Expression of Interest EOI

Part 1 – General Details

EOI ID	1157
EOI Title	Intellectual Property and Data Management Review
Expected Start Date	18/01/2027
Expected End Date	23/04/2027
CRDC Pillar	2. People
CRDC Theme	2.3 Adoption and Impact
CRDC Outcome	2.3.1 By 2026, research outcomes are integrated into on-farm practice change at a faster rate
Application Type	
EOI Close Date	27/11/2026

Part 2 – Expression of Interest Requirements

Project Investment:				
Year				**TOTAL**
Indicative budget (up to)				$0.00

Issue to be addressed and project description:

1. Background

CRDC is seeking an independent consultant to audit how data generated in CRDC-funded research is identified, classified, controlled and managed, by CRDC and by a sample of its research partners.

1.1Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) overview

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) and an agency in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.

CRDC was established as a statutory authority under the Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989 (PIRD Act) to enhance the performance of the Australian cotton industry and community by investing in research, development and extension (RD&E). It is funded by the Australian Government and

cotton producers.

CRDC's planned outcome is: Adoption of innovation that leads to increased productivity, competitiveness and environmental sustainability through investment in research and development that benefits the Australian cotton industry and the wider community.

CRDC is governed by a board of directors appointed for their expertise and is led by an Executive Director who manages day-to-day operations. The Board's Investment Committee oversees CRDC's investment in RD&E, including periodic independent audits of IP management.

CRDC funds research under the CRDC Research Deed, negotiated with its key research partners. The Research Deed sets the rules for ownership and management of IP used in or created by research projects, and for equity in any income from exploiting project IP. CRDC's core objective is to deliver research outcomes for the benefit of the Australian cotton industry; financial or other gains are secondary.

1.2Requirement for IP Management Review

CRDC regularly reviews its IP management systems and processes for compliance with the CRDC IP Policy, IP Management Plan and Research Deed, and reviews IP management by its research partners. Targeted audits with a narrow, testable scope and clear deliverables have proved the most useful.

CRDC's IP management framework is well established. Data is a different matter. It can be categorised by an extensive and diverse range of criteria, and it is not yet consistently treated as a managed asset class across:

- identification at project level
- classification (raw versus analysed)
- ownership and control
- access and reuse permissions
- hosting and security
- publication and attribution

This fragments how data is captured, controlled and managed across projects and research partners. It matters because:

- the value and volume of data from CRDC-funded projects is increasing, and access to good research data sets will be foundational to deploying AI and realising significant additional value;
- data is defined and managed inconsistently across research partners;
- consistency with principles for seeking grower consent for using on-farm data, as outlined in the farm data code.

- unclear ownership, access rights and reuse permissions create operational risk; and
- CRDC needs to confirm that contractual rights under the Research Deed match actual practice.

The audit is therefore a targeted, data-centric audit rather than a broad IP compliance review. It is a data management improvement exercise, not compliance enforcement. Its purpose is to determine whether CRDC has effective visibility and control over the data assets it funds, and what structural changes may be needed to achieve this.

Expected project outputs and outcomes:

2.1Statement of Requirement

CRDC is seeking EOIs from suitably qualified parties to audit how data from CRDC-funded projects is identified, classified and managed by CRDC and by a selected sample of research partners, and to provide specific, prioritised recommendations for improvement.

The audit is to be narrow, defined and testable. The project sample is to be targeted, not exhaustive.

2.2Terms of Reference

The audit is to address the following Terms of Reference.

- Data identification. Assess whether data generated in projects is consistently identified and recorded, and whether project outputs align with the Schedule 2 IP Registers and the CRDC Managed IP Register.
- Data classification. Assess how raw data and analysed data are differentiated, and whether classification affects ownership, access and reuse settings.
- Data management practices. Across a selected sample of projects and research partners, assess:
- (a) Ownership: alignment between contractual ownership (Research Deed) and actual practice.
- (b) Access permissions: internal versus external access controls, and third-party sharing practices.
- (c) Hosting: where data is stored (partner systems versus central repositories) and the risks of decentralised storage.
- (d) Publication rights: timing and control of disclosure, and consistency with CRDC's commercialisation objectives.
- (e) Attribution: whether CRDC's contribution is appropriately recognised.
- (f) Standardisation: whether consistent data management protocols exist across research partners and across Research and Development Corporations (RDCs).
- Gaps and recommendations. Identify gaps between contractual rights and operational reality, and report clear findings, specific recommendations and implementation priorities.

The audit will not pre-determine outcomes. CRDC expects it to test and inform the following possible approaches, which respondents should address in their recommendations where the evidence supports it:

- a data catalogue or library approach (non-custodial), recording what data exists, where it is held, who owns and controls it, and the access conditions and request pathways, rather than a central repository;
- adoption of existing metadata and protocol frameworks (for example, GRDC metadata standards and research partner protocols) to support consistent identification and interoperability across projects and RDCs;
- minimum standards for data management across projects, covering ownership and licensing, access and sharing, retention and storage, and publication and attribution;
- resourcing and administration models for ongoing data management, including centralised CRDC support, cost-recovery mechanisms (such as subscription or access-based models) and hybrid approaches; and
- integration of upfront data identification and classification, and defined access and reuse pathways, into project assessment and management processes.

CRDC has related work under way to confirm data permissions and owner- and grower-collected data using a long-running data set. The successful consultant will be given the relevant findings and is expected to build on them rather than duplicate them.

2.3Audit scope and sample

CRDC practices: CRDC's data identification, classification and recording practices, and the alignment of its IP registers with project outputs. The audit period for CRDC records will be agreed at the inception meeting.

- Research partners: a targeted sample of research partners and projects, to be agreed with CRDC at the inception meeting. Tenderers should state the sample size and selection approach they would propose, and the effort each additional partner or project would add.
- Not in scope: a general compliance review of CRDC's IP Policy, IP Management Plan or Research Deed outside the data management matters above, however if the review process notes broader IP issues or recommendations these can be included in the reporting.

2.4 Project Outputs

The successful party will deliver the following within the agreed timeframe:

- Draft Report (PDF and Microsoft Word format)
- Final Report (PDF and Microsoft Word format), setting out clear findings, specific recommendations and implementation priorities
- Executive Summary of the key findings and recommendations (PDF format)

2.5Resource Allocation

The CRDC contact will help with access to relevant documents held by CRDC, connect the consultant with CRDC staff, and introduce research partner project administrators as required. The successful party must provide its own administrative support, including word processing and printing.

Additional guidance:

3. Submission

EOIs must address the requirements in 3.1 and will be assessed against the criteria in 3.6.

3.1Proposal requirements

Application must address the following:

1. Methodology

A detailed description of the proposed approach and methodology for the audit, addressing each Term of Reference. Include how relevant quantitative and qualitative data will be identified, collected and analysed, how the project sample will be selected, and how the audit will test alignment between Research Deed rights and actual data practice.

2. Reporting

An outline of the proposed table of contents and layout of the final report, showing how findings, recommendations and implementation priorities will be compiled and articulated. Attach examples of similar completed reports.

3. Experience and qualifications

The names, roles, qualifications, relevant experience and knowledge of all personnel allocated to the project, including experience in IP management audits or reviews, research data governance and data rights (ownership, licensing, access and reuse), the agricultural or research and development sector, and report writing. Include current references for the organisation and nominated personnel.

4. Capacity and resources

Project management details showing capacity to start and manage the project within the required timeframe.

5. Pricing

A costing and payment schedule, including the basis for pricing (for example, days per person). The CRDC consultancy agreement will be a fixed price contract, with payments made on achievement of agreed milestones.

3.2Conflict of interest

Expressions of Interest are required to include any actual or perceivable conflict of interest that exists at the time of lodging the tender. The successful consultant will be required to advise CRDC in writing of any changes in conflicts of interest at the time of contracting the services with CRDC or at any time during the term of the agreement when a conflict occurs. The CRDC Annual Report lists our stakeholders, directors, staff and research partners and may be helpful in determining if you have a conflict of interest. The CRDC Annual Report is available on our website at Corporate Publications | CRDC under the Corporate Publications page.

3.3Confidentiality

The successful consultant will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement with CRDC and must keep confidential all information, documents, data and software that is provided by CRDC or its research partners for the purpose of undertaking the performance review activities.

3.4Professional indemnity and public liability insurance

Details of professional indemnity and public liability insurance must be provided at commencement of services.

3.5CRDC Services Agreement

CRDC will contract with the successful Tenderer using the CRDC Services Agreement (refer to Attachment 1)

which is based on the standard Commonwealth Contract Terms.

3.6Criteria for selection

CRDC will evaluate the Expressions of Interest on the basis of the following criteria:

- degree of understanding of the project demonstrated in the proposal, including:
- - CRDC's IP management strategy, principles and policy.
- - how CRDC through the Research Deed manages IP during the project and post project.
- suitability of the methodology proposed for undertaking the project and meeting each of the requirements of the Terms of Reference.
- demonstrated experience in conducting intellectual property management reviews and providing evidence-based findings and recommendations for improvement.
- qualifications and skills of the proposed project personnel.
- capacity and resources of the consultant to deliver within timeframe.
- cost effectiveness and value for money.

3.7CRDC rights

Without limiting its rights at law or otherwise, the CRDC reserves the right in its absolute discretion at any time to:

- cease to proceed with, or suspend the Expression of Interest process
- alter timing of the Expression of Interest process
- vary the Expression of Interest structure
- vary any time or date specified in the Expression of Interest
- require additional information or clarification from the organisation submitting an Expression of Interest
- request a new Expression of Interest
- reject any Expression of Interest received after the closing date
- reject any Expression of Interest that does not comply with the requirements as described in this document
- publish the names of the successful Tenderer.

3.8Conditions of lodgement

The respondent agrees, by lodging an Expression of Interest, that it is bound by these conditions:

- All Expression of Interest documents become the property of CRDC upon lodgement
- It warrants that all information in the Expression of Interest is accurate and complete
- That it will keep confidential any confidential information provided by CRDC in connection with the Expression of Interest
- That it will make any inquiries relating to the Expression of Interest process only through the contact details provided
- That pursuant to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) it will be bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in respect of any act done or practice engaged in by the respondent in connection with this Expression of Interest process.

Important to note:

• Applicants are expected to have read the CRDC Strategic Plan and Researchers Handbook before applying for funding.

• Where there are system limitations that prevent the ability to include graphs, pictures or background documents, attachments can be uploaded with your application. Please note you must abide by character limits where applicable. Attachments cannot be used as workarounds for the text fields in Fluxx, unless otherwise advised by CRDC.

• Some organisations require a two-step submission process. For these organisations, applications must be approved by the authorised Grantee Admin before they can be submitted to CRDC. Please allow your Grantee Admin sufficient time to action this before the EOI closing date.

• Applications may be submitted in Fluxx up to 11.59 pm on the close date, noting the above requirement (if applicable to your organisation).

• This EOI is not a guarantee of funding.

• If you are unsure of your organisation's requirements, or for any other queries, contact the Innovation Administration team via 02 6792 4088 or research@crdc.com.au

To apply, follow this process.