

MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) Application Guidelines for Full Applications

Planning your project and developing a full 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, evaluation and reporting (MER).

To assist in developing your application the following guidelines have been prepared. They should be read in conjunction with the relevant **PDS Terms of Reference (ToR)** and the **Levy and Co-Contributor full PDS application form**, available on the [MLA website](#).

It is important to ensure that the appropriate application form is used for the PDS funding option that your group is applying for.

Producer Group Name

Please provide the name of the producer group implementing the project.

Project Title

Please provide a title for your project that captures the essence of the work. This should be brief (**maximum of 6 words**) as it is the title by which the PDS becomes known.

Project Start Date/Project Completion Date

Please provide the proposed project start and completion date, minimum project period is two years, with a maximum project period of six years.

Priority/Industry Target

For Levy PDS applications:

Identify the regional priority the application will address. Levy applications must align with a least PDS priority outlined in the PDS Terms of reference (available at www.mla.com.au/pds).

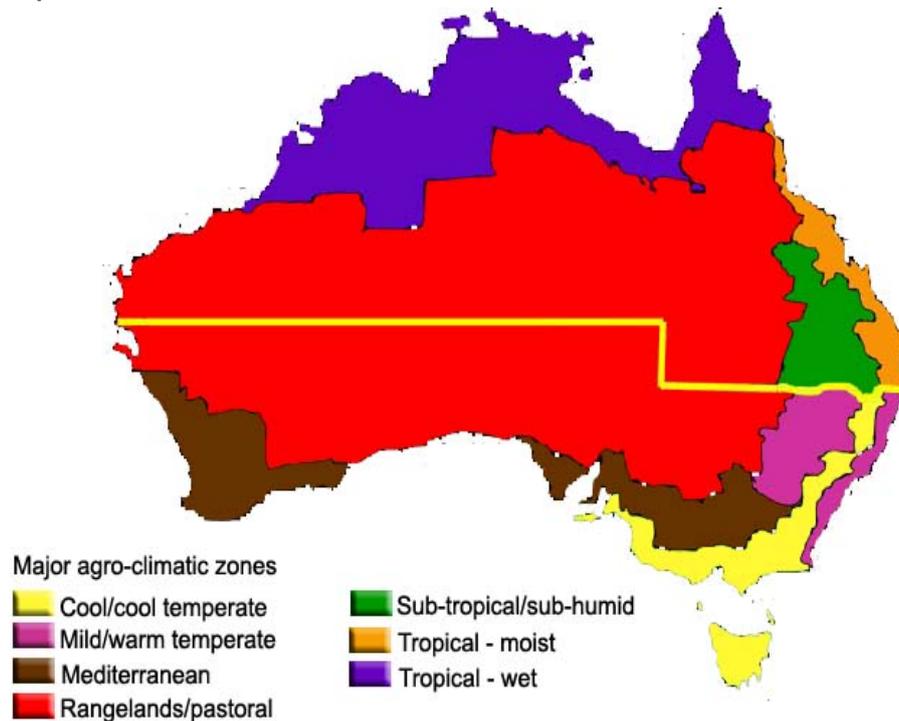
Co-contributor PDS applications:

Identify how the project aligns to industry issues/priorities and targets (refer to [MISP](#), [BISB](#), [SISP](#) and [MLA Strategic plan](#)). You will need to make a financial contribution under this project type (refer to Terms of Reference or [MLA Website](#)).

1. Producer Group Contact

Please provide the contact details for the producer who is the Chair/lead producer of the group.

Climatic Zones Map



3. Producer Group Members

List all core PDS producer group members and contact details. Additional rows can be added to the table as needed.

Producer groups applying have the following:

- A 'core' group of producers who will be actively involved in the running of demonstration site project. The core group must involve at least 10 producers, though flexibility is offered in extensive regions. A portion of core producers will have demonstration sites on their properties.
- A larger 'observer' group of producers who receive regular updates on progress with the PDS as well as attending workshops and field days to learn first-hand about outcomes and likely to closely examine their application and implement on their own property.

Also include data as requested on scale of operation – livestock numbers, area of operation etc. covered by the core and an estimate of the observer (entire) group.

4. Group Facilitator

PDS activities are expected to have detailed MER at appropriate stages. All PDS projects must have an appropriate industry specialist involved in your project to act as the group facilitator. The group facilitator via the contract organisation is responsible for ensuring that the project is running to schedule, milestones met and MER is completed. The group facilitator (and the contracted organisation) will also be responsible for managing the project budget.

Group facilitator contact details will be published on the MLA website, as the key contact for producers/stakeholders to contact to obtain additional information on and/or engage with the project. The applicant/contracting organization must obtain written consent from the group facilitator in relation to their contact details being published as noted above.

5. Contracting Organisation

An MLA PDS requires a contract with a single company that is responsible for reporting and invoicing. This is usually the organisation that the Facilitator works for or the Producer Group. Please note MLA is unable to contract with entities registered as a sole trader.

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 along with a copy of the Trust Deed.

The contracting organisations authorised signatory must supply their full name, mobile number and email address. This information is used for successful applicants through the contracting process.

6. Insurance

The contracted organisation must provide details of current insurance policies held by it and each proposed subcontractor and supplier.

7. Description and background to the PDS

- Provide 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.
- Clearly identify (and, if possible, quantify) the magnitude of the problem to the group, and 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' (economic, environmental and social) and should be a genuinely tangible issue.
- Clearly identify the related management practices the groups will be demonstrating and quantify the current uptake.
- Identify how the project will address relevant MLA regional priorities of SALRC, NABRC or WALRC (applicable to Levy PDS only). For Co-contributor PDS, identify how the project will address current industry adoption issues and work towards achieving industry targets.
- Advise if proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the supporting partner organisation/s, or the relevant regional committee.

8. Project Aim

Maximum one short sentence.

This should be a broad umbrella statement such as:

- (a) Demonstrate the uptake of perennial grasses and associated management practices can increase the carrying capacity and meat production per hectare by 10%.
- (b) To improve members' skills in live assessment so they are more confident with OTH trading

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

The aim cannot be to conduct basic or applied research. PDS projects must aim to demonstrate the implementation of best practice management, known research outputs or outcomes and/or technologies to increase producer knowledge, skills and adoption.

Example demonstration aim:

Demonstrate that dual-purpose canola increases pre-joining liveweight gains, condition scores, and the conception rate and reproductive rate (measured by pregnancy scanning) of ewes relative to current forage options and can be harvested in its second year to produce a seed/oil crop in the central & western NSW and QLD Sheep region.

9. Objectives (Measurable Outcomes)

This is probably the most critical element of your application form.

Develop objectives that meet your project aim. The measures will be the specific results from your project. Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based) and address the selection criteria found in these Guidelines.

Take some time in clearly developing your projects objective(s). Use criteria such as number of producers developing a certain skill or a stretch kg/ha production target (eg. increasing from X kg/ha to Y kg/ha). There may be more than one objective. For example, “By 2020 to have nineteen members measuring animal performance against pasture input” may require goals such as:

- To have nineteen members trained in the best methods of assessing feed availability on their properties.
- To increase average turn off/slaughter weights by X kg [from A kg to B kg] or reduce the average age at turn-off by X weeks [from A weeks to B weeks].

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 and budget. Don't try to over-commit and make the project too complex.

It is better to have one or two clear measureable objectives than to have an extensive but hard to quantify list. Please ensure you cover both core and observer producers and remember PDS should be designed to achieve demonstrable practice change and impact.

10. Method

Detail where, how and when the project will be undertaken. Include the number of sites involved in the demonstration. Minimum of 3-5 sites preferred. (e.g. 4 demonstration sites will be established in year one, with an additional 4 new sites each year, totaling 12 sites by completion of the project).

Directly address how and when the 'standard' measurements will taken and by whom.

Outline:

- Project design and treatments: Describe the type of demonstration design and treatments used. Include the management practices producers will be developing. What will you be comparing to i.e. a control treatment?
- Animal management: Describe how you will manage your animals or will, for example, meat production be modelled? What animals will you use, how many, for how long will they be measured and for what etc?
- Pasture management: Describe what is the type or cultivar of the pasture or crop used, and how will you manage it?
- Measurements: Detail how and when the measurements will be taken
- Economics: Describe how the impact or value of your project will be demonstrated
- Producer engagement: What activities will the group implement to engage producers outside the core group i.e. observers and when?

Sequence of Activities (Work breakdown structure)

There is a table within the application form for you to use. Please include a work breakdown structure within the method section. Clearly present the tasks required to be undertaken to achieve the project objectives and when these will be undertaken. Use relevant experts to help design your trials and measures.

For the above example this might be:

- 1st May: Complete a review of current practices and benchmarks
- 1st August: Spray trial paddocks and take soil samples
- 1st December ...etc

11.Outcomes

Benefits to PDS group members

Describe the expected benefits of the PDS to the group and include the triple bottom line benefits you are trying to achieve (if applicable). This should directly link to your objectives. Also consider the outcomes to the observer producers and others.

To what extent would you expect the results to be applicable in a wider region? Estimate what the benefits achieved by core producers (as above) would mean to the wider region if they were to adopt the new practices/knowledge.

12.Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) activities

All PDS projects will be required to have a comprehensive MER plan aligned to the MLA framework. Please budget for MER in this proposal. MLA suggests between 5-10% of the total budget should be allocated to MER activity and reporting. An example PDS MER plan template is provided as a downloadable attachment from www.mla.com.au

For successful applicants the MER plan should be produced within one month of contracting.

In your full application, please provide a brief overview of the key components of your MER i.e.:

- What practices and metrics are being tested
- General statistics on producer numbers and animals and area potentially impacted by the project
- Entrance and exit surveys of producers (core and observer) to benchmark Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Aspirations (KASA) in relation to the subject
- Benchmark current practices in relation to the subject and undertake exit surveys to enable assessment of changes in reactions to the project (perceptions, enthusiasm etc) and changes in practices
- Extent of and impact from communication / extension activities beyond the core producers

12.1 Key Contributing Practices/Capabilities/Tools

Please select which key contributing practices / capabilities will be demonstrated and measured from the list of options supplied. If there is an option not available that you believe is relevant to your project.

Please identify which tools and technologies will be incorporated into the project. These could include benchmarking, forecasting and assessment tools.

12.1 Engagement & Adoption Performance Metrics

Please select which performance metric(s) will be measured with core group members to demonstrate the impact of adoption? Please add if yours are not listed.

MLA’s expectation is that a result will be reported throughout the project and on delivery of the final report for all metrics selected within the application.

13. Communication activities to engage the project and broader livestock production community

PDS progress, findings and benefits should be communicated to the core and observer producers and to the broader producer and industry audience. There is a template in the form to use – please provide details in relation to these activities which could include farm visits, property field days, workshops, webinars / seminars, forums, visiting speakers, case studies, producer case studies / guidelines or videos etc.

All PDS projects will be required to provide content and producer interviewees for MLA communication channels such as Feedback articles.

Think about opportunities to link to other groups and organisation events to communicate and extend your PDS results and message and how your communication activities will help to drive impact and adoption.

14. Milestones and reporting

PDS projects are made up of different stages called milestones. When a milestone is achieved, it means a stage in the project has been completed. Payments will be linked to the completion of a specific milestone or series of milestones. MLA requires the project milestones and the date of completion to be summarised in a table in the application form.

For administration reasons milestone dates should not be set in late **December or June**.

For each project, a detailed annual report is required along with a 6 monthly report each year. A detailed Final Report will be required at project completion. Six monthly and Annual Reports are relatively brief updates (two or three pages - a template is provided) and would normally be aligned with key activities.

A ‘Go / No Go’ project review will be held annually, following submission of the Annual Report by teleconference.

Up to two payments per year can be made, which should align with expenditure and a report. 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	Payment schedule (of total project cost)
1	Project executed	0	Nil
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan • Monitoring and Evaluation plan • Pre project core & observer producer survey templates submitted & approved by MLA. 	+1 month	10%(indicative)
3.	Progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report • Summary of key activities or data over past 6 months • Update against communication and wider engagement plan activities 	+ 5 months	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-project core and observer survey completed, analysed and results reported 		
4.	<p>Annual report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report • Summary of key activities or data over past 6 months • Update against communication and wider engagement plan activities • 1 case study • Field evaluation results • Year 1 project results 	+ 6 months	35% (<i>indicative</i>)
5.	Go/ No Go decision	+ 2 weeks	
6.	<p>Progress report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report • Summary of key activities or data over past 6 months • Update against communication and wider engagement plan activities 	+ 5 months	
7.	<p>Annual Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report • Summary of key activities or data over past 6 months • Update against communication and wider engagement plan activities 	+ 6 months	30% (<i>indicative</i>)
8.	Go / No Go decision	+ 2 weeks	
9.	<p>Progress report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report • Summary of key activities or data over past 6 months • Update against communication plan activities • Post project core & observer producer survey templates 	+ 5 months	
10.	<p>Final Report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project findings & impact (BCA) • Communication & extension outputs & outcomes • Whole of project MER • Financial reconciliation 	+ 6 months	25%
11.	Acceptance of the final report and supporting deliverables by MLA	+ 1 month	25%

15. Project budget and funding

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 contracted 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 no less than 10 - 25% of the total project budget (subject to project value).

15.1 Operating

Include testing fees, equipment hire, advertising for workshops, etc that you have identified as being necessary for the completion of your project. However please seek sponsorship support or use members' equipment/materials and return afterwards. Sponsorship and use of members equipment/materials is viewed favorably as it demonstrates buy-in from commercial parties and producers.

Capital items required for projects

MLA PDS funding will not cover the costs of capital items. In all cases, commercial partnerships (including sponsorship, equipment loans, etc) are encouraged.

Example of items not covered by PDS funding include animals, fencing (temporary or permanent), extensive hardware, eID tags, etc.

If you are unsure whether items should be budgeted for contact the Project Manager or National PDS Coordinator to discuss.

Work already completed - MLA is unable to offset the cost of work or professional fees that have occurred before the project commences.

15.2 Travel

Car travel costs for professional support will be reimbursed. Producers need to be prepared to pay for their own travel.

Car travel will be reimbursed at a standard rate of: 68c per km

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

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

Please detail who will be providing professional support to assist with project delivery, including

- the organization they work for;
- hourly, or daily rate;
- how much time will be required; and
- what tasks will be undertaken;

If you are unsure of the person's 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 or for the purchase of animals. The animals and on-farm labour required for running the project are deemed an in-kind contribution from

the group members. Direct producer involvement is a key component of skills development among the group members.

MLA PDS funding can 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.

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

15.4 Summary of budget and funding

Simply complete the summary tables in the application form. See examples below for further assistance.

15.4.1 Budget

This table outlines all costs associated with the project. This value will be the contract value. This section differs slightly between is the Levy & Co-Contributor PDS applications.

For Levy PDS projects:

A simple table that combines the values provided in sections 15.1 – 15.3 to provide the total contract value. Example below.

BUDGET ITEM	TOTAL (\$)
Fees	\$40,000.00
Operating Items	\$25,000.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$75,000.00

For Co-Contributor PDS projects:

An 8% access fee, for producer contributions, is included to cover costs associated with providing and operating MDC programs. Example below.

BUDGET ITEM	TOTAL (\$)	
Fees	\$39,300	
Operating Items	\$19,300	
SUB TOTAL PROJECT COST	A	\$58,600
Plus 8% of SUB TOTAL (MDC Access fee) <i>N.B.: Applicable to Co-Contributor Applications only</i>	B	\$4,688
TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE	A+B	\$63,288

15.4.2 Producer Funding Co-Contribution

This section is applicable to Co-Contributor PDS applications only.

	Funding percentage	Cash Contribution to the project (ex GST)	Access Fee	TOTAL (ex GST)
Producer	25% of A above	\$14,650	25% of B above	\$1,172
MLA / MDC	75% of A above	\$43,950	75% of B above	\$3,516
TOTAL		\$58,600		\$4,688

For more information on cash flow and invoicing for Co-contributor PDS projects please refer to the Co-Contributor Cash flow Frequently Asked questions (FAQ) document available on the [MLA website](#). The FAQ has been developed to assist producer groups to understand the mechanics of cash flow with MDC, including when producer contributions are required to be paid.

15.4.3 Distribution of Funds

Date	Payment Dependent on Milestone	Fees	Operating Expenses	Total
<i>1 March 2012</i>	<i>Milestone 1*</i>	<i>\$8,400</i>	<i>\$12,400</i>	<i>\$20,800</i>
<i>1 Oct 2012</i>	<i>Milestone 3 *</i>	<i>\$9,450</i>	<i>\$2,700</i>	<i>\$12,150</i>
<i>1 April 2013</i>	<i>Milestone 5 **</i>	<i>\$9,450</i>	<i>\$2,700</i>	<i>\$12,150</i>
<i>1 April 2014</i>	<i>Final Report</i>	<i>\$12,000</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>	<i>\$13,500</i>
TOTALS		\$39,300	\$19,300	\$58,600

*Note: For **Co-contributor PDS** projects, the Sub Total Project Costs (A) in table 15.4.1, is the amount of funds that are to be disbursed back to the contracting organisation through Milestone payments. The 8% access fee is not part of the disbursement of funds.*

16. Other Support

List any other support this project is receiving.

For example:

- Group – Number of in-kind days that members are contributing to this PDS - on their own property, at other trial site(s), attending workshops, courses etc. Define as number of days.
- Sponsors - PDS groups are encouraged to obtain sponsorship for inputs where possible.
- 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 on an unpaid basis please estimate their time.

All parties contributing an in-kind or financial contribution to the project must be listed. Indicate the amount and type of contribution, and whether the Contributor will seek any Intellectual Property.

If there is more than one funding party, MLA maintains the rights to ensure that the mechanism for determining commercialisation will enable MLA to address the requirements of its stakeholders.

Other Important information relevant to PDS Applications

Animal Welfare Committee Approval

Supporting Partner Organisations are responsible for obtaining any relevant Animal Welfare Committee approval from their respective organisations prior to approval of PDS funding. If animal welfare committee approval is required, please advise once approval has been received.

Intellectual property (IP)

a. Ownership

Project IP Interests will be outlined in the contract.

You must ensure you own or have permission to use any Background IP used in the project

b. Provision of information

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

c. Personnel

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

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

Acknowledgement and project review process

A completed application includes a signed declaration (see Terms of Reference) and the relevant application form submitted electronically via email to: Russell Pattinson PDS Coordinator, Miracle Dog Pty Ltd, email: miracladog@bigpond.com (Ph 0419872684) and pds@mla.com.au.

For Co-Contributor projects, in addition to the standard Tender declaration, the source of funds declaration (See [Terms of Reference](#)) must be completed and submitted with the full application (if it has not previously been submitted at preliminary stage).

Once received, applications will be acknowledged and recorded on the MLA project information system.

Levy PDS application Review:

A panel of NABRC, SALRC & WALRC producer representatives, MLA RD&A Managers, Technical Experts and the PDS National Coordinator will assess preliminary applications.

MLA Research Development & Adoption Managers and the PDS National Coordinator will assess full applications.

Co-Contributor PDS applications:

MLA RD&A Managers, Technical Experts and the PDS National Coordinator will assess both preliminary and full applications.

All projects will be 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.

Key Roles, Responsibilities & Contacts

Producer Group Chair/Lead Producer - is the key contact for the producer group.

Core Producers- are those directly involved in the project. The core producers are committing to the project and the expected outlined practice change by undertaking and participating in the project. A number of core producers will be demo site owners.

Observer Producers - producers who will receive regular updates on progress of the PDS, through communication activities, as well as attending workshops and field days

Group Facilitator - 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.

Contracted Organisation - holds an executed agreement with MLA to deliver the project and is responsible for the management of the project budget. The contracted organisation may be the Producer Group, the Group Facilitator or another company that is directly involved in the PDS project.

National PDS Coordinator - is contracted on MLA's behalf to drive the development and implementation of the PDS program.

Russell Pattinson, Miracle Dog, Ph: 0419 872 684 Email: miracledog@bigpond.com

MLA Project Manager - The MLA project manager responsible for the contracting, and ongoing management of the PDS Program, including managing the annual open call for projects.

Alana McEwan, Project Manager Productivity and Market Insights, Ph: 0417 541 000 Email: amcewan@mla.com.au

MLA Adoption Program Manager - is responsible for overseeing the management and implementation of MLA's producer adoption and extension activities, which the PDS program falls under.

David Packer, Program Manager Producer Adoption, Ph: 0448 113 559 Email: dpacker@mla.com.au