



Consultancy to Coordinate the Preparation of a National Weed Research, Development & Extension Investment Plan

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Weeds remain a significant threat to the health of Australian landscapes, conservation values and the productivity and profitability of agriculture. In providing its investment of \$20 million in the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (the Centre), the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources requested the Centre to develop a 10-year Investment Plan for Weed Research, Development and Extension that aims to improve weed management in Australia. While the Investment Plan's main purpose will be to establish a ten-year national investment framework for weed R,D&E, the consultancy process should also act to guide shorter-term Centre investment of around \$1 million over 2018-19 to 2021-22. This request has been incorporated into Government's Grant Agreement with the Centre, the terms of which are outlined in Appendix A.

Management of weeds is increasingly becoming embedded into the discourse of Australia's overall national biosecurity system, with an eye on national and local economic, environmental and social benefits. All States, Territories and regional natural resource management bodies, most agricultural industries and local land and water community management groups have weeds highlighted as a significant area of focus within their prioritisation and investment frameworks.

Indeed, there is no shortage of weed investment frameworks, strategies and research and innovation plans in place across Australia. However, there is a perception that these have struggled to make significant inroads into the ongoing impacts and management of established weeds, and that far more can be done to improve early detection, intervention and prevention measures. Success has been sporadic. The Centre recognises this space as crowded, institutionally contested and reflecting various degrees of effective collaboration and coordination. The Centre also recognises that while organisations and groups view weeds as a significant and even an increasing priority, the overall investment in management has declined in recent years.

The request from Australian Government for the Centre to prepare an Investment Plan in Weed Research, Development and Extension acknowledges the need to:

- provide a framework resilient over at least ten years,
- place emphasis on supporting action, not continuous strategy development, and
- maximise impact and return on investment.

In addition to providing the Centre with resources to prepare a ten-year Investment Plan, the Australian Government has provided funds for initial implementation of the Plan over 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Terms of reference (ToR)

The Centre requires the assistance of a professional individual or team to work with and advise the Centre and its partners on the preparation of a National Weed Research, Development and Extension Investment Plan. The Plan is intended to guide co-investment by the Centre's partners (Australian Government, State Government, industry and universities) to maximise the benefits to Australia's environment, economy and community. The consultant/s will have deep knowledge of Australia's weed management system from biosecurity policy through to weed R,D&E and regional and local management implementation consistent with the approach and guiding principles outlined over-page, and is expected to address the following ToRs:

1. **Task:** Prepare a situation analysis and discussion paper to elicit initial Centre agreement on the scope of the Investment Plan and the mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in the preparation of the Plan, and to provide potential stakeholders with discussion prompts during the consultation phase. The situation analysis should cover the institutional and investment frameworks in place (including current major weed investments such as R&D for profit biocontrol projects), gaps, priorities and opportunities for new investment, and lessons from past investments and contemporary reviews to adopt, adapt or avoid. The situation analysis and discussion paper should be submitted to the Project Steering Committee for feedback, refinement and approval.

Note: The scope of the Investment Plan may ultimately vary from that initially agreed depending on stakeholder feedback, however it will be important that the paper takes into consideration the likely resourcing available. The paper should also identify key informants and stakeholders to be consulted and provide some guidelines on how the likely wide variety of consultation feedback will be assessed, reconciled and prioritised in a manner that is objective and transparent.

Timeframe: 9 March – 6 April 2018

2. **Task:** Facilitate a consultation phase that includes face to face and/or teleconference briefings to obtain feedback from key informants, critical stakeholders and potential co-investors or complementary investors. The consultation phase should use the situation analysis and discussion paper as a basis for eliciting feedback, both in the briefings and more extensively through on-line and other mechanisms. The phase should culminate in a national workshop of key stakeholders to refine a draft plan [see ToR3], with the draft already having been circulated for wider feedback.

Note: The consultant will be expected to design and facilitate the workshop, with CISS aiding in the organisation. The budget for the non-facilitation aspects of the workshop will be funded separately from this consultancy.

Timeframe: 10 April – 8 June 2018

3. **Task:** Prepare and submit a draft Investment Plan to the Project Steering Committee for feedback and refinement prior to subsequent distribution to national workshop attendees. The refined draft Plan should be with attendees at least two weeks prior to the national workshop. The investment plan should include:
- a) a summary of a revised situation analysis;
 - b) a description and evaluation of the opportunities and rationale (including ex-ante economic analysis) for the prospective priorities expected to be pursued nationally and by the Centre in weed management research, development and extension;
 - c) an investment action plan covering:
 - i. the ten-year national investment framework including a description of the desired outcomes, outputs, activities (projects), assumptions, performance targets and investment quantum, principle and mechanisms appropriate for this longer-term investment; and
 - ii. Additional detail for the initial four-year shorter-term investment, consistent with the Australian Government's terms and conditions outlined in Appendix 1, i.e. as a minimum to include a high priority project of at least \$500,000;
 - d) the appropriate stakeholder engagement, communication and co-investment mechanisms fundamental to ensuring that robust pathways to adoption and success are in place; and
 - e) an appendix summarising the feedback from the consultation phase and a description of the assessment, reconciliation and prioritisation of issues raised in this feedback;

Note: The Draft Plan should place emphasis on guiding investment into activities leading to demonstrable high impact. The Plan is expected to go through a second round of consultation following completion of this consultancy and the submission of a revised Plan by the consultants.

Timeframe: 9 April – 25 June 2018

4. **Task:** Preparation of a final Draft Investment Plan, taking into account feedback on the draft from the Project Steering Committee and the national workshop.

Note: The Final Investment plan should be accompanied by recommendations on its implementation, communication and ongoing monitoring and assessment.

Timing: 2 - 16 July 2018

Approach and guiding principles

In balancing the challenge of preparing a ten-year Plan with restrained pre-leveraged implementation funds, the Centre recognises that its initial investment into weeds must be targeted. That may mean being highly selective in terms of target species to address, ecosystems to focus on, technologies to develop, communities to work with or resilience mechanisms to build. Alternatively it may also mean focusing on one or two broadly applicable projects aimed at tackling overarching issues relevant to multiple species, ecosystems etc.

The consultant should take into account the framework of the Centre's Portfolio No. 1 investments, which distribute funding across the domains of Incursions, Integrated Landscape Management, Biocontrol, Tools and Engagement. It should also take into account the Centre's desire for the Plan to be consistent with the frameworks of the National Biosecurity Committee and the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee.

For the purpose of the Investment Plan preparation, weeds will be limited to introduced terrestrial and freshwater aquatic species; marine species and marine environments are excluded. The priorities ultimately pursued by the Plan will no doubt be narrower.

The rationale for the Investment Plan priorities will be evidence-based and will aim to achieve improved outcomes through more effective tools, rather than focusing on processes.

Oversight and day-to-day contact

The Project will be overseen by a Project Steering Committee comprising the Centre's Research Management Team supplemented with key external stakeholders still under consideration. The Centre's Portfolio Director (Research) will chair the Committee.

The consultant is expected to work closely with the Portfolio Director and Projects and Contracts Coordinator throughout the consultancy.

Budget and payment

A budget of \$40,000 (ex GST) has been allocated towards this consultancy, covering total cost of the consultancy as outlined, workshop facilitation and adequate ex-ante economic analysis. Payments will be made as follows:

Upon contract execution:	25%
Upon acceptance of draft report	50%
Upon acceptancy of final report	25%

Submission process

Applications are due for submission by **12:00 noon Friday 2 March 2018**.

Applications are to be submitted by email to:

A/Prof Richard Price, Portfolio Director (Research): **richard.price@invasives.com.au**

Applications of no more than 8 pages, inclusive of summary CVs, should address the following:

- 1) The proposed approach and workplan
- 2) An itemised budget, including a breakdown of overall days allocated to key tasks
- 3) A summary of the experience of the consultant/s with an emphasis on experience in strategic planning and direction of weed R,D&E

Enquiries by telephone are welcome: **Richard Price: 0409 624297**

Appendix A: Australian Government Grant Agreement Extract Pertaining to Weeds

Direct a minimum of 5 percent (\$1 million) of the funding/effort towards Projects in the Project Portfolio that are primarily focused on research, development and extension to improve weed management in Australia (the “Weed Funding”). The Weed Funding;

- (i) must include a project, to be delivered by 30 June 2018, to develop a 10 year investment plan in weed research, development and extension that aims to improve weed management in Australia, with the additional purpose of brokering additional investment for those projects;
- (ii) must include \$500,000 for a priority weed research, development and extension project or projects, to be identified as part of the investment plan described at B.3(a)(i);
- (iii) must include a project to develop and continuously improve the LandSmart website, including the updating of the existing weed.gov.au resource. Expenditure must be clearly identified as being specific to the improvement of weed management and can be accounted for separately in the Operational Plan;
- (iv) may include expenditure from the Projects at B.2.2(a) that can be clearly identified as being specific to the improvement of weed management and can be accounted for separately in the Operational Plan; and
- (v) may include any other project agreed in writing between the Commonwealth and IAL.

Appendix B: List of some useful documents

Australian Weeds Strategy 2017-2027 (Invasive Plants and Animals Committee)

National R, D & E Priorities for Invasive Plants and Animals 2016-2020 (IPACC)

National Weeds and Productivity Research Program R&D Plan 2010 to 2015 (RIRDC)

National Environment and Community Biosecurity, R, D & E Strategy 2016-2019 (DAWR)

Australia's Present Scientific Capacity to Progress the Biological Control of Weeds (Qld DAF 2015)

A heuristic framework for invasive species research planning and measurement (Harris et al 2017)

Virtue, J., Sheppard, A., Tracey, J., Allan, C., Young, K. and Thompson, J. (2014). Coordinated weeds RD&E in Australia: despair or opportunity? In Proceedings of the 18th Australasian Weeds Conference (Ed. M. Baker). Tasmanian Weed Society, Hobart. pp. 92-95.