

Expression of Interest EOI 2018-19

Part 1- General Details

		EOI ID	1819-EOI-	
EOI Title: (max 80 char)	Australian Cotton Industry Sustainability Strategy and Sustainability Targets			
Type of Research	Applied			
Proposed Start Date:	3/12/2017	Proposed Cease Date:	31/05/2018	
Please refer to CRDC's Strategic R&D Plan 2013-2018 for the following.				
CRDC Program	2. Industry			
CRDC Theme	2.3 Sustainable Futures			
CRDC Strategy	2.3.2 Supporting innovative approaches to solve traditional industry issues and drive future sustainability.			
Please identify the relevant Measure of Success as outlined in the CRDC Strategic R&D Plan.				
CRDC Measure of Success:	Industry can report against recognised sustainability indicators			
Science and Research Priorities	Food(3i) enhanced food production through: novel technologies, such as sensors, robotics, real-time data systems and traceability, all integrated into the full production chain.	0 %	Food(2) knowledge of the social, economic and other barriers to achieving access to healthy Australian foods.	100 %
	Food(3iii) enhanced food production through: protection of food sources through enhanced biosecurity.	0 %		
Rural R&D Priorities	Adoption of R&D, focusing on flexible delivery of extension services that meet primary producers' needs and recognising the growing role of private service delivery.			
R&D Manager:	Jane Trindall	EOI Due Date:	3 November 2017	

Part 2 – Expression of Interest Requirements

Issue:

The sustainability agenda is becoming increasingly important globally. The business community and government are actively developing programs to reduce their impact, contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and innovate to create sustainable value. Dialogue is increasing and stakeholders are advocating for transparency and evidence of businesses and industries sustainability efforts and achievements.

The Australian cotton industry aims to be a global leader in sustainable agriculture and strives to become the producer and supplier of the most environmentally and socially responsible cotton in the world. Simultaneously there are multiple stakeholders with varying expectations of the industry in relation to sustainability, whose motivation and use of information regarding the industry's credentials varies and changes over time.

The Australian cotton industry is made up of around 1000 growers, producing annually on average 641,806 metric tonnes (2,827,338 bales) of cotton lint, nearly all of which is exported (Cotton Australia and Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CA/CRDC), 2014). The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) is a statutory body, which invests in RD&E for the benefit of the Australian cotton industry. Cotton Australia (CA) is the peak body for Australia's cotton growers.

Over many years, the Australian cotton industry has been under significant external pressure to manage its environmental impacts. In response, the industry has a 21 year history of independent environmental assessments, has developed an environmental self-assessment scheme (myBMP), undertaken life cycle assessments of cotton production in Australia, launched its first ever Sustainability Report in 2014 (CA/CRDC,

2014) and this year will announce sustainability targets. CA has recently joined two international sustainability partnerships: The Cotton LEADS Program and the Better Cotton Initiative. myBMP is the Australian cotton industry's voluntary farm and environmental management system for growers to improve on-farm production.

The Cotton Industry Sustainability Working Group (SWG) provides a coordinating role and oversees the development and delivery of the industry's key sustainability actions (e.g. Sustainability report and targets) and ensures communication and coordination across a range of related cotton industry sustainability activities. The SWG consists of members of CA, CRDC and ACSA (the Australian Cotton Shippers Association). The consultant will be required to develop the Strategy in consultation with the Sustainability Working Group (SWG) who will eventually approve the Strategy for endorsement by the CRDC and CA Boards.

Outcomes:

The project will deliver:

- 1) One Australian Cotton Industry sustainability strategy document for Australian grown cotton.
- 2) One Australian Cotton Industry sustainability targets paper for Australian grown cotton.

The project will develop a strategy to enable the Australian cotton industry to be the global leader in sustainable agriculture.

Project description:

- 1) One sustainability strategy document for Australian grown cotton.

The key elements that require inclusion in the strategy are:

1. A Strategic Framework so that the industry's sustainability activities are co-ordinated, high impact and fit for purpose including:
 - An understanding of the industry's current sustainability activities, organisations and their responsibility.
 - A review of relevant literature and global examples of best practise Sustainability programs including other agricultural sectors and the global textile and apparel value chain.
2. Ensure stakeholder expectations are met and engagement and communication with internal and external stakeholders is coordinated and effective including:
 - A stakeholder analysis
 - Development of an engagement and communications plan including internal (cotton industry) and external stakeholders to clearly set out the target audiences and providing a framework for how, when and why to communicate to various target audiences.
 - Providing a process/framework for seeking and incorporating stakeholder feedback into cotton's sustainability reporting and positioning of its sustainability credentials.
3. Provide a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and implementation (MERI) framework for the SWG to ensure the industry's sustainability targets are achieved and key metrics reported.
 - Identification of key tactics, metrics, progress reporting and associated measures of success to meet sustainability targets and vision.
 - Timeline for key deliverables
 - Definition for roles, responsibility, leadership, and funding
 - Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Sustainability Working Group for governance of the strategy.
 - Process for monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The key tasks to complete the strategy are:

- a. Write a strategy report with the above elements
- b. Facilitate industry feedback on the strategy to test assumptions and elements

- c. Prepare a draft strategy document, circulate for feedback and review accordingly
- d. Desktop publishing (optional)

2) One sustainability targets paper for Australian grown cotton:

The industry has produced its first sustainability report. The next phase of the “Australian Grown Cotton” journey is to develop sustainability targets to focus the industry’s efforts to be a successful, resilient and responsible industry. Short and long-term targets are proposed that cover each of the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainability. A draft targets paper has been prepared and stakeholders consulted. The targets presented within this document were discussed by representatives of the cotton industry and external stakeholder groups as part of a 2016 Sustainability Stakeholder Reference Forum and feedback from this forum was incorporated. These targets are now in the process of being revised as a consequence of stakeholder feedback.

The key tasks to complete the targets are:

- a. Consolidate information to revise consultation draft document
- b. Ensure targets are in sync with best practise science based Sustainability targets including the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- c. Facilitate review with SWG and other relevant stakeholders
- d. Finalise targets paper
- e. Desktop publishing (optional)

Project Investment:

Budget indicated is maximum available. Where the FRP only seeks to address some of the outcomes, the budget will need to reflect this. Overseas travel is not to be included in FRP budgets unless it directly relates to a project output and is an explicit milestone. Otherwise overseas travel must be made as a separate travel application.

Note: This project will be jointly funded by CA and CRDC. If the proposal does not include desktop publishing the maximum budget for the project will be reduced to \$50,000.

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Indicative budget (up to)	\$60,000			

Part 3 – Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used by the CRDC to assess the full research proposals (FRPs) received for each Expression of Interest.

- 1. A sound understanding of the nature and importance of the outcome to the Australian cotton industry:**
The research applicant must address the Issue, Outcome and Project Description in terms of the CRDC Strategic Plan and demonstrate understanding of the impact on the Australian cotton industry.
- 2. Soundness and clarity of the proposed R&D methods to address project deliverable outcomes:**
The research applicant must describe how the research methodology employed will enable the project outcomes to be delivered
- 3. Demonstrated capacity of the nominated researcher/s to provide project coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation for the timely delivery of high quality outputs:**
The research applicant must describe the research team’s project management skills and experience and may include a recent example of a completed project. They must detail the monitoring and evaluation strategy which should include any steering committees to co-ordinate collaborative research, links with CottonInfo, CGAs, Cotton Australia, etc and any additional reporting outside the 6 monthly Progress Reports.
- 4. Demonstrated track record, technical knowledge and experience of all key personnel in the research area:**
The research applicant must describe the project research team’s technical skill and experience relevant to the project and methodologies proposed.

5. A demonstrated capacity to effectively communicate project outcomes to diverse stakeholders within the Australian cotton industry:

The research applicant must describe the communication skills and existing communication channels that the research team use to communicate project outcomes to the Australian cotton industry. The new applicants to the cotton industry should provide an example of industry communication from a recent project.

6. Demonstrated ability of the project team to form productive networks and links to build on national and international research already undertaken in related areas:

The research applicant must describe existing networks that the research team use for collaboration with other researchers and an ability to develop new networks as research knowledge increases.

7. The cost effectiveness of this project including cash and in-kind commitments from the applicants and leverage through domestic or international linkages that are useful if not essential to progress the project:

The research applicant should demonstrate market value and market fairness for the proposed budget and comment on the leverage achieved through collaboration and in-kind support.

8. Project demonstrates collaboration between organisations or research groups:

The research applicant must describe the existing or proposed collaboration with other researchers, research groups or committees and the Australian cotton industry.