

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:**

## Australian Cotton Disease Collaboration: Call for partners

Reference	ACDC – Australian Cotton Disease Collaboration
Release date	July 17, 2023
Closing time & date	5pm AEST, August 21, 2023
Deadline for enquiries	5pm AEST, August 18, 2023
Industry briefing	10am AEST, July 31, 2023
Document contact and enquiries	Elsie Hudson Innovation Broker Cotton Research and Development Corporation  Enquiries in relation to this Expression of Interest must be submitted via email to <a href="mailto:acdc@crdc.com.au">acdc@crdc.com.au</a> by 5pm AEST, August 18, 2023.
Lodgement of response	<b>Responses to this Expression of Interest must be submitted via email to <a href="mailto:acdc@crdc.com.au">acdc@crdc.com.au</a> by 5pm AEST, August 21, 2023.</b>  Responses lodged after the deadline or that do not provide all the information requested may be excluded from further consideration.



## PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. Introduction

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) invites suitably qualified individuals and entities to submit responses in accordance with this Expression of Interest (EOI).

### 2. Background

Disease is a high priority issue for the Australian cotton industry. It contributes to significant yield losses and undermines long-term confidence in growing cotton. In extreme cases, some growers have opted out of cotton in response to severe and escalating disease pressure.

CRDC has invested in cotton disease research over several decades. Nevertheless, disease is still one of the leading limitations in the cotton production system. As a result, in the new *CRDC Strategic RD&E Plan 2023-28: Clever Cotton*, CRDC is proposing a new collaborative approach to disease research to mitigate the economic impacts of disease.

CRDC's goal is to reduce the economic impact of current and emerging diseases of cotton to less than five per cent of the cost of production by 2028. To achieve this, CRDC is committing \$10 million to disease RD&E over the five years of Clever Cotton.

#### **This will be achieved via the Australian Cotton Disease Collaboration (ACDC).**

ACDC will develop long-term strategic partnerships, focused on genuine co-design and partner co-investment. This EOI is seeking responses from parties interested in being partners with CRDC in ACDC.

### 3. About ACDC

CRDC recently commissioned a cotton disease review by Professor Mark Gibberd of Curtin University. This review highlighted the need for long-term investments – with strong linkages to ongoing economic impact assessment.

As a result of this review, CRDC has formed ACDC: a comprehensive national disease program to understand the impact of disease, enhance foundational pathology resources and capability, and deliver tactical management and innovative technical solutions for cotton growers.

*ACDC's mission is: to reduce the economic impact of current and emerging cotton diseases to less than 5 per cent of the cost of production, through practice change underpinned by efficient and collaborative RD&E.*

Long-term strategic partners will be selected based on their clear strategic alignment to this mission and CRDC (including capacity building), willingness to co-invest, and commitment to

co-design. Through ACDC, CRDC aims to help maintain/build capacity in partner organisations and bring together complementary skills to achieve ACDC's mission.

#### 4. Requirements

- 4.1 CRDC seeks responses from parties interested in partnering in ACDC and helping to achieve its mission. CRDC specifically seeks responses from parties with the capability to address one or more of the domains listed in section 4.2, and a commitment to participating in a multi-stage co-design process.
- 4.2 Strategic partnerships are sought from research, government, and commercial partners in the following domains:
- Systems-based disease control packages.
  - Understanding pathogen behaviour: the phenotype (the virulence and epidemiology of the pathogens causing disease), the genotype (genetics of the pathogens and pathogen populations) and interactions between the pathogen and host.
  - Increased adoption of spatial data analytics and advanced modelling capabilities for disease prediction and management.
  - Investment in supporting the testing and introduction of new actives (fungicides and mediators of plant defense) for disease control.

There are three levels of investment (Partnership Tiers – see Table 1).

4.3 CRDC seeks responses from potential partners:

- Identifying their preferred Partnership Tier and responding to the attributes listed in table 1.
- Describing the partner's ability to contribute to one or more of the four domains, including a high-level statement of intent for each of the domains of interest.

A form has been provided on the CRDC website as a template for potential partners.

Once confirmed, level one partners (Strategic Partners) will assist in the co-design of ACDC, along with any other parties chosen at CRDC's discretion. Partners must view Australian cotton disease as a strategic priority and be prepared to co-invest accordingly. Level two and three partners (Project and Associate Partners, respectively) will not be involved in the initial co-design and will be invited to tender for specific work packages to achieve the ACDC objectives.

- 4.4 Through this EOI, CRDC will shortlist respondents into the appropriate Partnership Tier categories (Strategic, Project and Associate Partner). CRDC expects to shortlist between one and three Strategic Partners. Should respondents not be chosen for their preferred Tier, they may be considered for one or more of the other Tiers.
- 4.5 CRDC will not accept consortia responses to this EOI. Each respondent must be a single legal entity.

4.6 It is anticipated that all Partners will sign a confidentiality agreement covering the co-design process and agree to Terms of Participation in relation to the co-design phase.

These may include but not be limited to:

- a) An acknowledgement that no fees are applicable to the co-design process
- b) An acknowledgment that participation in the co-design process does not establish a contract (or guarantee any contract) to establish and govern ACDC
- c) A requirement to work collaboratively and in good faith with CRDC and any other parties involved in the co-design of ACDC
- d) An acknowledgment that any IP created during the co-design process vests in CRDC on creation.

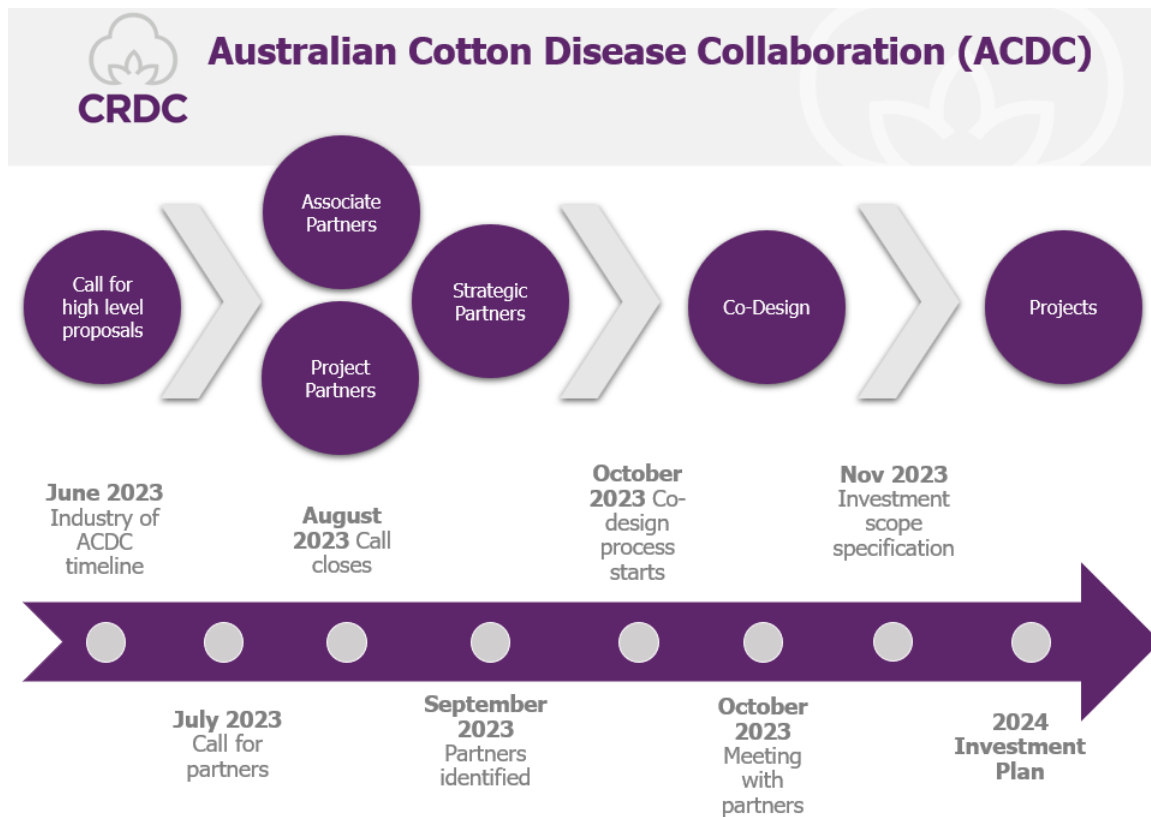
4.7 Following co-design of ACDC, respondents shortlisted as potential Strategic, Project and Associate Partners will be invited to tender. CRDC will approve all ACDC partners.

4.8 CRDC reserves the right to change this procurement process, including the right to re-open the call and the right to approach potential partners directly if capacity is missing. CRDC has no obligation to select partners from respondents.

## PART 2 – EOI CONDITIONS

### 5. Procurement Summary

#### Timetable



#### Partnership Tiers (Table 1)

Partnership	Attributes
Strategic Partners	<p>Each organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-invests a minimum of \$750,000–\$1,000,000 per annum in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cash; and/or</li> <li>○ Personnel salaries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Also makes additional co-investment in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ project specific equipment, facilities, resources;</li> <li>○ IP.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Builds and retains cotton disease RD&amp;E capacity and capability beyond the life of the ACDC</li> <li>• Commitment to dedicated and sustained National leadership as it relates to cotton pathology</li> <li>• Has internationally and/or nationally recognised talent</li> <li>• Commitment to supporting partnership with Project and Associate Partners</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has collaborative links that add value to research translation and/or RD&amp;E outcomes</li> <li>• Agrees to IP co-ownership and beneficial interest</li> </ul>
Project Partner	<p>Each organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-invests at least \$500,000–\$750,000 per annum that can be comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cash;</li> <li>○ Personnel salaries;</li> <li>○ Project-specific equipment, facilities, or resources; or</li> <li>○ IP</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Has a commitment to being involved in cotton disease RD&amp;E</li> <li>• Commitment to dedicated and sustained human resource capability as it relates to cotton pathology</li> <li>• Has internationally and/or nationally recognised talent</li> <li>• Has collaborative links that add value to research translation and/or RD&amp;E outcomes</li> </ul>
Associate Partner	<p>Each organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely focussed on a well-defined enabling capability, or the utilisation of research outputs for on ground impact.</li> <li>• Will be considered part of the ACDC RD&amp;E community (e.g. technical and research working groups).</li> <li>• Will be involved in individual projects or project activities aligned with the partner’s capability.</li> </ul>

## 6. Multi-Stage Process

- 6.1 This is not an EOI for projects, but rather to identify willingness to contribute resources, skills, and capacity to the ACDC mission.
- 6.2 CRDC is seeking to shortlist respondents through this process that have the relevant strategic commitment, experience, capacity and resources. Selected respondents in each Partnership Tier will be invited to respond to a Request for Tender (RFT).
- 6.3 Respondents should note that they are to apply through this EOI for consideration as one or more of:
- a) a Strategic Partner;
  - b) a Project Partner;
  - c) an Associate Partner.

## 7. Invitation

- 7.1 This EOI is a formal request for respondents to address the requirement, using the application template listed on the website. Nothing in this EOI is to be construed as creating any binding contract (express or implied) between CRDC and any respondent in relation to the process of selection or any other matter.

## **8. Accuracy of EOI**

8.1 CRDC makes no representations or warranties that the content or information in this EOI or any information communicated or provided to respondent in relation to or during the EOI process is, or will be, accurate, correct current, or complete.

## **9. Enquiries about this EOI**

9.1 All Enquiries in relation to this EOI must be:

- a) in writing via email to [acdc@crdc.com.au](mailto:acdc@crdc.com.au); and
- b) submitted no later than the Deadline for Enquiries.

## **10. Additions and amendments**

10.1 CRDC reserves the right to change any information or to issue an addendum to this EOI.

10.2 If CRDC amends this EOI after responses have been submitted, CRDC may seek amended responses.

10.3 Respondents will have no claim against CRDC or its officers, employees or advisers in connection with either the exercise or failure to exercise CRDC's rights.

## **11. Industry Briefing**

11.1 CRDC will provide an industry briefing July 31, 2023, in the form of a webinar.

11.2 CRDC reserve the right to amend the EOI and prospectus, dates and/or partnership requirements.

## **PART 3 – LODGING A RESPONSE**

### **12. How to Lodge a response**

12.1 Responses must be submitted via email to [acdc@crdc.com.au](mailto:acdc@crdc.com.au) by the closing time, which may be extended by CRDC at its absolute discretion. Responses submitted by any other means including by hand or fax, will not be accepted by CRDC.

12.2 Any response lodged after the Closing Time or received after the Closing Time may be deemed to be a late response, and not accepted.

12.3 Requests for further information or clarification in relation to this EOI, or enquiries about this EOI, must be directed via email to [acdc@crdc.com.au](mailto:acdc@crdc.com.au).

### **13. Criteria for Selection**

13.1 CRDC will evaluate the EOI's based on the following criteria:

- a) demonstrated capability to address the ACDC mission in the EOI application
- b) demonstrated experience in, but not limited to, cotton and plant diseases
- c) dedicated capacity and resources of the partner to deliver on the EOI
- d) cost effectiveness and value for money
- e) commitment to building and maintaining capacity and National leadership (for Strategic Partners) in the Australian cotton industry
- f) innovative approach to solving disease in the Australian cotton system

### **14. CRDC Rights**

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

- a) to seek external advice during the assessment process
- b) cease to proceed with, or suspend the EOI process
- c) alter the timing of the EOI process
- d) vary the EOI structure
- e) vary any time or date specified in the EOI
- f) require additional information or clarification from the organisation submitting an EOI
- g) request a new EOI
- h) reject any EOI received after the closing date
- i) reject any EOI that does not comply with the requirements as described in this document
- j) publish the names of the successful Tenderer

14.2 All applications and partners will be subject to a confidentiality agreement.



## **15. Conditions of lodgment**

15.1 The respondent agrees, by lodging an EOI, that it is bound by the following conditions:

- a) All EOI documents become the property of CRDC upon lodgment
- b) It warrants that all information in the EOI is accurate and complete
- c) That it will keep confidential any information provided by CRDC stated as being provided in confidence in connection with the EOI
- d) That it will make any inquiries relating to the EOI process only through the process outlined
- e) 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 EOI process.