



**MLA GRDC Partnership
Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) Program
Application Guidelines for Preliminary
Applications**

Contents

Planning your project and developing a preliminary application	3
MLA GRDC Partnership PDS Priority.....	3
Regions	3
MLA Consultation Regions	3
GRDC subregions	4
Agro-climatic Zone.....	4
Applicant Information	5
Producer Group Name:.....	5
Project Title:.....	5
Contact Person & Contact Details:	5
No. Members:	5
No. Core Producers:.....	5
No. of Demonstrations Sites:	5
Project Start Date/Project Completion Date:	5
Contracting Organisation.....	5
Insurance	5
Purpose/role of group	5
The challenge/problem/opportunity	6
Project Aim.....	6
Objectives (Measurable Outcomes).....	6
Method	7
Communication activities to engage the project and broader industry	7
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) activities.....	8
Budget	8
Operating Expenses.....	8
Capital items & private good.....	8
Travel	9
Professional project support (Salaries) - (such as facilitation, report writing, etc.).....	9
In-kind Contribution	9
Example budget table for MLA GRDC Partnership PDS projects:.....	10
Other Important information relevant to PDS Applications.....	11
Animal Welfare Committee Approval	11
Intellectual property (IP).....	12
Acknowledgement and project review process	12
Key Roles, and Responsibilities	12
Contacts	13

Planning your project and developing a preliminary application

Planning your project is an important step in 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 (methodology) 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 **MLA GRDC Partnership PDS Terms of Reference (ToR)** and the **Preliminary application form**, available on the [MLA GRDC Partnership PDS webpage](#).

MLA GRDC Partnership PDS Priority

Identify the MLA GRDC Partnership PDS priority the application will address.

Applications must align with at least one priority outlined in the Terms of reference (available at www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/pds-producer-demonstration-sites/mlagrdc-partnership--producer-demonstration-site-pds-projects/).

Regions

Please nominate the MLA consultation region, GRDC sub-region and agro-climatic zone in which the PDS activities will be conducted. This will be determined based on where demonstration site holders & field activities will take place. Refer to the maps below.

MLA Consultation Regions

MLA engages research advisory councils for directing research, development and adoption (RD&A) investment for grassfed cattle and sheepmeat levies.

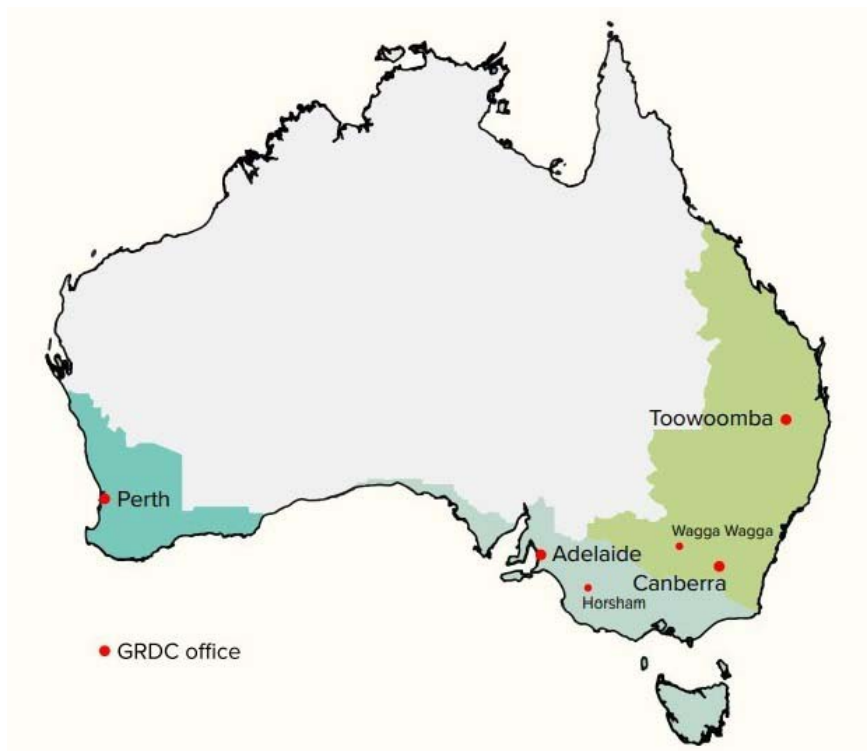


- [North Australia Beef Research Council \(NABRC\)](#)
- [Western Australia Livestock Research Council \(WALRC\)](#)
- [Southern Australia Livestock Research Council \(SALRC\)](#)

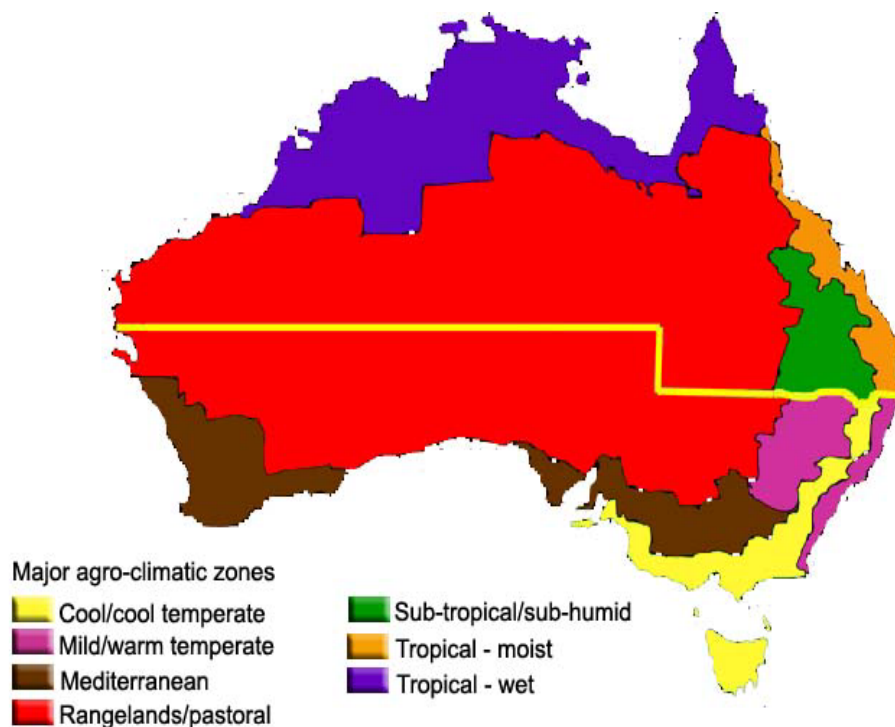
GRDC subregions

The Australian grains industry is defined by three broad regions – comprising 13 agroecological zones – with distinct climate, cropping and market characteristics.

- [Southern region map](#)
- [Western region map](#)
- [Northern region map](#)



Agro-climatic Zone



Applicant Information

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. Consider a title that will also support search engine capability i.e. keywords that reflect the project subject.

Contact Person & Contact Details: Please provide the name of the person who is preparing and submitting the application on behalf of the group. These details will be used following the review of the application to advise the outcome of the review/feedback.

No. Members: Please provide the total number of members in the producer group.

No. Core Producers: Please provide the number of 'core' producers. These are the members who will be actively involved in the running of the 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.

No. of Demonstrations Sites: Please provide the number of sites that will be used for the demonstration activity. These sites will have the key data collected from the on-farm activity throughout the life of the project.

Project Start Date/Project Completion Date: Please provide the proposed project start and completion date, the maximum project period of 40 months(3 years, 4 months).

Contracting Organisation

MLA has been appointed the managing agent for the MLA GRDC Partnership PDS program.

The MLA GRDC partnership 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 that 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.

Insurance

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

Purpose/role of group

Provide brief commentary about the producer group

- how many producers are involved (core and wider interest group),
- what are their areas of interest,
- did they form specifically for this project (or already established)
- previous experience and capacity to undertake a PDS

This section should be a maximum of 300 words.

The challenge/problem/opportunity

- Describe what the challenge/problem/opportunity is.
- Quantify its impact on producers and the industry
- How many producers does it impact in your region?
- How is it being addressed now, if at all?
- Provide an estimate of the number of producers already adopting the proposed practices
- Describe how the project will address the identified priority.
- Advise if the proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the supporting partner organisation/s or the relevant regional committee.

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 to 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 regions.

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 to clearly develop 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 date in the Region of ... state, the project will establish x demonstration sites, engaging x core and x observer producers to:

1. Demonstration trials across ... number of sites ... will have ... increased / decreased the trait or issue you are trying to change or impact
2. Conduct a simple analysis of the costs and benefits of the trait or issue you are trying to change or impact shows a positive return on investment (estimated)

3. Achieve xx% of core producers and xx% of observer producers adopting (or intend to adopt) *the trait or issue you are trying to change or impact*
4. Implement a series of skills and development activities to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of xx% of core producers and xx% of observer producers in relation to *the trait or issue you are trying to change or impact*.
5. The results of the PDS will be widely disseminated with targeted extension and adoption activities such as

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 objectives 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 a small number of clear measurable 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.

A detailed example is provided in the application template.

Method

Provide a summary 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).

Summarise:

- 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: identify what & how 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?

Communication activities to engage the project and broader industry

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

Please provide details in relation to proposed communication & extension 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 and GRDC communication channels.

Think about:

- How will you achieve skill development, knowledge and confidence increase & adoption of the results with the core producer group?
- How you will engage your observer group to increase knowledge, skill and confidence to adopt the demonstrated practices
- How will you promote the outcomes to the wider producer community?
- 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

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) activities

Provide a summary of the monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities that will take place throughout the project. Consider the following:

- How will you measure success at the demonstration sites e.g. economic, social & environmental benefits?
- How will you measure producer change (knowledge, skills and adoption)?
- What practices are being demonstrated and, as a result, what data will be collected (metrics) to determine the benefit or impact of implementing the practice?
- General statistics on producer numbers and animals and area potentially impacted by the project
- Benchmark current practices in relation to the subject and undertake exit surveys to enable assessment of changes in reactions to the project (knowledge, skills, confidence etc) and changes in practices
- Extent of and impact from communication/extension activities beyond the core producers

Refer to the monitoring and evaluation guidelines for additional information on PDS MER expectations.

Budget

The project budget is recorded as GST-exclusive. MLA will pay GST, in addition to the budget, on the presentation of a tax invoice from the contracted organisation.

Operating Expenses

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 & private good

MLA GRDC Partnership PDS funding will not cover the costs of capital items or items that have substantial private benefit. In all cases, commercial partnerships (including sponsorship, equipment loans, etc) are encouraged.

Example of items not covered by the funding include animals, fencing (temporary and permanent), extensive hardware, eID Tags, etc.

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 the ATO standard mileage rate, please refer to the [ATO website](#) for the latest rate.

Any other travel should be at economy rates.

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

Please provide the estimated budget for professional support to assist with project delivery.

The 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.

The 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.

The funding is not available for the facilitator to conduct all routine monitoring and data collection. It is important to ensure that the producers are upskilled in the routine monitoring and data collection requirements for the project.

In-kind Contribution

Provide an estimated budget for in-kind contributions from supporting organisations.

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.

Complete the summary tables in the application form.

See the examples below for further assistance.

Example budget table for MLA GRDC Partnership PDS projects:

BUDGET ITEM		TOTAL (\$)
Fees*		250,000.00
Operating Items (including Travel Costs)*		110,000.00
SUB TOTAL PROJECT COST (excl GST)		A
		360,000.00

50% of the project value will be funded by GRDC contributions, and the remaining 50% of the project budget will be funded through MLA's MDC funding program (at a ratio of 60/40). This requires a cash contribution from a project partner (either the producers, producer group or other third-party organization, or a combination of both). The cash contribution required is 30% of the total project value.

An 8% access fee for producer contributions is included to cover costs associated with providing and operating MDC programs. Where a third-party contribution (non-producer dollars) is being matched by MDC, the access fee is 12% of the contribution amount. Examples are outlined below.

Producer contribution only:

In this scenario, the producer contribution is 30% of the project costs; based on this, the funding split is 50% GRDC, 30% producer contribution & 20% MDC.

	Funding percentage	Cash Contribution to the project (\$ ex GST)	Access Fee	TOTAL (\$ ex GST)
Partner (Producer)	30% of A above	\$108,000.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$8,640.00
MLA/MDC	20% of A above	\$72,000.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$5,760.00
GRDC	50% of A above	\$180,000.00		
TOTAL CASH CONTRIBUTIONS		\$360,000.00	TOTAL ACCESS FEE	\$14,400.00
TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (TOTAL CONTRIBUTION + TOTAL ACCESS FEE)			\$ 374, 400.00 (Excl GST)	

Third-party contribution only:

In this scenario, a third-party organization is contributing the partner contribution of 30% of the project costs; based on this, the funding split is 50% GRDC, 30% third-party contribution & 20% MDC.

	Funding percentage	Cash Contribution to the project (\$ ex GST)	Access Fee	TOTAL (\$ ex GST)
Partner (Producer)	30% of A above	\$108,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$12,960.00
MLA/MDC	20% of A above	\$72,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$8,640.00
GRDC	50% of A above	\$180,000.00		
TOTAL CASH CONTRIBUTIONS		\$360,000.00	TOTAL ACCESS FEE	\$21,600.00

TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (TOTAL CONTRIBUTION + TOTAL ACCESS FEE)	\$ 381,600.00 (Excl GST)
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Producer + third party contribution:

In this scenario, the producer contribution is 20% of the project costs, and a third-party organization contributes an additional 10% based on this the funding split is:

50% GRDC, 20% producer contribution, 10% third party contribution, 20%MLA/MDC. The access fee is charged at 8% against the producer contribution and MDC matched amount and 12% against the third-party contribution and matched amount.

	Funding percentage	Cash Contribution to the Project (\$ ex GST)	Access Fee	TOTAL (\$ ex GST)
Partner (Producer)	20% of A above	\$72,000.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$5,760.00
Partner (Third Party)	10% of A above	\$36,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$4,320.00
MLA/MDC (Producer Matched)	15% of A above	\$54,000.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$4,320.00
MLA/MDC (Third party Matched)	5% of A above	\$18,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 8% / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12% of the contribution	\$2,160.00
GRDC	50% of A above	\$180,000.00		
TOTAL CASH CONTRIBUTIONS		\$360,000.00	TOTAL ACCESS FEE	\$16 560.00
TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (TOTAL CONTRIBUTION + TOTAL ACCESS FEE)		\$ 376 560.00 (excl GST)		

For more information on cash flow and invoicing for Co-contributor PDS projects, please refer to the PDS MDC Cash Flow Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document available on the [MLA GRDC Partnership PDS webpage](#). The FAQ has been developed to assist producer groups in understanding the mechanics of cash flow with PDS projects accessing MDC funding, including when contributions are required to be paid.

In-kind from supporting organisations	
In-kind for producer time and resources	
TOTAL IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION:	

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. Consider the cost of obtaining animal welfare committee approval in your project budget.

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 tender declaration, the MDC source of funds declaration and the relevant application form (see Terms of Reference) submitted electronically via email to pds@mla.com.au.

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

Preliminary applications will be reviewed, and successful projects will be determined by an evaluation committee that will be comprised of six members:

- 1 x GRDC staff
- 2 x GRDC Regional Panel members per region (Northern, Southern & Western)
- 1 x MLA Adoption Project Manager
- 2 x MLA Research Advisory Committees producer members per region (NABRC, SALRC and WALRC).

All projects will be ranked against the selection criteria and competing applications. Applicants will be advised by email of the outcome of their submission.

Applicants of the supported preliminary applications will be invited to submit a full application.

Key Roles, and Responsibilities

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.

PDS Coordinators - are contracted on MLA's behalf to drive the development and implementation of the PDS program.

Contacts

All requests for further information or clarification are to be submitted via email prior to the date advised in the Terms of Reference; all requests and responses to requests will be published as Frequently Asked Questions at the bottom of the [MLA GRDC PDS Partnership program webpage](#).

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