**Expression of Interest**

**Harnessing the Power of Data & AI for the Australian red meat industry**

**Background**

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)’s Strategic Plan 2030 recognises data as one of the industry’s most powerful tools, with its importance only continuing to grow. The plan highlights how data, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital systems are unlocking new opportunities to drive efficiency, generate insights, and support industry growth. Over the next five years, MLA is committed to leading a digital transformation across the red meat supply chain - enhancing traceability, improving visibility, and enabling better decision-making to ensure the industry remains competitive and responsive to evolving market demands.

Integrity Systems Company (ISC), a subsidiary of MLA, plays a role in managing the data and traceability systems that underpin the integrity of Australia’s red meat industry. Through the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), Livestock Production Assurance (LPA), and National Vendor Declarations (NVD), ISC ensures that livestock information transferred across the supply chain is accurate, secure, and traceable.

ISC’s 2030 ambition is to harness digital tools and data to deliver whole-of-life traceability linked to livestock credentials and performance, enable livestock information to feed forward through digital consignments, and apply data, insights, and AI to drive operational efficiencies and strategic outcomes. Central to this ambition is investing in projects that enable interoperability across the red meat industry: improving how systems connect, data flows, and information is leveraged to support trust, market access, and industry integrity. By strengthening data capability and developing technology solutions, ISC aims to unlock greater value from existing systems and support a more connected, transparent, and efficient supply chain.

ISC is seeking supply chain partners with interest in testing ideas or use cases that will drive new innovations aligned with ISC’s 2030 ambition. ISC is seeking expressions of interest from organisations (or partnerships of organisations) to co-invest, via the MLA Donor Company (MDC) funding mechanism (Appendix), in the following areas:

* Driving interoperability and integration by connecting datasets to gain insights within their supply chain.
* Exploring the use of artificial intelligence to improve business operations or supply chain efficiency.
* Exploring the use of verifiable credentials to deliver whole-of-life credentials through the supply chain to determine market demands and drivers.

This EOI will foster opportunities for projects that can harness the value of connected data and digital technologies for better decision making capabilities and ultimately outcomes for the Australian red meat industry. By using and connecting datasets that already exist, applying predictive analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, or presenting verified data that can create value, these projects will facilitate the opportunity to uncover insights, respond to changing conditions and drive meaningful practice improvement.

This EOI opportunity is open to any red meat supply chain partners (e.g., Agtech companies, software providers, tag manufacturers, saleyards, feedlots, processors, research organisations, universities, government, etc.) that can demonstrate strong value of connected datasets and digital technologies to the red meat industry.

**Opportunities**

**Driving interoperability and integration by connecting datasets to gain insights within their supply chain.**

This project area invites proposals that aim to connect datasets across the red meat industry to unlock insights, improve decision-making, and drive innovation. The goal is to enable better integration between ISC systems and external data sources to create a more intelligent, responsive, and data-driven supply chain.

The red meat industry generates vast amounts of data across production, processing, logistics, and compliance. However, much of this data remains siloed, underutilised, or inaccessible across different parts of the supply chain. ISC recognises that connecting these datasets can significantly enhance the value of existing systems and support broader industry goals around traceability, sustainability, and market access.

ISC is supporting supply chain partners to connect their existing datasets with data from their supply chain to develop dashboards, predictive models, benchmarks, or journey mappings etc, to gain insights and enhance decision making capability. This opportunity is available to supply chain partners that already have consent from the data owners (e.g., producers, supply chain partners, Agtech) to utilise and connect datasets to enable improved decision making and gain insights.

Projects may involve collaboration with industry stakeholders and may leverage existing infrastructure such as the MLA data platform, the Australian Agricultural Data Exchange (AADX), or integrations with ISC APIs.

Applicants should outline the technical architecture of their proposed solution, including data sources, integration methods, security protocols, and scalability. Where applicable, they should also address data governance, privacy, and compliance with relevant standards.

The final deliverable will include a case study and final report (in the MLA final report template) that includes details of the learnings gained throughout the project.

**Exploratory use of artificial intelligence to improve business operations and supply chain efficiency**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and technologies are rapidly evolving and gaining relevance, as the opportunities to apply AI for business outcomes are growing. ISC is exploring how AI can benefit organisations and the broader industry to drive efficiency and improve decision making. ISC seeks to support supply chain partners that are interested in exploring the innovative application of AI to improve business processes, data capabilities, and decision-making across the Australian red meat industry. The goal is to accelerate digital transformation by embedding AI into operational workflows, enhancing the value of existing data assets, and enabling smarter, more responsive supply chains.

AI technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and predictive analytics offer powerful tools to address complex challenges in agriculture and livestock management. From automating routine tasks, such as counting livestock or processing data, to uncovering hidden patterns in data and creating predictive models to offer decision support tools, AI may help industry stakeholders optimise performance, reduce costs, and unlock new opportunities for growth.

The expected outcomes of projects in this area include improved operational efficiency, enhanced decision-making, greater digital readiness, and new opportunities for value creation. Applicants should clearly articulate how their project will deliver these outcomes and how success will be measured. Metrics might include reductions in processing time, increases in data accuracy, improvements in compliance rates, or gains in productivity and profitability.

Collaboration with industry stakeholders will be essential. Applicants should identify partners and describe their roles, contributions, and incentives. These might include technology companies providing AI platforms or expertise, processors or saleyards offering access to operational data, or universities and research bodies supporting algorithm development and evaluation. Projects that demonstrate strong industry engagement and co-investment will be viewed favourably.

The supply chain partner will have an already developed use case and data access to develop the AI tools to improve their business efficiency. The final deliverable will include a case study and final report (in the MLA final report template) that includes details of the learnings gained throughout the project.

**Exploring the use of verifiable credentials to deliver whole-of-life credentials through the supply chain to determine market demands and drivers.**

Verifiable Credentials (VCs) are a digital way to prove information about a person, organisation, or product in a secure, privacy-respecting, and tamper-evident manner. They are part of the decentralised identity ecosystem and are designed to be cryptographically secure and easily shareable.

ISC delivers trusted, whole-of-life livestock information through systems including the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), Livestock Production Assurance (LPA), and National Vendor Declarations (NVD). These systems underpin Australia’s market access by enabling traceability, compliance to regulations including biosecurity, food safety and animal welfare, and transparency across the supply chain. VCs offer a secure way to enhance these capabilities and ensure that data shared between supply chain participants is authenticated and aligned with the future direction of global standards for food safety, biosecurity, and provenance.

ISC is supporting supply chain partners that are interested in creating value from the data of their supply chain to explore or implement the delivery of verified whole-of-life livestock VCs to underpin market access, growth and value. This is to explore the potential value creation vehicles to communicate the benefits of Australian red meat – such as verified country of origin, production practices, traceability, compliance statuses and nutrition claims to support Australia’s red meat reputation for delivering a clean, quality protein source.

The aim is to investigate how VCs can enhance traceability, trust, and data integrity, and to establish practical use cases that demonstrate their value in real-world operations. Projects may involve developing technologies, piloting use cases, or conducting research into the feasibility and impact of VCs in various supply chain contexts.

Projects that are submitted under this area may focus on developing technologies that enable the creation, management, sharing, and verification of credentials. This could involve building identity link resolvers, credential registries, or digital wallets/passports that allow supply chain participants to issue and share credentials securely. Applicants may propose solutions that integrate with existing ISC products or extend the functionality of their own products to support new types of credentials and use cases.

Proposals may also investigate the use of VCs in specific business or supply chain scenarios. For example, a processor might explore how VCs can be used to verify the quality assurance programs within their supply chain, or a feedlot might pilot a system for issuing credentials related to animal health and welfare. State governments may be interested in using VCs to support biosecurity programs or regulatory compliance. Technology companies and universities may contribute by developing prototypes, conducting user research, or evaluating the technical and economic feasibility of VC adoption.

Applicants must describe the specific objectives of their project, the activities that will be undertaken, and the expected benefits for their business and the broader industry. They should also outline how they will measure success, such as through stakeholder engagement, system performance, or adoption metrics. Projects that demonstrate a clear pathway to implementation and scale will be viewed favourably.

The final deliverable will include a case study and final report (in the MLA final report template) that includes details of the learnings gained throughout the project.

**Please register which project area/s you are expressing interesting in:**

☐ Driving interoperability and integration by connecting datasets to gain insights within their supply chain.

☐ Exploratory use of artificial intelligence to improve business operations and supply chain efficiency

☐ Exploring the use of verifiable credentials to deliver whole-of-life credentials through the supply chain to determine market demands and drivers.

**Business Name**

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

**Name of Applicant**

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

**Background & Activities Proposed**

*In less than 1 page explain the background and proposed activities.*

**Objectives**

*Outline the project's objectives. Use verbs when starting objectives e.g. Determine, Develop, Evaluate.*

**Outcomes**

*Articulate the outcomes your project will deliver and how success will be measured.*

**Digital Readiness Level**

*Outline the data and digital readiness level of your solution/opportunity.*

**Data access**

*Outline the datasets that will be required for the project and detail whether data permission has been granted by the data owner to use the dataset for any of the project work.*

**Timeframe**

*Outline the development cycle and timeframe to commercial adoption. Use items such as tables or Gantt charts to demonstrate.*

**Value Proposition**

*What makes your proposed offering unique and why would industry want to adopt it?*

**Adoption Pathways**

*Outline the current level of adoption and total addressable market (supply chain partners, Agtech providers, Integrators etc.). Outline the potential serviceable market, who are the competitors in the market, and the likely obtainable market. What are the existing or proposed commercial pathways for adoption? Please see appendix for definitions of addressable, serviceable and obtainable markets.*

**Safety or Regulatory Issues**

*Outline any expected safety or regulatory issues regarding the proposed project.*

**Indicative Budget**

*Outline a total indicative budget for fees, expenses and capital for the project (AUD, Excl. GST).*

**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.

**Process**

ISC will review the expression of interest. In evaluating submissions, ISC will consider strategic alignment with its priorities, potential for industry impact and scalability, strength of partnerships, technical feasibility and innovation, and the clarity of the project application and success measures. ISC will contact parties to indicate if their expression of interest has been prioritised.

**Project proposal submissions:**

The expressions of interest form contained in this document must be lodged electronically as Word document to: Samarah Thrift sthrift@integritysystems.com.au

Expressions of interest must be received by 17: 00 AEDT on Wednesday 1st October.

**Further information:**

Anna Ly – Project Manager Data & Insights ISC

aly@integritysystems.com.au

Gabrielle Sherring – Project Manager Integrity Products ISC

gsherring@integritysystems.com.au

**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:

**Appendix**

*MDC funding mechanism*

The MDC funding mechanism is based on a co-funded approach to ensure the best outcomes can be delivered for both ISC and the participant. This mechanism involves a 60% contribution of funds by the applicants and 40% contribution by MDC, and an access fee of 12% (or 8% for MLA Levy payers) of the total contribution paid by each party to cover project administration costs (apportioned as annual quarterly payments). The payment process involves the applicant’s 60% contribution payment made 30 days prior to milestone sign-off, then MDC pays 40% contribution to the milestone. Upon milestone sign-off the applicant invoices MLA for 100% of the milestone costs and 100% of the milestone cost is paid to the applicant on MLA 30-day payment terms. For example:

* Milestone 1 is due on 1/11/2025 and the total milestone cost is $20,000. On 1/10/2025 the applicant pays $12,000 and MDC contributes $8,000 to total $20,000.
* Once the milestone has been completed and is signed off, the applicant invoices MLA for $20,000 and this total is paid to the applicant on MLA 30-day payment terms.
* The total project value is $200,000 of which the applicant’s total contribution is $120,000. As the applicant is not an MLA levy payer, their access fee is 12% of their contribution totalling $24,000. The project runs from September 2025 to March 2027 which includes 9 whole financial quarters. Each quarter the applicant pays the access fee of $2,667.

MDC funding and the types of costs that may be covered are further detailed in the [MLA Project Funding Application Guidelines.](https://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/research-and-development/documents/funding-oportunities/mla-project-funding-application-guidelines_2024.pdf)