



RESEARCHERS' HANDBOOK

2026-28

CRDC Researchers' Handbook 2026-28

Introduction.

Welcome to the **CRDC Researchers' Handbook 2026-28**: a comprehensive guide for researchers to CRDC's investment in cotton research, development and extension (RD&E).

CRDC's purpose is to grow the sustainable future of cotton through innovation with impact. We deliver world-class research, development and extension (RD&E) outcomes for the cotton industry, through thought leadership, innovation and adoption, collaboration and partnership. Our comprehensive research program seeks ambitious outcomes around the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability of the cotton industry – outcomes that we can only achieve in collaboration with a strong team of researchers.

This Handbook references the CRDC Strategic RD&E Plan for 2023-28, Clever Cotton. Clever Cotton is our plan to achieve a sophisticated, prosperous cotton industry, connected through our value chain delivering sustainable cotton – and we invite research partners to join us to achieve this.

We have designed this Handbook to provide information and advice to researchers who are interested in applying for CRDC investment funding (with information on our 2023-28 Strategic RD&E Plan and the industry's key research priorities, and our procurement round process); and for those who are already part of our research collaboration (with a snapshot of key information from our research deed as a ready-reference guide to our agreement).

We wish you success in your research, and look forward to working with you to help enhance the performance of our cotton industry. If you have any questions regarding the contents of this Handbook, please contact CRDC's Innovation Administration team on 02 6792 4088 or via research@crdc.com.au.

Susan Maas

Acting General Manager, Innovation

July 2026

On the cover: Plant pathologists Dr Chi Nguyen of the University of Southern Queensland and the Australian Cotton Disease Collaboration and Dr Karen Kirkby of the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

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About CRDC.

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) delivers outcomes in cotton research, development and extension (RD&E) for the Australian cotton industry.

A partnership between the Commonwealth Government and cotton growers, CRDC exists to invest in world-leading RD&E to benefit Australia's dynamic cotton industry, and the wider community. Our investments are governed by the CRDC's Strategic RD&E Plan 2023-28: Clever Cotton.

Clever Cotton defines what CRDC aims to achieve over the five years and what we will do to get there. It commits us to invest in RD&E to address and capitalise on challenges and opportunities for the benefit of levy payers, the cotton industry, and the wider community.

Clever Cotton is aligned to the Australian cotton industry's sustainability framework, which recognises that sustainability is integral to the industry's future success, and provides a pathway for the entire industry. It charts an ambitious course through three pillars of investment – Paddock, People, Planet.



The Australian cotton industry's research priorities.

CRDC has two key stakeholders: cotton growers (through Cotton Australia) and the Australian Government (through the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry).

As such, the research priorities for the cotton industry are set at both the industry and the Government level. CRDC takes these priorities into account in setting its own research priorities, through the development of the CRDC Strategic RD&E Plan.

Industry

CRDC is accountable to the cotton industry through its representative organisation, Cotton Australia. As the industry peak body, Cotton Australia is responsible for providing advice on industry research priorities.

CRDC engages with Cotton Australia in a formal process of consultation in the development and implementation of the Strategic RD&E Plan including RD&E investments. Through this consultation, industry research priorities are regularly reviewed, emerging issues are actively considered, and research outcomes are adopted in the form of best practices.

Government

CRDC is accountable to the Australian Government through the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Government communicates its expectations of CRDC through Ministerial direction, enunciation of policy, administration of the *Primary Industries Research and Development (PIRD) Act 1989*, and priorities (National Science and Research Priorities and National Agricultural Innovation Priorities). CRDC responds to government expectations through regular communication, compliance with policy and legislated requirements, and the development of Strategic RD&E Plans, Annual Operational Plans, Annual Reports and Performance Reports.

Government research priorities:

The [National Science and Research Priorities](#) are:

- Transitioning to a net zero future
- Supporting healthy and thriving communities.
- Elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.
- Protecting and restoring Australia's environment.
- Building a secure and resilient nation.

The [National Agricultural Innovation Priorities](#) are:

- Australia is a trusted exporter of premium food and agricultural products;
- Australia will champion climate resilience to increase the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the agricultural sector;
- Australia is a world leader in preventing and rapidly responding to significant pests and diseases through future-proofing our biosecurity system;
- Australia is a mature adopter, developer and exporter of digital agriculture.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's priorities for RD&E are biosecurity, climate change and sustainability, trade and market access, First Nations engagement, workforce and digital innovation.

CRDC's strategic RD&E priorities.

Taking into account the stakeholder priorities, CRDC establishes its own strategic priorities. CRDC's Strategic RD&E Plan 2023-28 contains three pillars of investment – Paddock, People, Planet – aligned with the Australian Cotton Industry's Sustainability Framework. Each of these pillars contains three themes, creating nine key investment areas. The key focus areas for investments within these priority areas are outlined over the page.

Researchers interested in securing CRDC support must be able to demonstrate how their proposed research will help achieve these outcomes, while researchers already on contract to CRDC must be able to demonstrate how their research contributes to the outcomes. The Strategic RD&E Plan 2023-28 is available to download from the CRDC website: www.crdc.com.au/strategicplan.

All researchers are expected to have read the plan before applying for funding.

Snapshot: CRDC's Strategic RD&E Plan 2023-2028

Paddock

Our future fields



Data-driven decisions

Objective

Improve productivity, profitability, and sustainability by accurately monitoring and measuring every field on every cotton farm.

Impact

In 2028, a transparent and trusted data platform will deliver increased profitability and productivity through better decision-making, facilitating innovative research, and building trusted engagement.



Adaptive systems

Objective

Grow the profitability and resilience of Australian cotton-farming systems through innovative solutions, technologies and practices.

Impact

In 2028, Australian cotton-farming systems are resilient, biosecure, and able to thrive in an increasingly variable climate with enhanced resource efficiency.



Connected market intelligence

Objective

Enhance the sustainability, market access and diversity, and value of Australian cotton.

Impact

In 2028, Australian cotton growers are preferred suppliers of sustainable cotton.

People

Central to our success



Design and innovation

Objective

Embed collaboration in RD&E prioritisation, design, development, and adoption.

Impact

In 2028, growers can see RD&E addressing their problems and creating practical solutions to be adapted and adopted into their production systems.



Leadership and capacity

Objective

Develop people and skills to support industry RD&E.

Impact

In 2028, the development of world-class research capability supports industry goals.



Adoption and impact

Objective

Adopt knowledge and technology through dedicated development and delivery pathways.

Impact

In 2028, adoption has increased its rate, reach and effectiveness.

Planet

Our shared future



Natural capital

Objective

Implement resilient natural capital practices that support productivity, help maintain biodiverse ecosystems, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, and progressively improve regional water, land and soil quality.

Impact

In 2028, cotton farms have maintained and enhanced natural capital and are more resilient to shocks.



Carbon

Objective

Establish a sustainable low-carbon cotton production system for a changing future.

Impact

In 2028, the cotton industry meets market, community and government expectations for carbon.



Circular economy

Objective

Develop the circular economy for Australian cotton.

Impact

In 2028, the cotton industry can participate in the circular economy, providing lasting end-of-life solutions for cotton textiles.

Engaging with industry programs.

CottonInfo

Delivering the outcomes of RD&E to growers is the role of CottonInfo – the cotton industry’s joint extension program.

CottonInfo is a partnership of CRDC, Cotton Australia and Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD) to deliver industry good. The CottonInfo Management Committee, comprised of representatives of CRDC and Cotton Australia, leads the CottonInfo program. CRDC manages the program and team, Cotton Australia delivers the industry’s best management practices program myBMP, and CSD is a key investor. CottonInfo gratefully acknowledges the funding it receives from CSD to support the Regional Extension Officers and the activities they undertake for the benefit of the industry.

The CottonInfo team provide a valuable pathway for researchers to engage with the industry and understand emerging RD&E needs. The team includes Regional Extension Officers located throughout the cotton-growing regions of Australia, from Kununurra (WA) to Emerald (Qld) and Griffith (NSW), Technical Leads with expertise across key cotton research priority areas, and myBMP staff who support the industry’s best management practice program. Collectively, these staff maintain strong connections with growers, consultants and industry stakeholders, providing researchers with opportunities to discuss research findings, identify emerging challenges and gain insight into industry priorities and adoption considerations.

Cotton’s Sustainability Framework and myBMP

In addition, CRDC and Cotton Australia jointly lead the cotton industry’s PLANET. PEOPLE. Paddock. Sustainability Framework, which helps the industry identify and respond to sustainability risks and opportunities, measure progress, and communicate performance transparently to stakeholders. The framework complements myBMP, which provides the standards and assurance systems that support continuous improvement and demonstrate the sustainability credentials of Australian cotton production.

Researchers are encouraged to consider how their work may align with the Sustainability Framework and contribute to myBMP outcomes.

Section 2: Applying for funding

Our program and investment plan framework.

Under Clever Cotton, CRDC uses a program and investment plan framework to guide its RD&E investments. This approach enables CRDC to focus on delivering large-scale outcomes that address complex industry challenges and create lasting impact. Investment plans articulate the outcomes sought by industry and government, providing a clear line of sight between strategic priorities, proposed investments and expected benefits for cotton growers and the broader industry.

CRDC and CottonInfo work closely with cotton growers and industry organisations to identify and prioritise the RD&E needs for this investment planning. Research priorities are informed through ongoing engagement activities, including industry consultations, grower feedback, strategic planning processes and research forums.

Researchers are encouraged to engage with CRDC throughout the year to share emerging research opportunities, industry challenges and identified RD&E needs. This can occur through direct discussions with CRDC staff, participation in industry forums, grower and stakeholder consultations, workshops, conferences, and project review activities. Researchers are also encouraged to maintain close connections with growers, consultants, CottonInfo, Cotton Australia and other industry stakeholders, as these interactions provide valuable insights into current and emerging industry priorities. CRDC values ongoing dialogue with the research community and welcomes information on new issues, knowledge gaps and innovative research concepts that may help address industry needs.

Our procurement process.

CRDC provides ongoing opportunities for researchers and research organisations to apply for funding for research into CRDC's priority areas.

CRDC's procurement process involves a review of each of the strategic priorities under the CRDC Strategic RD&E Plan, and annual research priority forums involving CRDC, Cotton Australia, cotton growers, CottonInfo and researchers to identify research needs and gaps.

CRDC releases Expression of Interest (EOI) guidelines in response to these strategic priorities on a rolling schedule, inviting researchers to submit Full Research Proposals in response to those of interest. Each EOI:

- Identifies the issue to be addressed
- Provides a brief overview of the project (the idea here is not to be prescriptive, but to allow the researcher to bring their ideas to the project and enable innovation)
- Defines the outcomes to be achieved
- States any outputs to be delivered
- Outlines selection criteria to be met for the successful awarding of the project.

An EOI may also provide guidance as to how much CRDC is prepared to invest in a particular area to achieve that outcome.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) guidelines.

Opportunities to apply for research funding are:

- Advertised on the CRDC website www.crdc.com.au/researchers/expressions-interest
- Advised through Fluxx notifications to registered users (see next page).

How to apply.

To apply for CRDC research funding, researchers must follow this application process:

Register for CRDC's grant management system, Fluxx

1. To register as a Fluxx user, visit crdc.fluxx.io and select 'Grantee User Registration'.
2. Review the terms, conditions and privacy policy and if you accept tick 'agree'.
3. Complete the registration form and 'submit request'. (Please note your organisation must also be registered in Fluxx. Contact CRDC Project Administration for further information).

Access the Expressions of Interest (EOIs)

1. Once you have logged into Fluxx, on the left hand side you will find a navigation panel.
2. Under 'Expressions of Interest', you will find the EOIs open for funding applications.
3. On the EOI you are interested in, select 'Apply for Funding'. This will open up the application form.

Submit a Full Research Proposal (FRP)

On the CRDC website, you will find a word version of the fields that are required to be completed in Fluxx.

NB: Word application forms are not accepted by CRDC. The form is to help you draft the text for pasting into Fluxx.

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.

Complete a Budget

Completing the budget is a two-step process:

1. Please complete the Excel spreadsheet (available from the CRDC website or from within the EOI form).
2. Copy the summary information from the Excel into Fluxx and upload the document.

Please ensure you select 'save and continue' as you progress, as the system does not auto-save.

If you have any queries, please contact the CRDC Innovation Administration team via 02 6792 4088 or research@crdc.com.au.

Our assessment process.

CRDC assesses research proposals against a range of criteria, including:

- The rationale of the project, how it supports Clever Cotton and the potential impacts for the Australian cotton industry and community. *This criteria is assessed on the soundness of the proposal's understanding of the issues outlined in the EOI, and the extent to which the project outcomes will address the issues and support CRDC to achieve its measures of success.*
- Project methodology. *This criteria is 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 criteria is 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 criteria is 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.*
- Proposed collaborations for the project and/or the collaborative networks of the project team. *This criteria is 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 is assessed on the cost effectiveness of this project including cash and in-kind commitments from the applicants and leverage through domestic or international linkages.*

Tips for developing a competitive proposal:

- Read the funding call documentation carefully and ensure all eligibility, submission and assessment requirements are addressed before submission.
- Clearly demonstrate how the proposed research addresses the issue or opportunity outlined in the EOI and aligns with CRDC's strategic objectives.
- Review relevant CottonInfo resources and past CRDC investments available through Inside Cotton (www.insidecotton.com) to identify existing knowledge, build on prior outcomes and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Engage with end users and industry stakeholders early when developing the proposal to ensure the research is relevant, practical and addresses an identified industry need.
- Articulate the expected value proposition for industry, outcomes, impacts and adoption pathways, not just the research outputs. Consider who will use the outputs and how this will support industry improvement.
- Ensure objectives, milestones, deliverables and methodologies are well defined, realistic and aligned with the proposed budget and project timeframe.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with other researchers, organisations, RDCs, industry groups or extension partners where this will strengthen outcomes and avoid duplication.
- Consider adoption and extension from the outset, including how project findings may be communicated and translated into practice through CottonInfo and established industry networks. In some cases, commercialisation is required to ensure impact can be realised.
- Clearly note in proposal any assumptions about required in-kind support from CottonInfo or CRDC (e.g. communications or requests for surveys).
- Clearly outline project risks and mitigation strategies, including technical, operational and adoption-related risks.
- Provide a fit-for-purpose budget that clearly justifies costs and represents value for money for levy payers and the Australian Government. Clearly describe any cash and in-kind contributions from project partners, as strong co-investment and leverage are viewed favourably.
- Demonstrate the capability, expertise and capacity of the project team to successfully deliver the proposed work, including examples of past projects, and publications.
- Use clear, concise and accessible language throughout the proposal, recognising that applications may be assessed by reviewers with different areas of expertise.
- Explicitly describe how success will be measured and how project outcomes/impacts will be evaluated.
- Complete the Intellectual Property (IP) sections thoroughly and accurately. CRDC manages IP to ensure that research outcomes funded by cotton growers and the Australian Government are protected, accessible and positioned to deliver maximum industry benefit. Clear IP arrangements support adoption, collaboration, commercialisation and the long-term use of project outputs and ensure all parties rights are acknowledged and managed. The majority of project outputs are typically published and made publicly available to maximise knowledge sharing and industry impact, however commercial pathways are sometimes required to enable impact for industry.
- Identify any background IP that will be used in the project (e.g. datasets, software, algorithms, germplasm, protocols or proprietary knowledge), including ownership and permission/access arrangements.
- For project IP, describe the new knowledge, tools, technologies or datasets that may be generated, along with any anticipated ownership, protection or commercialisation expectations .

Scholarships, Travel Grants and Capital Investments.

When funding is available, CRDC may also offer the following types of investment:

- Postgraduate scholarships
- Summer and Honours scholarships
- Travel grants
- Scientific exchanges
- Major capital items (>\$10,000)

Postgraduate scholarships

A PhD top-up scholarship of \$36,600 per annum can be applied for by those cotton-relevant scholars who are receiving a Research Training Program (RTP, or equivalent) scholarship. This top-up scholarship includes \$23,750 stipend, \$11,000 operating and \$1,850 for travel for three years.

At times, CRDC also supports other scholarships for postgraduate students. Students completing cotton-relevant research which aligns with CRDC's Strategic Plan are encouraged to speak with a member of our Innovation team.

To be eligible for a CRDC postgraduate scholarship, candidates must:

- Undertake postgraduate study
- Receive acceptance at a recognised institution
- Be interested in working in the Australian cotton industry to pursue postgraduate studies relating to the cotton industry or its related activities

Interested students are advised to speak to CRDC about available scholarships.

Summer and Honour Scholarships

The Summer and Honours Scholarship program provides students with an opportunity to work on a real project in a working environment as part of their professional development. The scholarships enable university students to conduct short research, extension or industry projects under the direct supervision of a researcher or extension officer from either the public or private sector.

Scholarships up to \$10,000 are available for public or private research organisations to support undergraduates working on cotton-related projects. CRDC seeks high-achieving students interested in short research, extension, or industry projects that deliver impact for the Australian cotton industry.

To be eligible candidates must be enrolled in undergraduate degree and/or approved Honours program with a recognised institution (open to all university students of a high academic merit).

The scholarship contract is with the research institution (university or research organisation), not the student (applicant). Application proposal should be developed in consultation with your research institution. Any concerns can be highlighted in the application.

Travel grants

Travel applications support current industry researchers and personnel to attend national or international conferences or events which allow them to present their research and/or build their knowledge and professional networks.

Funding of up to \$2,500 is available to cover transport, accommodation and event registration fees. The proposed travel must be relevant to Australian cotton, and CRDC's preference is for research organisations to co-fund travel.

Scientific exchanges

Scientific exchanges provide opportunities for industry researchers and personnel to widen their research perspective, gain a broader research experience, build new knowledge, foster scientific collaboration and stimulate Australian cotton research.

Funding of up to \$5,000 is available to cover travel and accommodation costs of the identified exchange candidate. The proposed exchange must be of benefit to the Australian cotton industry, and CRDC's preference is for research organisations to co-fund the exchange.

Major capital items

CRDC occasionally considers requests for major capital investment assistance for items greater than \$10,000 in value. Requests for funding can be emailed to research@crdc.com.au.

How to apply - scholarships, travel grants & scientific exchanges

To apply for CRDC postgraduate scholarships, summer and honours scholarships, travel grants or scientific exchanges, researchers must apply via CRDC's grant management system, Fluxx (crdc.fluxx.io).

Register

1. To register to as a Fluxx user, visit crdc.fluxx.io and select 'Grantee User Registration'.
2. Review the terms, conditions and privacy policy and if you accept tick 'Agree'.
3. Complete the registration form and 'submit request'. (Please note your organisation must also be registered in Fluxx. Contact CRDC Project Administration for further information).

Access the Expressions of Interest (EOIs)

1. Once you have logged into Fluxx, on the left hand side you will find a navigation panel.
2. Under 'Expressions of Interest', you will find the EOIs open for funding applications.
3. On the EOI you are interested in, select 'Apply for Funding'. This will open up the application form for you to complete.

Please ensure you select 'save and continue' as you progress, as the system does not auto-save.

If you have any queries, please contact the CRDC Innovation Administration team via 02 6792 4088 or research@crdc.com.au.

Section 3: Information for successful applicants

Project agreement.

Following a decision by CRDC to commit to investing in an application, several processes come into play before a project can officially commence.

Preliminary advice

CRDC will provide preliminary advice to the successful applicant and their research organisation concerning the application approval decision. Preliminary advice could also include a request for a revised application to amend objectives, milestones, project budgets or to provide additional information about project details and Intellectual Property (IP).

Contracting

The successful research organisation will be required to enter into a contractual agreement with CRDC, which contains obligations around:

- IP ownership and exploitation
- Reporting against milestones, outputs and outcomes
- Financial accountability.

CRDC generally contracts research providers under the CRDC Research Deed, which establishes the standard terms and conditions for CRDC-funded research investments. The CRDC Research Deed provides the framework for CRDC-funded research, setting out responsibilities for project delivery, reporting, intellectual property, data management, publications and the use of public funds. It ensures a consistent approach across investments while providing clear expectations that support the effective delivery and adoption of RD&E outcomes. In limited circumstances, CRDC may use a consultancy agreement for short-term projects where CRDC requires ownership of all project outputs and intellectual property.

Key contractual information.

Six of the key areas covered by the contract agreed to by the research organisation are:

- Financial management
- Intellectual property (IP)
- Reporting
- Project variations
- Publication
- Project collaboration agreements

We have included the key information that all CRDC-contracted researchers need to know about these six areas in this Handbook, as a ready reference guide. Further information can be found in the [CRDC research deed](#) or project agreement.

Financial management

CRDC partners in research by calling for Full Research Proposals (FRPs) with detailed budgets. The FRPs allow the CRDC research managers, CRDC Board and cotton industry representatives to assess the value of each project before allocating our limited financial resources to projects. The FRPs are an essential benchmark that are used to assess the progress of the projects, the milestones achieved and the efficient use of the funds.

The CRDC deed provides contractual obligations on the management of project funds so that:

- The funding is applied exclusively in respect of the heads of expenditure (e.g. operating, salaries) as per the contracted budget (deed clause 41);
- The research organisation must provide their contributions;
- Third party resources require CRDC approval before they are used for the project;
- Surplus funds are returned to CRDC; and
- Any grant or external funding is listed.

In addition, the deed requires:

- Research organisations and principle researchers to use CRDC funds only for the types of expenses that CRDC agreed to fund in the contracted FRP budget;
- Researchers to seek CRDC approval before using CRDC funds for other purposes such as transferring to another head of expenditure, or funding additional staff or operating expenses; and
- Researchers to obtain CRDC's approval before changing team members, milestones, or milestones dates.

Intellectual Property (IP)

CRDC's IP management policy aims to facilitate the efficient and effective development and adoption of RD&E results to achieve maximum benefits to the cotton industry. CRDC assesses IP ownership, the commercial benefits and possible commercialisation strategies on a case by case basis, subject to its core aim of delivering maximum benefit to the cotton industry.

CRDC works with research organisations on an individual project basis around intellectual property ownership and technology commercialisation. An IP register is established for each new project application, which records all background IP brought into a project, and any new IP proposed to be developed throughout a project. In the majority of cases, the research outcomes from CRDC investment will result in technical knowledge, rather than the creation of new technologies/products that require specific IP protection/commercialisation.

As a result, the focus is on developing an adoption pathway for grower uptake of this knowledge. Each researcher provides an pathway to impact with their research application (FRP). Where projects do have significant and identifiable background IP and potential project IP, a more detailed analysis, valuation and risk assessment is conducted by CRDC, and an IP position negotiated with the research organisation.

CRDC's seven guiding principles for IP management:

1. IP Management is integral to RD&E investment decisions:
 - a) CRDC will seek to manage the IP identified in research projects in such a way as to maximise the benefit to the cotton industry, which will include an assessment of the proposed adoption pathway for each relevant project.
2. IP Management is a means to an end, not an end in itself:
 - a) IP management is the process used to identify and establish rights in IP, appropriately protecting the IP and thereafter to optimise the benefits from IP through exploitation.
 - b) CRDC will adopt a flexible and adaptable approach to IP Management and IP Ownership, including seeking novel models of co-ownership where industry benefit is maximised.
3. IP Management facilitates decision-making on pathways for impact:
 - a) CRDC's research application will require a proposed 'pathway to impact'.
 - b) CRDC requires a Technology Adoption Plan to manage the impact of Project IP or Scholarship IP and to assess the benefits of disseminating IP through either public domain, Australian cotton industry domain, commercialisation or further research.
4. IP ownership and use rights are important and must be carefully considered:
 - a) Clear chain of title is important for any commercial activities
 - b) Ownership and use of IP has inherent rights and obligations, including the IP owner's right to secure and benefit from the IP.
 - c) CRDC will ensure appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard the copyright and confidentiality of another party's IP.

- d) Research organisations may be required to demonstrate that they have appropriate IP policies and procedures in place to help protect CRDC IP.
- e) CRDC reserves the right to request assignment of copyright in works created in the course of CRDC-supported research.
- f) CRDC may reserve a right of first refusal to purchase another party's share of any IP rights that arise from a CRDC supported project.
- 5. "Freedom to operate" can minimise barriers to commercialisation and RD&E investment:
 - a) CRDC may request that permission to use third party IP and/or background IP rights.
 - b) CRDC may request that a research organisation helps in ensuring that research outcomes do not infringe the rights of others.
- 6. "Rights to publish" is part of a broader IP management strategy:
 - a) CRDC acknowledges that public research organisations may require information from RD&E investments to be published as part of their purpose or to allow students to complete their thesis.
 - b) CRDC will ensure appropriate procedures are in place to manage IP owner's rights and confidential information when assessing publications.
- 7. IP Risk Management Strategies are essential to protect IP rights and benefits:
 - a) Each organisation responsible for the generation and management of IP should develop and implement IP risk management strategies.
 - b) Effective IP risk management should strike an appropriate balance between the merits and risks of protecting and granting access rights to IP.
 - c) CRDC will apply appropriate risk management assessment to IP management.

Reporting

Reporting is an important part of working with the CRDC. If you are successful in securing funding your contractual arrangement will outline your reporting requirements, such as progress reports, final reports, travel reports, annual financial statements and IP registers. A summary of the CRDC's required reports is as follows.

All reports are to be completed in CRDC's grant management system, Fluxx (crdc.fluxx.io).

Progress Reporting

For all CRDC-supported research projects, a progress report is required annually or every six months for the life of a project. For Postgraduate Scholarships, the supervisor of the scholarship recipient is to provide a summary report on the progress of the recipient as part of the progress report.

Final Reports

At the conclusion of a CRDC-funded research project, the researchers must provide a final report (an electronic copy) to the CRDC by the date specified in the contract or within 60 business days after the end of the project. Final reports will be published on the Inside Cotton website (www.insidecotton.com) unless deemed to be Commercial In-Confidence or confidential. In this instance, a version suitable for public release will be required.

For Postgraduate Scholarships, students must email a copy of their plain English summary when they submit their thesis for examination. Once approved, an electronic copy of the awarded thesis is to be provided to CRDC.

Travel Report

Reporting required for Travel Grants and Scientific Exchanges is dependent on the nature of the travel. CRDC may require a comprehensive report which will be communicated to the applicant at the time of investment approval. In most cases, a report reviewing travel and/or conference participation is due within 30 business days of completing the travel and/or conference attendance.

Annual Financial Statements

CRDC requires researchers to provide an annual financial statement for each project by the date specified in the contract or within 60 business days of the end of each financial year. The statement must be in the format provided by CRDC and authorised by an independent accounting officer. Reporting in the Fluxx system will require a summary financial report and will allow you to request a carry forward of funds and/or budgetary transfer.

Reporting and CRDC's Schedule of Payments

CRDC generally makes biannual payments tied to reporting milestones. Frequency of payments will depend on the duration of each contract, type of investment and any special conditions contained in a grant agreement. Importantly, CRDC does not make payments until it has received and approved milestone reports from the researcher. CRDC will withhold final payments until the final report, final register, intellectual property and final financial statements (or a satisfactory equivalent as determined by CRDC) has been received and approved by CRDC.

Project variations

Before making a variation to an existing contract (such as objectives, milestones, team members, third party resources, end date etc), research organisations must notify CRDC and gain written approval.

If the researcher is aware of the need for a variation, please discuss with CRDC as soon as possible, and request an amendment via Fluxx. The request will then be reviewed by the relevant CRDC Innovation Broker, and considered for approval by CRDC management.

IP Ownership Changes

Initial IP information is provided by the research organisation as part of the contractual documentation for the project. Researchers must regularly review this information and provide CRDC with an updated version within 20 business days of changes occurring. Both CRDC and the research organisation will notify the other party if there has been a change of ownership or usage rights to any background IP it may have provided to a project. Changes to the IP register should be submitted via Fluxx as an amendment request.

Budget variations

Requests for budget variations must be provided when a financial issue arises within the project, along with justification for the request. Researchers are asked to discuss with CRDC and then submit an amendment request via Fluxx along with a revised budget document to CRDC for consideration for approval.

Surplus funds of a ceased project

CRDC will raise an invoice for any surplus funds at the end of a project as identified in the financial report. Requests to utilise/transfer surplus funds to other projects at the end of the project will not be considered.

Extension requests for research reports

Requests for deadline extensions for CRDC-supported research reports are subject to a formal approval process. Requests for extensions must be completed against the report in Fluxx.

Once received, the request for extension will be considered by the relevant CRDC Innovation Broker. Please note: a request for a deadline extension does not guarantee approval. CRDC will respond with the request outcome via Fluxx. This approach ensures that all relevant parties are aware of the request, and the potential impacts to project timelines.

Publication

CRDC recognises how important it is to researchers to publish the outcomes of research, as getting findings out to growers and other key stakeholders is critical to us too. The CRDC research deed contains a publication clause, relevant to all who receive funding from CRDC – be it for research or scholarships.

The clause relates to approval and acknowledgement of CRDC in all publications (including media releases, journal articles, conference papers, research posters, social and online media, video interviews, dedicated publications and brochures, e-newsletters etc).

The clause asks all CRDC-supported researchers to send materials to the relevant CRDC Innovation Broker **before publishing** (via the process outlined at the bottom of this page). Below are the top four requirements under the clause. The full deed is available to download from the CRDC website www.crdc.com.au/for-researchers.

1. Researchers must not publish during their research term, or for one year after their project, except with CRDC's written permission.
Exceptions to this are: if the project's finished and CRDC has approved the final report; if CRDC has agreed in writing that there are no commercialisation issues; and/or if CRDC has approved the release of information into the public domain. Importantly, CRDC won't unreasonably withhold approval, but it does retain the right to review anything researchers wish to publish to ensure it is ready for publication.
2. Any request to publish must contain a copy of the material ready for publication and details of when and where it will be published.
Requests to publish are to be submitted following the process outlined at the bottom of this page.
3. CRDC must be acknowledged as a funding source.
The acknowledgement is to read: *The research provider (insert name) acknowledges the financial assistance of the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (and if applicable add other funding partners or grants) in order to undertake this project.*

The acknowledgement, and its associated disclaimer, can be found in schedule six of the funding deed.

The CRDC logo is available to researchers for inclusion in all CRDC-supported project materials. The logo must be applied according to the branding guidelines, outlined in more detail under the *Use of the CRDC logo* section of this document.
4. Once published, researchers must provide CRDC with an electronic copy of the publication in high resolution, colour PDF.

Submission of publications for review by CRDC Innovation Brokers is to be completed in Fluxx, following the process outlined below:

1. Log into Fluxx (crdc.fluxx.io)
2. Go to 'Add a publication'
3. Select the Project ID, enter the publication details and upload the document. Select 'save and close', then 'submit'.

If you require assistance, please contact the CRDC Innovation Administration team via 02 6792 4088 or research@crdc.com.au.

Use of the CRDC logo.

The CRDC logo is available to researchers for inclusion in all CRDC-funded project materials. The logo, and its guidelines, are available for researchers to download from the CRDC website: www.crdc.com.au/brand.



CRDC research survey policy.

CRDC recognises that in order to complete some CRDC-supported RD&E projects, researchers may require information from, or access to, cotton growers on the CRDC database for survey purposes.

It is CRDC's policy to minimise the number of surveys sent to growers in any one year, with preference given to the annual CRDC-supported Cotton Grower Survey.

Data from the CRDC database is only provided to the contracted researcher conducting the Cotton Grower Survey, under strict confidentiality and usability guidelines. Data from the database will not be provided to any other researcher.

All other researchers wishing to have a survey sent out to CRDC's database must work with the Cotton Grower Survey researcher to include their survey questions in this survey.

If it is not possible to include the requested survey questions in the Cotton Grower Survey – for example, if the survey is too extensive or must be conducted at a different seasonal time – then CRDC will consider a request from a researcher to send a survey out on their behalf.

CRDC's position is to support up to two such requests per financial year, based on a first in, first assessed basis, and only after attempts have been made to include the questions in the Cotton Grower Survey. Surveys will only be sent on behalf of CRDC-supported researchers, and only those who have specified the need to survey in their approved Full Research Proposal.

Glossary

The following terms are frequently used by CRDC in its application forms or in planning and reporting processes. If a term is not listed, and you require clarification, please contact the CRDC Project Administration team.

ABN	Australian Business Number. Provided by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) for Australian residents and corporations only. Consult ATO for the appropriate usage of this identifier.
Aim	The purpose or intention of a research project.
Commercialisation or Commercialise	In relation to IP any exploitation of the IP for financial gain and the term commercialised will have a corresponding meaning.
Intellectual Property 'IP'	All present and future rights conferred by statute, common law or equity in or in relation to copyright, trademarks, designs, patents, circuit layouts, plant varieties, business and domain names and inventions, trade secrets, know how, confidential information and other results of intellectual activity in the industrial, commercial, scientific, literary or artistic fields whether or not registrable, registered or patentable and whether or not created in Australia or elsewhere, but does not include Moral Rights, and all other intellectual property as defined in article 2 of the Convention establishing the World Intellectual Property Organisation 1967.
Major capital item	An item of value greater than \$10,000.
Milestone	Progressive achievement within a research project; a marker of progress towards achieving the direct aims of a project.
Out of session	An urgent request for funding that is not submitted in the annual competitive funding round.
Outcome	The objective and anticipated outcomes of a project or scholarship as specified in the relevant Full Research Proposal.
Output technology	The results or achievements of a research, development or transfer project or program. Can be influenced but not forced or controlled.
Performance indicator	A way of measuring success towards meeting the aims of a project.
Research project	Research, development and extension project described in a project approval.

For more information

For more information or to discuss any element of the Researchers' Handbook, please contact CRDC's Innovation Administration team on 02 6792 4088 or via research@crdc.com.au.