

**Annual Call for Expressions of Interest**

**Co-investment Feedbase (Pastures and Soil) Projects – MLA Donor Company**

**Scope**

Pastures are the indispensable foundation of red-meat production and the value chain, with 90-95% of red meat production occurring in grass-fed grazing systems. A healthy feedbase is critical to on-farm productivity, as well as to positive environmental and sustainability outcomes.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is seeking expressions of interest from organisations (or partnerships of organisations) to co-invest via the MLA Donor Company in research, development and adoption projects for the following areas (see appendix 1 for more detail):

* Safeguarding our feedbase resources,

This includes but is not limited to the monitoring and management of soil health and land condition to improve productivity, and protecting the feedbase from weeds, diseases and pests.

* Future feedbase design

This includes but is not limited to technologies, tools or new practices that raise the productivity ceiling of pastures and whole farm feedbase management, including through plant breeding and agronomy activities.

* Enhanced adoption of feedbase innovation: this includes but is not limited to investments that develop additional pasture advisors, establish and conduct demonstration sites, development and publication of information resources, to support producers in adopting innovative practices.

**Funding source & investment guidelines**

Projects are expected to be wholly funded by co-investment between the applicant and the MLA Donor Company.The MLA donor company will invest at a ratio of 40:60 (MLA: Applicant) with access fees of 8% (primary producer) or 12% (other organisations) deducted.

Work currently underway conducted by the applicant may be eligible for expansion in scale or scope provided the applicant can commit additional funding to leverage MDC funding. Commonwealth funding is not eligible to be matched by the MDC.

Detailed information on preparing project budgets is available here:

MLA Project Funding Application Guidelines.docx

**Confidentiality**

By submitting an expression of interest, the applicant will disclose information in the expressions of interest form to MLA’s employees, agents, contractors and advisors, for the purposes of the expressions of interest process and any legal or MLA policy requirement. Applicants must identify any information that they consider should be protected as confidential information and provide reasons for this. Confidential IP should not be divulged by the applicant as part of the expressions of interest process.

**EOI submissions:**

The expressions of interest form contained in this document must be lodged electronically as Word document to: tenders@mla.com.au. Expressions of interest must be received by 1700 AEST on Friday 3rd October 2025.

**Further information:**

**Dr Joe Gebbels:** jgebbels@mla.com.au

**Dr Allan Peake:** apeake@mla.com.au



**Expressions of Interest**

**Annual Call for Co-investment in Feedbase Projects – MLA Donor Company**

**Business Name**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **ABN** |  |
| **Street Address** |  |

**Name of Applicant**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **Phone Number** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |

**Authorised Person (Signatory) In submitting this form, I warrant:**

(a) I have the authorisation to make this warranty on behalf of the Applicant Organisation.

(b) that the information in this application is accurate, and the project will be performed in accordance with all statutory, professional and ethical standards and practices.

(c) in relation to any personal information provided to MLA in this application, before providing any personal information to MLA, notified all individuals to whom the personal information relates that it will be disclosing their personal information to MLA for the purposes of this application/ the project and obtained any required consent to such disclosure; and (ii) provided those individuals with information about where they may find [MLA's Privacy policy.](https://www.mla.com.au/general/privacy/)

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

**Background & Activities Proposed (1 page maximum)**

*In less than 1 page explain the problem facing red meat producers, and intended activities to address the problem, including project duration. Activities from research to development, extension or adoption (i.e. anywhere in the RDE&A pipeline) are eligible.*

**Objectives (200 words maximum)**

*Outline the projects objectives. Use verbs when starting objectives e.g. Determine, Develop, Evaluate*

**Outputs (100 words maximum):**

*What tangible outputs will be delivered by the project e.g:*

* *Producer-relevant best practice guide*
* *Decision support tool*
* *Training packages*
* *Workshops*
* *Technical report*

**Value Proposition (200 words maximum)**

*For example, consider the following questions:*

* *What makes your proposed project useful and why would producers find it useful?*
* *How and by how much will the proposed activity benefit red meat producers?*
* *What is the potential increase in animal production?*
* *How many hectares nationwide could realistically be impacted by the proposed activity?*
* *Which specific regions or agro-climatic zones is it relevant to?*
* *Is it applicable to beef, sheep or goat production?*
* *How much is it likely to cost producers to use, and what economic return could they realistically expect if the project concept is successful?*

*Note: Depending on the project objectives it is not necessarily expected that producer adoption will occur in the life of the project. However, it is expected that applicants have considered the potential impact of the proposed project if it works as anticipated.*

**Safety or Regulatory Issues**

*Outline any expected safety or regulatory issues*

**Indicative Budget**

*Outline a total indicative budget for fees, expenses and capital for the project (AUD, Excl. GST). Specify the funds to be provided by the applicant and the funds to be supplied by the MLA Donor Company.*

*Detailed information on preparing project budgets is available here:*

MLA Project Funding Application Guidelines.docx

**Appendix 1: Additional Background**

***Safeguarding our feedbase resources***

Australian red meat producers manage over half of Australia’s land mass, operating under an increasingly variable climate. Resilience depends on a productive, sustainable feedbase which provides quality forage to support livestock reproduction and growth.

Maintaining productive and sustainable feedbase systems relies on monitoring and protecting land condition and matching pasture production with stocking rate and grazing management. Through pasture management or renovation producers can improve biomass production, drought buffering capacity, and animal productivity.

Key threats to the feedbase productivity include weed and pest infestation, soil constraints (such as salinity or acidity) and poor grazing land management leading to land condition decline.

***Future feedbase design***

This investment theme aims to raise productivity of pastures nationwide. Key focus areas include (but are not limited to):

* using novel and diverse pasture mixes (perennial or annual) to raise productivity, increase resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
* breeding of new pasture, forage, shrub and fodder tree species/cultivars, including provision of species/variety comparison data through the Pasture Trial Network
* development and delivery of agronomic packages for new varieties/species or expanding the adaptation zone of existing pasture/forage systems
* addressing pasture rundown through improved adoption of legumes, particularly in northern Australian and in the southern rangelands
* identification of new tools/sensors for, more accurate pasture biomass measurements, improving the understanding of animal intake and grazing behaviour
* enhancing forage conservation strategies to enable increased performance and resilience

***Enhanced adoption of feedbase innovation***

Adoption of feedbase R&D is paramount to ensuring that industry realises tangible benefits from investment in enhanced feedbase practices and technologies. Furthermore, activities that are developed with producer and advisor input achieve greater applicability of research outputs across a range of environments or seasonal conditions and more immediate commercial relevance. Lack of adoption however can occur for a multitude of reasons including the absence of, regional and local training opportunities, demonstration sites, locally generated research results, and advisor availability.

To address these gaps, MLA are seeking co-investment opportunities related to:

* Production and delivery of locally relevant training opportunities for producer and or their advisors. This could include (but is not limited to):
	+ Supported demonstration sites situated within key production regions
	+ Use of workshops
	+ 1:1 support models to support producers (especially in extensive grazing systems)
	+ formation of producer groups in new regions to help encourage producer driven adoption models
* Production of learning support resources, in a range of formats to support different learning styles, to deliver knowledge within the adoption ecosystem
* Supporting capability and capacity development relevant to the MLA Feedbase program priorities. This could include activities targeting students, other industry entrants, advisor training and enhancing the capacity of commercial or research organisations to deliver greater impact for the Australian red meat sectors.