



PRODUCER DEMONSTRATION SITE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Selection criteria

1. Project alignment and commitment to deliver on MLA RD&E targets.
2. Demonstrated potential impact of the project – i.e. group characteristics including DSEs managed.
3. Rigor of trial design (including related monitoring and evaluation).
4. Demonstrated commitment of the group to building their individual and collective capacity.
 - Participation in other producer-based training activities.
 - Existing engagement with local agribusiness and organisations.
 - Demonstration of prior RD&E experience, capabilities and/or achievements.
 - Time and commitment to the proposed trial.
5. Nominated activities to encourage awareness of the PDS project and engagement of producers outside the core group.

All projects that meet the selection criteria will be assessed by the MLA PDS Evaluation Committee. Due to funding limitations, selection will be a competitive process. Not all applications meeting the selection criteria will necessarily be funded. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

Application process

The following steps should be followed:

1. Establish a producer group, supported by a facilitator (may be a partnership with an organisation that has a common purpose). All groups should include a person experienced in trial design, data collection and evaluation in the area of on-farm grazing projects.
2. Define and describe what the PDS intends to achieve, using the project requirements following as a guide.
3. Submit a Preliminary Application (1 page) outlining your proposed project.
4. Discuss your proposal with the relevant MLA Manager (see contact details at www.mla.com.au/producersupport).
5. Identify the PDS site management team and producer Chair.
6. Prepare an application using the PDS application form.
7. Submit PDS application to the management of the participating supporting agency for review and endorsement.
8. Submission of a draft proposal prior to the due date is recommended.
9. PDS site management team then submit the PDS application to MLA at applications@mla.com.au for evaluation against the selection criteria and competing applications.

Project requirements

Projects should incorporate the following attributes:

- Sheep PDS projects should align with the objective of sustainable¹ and profitable production which maximises kilograms of lamb and sheepmeat production per hectare by efficient management of the animal and feedbase – how will the topic being studied impact on this?
- Establish reference points for ‘before and after’ analysis of production, economic and environmental measures associated with the topic being assessed. Projects should have an appropriate level of experimental design to enable analysis and conclusive results.
- A group of producers committed to hands-on involvement in participatory learning activity with a facilitator who is responsible for overseeing monitoring, collation, analysis and reporting.
- Demonstrate how the project supports on farm change within the group members and the broader community.

¹ *Sustainable refers to both economically and environmental parameters. Both must be considered.*

Planning your project and developing an application

Planning your project is an important step of your application. Your group should engage with all participating parties early in the planning phase. Appropriate technical support should be brought in to ensure a sound design, and effective monitoring and reporting.

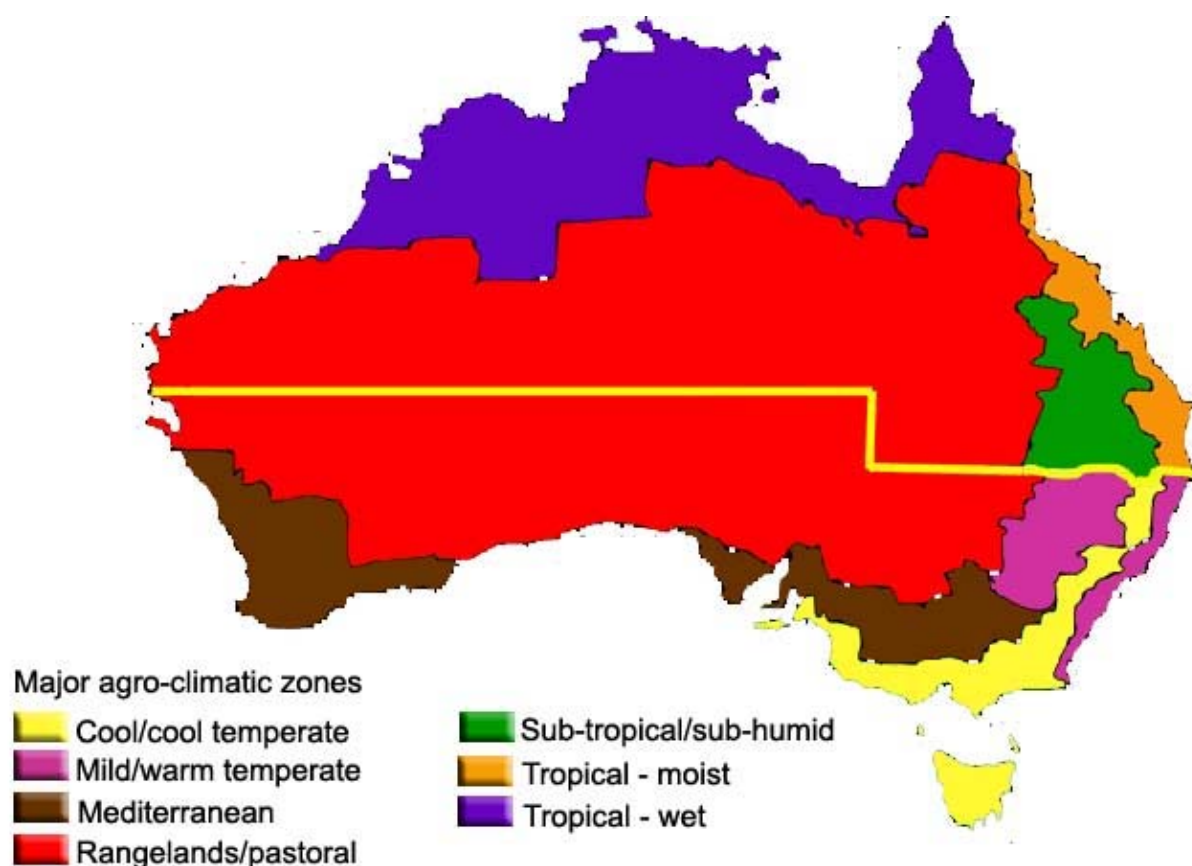
To assist in developing your application the following guidelines have been prepared. Please read these guidelines carefully before completing this form (**guideline numbers correspond to the sections in the Producer Demonstration Site Application Form**).

1 Producer Group Contact

This is the contact details for the producer who is the Chair of the group.

2 Climatic Zone

Please nominate the climatic zone, or zones, in which the PDS activities will be conducted.



3 Producer Group Members

List all participants and contact details. Please add more rows to the table as required. Please collate flock and property details for all group members.

4 Group Facilitator

PDS activities are expected to have detailed monitoring, evaluation and reporting at appropriate stages. It is strongly recommended that an appropriate industry specialist is involved in your project as the group facilitator. The group facilitator is responsible for ensuring that the project is running to schedule and milestones are being met. That person will also be responsible for approving account claims from the grant.

5. Contracted Organisation (if different from Group Facilitator)

An MLA PDS requires a contract with a single entity which is responsible for reporting and invoicing. This is usually the Group Facilitator or the organisation they work for. Please provide their contact details here. Repeat table if more than one partner organisation is involved.

6. Project Title

Please provide a title for your project that captures the essence of the work. This should be brief as it is the title by which the PDS becomes known.

7. Description and background to the PDS

Give a brief outline of why your group formed, when it formed, what group members have in common, etc. Please indicate if your group is part of, or assisted by, any other group.

- Define the problem, detail the needs of producers and the expected benefits of the project. This definition should clearly identify (and, if possible, quantify) the magnitude of the problem (1) to the group and (2) to the industry at a local or broader level. The magnitude in this context should focus on one or more components of the “triple bottom line” and should be a genuinely tangible issue.
- Identify the relevant Key Research Area, outcomes and targets in the Lamb and Sheepmeat Program Strategic Plan (see www.mla.com.au/LambSheepStrategicPlan and how the project will link/incorporate any of the Making More From Sheep principles, procedures and tools: www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au
- Advise if proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by supporting partner organisation.

8. Project Aim

Maximum one sentence.

This should be a broad umbrella statement such as:

- (a) to improve members’ skills in live assessment so they are more confident with OTH trading or
- (b) To increase carrying capacity and meat production per hectare by lifting pasture production using perennial grasses.

Consider using words such as optimising, profitability, productivity, sustainability.

9. Objectives (Measurable Outcomes)

Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) and address the selection criteria found in these Guidelines.

Develop objectives that meet your project aim. The measures will be the specific results from your project. Please think about what the real measures of your project will be. Consider things such as number of producers developing a certain skill or a stretch kg/ha production target. There may be more than one outcome. For example, "To have nineteen members measuring animal performance against pasture input" may require goals such as:

- To increase average turn off/slaughter weights by X kg, reduce the average age at turn-off by X weeks or to reduce over-fat lambs from 28% to less than 10%.
- To have nineteen members trained in the best methods of assessing feed availability on their properties.

As a group it is worth developing a range of objectives (measurable outcomes), and then ranking them in order of importance to your group, and evaluating how many of the goals it would be feasible to complete within the project time frame.

1 or 2 clear measureable objectives is preferable to an extensive but hard to quantify list.

10. Methodology and Sequence of Activities

(What actions will you take to meet the Objectives?)

Detail why, where, how and when the project will be undertaken. Directly address how and when the 'standard' measurements will be incorporated into the project method and when they will be taken.

Taking the measurable outcomes you have now ranked, you need to set out how you will get to that point. For example 8 members will split a mob and treat half with X. Present clearly the tasks and methods you will use in your trial? Please use relevant experts to help design your trials & measures. You must show here how you will measure your Objectives on all sites.

For the above example this might be:

- By 30 June complete a review of current practices and production benchmarks
- By 31 August spray trial paddocks and take soil samples
- By Decemberetc

11. Outputs and Outcomes

Benefits to Members

What do you expect will be the outcome of these trials? In general terms describe the expected benefits, particularly including the dollar benefits you are trying to achieve. This should directly link to your objectives.

Assessment of potential benefit to producers outside the group

How widely does the problem or opportunity investigated apply? To what extent would you expect the results to be applicable in a wider region? Please include the 'ball-park' figure of what the benefits achieved by members (as above) would mean to the wider region if they were to adopt the new knowledge.

12. Communication activities to engage the broader farming community

Where a project has value to producers outside the immediate group it is important to consider how the findings can be disseminated more broadly. Detail communication and engagement activities for producers in the group and the local area. These activities could include farm visits, property field days, workshops, seminars, forums, farm walks, visiting speakers, stories for MLA publications (Prograzier, Feedback) etc. This should detail specific activities and target dates.

13 Milestones and reporting

PDS projects are made up of different stages called milestones. When a milestone is achieved, it means a significant stage in the project has been completed. Milestones are often used to trigger a payment linked to the completion of a specific activity. MLA requires the project milestones and the date of completion to be summarised in a table in the application form. Note: for financial reasons, milestone dates should be set at the beginning of the month and not within the month of June.

For each project we require Quarterly Reports and a Final Report. Quarterly Reports can be a single page (template provided) and would normally be aligned with key activities. Please include these report dates in this section.

Up to four payments can be made, should be aligned with expenditure and will usually align with one of the Interim Reports. Your final invoice will be due with your Final Report and payment made on acceptance of the Final Report

EXAMPLE

Milestone Number	Achievement criteria	Due date
1	<i>Contract signed*</i>	<i>1 March 2011</i>
2	<i>Site established, sheep allocated and treatments implemented</i>	<i>1 May 2011</i>
3	<i>Y1 results and progress report*</i>	<i>1 Dec 2011</i>
4	<i>Y2 progress report Producer group property visit and review</i>	<i>1 April 2012</i>
5	<i>Y2 results. Producer field day run.*</i>	<i>1 Dec 2012</i>
6	<i>Final Report and Budget Report**</i>	<i>1 April 2013</i>

* *Payment on acceptance and approval of corresponding milestone report, with tax invoice for payment and financial summary attached*

** *On receipt and acceptance of final report, full financial summary and with tax invoice attached*

Note: any money uncommitted at the end of the Project must be returned upon receipt of an invoice from MLA.

14 Project budget and funding

EXAMPLE

Date	Payment Dependent on Milestone	Operating Expenses	Travel Expenses	Salary/Fees	Total
1 March 2011	Milestone 1*	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$9,000
1 Dec 2011	Milestone 3 *	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$17,000
1Dec 2012	Milestone 5 **	\$6,000	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$11,500
1 April 2013	Final Report	\$6,000	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$16,500
TOTALS		\$24,600	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$54,000

14a Operating

Include testing fees, equipment hire, advertising for workshops, etc that you have identified as being necessary for the completion of your project. Please seek sponsorship support or use members' equipment/materials and return afterwards.

14b Travel

All car travel will be reimbursed at a standard rate of:

1600cc	58c/km
1601 – 2600cc	69c/km
Over 2600cc	70c/km

Any other travel should be at economy rates and you should provide details in the space provided.

14c Professional project support - (such as facilitation, report writing, etc)

You need to tell us who you are requesting professional support for to assist with project delivery, including who they work for, what you will pay them (hourly or daily rate), how much of their time will be required, and the tasks they will be undertaking on your behalf. If you are unsure of the persons name at the time of Application please identify tasks and approximate remuneration rates.

MLA PDS funding will **not** cover the costs of on-farm labour of the PDS project. On-farm labour required for running the project is deemed an in-kind contribution from the group members to encourage a high level of commitment and involvement in monitoring and conducting the project. Direct producer involvement is a key component of skills development among the group members.

MLA PDS funding does however, support the cost of the group engaging a project facilitator (and/or other professional support) who is experienced in delivering on-farm research and demonstration projects and is responsible for project design, set up, overseeing monitoring, data recording, data analysis and reporting.

Funding is not available for the facilitator to conduct routine monitoring and data collection.

The project budget is recorded as GST exclusive. MLA will pay GST, in addition to the budget, on presentation of a tax invoice from the research organisation. When allocating payments MLA follows these guidelines:

- MLA under certain circumstances provides up-front payments
- All payments are to be performance based (i.e. linked to the achievement of a milestone)
- The amount of the final milestone payment (generally on acceptance of a final report) should be adequately weighted. For example, a three year project should be no less than 20% of the project budget.

Capital items required for projects

MLA PDS funding will not cover the costs of capital items. Each project is treated on a case by case basis and if specialist equipment is required to conduct the project groups are encouraged to discuss this with MLA prior to submission of the project. In all cases, commercial partnerships (including sponsorship) are encouraged to minimise capital costs incurred by group members.

15 Other Support

In this section you are listing all efforts that will support this project, to demonstrate to the Evaluation Committee the extent of non-MLA support. This can be given as your best estimates of the dollar or time.

For example:

- **Group - What** are members doing in this PDS - on their own property, on the other trial site(s), attending workshops, courses etc. Define as number of days.
- **Sponsors** - We encourage PDS recipients to obtain sponsorship for inputs where possible. Many suppliers see the commercial value of either discounting or outright sponsorship of PDS projects.
- **Other Funding Sources** - Will your group be applying for or already have funding from other sources for this project?
- If Government Department Officers are assisting in your project, please estimate their time.

You must indicate any parties that are providing an in-kind or financial contribution to the PDS. Indicate the amount and type of contribution, and whether the Contributor will receive any Intellectual Property. NOTE: If there is more than one funding party, MLA should have rights that ensure that the mechanism for determining commercialisation will enable MLA to address the requirements of its stakeholders.

16 Animal Welfare Committee Approval

Supporting Partner Organisations are responsible for obtaining relevant Animal Welfare Committee approval from their respective organisations prior to approval of PDS funding.

17 Acknowledgement and project review process

Once received, applications will be acknowledged and recorded on the MLA project information system. All projects will be reviewed by the MLA PDS Evaluation Committee and ranked against the selection criteria and competing applications. Applicants will be advised by email of the outcome of their submission.

Projects will commence on the signing of the contract between MLA and the producer group.

18 Intellectual property

18.1 Ownership

Project Intellectual Property is owned by the parties in accordance with their respective interests.

18.2 Provision of information

The Research Organisation must provide MLA with all information in its possession regarding Project Intellectual Property which has been developed or is in the process of being developed.

18.3 Personnel

The Research Organisation must ensure that those of its employees, agents and contractors who participate in the Project:

- (a) identify Project Intellectual Property generated or developed by them;
- (b) promptly communicate details of Project Intellectual Property to MLA; and
- (c) assign ownership of all Project Intellectual Property in accordance with the provisions within the MLA agreement