Appendix 1. Guidelines to developing an adoption pathway for annual call RD&A projects

MLA has a number of adoption programs which aim to drive on-farm practice change, and build capability of both producers and advisors. These activities range from 'raising awareness' through to 'involve and partner' programs. Two of MLA's 'involve and partner programs', Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) and Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) are outlined below. These **may** form part of an adoption strategy within an RD&A project.

MLA encourages applicants to customise adoption programs to suit their RD&A project, particularly producer activities aligning with the core principles of the 'involve and partner' programs; peer to peer, long term (>12 months), supported and/or experiential learning. Similarly, activities which build capability of researchers, advisors and other industry persons, new or existing, is encouraged. Any adoption plan should consider producer and advisor engagement from initial consultation around project scope/design i.e. design led thinking, through to opportunity for application and learning pending a confident research output.

Upon Red Meat Panel endorsement of a project, MLA RD&A managers will work closely with the research organisation to further develop the Research, Development and Adoption components within the project.

Producer Demonstration Site Programs: Integrated Research & Development PDS

MLA's Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) program aims to increase the rate of adoption of key management practices and technologies that improve business profitability, productivity and sustainability.

MLA has recently reviewed and enhanced the PDS framework to provide more opportunities for extending research on-farm. One of these PDS pathways is the Integrated R&D PDS, which aims at reducing the timeline between research and adoption. This mechanism allows research to be initially implemented in commercial production systems under robust methodology, with the lead and guidance of the research organisation. This does not necessarily mean that the researchers will be conducting the on the ground activity, but partner with suitable facilitators and producer groups to ensure effective implementation. Beyond acting as an adoption enabler, the Integrated R&D PDS offers the RD&A project an opportunity to test the research outputs in variable commercial systems and the opportunity to collect additional data e.g. animal production data for pasture trials. This will aid in developing a stronger value proposition to assist with wider promotion and uptake.

The funding for the Integrated R&D PDS projects will be provided to the research organisation and be developed into the project schedule as outputs against a milestone and final deliverables.

Key information for the development of an Integrated R&D PDS:

- Engage with group/s of suitable producers and advisors that may be interested in demonstrating and validating the research outcomes. MLA encourages researchers to liaise with the Research Advisory Councils to identify potential collaborators.
- Engage a suitably skilled facilitator to guide group activity, coordinate extension activities, ensure protocols are implemented and reported back to MLA. The facilitator is engaged by the research organisation via a sub-contract.
- Minimum of **ten core producers** actively involved in running the demonstration component of the research project, though flexibility is offered in extensive regions and/or to suit the project outputs. A portion of core producers will have demonstration sites on their properties.
- Minimum **three demonstration sites**, at a commercially relevant scale. Flexibility is be offered for projects in extensive regions or to suit the project outputs.

- A larger 'observer' group of producers who receive regular updates on progress with the PDS/s 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.
- Minimum of two years, to maximum of 6 years for the demonstration, though this can be developed with the MLA RD&A team to suit the project outputs.
- Include extension and communication activities to extend key messages and learnings beyond the core group.
- An integrated R&D PDS will commence within the research project once there is confidence in the research outputs and will ultimately be the decision of the research organisation in conjunction with the MLA RD&A team.

Profitable Grazing Systems

MLA's Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) program equips producers to improve their production system prosperity. PGS delivers tailored best practice on-farm skill development through approved coaches to small groups of like-minded producers.

PGS allows deliverers to develop and work through training package/learning projects targeting any combination of the following subject areas: business; people management; genetics and reproduction; feedbase; and the value chain. These learning projects are to be tailored to different enterprises (e.g. goats, sheep vs cattle), regions (e.g. rangelands vs Mediterranean) and producer needs.

Options for research organisations to engage with PGS as an adoption pathway include:

1. Work with the MLA and the PGS team to identify existing PGS training package/learning projects in which the project outputs could be incorporated to update the package
2. Engage a suitably skilled consultant/advisor to develop their own training package/learning project that incorporates the research outputs, aligned to the MLA curriculum.
   - Development of the learning package would be at consultants own cost though would own the package IP, and be able to license its use.
3. Develop an MLA owned training package/learning project, incorporating the research outputs, aligned to the MLA curriculum.
   - Development of the training package/learning project would be at MLA's approval and cost – MLA would own the supported learning package IP, and be able to license its use/delivery.

Key Information for PGS as an adoption pathway

- PGS is a commercial product, MLA invests in come of the delivery to cover the costs for monitoring and evaluation.
- Training package/learning project delivery timeline of >6 months, and optimally >12 months.
- Engage a suitably skilled consultant to co-develop and deliver the supported learning package.
- Maintain oversight of the development and the initial/pilot delivery of the package to ensure the research outputs are appropriately represented.
- Develop feeder activities to engage producers to participate in the initial/pilot delivery of the supported learning package.
- Monitoring and Evaluation plans developed and implemented aligned with the PGS M&E Framework.
- Include extension and communication activities to extend key messages and learnings beyond the core group.
- PGS is not a training platform to learn how to use a new tool, it aims at increasing productivity (with specifics). A new tool may be one of the enablers/resources for a training/learning package.