gather and provide information on this subject.

The Australian Government's key climate change initiative for primary producers is Australia's Farming Future. It will provide \$130 million over four years to help farmers adapt and adjust to the impacts of climate change and manage their emissions.

The primary industries sector is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and Australia's Farming Future will provide primary producers with the scientific and economic information to make important commercial decisions.

It comprises programs that support research, development and demonstration, communication and awareness activities, training, and professional adjustment advice and assistance, including for those who choose to leave farming.

The Australian Government also recognises that best practices in biodiversity conservation will also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The \$46.2 million Climate Change Research Program is part of Australia's Farming Future. It will fund research projects and on-farm demonstration pilots that address the following priorities:

- reducing greenhouse pollution
- better soil management
- adapting to a changing climate, including research into new adaptation technologies and new techniques.

Further information on the Australia's Farming Future initiative is available at www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/australias-farming-future

3) Relevant activities to reduce the threat of nutrient loading, and especially nitrogen deposition, to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (decision IX/1, para. 40): Parties and other Governments are also invited to provide information on this subject.

In May 2008, the Australian Government committed \$200 million over five years through its Caring for our Country, Reef Rescue initiative, to address the impacts of declining water quality in the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. Reef Rescue will improve the water quality by increasing the adoption of land management practices that reduce the run-off of nutrients, pesticides and sediments from agricultural land. Reducing these pollutants flowing from land-based activities onto the reef will give the reef a chance to regain its inbuilt natural resilience and ability to cope with the impact of climate change.

For 2008/09, Reef Rescue's focus is on \$23 million for Water Quality Grants to assist landholders improve their land management practices and Reef Partnerships for extension activities and capacity building. Investment priorities were developed for 2008/09 through the best available reef science, and targeted areas that pose a significant and immediate threat to the reef lagoon in terms of water quality. These are the regions of the Wet Tropics (Terrain), Mackay-Whitsunday (Reef Catchments) and the Burdekin Dry Tropics. Activities that reduce the delivery of sediments, chemicals and nutrients on a reef-wide scale were also priorities.

The demonstration of strong partnerships is an important aspect of Reef Rescue. In 2008/09 this is being achieved through regional groups working in partnership with agricultural industry groups, landholders, community groups and the World Wildlife Fund. The partnership between the industry and regional bodies is the first of its kind in Australia. This unique partnership allows the different partners to bring their

expertise, knowledge and experience together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the Great Barrier Reef.

Reef Rescue priorities for years two to five will be determined through a facilitated process involving scientists and key stakeholders. This is currently under development along with other aspects of the future roll-out of Reef Rescue.

Further information on Reef Rescue is available at
<http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/reef-rescue.html>