



# “Evaluating and understanding success in forestry R4D projects”

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## PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

- Context and Focus of Research
- ACIAR’s role in international forestry research
- Evaluating Relative Success of Projects
- Results from 3 Case Studies
- Some of the findings

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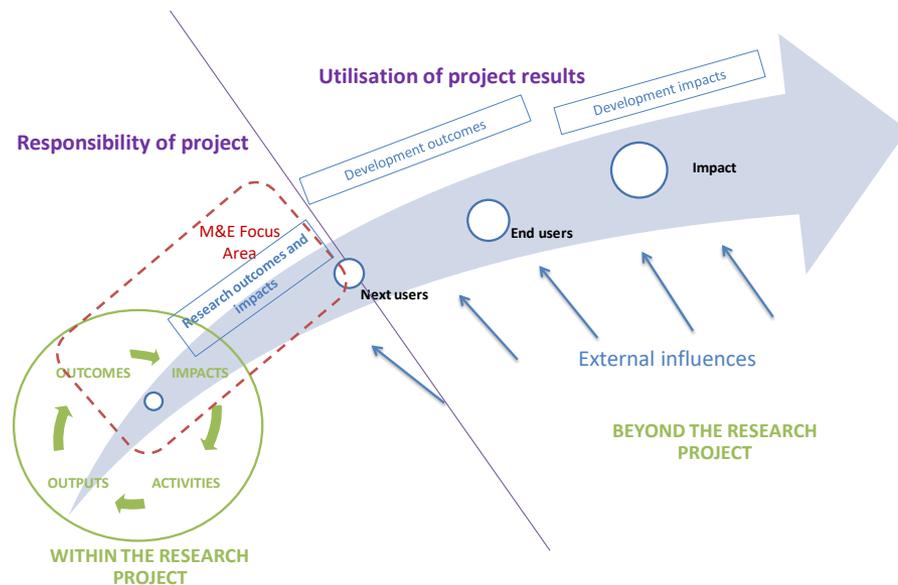
# Evaluation challenges with R4D projects

Agricultural, forestry and people-centred rural development

- **Uncertain and complex causal chains**
- Level of **risk from adoption** for smallholders

Forestry:

- Comparatively **long lag times to achieve impacts**
- Multiple objectives (productivity & environmental)
- **Products difficult to market** and require processing



Source: ACIAR (Unpublished)



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# Focus and Research Questions

*“What constitutes success, and what factors influence it, in forestry research for development projects?”*

- **Research sub questions**

1. How can the relative success of multiple research projects be systematically evaluated in a cost effective manner?
2. What are the factors that are considered by project participants to affect the relative success of ACIAR’s forestry projects?
3. Are there relationships between the identified success factors and the relative success of individual projects?

In the ACIAR approach **success has two primary dimensions:**

1. the extent to which planned research outputs are achieved and adopted; and
2. the extent of the impacts resulting from wider adoption, typically outside of the project and beyond its life.



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# Research Methods

## Review of Literature:

- Evaluation literature -mostly on accountability c.f. lessons
- No substantive research on factors influencing success of collaborative forestry research in developing countries
- No existing (cost-effective) methods for comparing success of a large number of projects (Relative Success)

Used a variety of formal and informal methods:

- **Design of evaluation methodology** to identify relative success in projects and potential success factors;
- Structured **analysis of ACIAR project records**: project documents & reports, reviews and impact studies;
- **3 country case studies (Vietnam, Indonesia & PNG)** evaluated 30 projects; **90 researcher interviews**



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# ACIAR and its Forestry Program

- ACIAR commissions **Research for Development projects**, addressing priorities identified by partner countries
- **Collaborative research** linking Australian +/- International institutions and developing country partners

## Review of ACIAR Forestry Program

- Program has evolved over 30 years, number of partners and themes of research have increased (10 themes)
- **101 completed research projects** in 29 countries, most projects in **Indonesia, Vietnam and PNG**
- **Success varies** between theme and also country, with plantation forestry & smallholder systems most successful

BARTLETT, A. G. 2016. The evolution and impacts of ACIAR's forestry research program over three decades. *Australian Forestry*, 79, 171-188.

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# Evaluating Relative Success (Methodology)

- New score-card evaluation method developed
- Analyze project records and score against following:

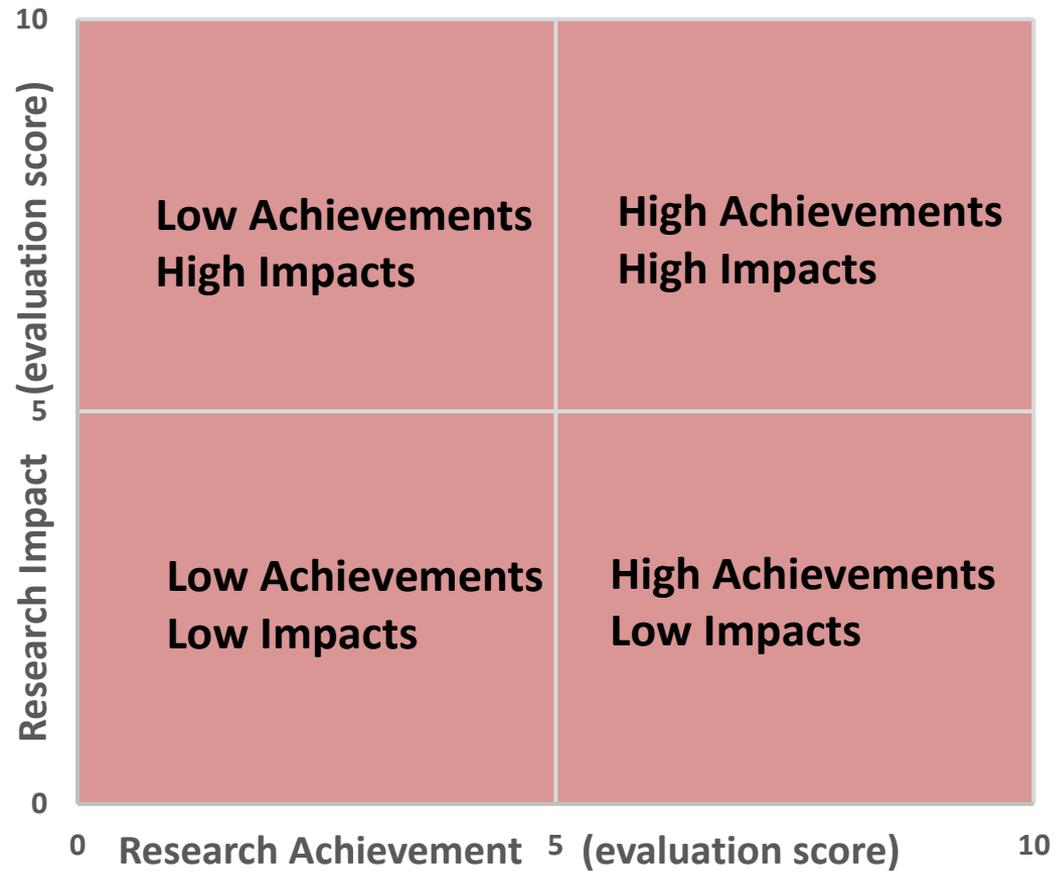
Research Achievements			Impacts		
Components		Max Score	Components		Max Score
C1	Project Design	2	C5	Capacity Building	2
C2	Results Achieved	4	C6	Science	4
C3	Collaboration	2	C7	Economic	2
C4	Publications	2	C8	Policy/Social	2
TOTAL		10	TOTAL		10

BARTLETT, A. G. 2016. Evaluating relative success of donor-funded collaborative research projects. *Research Evaluation*, 25, 405-415.



# Interpreting Relative Success

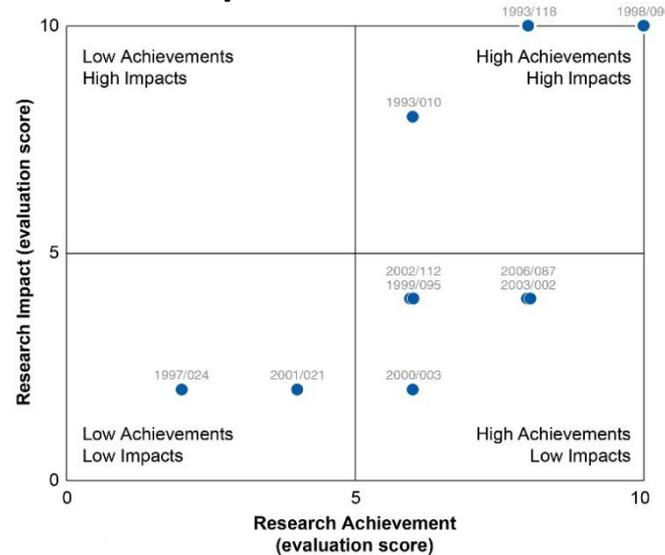
- Scores for “Achievements” and “Impacts” are not additive
- 4 Categories of Project Success - combinations of achievements and impacts scores



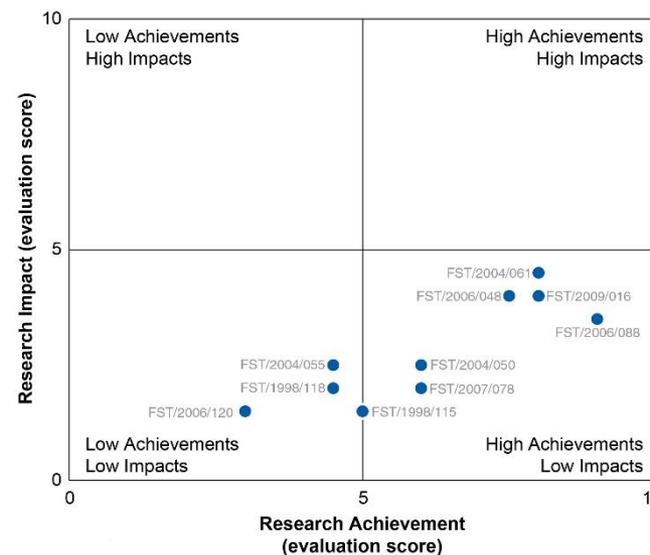
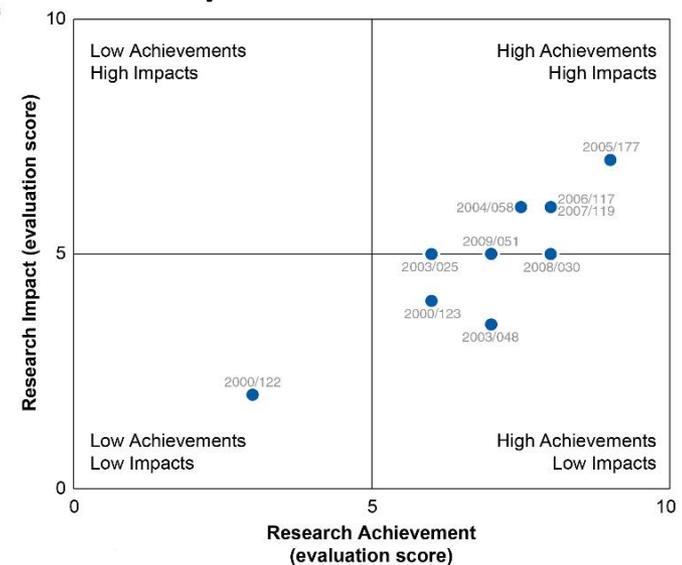
# Relative Success Results

- New methodology discerns differences between projects

## 1) Vietnam



## 2) Indonesia



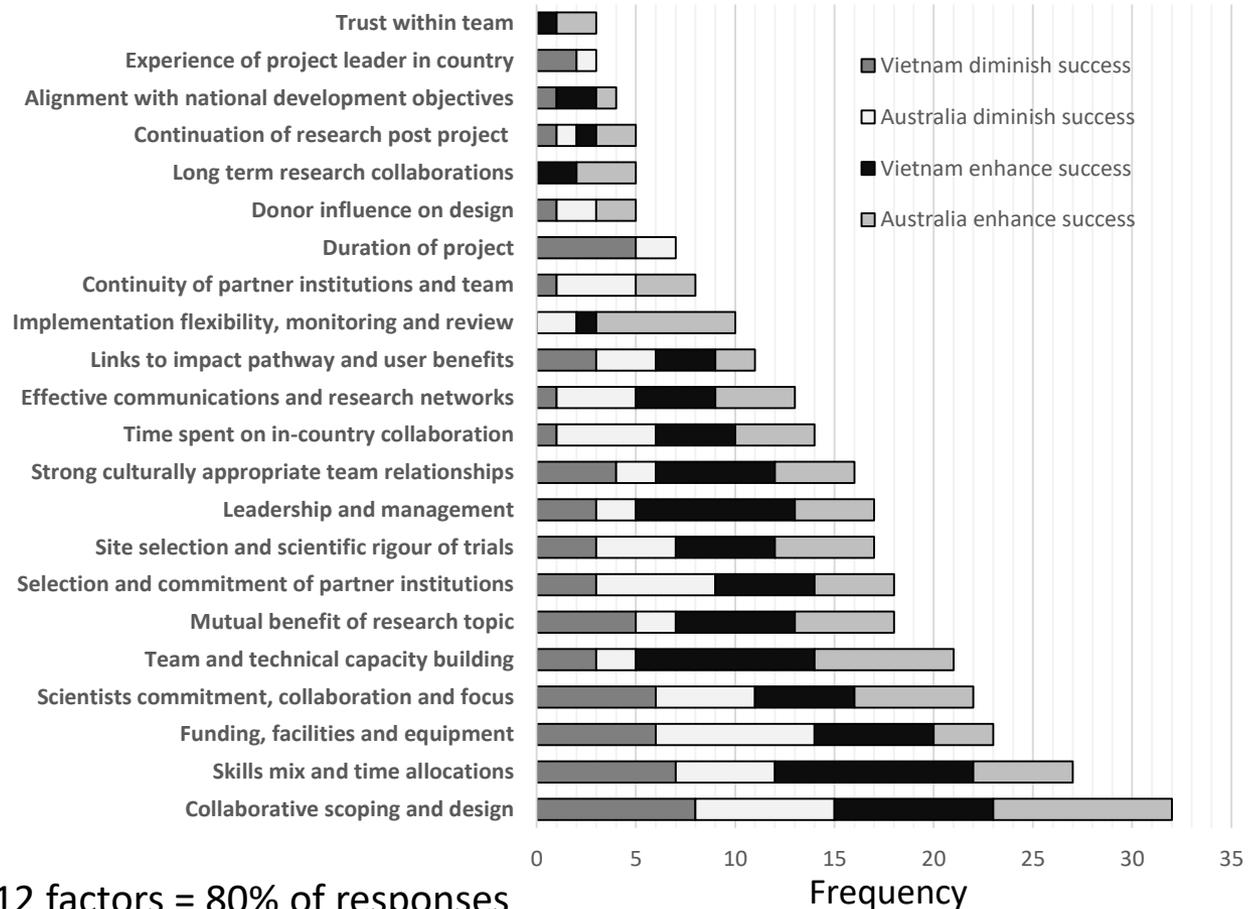
## 3) PNG





# Vietnam success factors

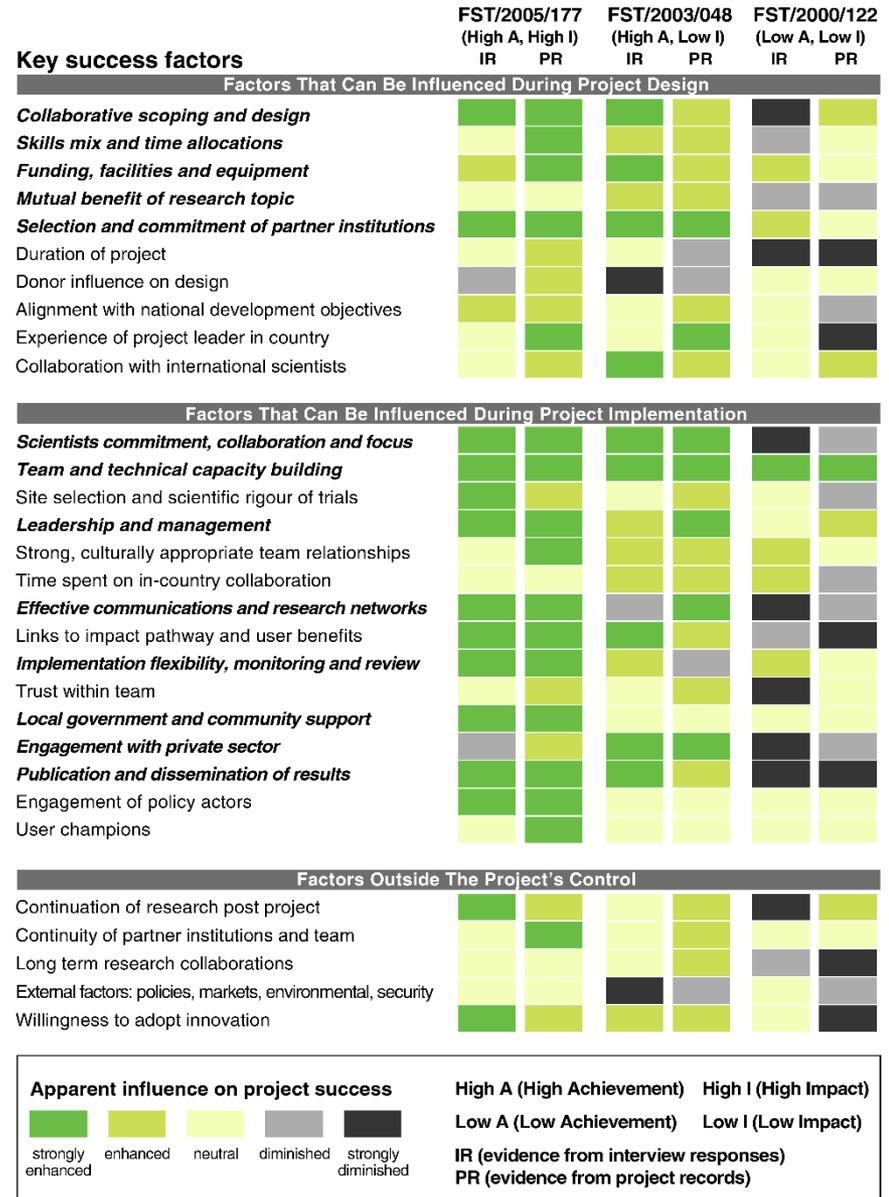
- 22 different factors identified that influence project success



- ▶ 12 factors = 80% of responses
- ▶ Some differences in views from Australians and Vietnamese responses
- ▶ Most factors identified able to both enhance or diminish success



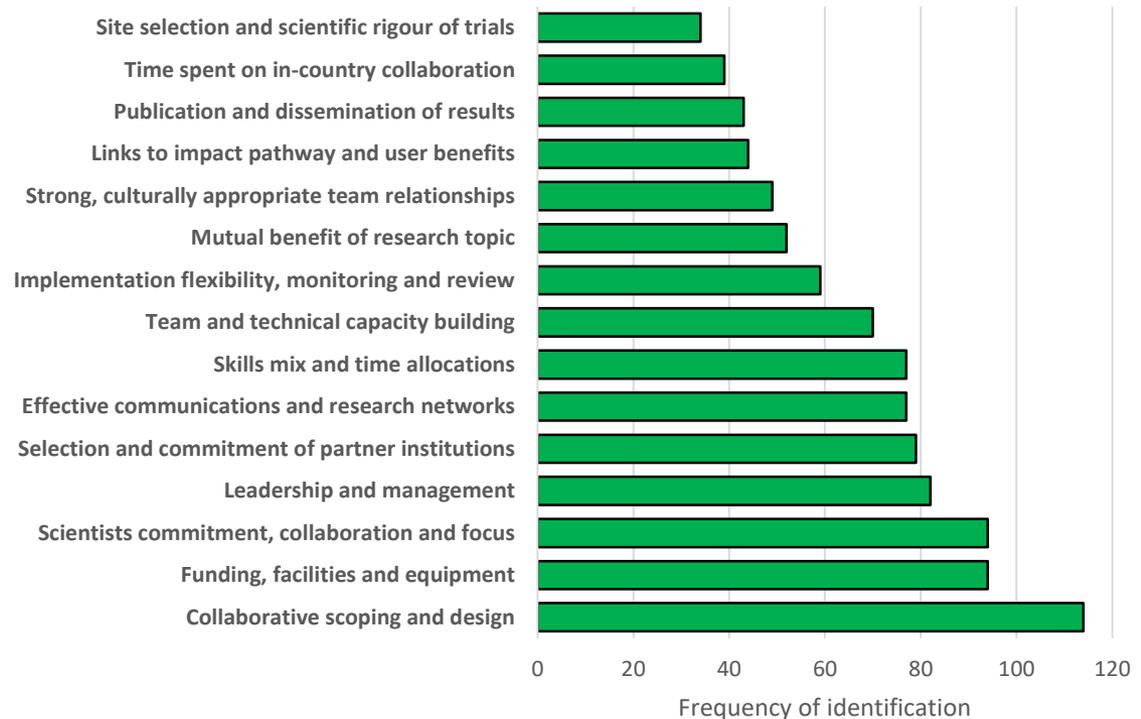
# Relationships of factors to success - Indonesia



# Research findings (1)

- 37 success factors identified across the 3 case studies
- 15 factors represent 75% of total responses. These are:

15 Most Identified Success Factors by Frequency



- ▶ Some differences in frequency rankings between countries
- ▶ All of these 15 factors can enhance or diminish success AND all can be influenced during project design and implementation

# Research findings (2)

- In R4D projects, ***assessing success*** should cover ***achievements & impacts*** (then interpret result wrt 4 categories of success)
- **New methodology** for evaluating relative success has **great utility** (low cost way of comparing multiple projects)
- 3 case studies demonstrated ***relative success varies*** within and between countries – lower success in PNG
- **Causal relationships exist** between success factors and relative success
- Important to **consider the relevance of all 37 factors during project design and implementation** (no blueprint to guarantee success).



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# Research findings (3)



- ***Within the one institution some projects were more successful*** due to local leadership, capacity and commitment within the team
- The ***theme of research did not affect relative success*** but did affect results for impacts (*for some themes*)
- ***Successor projects on the one theme don't necessarily result in higher scores*** for research achievements and impacts
- ***Context*** (national, local & project) also has some influence on success
- Need for additional case studies in different countries and for different research disciplines (agriculture/fisheries)

# Questions



## Case Study journal articles (all will be open access)

**Vietnam:** BARTLETT, A. G., KANOWSKI, P. J., VAN KERKHOFF, L. & BYRON, R. N. 2017. Identifying factors that influence the success of forestry research projects implemented in developing countries: case study results from Vietnam. *Forestry*, 90, 413-425.

**Indonesia:** "BARTLETT, A. G. Factors affecting the success of collaborative forestry research in Indonesia. *European Journal of Development Research*"

**PNG:** "BARTLETT, A. G. Factors affecting the success of collaborative forestry research in Papua New Guinea. *Australian Forestry*"

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