

**Request for Tender for
 MLA & GRDC Partnership Pilot Producer Demonstration Site Projects
 Terms of Reference (TOR)**

Timing:

Stage	Date
Preliminary applications in response to terms of reference close	25 th September 2024
Successful and unsuccessful preliminary applicants notified	23 rd October 2024
Successful preliminary applicants to submit full applications	20 th November 2024
Successful and unsuccessful full applications notified	19 th December 2024
New producer demonstration site projects commence subject to MLA approval processes and acceptance of MLA standard terms and conditions.	January – February 2025

Purpose and background

The close linkages between MLA’s PDS program and GRDC’s National Grower Network (NGN) in delivering impactful, on-farm, locally relevant projects created an opportunity to develop a partnership demonstration site program targeted towards mixed farming systems.

This partnership program will support groups of producers to demonstrate, adapt and validate the benefits of integrating new management practices, research and development outputs, and associated skills within the context of their commercial production systems.

The key outcome of the program is producer adoption of the demonstrated management practices, resulting in improved business performance.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) & Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC) Pilot Producer Demonstration Site Program is offering funding of up to \$ 2,160,000 over four years.

MLA and GRDC are calling for preliminary applications for PDS projects related to improving **mixed farming enterprise business profitability and productivity** that can commence during 2024/2025.

What is a PDS?

Proposals must:

- Be initiated by a producer group and address a key adoption issue limiting farm productivity and profitability, resulting in impact when adopted by producers. The practice or technology being demonstrated should aim to enhance the synergies of livestock and grain production.
- Demonstrate the integration of new technologies or management practices, research and development outputs, and associated skills on a minimum of three different properties at a commercially relevant scale. Some flexibility is offered for projects in extensive regions.

- Consist of a core group of producers directly involved in the project with a larger network of producers (observers) keen to attend events/activities and receive communications to learn about outcomes.
- Core producers are responsible for much of the in-field activities (e.g. measurements, stock rotations etc.)
- Be based on known, scientifically proven practices and/or commercially available technology, i.e. not research on a problem/issue or proof of concept.
- Have a robust method designed to test an outcome, including untreated controls for comparison
- Have a suitably skilled facilitator to guide group activities, coordinate extension activities, implement protocols, and report back to MLA and GRDC.
- Include extension and communication activities to extend key messages and learnings beyond the core group. All projects will be required to develop a communication plan using the templates provided by MLA.
- Implement monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) processes to demonstrate producer engagement, practice change and the benefit to the production businesses and broader industry. All projects will be required to develop a MER plan using MLA's standard framework within one month of commencing, and support will be available to assist facilitators with development. A copy of the MER plan guidelines is available on the [MLA website here](#).
- Submit a Data Management Plan (DMP):
 - The initial DMP is about establishing how data will be handled and stored, both for 'in project' use and sharing amongst Programs and upon maturity of the data and the long-term storage in approved data repositories.
 - The DMP template can be found here: [GRDC RD&E Data Management Plan](#).
 - For further detailed information, refer to [GRDC RD&E Data Capture and Storage Guidelines for Research Partners](#)

What is not a PDS?

- Based on an issue of limited interest to producers in the area or an issue that contributes only very marginal improvement in enterprise business performance.
- Basic or applied research regarding a problem/issue (i.e. the solution is not yet known)
- Demonstration of how commercial technologies operate and perform. Demonstrations involving commercial technologies must focus on the business/decision-making value of the technology, not whether it works.
- Demonstrations not at commercial scale.
- A project where the facilitator does all the work, including taking in-field measurements, etc.

Who can apply?

Funding is available for groups of mixed farming producers to validate and demonstrate the business value of integrating new commercially available technologies and on-farm management practices into local production systems.

All contracts will be required to be with a company or other legal entity, excluding individuals/sole traders. For unincorporated producer groups, arrangements should be made for contracting through an affiliated company.

Where the intended contracted party is a Trustee (on behalf of a trust), MLA will require copies of ID for all Trustees and a copy of the Trust Deed.

The Tenderer must provide details of its current insurance policies and each proposed subcontractor and supplier as outlined in the preliminary and full applications.

What is funded?

Producer groups engaged in the MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS projects will be able to access up to \$100,000 per year for up to 40 months to a maximum value of \$360,000.

MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS projects require cash investment in the project, which is matched by the MLA Donor Company (MDC).

The funding split is outlined below, calculated on total project value

- 50% GRDC Contribution
- 30% cash contribution + access fee (calculated on contribution value)
- 20% MLA MDC + access fee (calculated on contribution value)

The MLA MDC program is self-funded and is not supported by industry levy funds. The program can only be offered if sufficient funding is raised within the program to support the management, administration, and delivery of MDC activities. For this reason, a project access fee is applied to all MDC-supported projects. The MDC access fee is currently 8% or 12% of the contribution value, depending on the type of investment partner. Industry levy-payer partner contributions incur an 8% fee for their co-funding access. Other partners pay 12%. The access fee is invoiced quarterly or annually. Refer to [PDS MDC Cash-Flow Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) for further detail on the process of investing in MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS projects.

MLA/GRDC PDS funding can be used for the following:

- Facilitator time and expenses (for example, reporting, coordination, group activity)
- Operational aspects of the demonstration (excluding capital items)
- Extension and communications activities
- Conducting and reporting of robust monitoring & evaluation plan

MLA/GRDC PDS funding cannot be used for the following:

- Purchase of capital items (applicants should investigate sponsorship, share or leasing arrangements)
- Items of significant private benefit, e.g. DNA testing of whole flocks
- Purchase of animals
- Fencing and infrastructure (including temporary)
- eID Tags

Priority areas:

MLA and GRDC seek industry-aligned proposals for the MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS program across the mixed farming regions of Australia (see [MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS Guidelines](#) for map of regions)

MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS priorities for the mixed farming systems of Australia across Qld, NSW, ACT, VIC, SA, TAS and Southern WA are outlined below:

1. Human and animal wellbeing that supports communities and social license and ensures diversity of access to markets for Australian producers.
2. Optimise pasture and grain crop productivity through best management of plant nutrition and soils and enhanced biosecurity, weed, pest and disease control to improve profitability.
3. Sustainable, responsible production systems adapted to climate variability through business planning, enterprise mix, and risk management strategies. Demonstrating employment of commercial technologies, such as remote monitoring, virtual fencing, and drones, to increase efficiency and address labour shortfalls.
4. Demonstration of value-add opportunities in mixed farming systems to increase margins and/or lower post-farm gate costs.:

Preparing and submitting an application

Applicants should follow these steps:

1. Establish or nominate a current producer group supported by a facilitator (may be a partnership with an organisation with a common purpose). All groups must include a person experienced in facilitation, communication and MER of on-farm projects.
2. Define and describe what the PDS project intends to achieve. This should include the following:
 - a. What is the practical problem or need that the group aims to address?
 - b. What is the current level of adoption of the targeted management practice(s)?
 - c. How will the targeted management practices improve business profitability and productivity, i.e. what will the project's outcome be?
 - d. What is the potential scale of benefit to businesses?
3. Identify the area/sub region covered by the PDS group the facilitator and the producer Chair.
4. Submit a Preliminary Application (max 5 pages) outlining your proposed project. The Preliminary Application must be submitted on or before **25 September 2024**.

[Preliminary Application forms can be obtained here.](#)

5. All preliminary applicants will be notified of acceptance or otherwise by **23 October 2024**. If your Preliminary Application has been accepted, you will then need to prepare a Full Application using the PDS Full Application forms and submit it to pds@mla.com.au by **20 November 2024**.
[Full application form can be obtained here.](#)
6. If your PDS is to be contracted through a supporting agency, e.g. DPI or Landcare group, submit your PDS application to the management of the participating supporting agency before submitting it to MLA for review and endorsement.
7. All successful applicants will be notified by **19 December 2024**.
8. Projects will be contracted and ready to commence by **early 2025**.

For further information on preparing and submitting an application, please refer to the following supporting documents available at [MLA/GRDC Partnership – Producer Demonstration Site \(PDS\) projects | Meat & Livestock Australia](#).

Preliminary

MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS Preliminary PDS Application

MLA/GRDC Preliminary Application Guidelines

Full Application

MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS Full PDS Application

MLA/GRDC Partnership Full Application Guidelines

General

MLA PDS MER Guidelines

MLA Tender Declaration

MDC Source of Funds Declaration

PDS MDC Cash-Flow Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Important information regarding the tender process:

1. Tenders must comply with all requirements specified in this request for tender/terms of reference.
2. The requirements specified in this request for tender apply to both the preliminary and full applications.
3. Please submit an electronic/ soft copy of the tender applications.
4. All questions within the preliminary application form must be completed. Where invited to submit a full application, the current version of the Full Application Form must be completed in its entirety.
5. Tenderers of successful full applications will be provided with a link to complete a questionnaire regarding modern slavery due diligence. Completion of the questionnaire is required before progressing with contracting.

6. MLA has been appointed “Manager” of the Program and, as such, will be the key contact for the delivery partners associated with each Project and will be responsible for contracting, communications and financial payments.
7. The Terms of Agreement MLA wishes to enter with the successful Tenderer may be requested by emailing pds@mla.com.au. MLA is non-negotiable on the terms of the agreement.
8. Where the successful Tenderer has a negotiated standard agreement with MLA, the terms of that agreement will apply. Where no previously negotiated agreement is in place unless clearly stated to the contrary in the tender, all terms of our MLA Umbrella Research Agreement will apply.
9. Annexure 1 contains a tender declaration to be completed by the Tenderer. Also accessible on the [MLA website here](#).
10. Annexure 2 contains an MDC PDS source of funds declaration to be completed by the Tenderer. Also accessible on the [MLA website here](#).

Further information about PDS eligibility criteria, guidelines and application forms are available at [MLA/GRDC Partnership – Producer Demonstration Site \(PDS\) projects | Meat & Livestock Australia](#).

Selection criteria & review process

Selection of preliminary applications and full applications will be based on the following criteria

1. Alignment with priorities outlined in the terms of reference.
2. Number and enthusiasm of producers in the core group and opportunity for broader scale engagement across the observer group/district
3. Potential impact on producer business profit drivers & industry profitability
4. Project team's capability to undertake the requirements of a PDS
5. A very clear and measurable objective(s)
6. Methodology to demonstrate the business value of the technology/practice/innovation(s) and achieve practice change.
7. Extension and communications plan and activities within the PDS group (core) and more broadly (observer group and nationally)
8. Proposed monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (MER) activities and data management plan
9. Value for money

Applications that demonstrate cash and in-kind producer support and sponsorship for capital items will be viewed favourably.

Application Review:

Three regional joint evaluation committees (Northern, Southern & Western) will be established to review, assess, and determine successful projects at the preliminary stage.

The preliminary application evaluation committee will be comprised of six members:

- 1 x GRDC staff
- 2 x GRDC Regional Panel members per region (Northern, Southern & Western)
- 1 x MLA Adoption Project Manager

- 2 x MLA Research Advisory Committees producer members per region (NABRC, SALRC and WALRC).

An evaluation committee will also be established to review, assess, and determine successful projects at the full application stage.

The full application evaluation committee will be comprised of six members:

- 2 x GRDC staff
- 2 x MLA Adoption Project Manager

Additional commitments

- Projects may be required to nominate a producer case study(s) for MLA/GRDC communication activities
- Producers involved in projects may be required to participate in impact evaluation surveys in future years, including post-project completion.
- Successful applicants will be required to participate in MER training before the commencement of the project.
- Projects will be required to robustly estimate the potential scale of adoption beyond the core group and the potential benefits to individual producers and industry as part of their MER plan.

For further information:

All requests for further information or clarification are to be submitted via email prior to Friday, 20th September 2024; all requests and responses to requests will be published as Frequently Asked Questions at the bottom of the [MLA GRDC PDS Partnership program webpage](#).

Alana McEwan, MLA Producer Demonstration Site Program Project Manager, Email: pds@mla.com.au

TOR Updated 20.08.2024: Minor updates made to the What is funded? section of this TOR to address request for information and clarification regarding project funding and access fees. Queries and responses published on the FAQ page.

ANNEXURE 1 TENDER DECLARATION

Applications to complete the most appropriate declaration to their business and ensure that this is submitted with all applications.

NOTE: an editable word version of this template is available at: [MLA/GRDC Partnership – Producer Demonstration Site \(PDS\) projects | Meat & Livestock Australia](#)

1. DECLARATION

1.1 For corporate tenderers

I,
of
do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

I hold the position of and am duly authorised by
..... (**Tenderer**) to make this declaration on its behalf.

I make this declaration to the best of my knowledge, information and belief as to the accuracy
of the material contained in it and after due inquiry in relation to such material.

This tender comprises:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Neither the Tenderer nor any of its employees or agents had any knowledge of the price
submitted by any other tenderer prior to providing its tender, nor did the Tenderer disclose to
any other tenderer the Tenderer's tendered price prior to closing of tenders.

Neither the Tenderer nor any of its employees or agents has entered into an agreement,
arrangement or understanding which would have the result that, on being the successful
Tenderer, it would pay to any unsuccessful tenderer any moneys in respect of or in relation to
the tender or any agreement resulting from it.

The Tenderer is not aware of any fact, matter or thing which would materially affect the
decision of MLA in accepting the tender, except as disclosed in the tender.

The contents of the tender are true and correct.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by
virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1900*.

DECLARED at)
this day of 2024).....

Before me,

.....
Justice of the Peace/Solicitor

1.2 **For individual tenderers**

I,
of
do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

I make this declaration to the best of my knowledge, information and belief as to the accuracy of the material contained in it and after due inquiry in relation to such material.

This tender comprises:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Neither me nor any of my employees or agents had any knowledge of the price submitted by any other tenderer prior to providing its tender, nor did I disclose to any other tenderer my tendered price prior to closing of tenders.

Neither me nor any of my employees or agents has entered into an agreement, arrangement or understanding which would have the result that, on being the successful Tenderer, I would pay to any unsuccessful tenderer any moneys in respect of or in relation to the tender or any agreement resulting from it.

I am not aware of any fact, matter or thing which would materially affect the decision of MLA in accepting the tender, except as disclosed in the tender.

The contents of the tender are true and correct.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1900*.

DECLARED at)
this day of 2024).....

Before me,

.....
Justice of the Peace/Solicitor

ANNEXURE 2 PDS SOURCE OF FUNDS DECLARATION

NOTE: an editable word version of this template is available at: [MLA/GRDC Partnership – Producer Demonstration Site \(PDS\) projects | Meat & Livestock Australia](#)



Source of Funds Declaration MLA/GRDC Partnership PDS projects

Producer Contribution:

On behalf of [insert registered Company name] (ABN xx xxx xxx xxx), I, [insert authorised officer name] can confirm that the funds being provided by me/my organisation [delete as required] for matching via MLA Donor Company come from red meat levy paying producers/organisation.

I also confirm that the funds contributed by me do not originate from the Commonwealth of Australia.

Value of contribution: \$ _____

Third-party (Non-Producer) Contribution: [delete this section if not applicable]

On behalf of [insert registered Company name] (ABN xx xxx xxx xxx), I, [insert authorised officer name] can confirm that the funds being provided by me/my organisation [delete as required] for matching via MLA Donor Company come from [insert Third-party contributor].

I also confirm that the funds contributed by me do not originate from the Commonwealth of Australia.

Value of contribution: \$ _____

.....

Signature: Authorised officer

.....

Date