

Expression of Interest EOI

Part 1 – General Details

EOI ID	1040
EOI Title	Understanding red soils constraints in cotton production systems
Type of Research	Knowledge Creation
Expected Start Date	02/11/2026
Expected End Date	30/06/2029
CRDC Pillar	3. Planet
CRDC Theme	3.1 Natural Capital
CRDC Outcome	3.1.6 By 2030, growers are enhancing and maintaining biodiversity and soil condition, and are more resilient to impacts
EOI Close Date	18/09/2026

Part 2 – Expression of Interest Requirements

Issue to be addressed and project description:

Hard-setting red soils are widespread across Australian cotton-growing regions from southern New South Wales through Far North Queensland and into the Northern Territory. These soils can present major agronomic constraints due to poor soil structure driven by inherent physical properties, chemically induced dispersion, or a combination of both. Where red soils are low in organic matter and lack cropping cycles that build structural resilience and root-derived binding agents, they are particularly vulnerable to hard-setting and dispersion-related structural decline.

This project will quantify how hard-setting and dispersive red soils affect cotton productivity and long-term industry sustainability, and will refine best-management practices for cotton production on these soil types. The work will establish the extent and severity of key constraints, identify the primary drivers of structural decline across representative regions, and translate findings into practical, region-relevant management guidance.

Intended outcomes include improved understanding of red soil limitations in cotton systems, evidence-based recommendations to maintain or improve soil structure and more resilient cotton production and long term sustainability of the cotton industry.

Expected project outputs and outcomes:

Outcomes

Improved understanding of red soil limitations in cotton systems, evidence-based recommendations to maintain or improve soil structure and more resilient cotton production and long term sustainability of the

cotton industry.

Outputs

1. Technical Report that

- Identifies and describes cotton regions where red soils constraints are impacting cotton production
- Describes and quantifies the impacts of red soils constraints on profitability and sustainability at a cotton enterprise and industry level
- Compiles current knowledge on the mechanisms driving red soil health decline in cotton growing systems.
- Includes a gap and prioritisation analysis that identifies RDE opportunities, supported by case studies, to improve soil health in priority regions.

2. Regional relevant demonstrations (including monitoring and evaluation) of how red soils constraint can be managed in cotton production systems.

Project Investment:

Year	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	TOTAL
Indicative budget (up to)	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$450,000.00

Additional guidance:

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.

The rationale of the project, how it will support CRDC’s Strategic Plan and the potential impacts for the Australian cotton industry and the Australian community.

This criterion will be assessed on the soundness of the proposal’s understanding of the issues, and the extent to which the project outcomes will address the issues and support CRDC to achieve its measures of success.

Project methodology.

This criterion will be assessed on the soundness and clarity of the proposed R&D methods to achieve project deliverables and outcomes.

The skills and capacity of the research team to undertake the project.

This criterion will be assessed on the track record, technical knowledge and experience of all key personnel in the research area and the demonstrated capacity of the nominated researcher/s to provide project coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation for the timely delivery of high quality outputs.

The proposed ‘Pathway to Impact’.

This criterion will be assessed on the appropriateness of the proposed ‘Pathway to Impact’ and the demonstrated capacity of the project personnel to effectively translate research/project outcomes to on ground actions. Please include the target audience and process for extension/ communication/ commercialisation (as appropriate), as well as any collaboration partners and potential risks. Note that successful FRPs may be requested to develop specific milestones for delivery of project outcomes in collaboration with CottonInfo or CRDC Commercialisation Manager at the outset of the project.

Proposed collaborations for the project and / or the collaborative networks of the project team.

This criterion will be assessed on the demonstrated ability of the project personnel to form productive networks to build on national and international research already undertaken in related areas.

How this project is cost effective for the Australian cotton industry, including details of the resources being brought to the project.

This criterion will be assessed on the cost effectiveness of this project including cash and in-kind commitments from the applicants and leverage through domestic or international linkages. Budget including descriptive text will also be assessed as part of this criterion.

To apply, [follow this process](#). For further information, contact the CRDC Innovation Administration team on 02 6792 4088 or via research@crdc.com.au.

This EOI is not a guarantee of funding.