

Expression of Interest EOI

Part 1 – General Details

EOI ID	1108
EOI Title	Strengthening Cotton-Grain System in the Ord
Type of Research	Knowledge transfer/application
Expected Start Date	01/12/2026
Expected End Date	30/06/2029
CRDC Pillar	1. Paddock
CRDC Theme	1.2 Adaptive Systems
CRDC Outcome	1.2.3 By 2028, a sustainable and profitable cotton farming system is established in Northern Australia
EOI Close Date	27/08/2026

Part 2 – Expression of Interest Requirements

Issue to be addressed and project description:

The Ord region is entering a phase of rapid expansion, with irrigated cropping projected to increase to 50,000 ha, including supporting an estimated 200,000–300,000 bales of cotton per annum, as well as the production of cottonseed and grain crops such as maize, sorghum and pulses for export and domestic markets, including Northern Australia's extensive cattle industry. Building on established grain production and consistent cotton yields already being realised under irrigation, the region is well placed to optimise cotton grain farming systems to deliver sustainable, profitable and resilient outcomes.

Extensive research has been conducted both locally and across the broader industry, providing a strong foundation for targeted innovation. However, the next phase requires a coordinated effort to refine agronomic practices, and tailor technologies and practices to the unique climatic and soil conditions of the region to ensure profitability, long term sustainability, and to ensure cotton production continues to meet evolving community and market expectations.

CRDC is seeking proposals that will deliver information and practices to strengthen the profitability, resilience and regional adaptation of cotton grain farming systems in the Ord region.

GRDC will participate in the evaluation process for this EOI. Where a proposal demonstrates relevance to both the cotton and grains industries, applicants may request additional co-investment from GRDC as part of their submission. Subject to assessment outcomes and GRDC approval, co-investment may be provided proportionate to the level of grains relevance up to a level similar to CRDC's contribution.

Proposals may address one or more of the following, recognising that a portfolio of complementary

projects may be required to deliver across the full scope and that given available budget not all points will necessarily be included in final investment/s. Preference will be given to proposals that consider both cotton and grains systems and demonstrate opportunities to leverage potential GRDC co-investment.

- Increase understanding of the interaction between climate variability (particularly wet season timing) and cropping system performance and develop practical strategies for adapting planting windows, crop management and system sequencing for cotton and rotational crops aligned with weather pattern trends.
- Quantify nitrogen and water demand, interactions and system-level use efficiency in cotton–grain rotations, and identify integrated management strategies to improve productivity, profitability and resource use efficiency.
- Assess the impacts of cotton–grain–pulse rotation systems (e.g. corn, sorghum, chickpea, fodder systems) on yield, profitability, soil health and overall system resilience, and develop practical management strategies including to address emerging systems issues such as weed management
- Benchmark and understand natural capital associated with Ord region cotton–grain systems (including soil, water, biodiversity), and proactively engage with industry to prioritise and deliver practical pathways for management.

Strong linkage to extension pathways (including CottonInfo (www.cottoninfo.com.au) and collaboration with industry stakeholders will be critical to ensure adoption and impact. As the Australian cotton industry's extension and adoption partnership, CottonInfo plays a key role in translating research outcomes into practical knowledge, supporting grower decision-making, and facilitating industry-wide adoption of proven innovations. Proposals should describe any requested support from CottonInfo, including outlining the requested role the CottonInfo Northern REO will provide through in-kind support to the project.

Expected project outputs and outcomes:

Outputs:

Integrated, practical management strategies for cotton–grain farming systems in the Ord, including optimised planting windows, rotations, and water and nitrogen use efficiency, informed by improved understanding of system interactions and addressing emerging challenges such as weed management

Benchmarking and evidence base for sustainability and system performance in the Ord, including soil, water and environmental outcomes

Enhanced performance and reliability of cotton–grain farming systems in the Ord through adoption of integrated, resource-efficient management practices.

Outcome:

Sustainable expansion of cotton grain cropping farming system in Northern WA's Ord region is supported through development and adoption of profitable, resilient and regionally adapted practices that support adaption to variable and challenging conditions.

Project Investment:

Year	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	TOTAL
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Indicative budget (up to)	\$215,000.00	\$215,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$580,000.00

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.