

MLA Producer Demonstration Site Application Guidelines for Full Applications

Jan 2017

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 and reporting.

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 **full PDS application form**.

1 Producer Group Name

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

2 Project Title

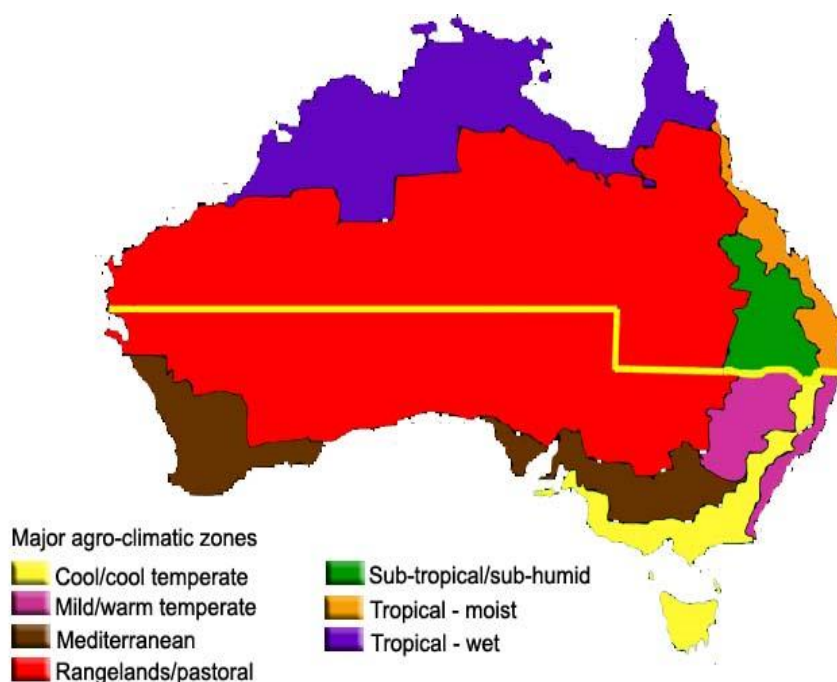
Please provide a title for your project that captures the essence of the work. This should be brief (**maximum of 5 words**) as it is the title by which the PDS becomes known.

3 Producer Group Contact

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

4 MLA Region

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



5 Producer Group Members

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

It is recommended that producer groups applying will be significantly advantaged should they have the following segments:

- a. A 'core' group of producers who will be actively involved in the running of demonstrations on their properties. This should involve a minimum of at least 10 producers, but preferably more
- b. A more numerous '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 closely examine their application

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

6 Group Facilitator

PDS activities are expected to have detailed monitoring, evaluation and reporting 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 monitoring, evaluation and reporting is completed. The group facilitator (and the contracted organisation) will also be responsible for managing the project budget.

7 Contracted Organisation

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

8 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 priorities of the SAMRC and WALRC.
- Advise if proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the supporting partner organisation/s.

9 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. An example of a research question is:

Our question is whether dual-purpose canola can increase 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

10 Objectives (Measurable Outcomes)

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

Develop objectives that meet your project aim and answer your research question. 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

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

11 Methodology

Detail 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 and by whom. Outline:

- Experimental design and treatments: Describe the type of demonstration design and treatments used. Include the management practices producers will be developing.
- 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 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 methodology 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

12 Outcomes

Benefits to PDS group members

Describe the expected benefits of the PDS to the group and include the dollar benefits you are trying to achieve. 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.

13 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 outside of the PDS project participants

14 Communication activities to engage the project and broader farming community

PDS progress, findings and benefits should be communicated to the core and observer producers and to the broader producer 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.

15 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 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.	Communications & Monitoring and Evaluation plan submitted to MLA.	+1 month	15 %
3.	Progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report 	+ 5 months	
4.	Annual report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report 	+ 6 months	30% <i>(indicative)</i>
5.	Go/ No Go decision	+ 1 month	
6.	Progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report 	+ 5 months	
7.	Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report 	+ 6 months	30% <i>(indicative)</i>
8.	Go / No Go decision	+ 1 month	
9.	Progress report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MER report 	+ 5 months	
10.	Final Report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project findings & impact (BCA) • Communication & extension outputs & outcomes • Whole of project MER • Financial reconciliation 	+ 6 months	25%

16 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 25% of the project budget.

EXAMPLE

Date	Payment Dependent Milestone	on Fees	Operating Expenses	Total
<i>1 March 2012</i>	<i>Milestone 1*</i>	<i>\$8,400</i>	<i>\$2,400</i>	<i>\$10,800</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>
TOTAL		\$39,300	\$9,300	\$48,600

a. 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.

b. 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: 66c per km

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

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. Budget summary

Simply complete the summary table in the application form

17 Other Support

List any other support this project is receiving.

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** - 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.

18 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.

19 Intellectual property (IP)

a. Ownership

Project IP is owned by the parties in accordance with their respective interests. Interests will be outlined in the contract.

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

20 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.

Updated: May 2016