

**Live export, grainfed beef and goat levy funded research development and  
adoption programs**  
**GUIDELINES for preparing MLA full proposals**

### **Application Process**

The research development and adoption (RD&A) project application process has two stages:

- Stage 1 - Applicants submit a Preliminary Proposal addressing a Terms of Reference for live export, grainfed beef and/or goat RD&A. Proposals will be scored against the selection criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.
- Stage 2 - Should your Preliminary Proposal be successful, MLA will invite you to submit a Full Proposal. Final project approval will be subject to contractual agreement between the applicant/s and MLA.

MLA will acknowledge receipt of each full proposal and record each proposal on the MLA project information system. Applicants will be advised in writing of the success or failure of their full proposal.

Write this preliminary proposal in plain English for a well-informed, live export, grainfed beef and/or goat producer. Avoid jargon and be succinct.

### **Acknowledgement**

The details you provide in the Full Proposal will be used to develop a Schedule for the subsequent Research Agreement, once approved.

### **Privacy Statement**

The information you are providing to Meat & Livestock Australia Limited ABN 39 081 678 364 ("MLA") may be personal information under the Privacy Act. We will collect, hold, use and disclose the email address you have given us and the personal information you provide in the manner set out in MLA's privacy policy (located at [www.mla.com.au/General/Privacy](http://www.mla.com.au/General/Privacy)), including for keeping you informed about the progress of this application, MLA R&D programs, market news, industry information and other communications from MLA. If you do not provide the personal information requested, MLA may not be able to provide you with products or services. By providing MLA with your personal information, you consent to the collection and handling of your personal information in accordance with MLA's privacy policy which can be viewed at [www.mla.com.au/General/Privacy](http://www.mla.com.au/General/Privacy) or obtained directly from MLA by calling 1800 023 100. You may access and correct any personal information held by MLA on request.

If you provide a telephone number, you consent to MLA contacting you for an indefinite period about future projects, products or services that may be of interest to you.

Please use the headings in the Full Proposal template and comply with the guidelines. Full Proposals that do not follow and comply with the guidelines will not be assessed. For competitive Full Proposals the inclusion of permanent staff salaries into the funding requested from MLA increases the price, decreases the attractiveness of the project and is not encouraged. Full Proposals that provide post-graduate and early career researcher opportunities will be scored favourably by the expert panel.

DO NOT submit these guidelines. ONLY submit the completed Full Proposal form.

The completed Full Proposal must be submitted electronically to MLA to: [applications@mla.com.au](mailto:applications@mla.com.au)

## GUIDELINES

The following notes in conjunction with *italicised instructions* in the Full Proposal template are designed to assist completion of the Full Proposal template.

Carefully read and adhere to these GUIDELINES for preparing MLA Full Project Proposals. While this may seem obvious, a disappointingly large number of full proposals submitted fail to follow these guidelines and consequently do not meet MLA's expectations.

Complete all fields in the Full Proposal template.

### **Confidential external review**

The live export, grainfed beef and goat levy funded programs are reviewed regularly by research and development committees and members of the relevant Peak Industry Councils. This includes reviewing and ranking RD&A proposals submitted in response to related Terms of References. This process helps deliver independence, quality, objectivity and transparency to project review and selection by MLA.

Full Proposals will only be considered for funding by MLA if you assent to external review by the Expert Panel.

### **Feedback on Preliminary Proposal**

Address feedback (if provided) on your Preliminary Proposal in the table provided in your Full Proposal template. Use language that will be readily understood by highly experienced, knowledgeable producers. Be concise. Avoid technical jargon and abbreviations. Provide responses that are readily understood in isolation from the Full Proposal.

This step is designed to give research and development committees and members of the relevant Peak Industry Councils confidence that technically sound Full Proposals submitted deliver benefit to live export, grainfed beef and/or goat producers.

*Tip: have your responses read by someone who is not a scientist or familiar with the work you are proposing.*

### **Terms of Reference addressed by this proposal**

Identify which ToR your proposal is directed to and ensure that this is the same ToR you identified in your Preliminary Proposal.

The ToR is key to assessment of the relevance of your proposal to industry needs and expectations. Also, to save space, you need not include the ToRs not selected.

ONLY Full Proposals that clearly address a single ToR tabled in the Full Proposal template can be assessed for funding.

### **Background of Research Work and Significance**

Describe the current problem, issue or need to be addressed. Support statements with objective measures including the scale and costs/benefits of the issue or opportunity.

Why is this project necessary? What is its significance in addressing the problem or issue? How will it address the nominated Terms of Reference?

Provide a brief scientific literature review and a summary of other background information from industry reports, research reports and other sources.

Reference to relevant publications is important to provide context and identify knowledge gaps and research needs. However, space limitations will dictate careful selection of references directly relevant to the proposal. Do not exceed 2 pages, including a list of cited references.

How does the project link to industry strategic plans? Review industry plans at:

- Meat Industry Strategic Plan ([MISP 2020](#))
- MLA Strategic Plan 2016-2020 ([MLA 2020](#))
- Live export Industry Strategic Plan ([LISP 2020](#))
- Goatmeat and Livestock Industry Strategic Plan 2020 ([GLISP 2020](#))

### **Project Objectives**

The list of objectives should focus on *outputs or outcomes* related to a central research question or hypothesis and should not be confused with completion of work phases or milestones.

Each objective should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART).

### **Methodology**

Describe the materials and methods or research plan or experimental protocols or design:

- What statistical methods will be used?
- What measures will be used?
- Where will data be stored during the project and after?
- Include a proposed timeline.

Include a justification for the proposed approach and if appropriate, consider an alternate approach.

All MLA funded experimental projects must have appropriate approval by animal and/or human ethics committees before experimental work commences.

### **Budget and Justification**

In addition to the budget information requested below, MLA requires detailed budget planning sheets for the project – refer to Appendix 2 and the following points.

### **Personnel (fees)**

For competitive applications the inclusion of permanent staff salaries into the funding requested from MLA increases the price, decreases the attractiveness of the project and is not encouraged. Where MLA funds for salaries is requested, they may include an on-costs loading including payroll tax, workers' compensation, leave loading, long-service leave, non-contributory and contributory superannuation, excluding items such as extended leave and severance pay.

Overheads must appear in the in-kind contribution column only and not be combined with salary. The methods used to calculate overheads should be stated and able to stand the scrutiny of an audit. MLA will pay a top up of \$8,000 p.a. for holders of an Australian Postgraduate Award for 3.5 years. MLA does not fund non-resident post-graduate student fees nor Higher Education Contribution Scheme fees.

### **Expenses**

- Travel – flights, accommodation, meals and mileage etc.
- Materials – steel, system controllers, cable, and drive motors, sensors etc.
- Consumables – water, electricity, gas, telephone calls, chemicals etc.
- Other – please specify. Include both hardware (if under \$1,000) and software items in any one year in this category.

Indicate the cost of travel, materials, consumable and equipment and installation based on the latest prices (excluding GST) obtained from the supplier at the time of submission. Do not simply estimate costs.

### Capital Assets

MLA prefers not to fund the purchase of capital items and will consider leasing. Items essential for the purpose of undertaking the project are treated as a depreciated capital asset and are sold or bought by the researcher at the completion of the project, e.g., livestock, computers, off-the-shelf equipment costing more than \$1,000, motor vehicles and machinery. The estimated buyback price will be calculated on the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) depreciation rate and time between the milestone linked to the purchase and the completion of the project.

For competitive projects basic facilities are not funded by MLA and if noted in this application must appear in the in-kind columns. For fully funded or contract research and consultancies an overhead charge is permissible.

### Budgets (add a table per financial year for the duration of the project)

The Project budget is recorded as **GST exclusive**. MLA will pay GST, in addition to the budget, on presentation of a tax invoice from the Research Organisation (RO).

**Example: Year #** (please reproduce this table for each year of the project)

	MLA Direct project costs	RO cash	RO salary	RO overhead	TOTAL Year 1
Personnel, name or role and proportion*					
Expenses Travel					
Materials and consumables					
Other					
<b>Expenses total</b>					
<b>Capital</b>					
<b>Revenue credit</b> (sale of stock, wool etc.)					
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b> (ex GST)					

\* Include on costs - one line per person.

### Example Budget Summary

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL
MLA						
Research Organisation contributions						

### Contributor(s)/other funds

Indicate any parties that are providing an in-kind or financial contribution to the project. Describe how the in kind contributions are derived using cash, salary contributions and overhead charges. Indicate the amount and type of contribution.

## Milestones

- Milestones are used by MLA to monitor the progress of the project towards achieving the project's objectives.
- Milestones are based on the completion of significant stages, activities or outputs within the project and milestone achievement criteria should be explicitly stated. Milestones are only complete after reports are submitted and accepted or edited, re-submitted and accepted by MLA.
- Payments are linked to the successful completion of milestones and upon receipt of a tax invoice for payment. Milestone payment dates will be one month after the milestone submission date, allowing MLA to review and approve the milestone report or seek modification before making payment.
- MLA requires you to summarise the milestones of the project in a table, indicating a completion date for each milestone, using the milestone template.
- The final report and a digital copy of all project data including metadata must be provided.
- MLA avoids milestone submission dates between 15 May and 30 June and final report submission dates between 31 March and 30 June.
- The amount of the final milestone payment on acceptance of a final report should be adequately weighted. For a 3 year project it should be no less than 20% of the project budget and for a 4 year project no less than 15% of the project budget.

As a guide, an appropriate number of milestones should be:

- Duration of project  $\leq$  6 months = 1 milestone;
- Duration of project 6 to 12 months = 1 to 2 milestones;
- Duration of project  $\geq$  12 months = 1 to 2 milestones per year.

A Final Report is required at the end of the project and must follow the MLA style guide:

([www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/project-reporting-templates/](http://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/project-reporting-templates/)). MLA strongly encourages investigators to publish their findings in the scientific literature.

**Important:** MLA requires a signed agreement before a project is undertaken. When proposing milestone dates and start/end dates for the project, you should be aware that a signed agreement can take up to 12 weeks to obtain.

Some examples of milestones are set out below:

### Example 1

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Achievement criteria</i>	<i>Due date</i>
1	<i>Commercial feasibility study completed and draft business plan available for industry feedback.</i>	<i>day/month/year</i>
2	<i>2.1 First scan and analysis completed and summary sent to MLA. 2.2 Scan and meat trait data provided to MLA.</i>	
3	<i>3.1 Final report submitted to MLA. 3.2 Meta - data provided with final report, and statement about where data are to be stored</i>	

### Example 2

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Achievement criteria</i>	<i>Due date</i>
1	<i>First scan and analysis completed.</i>	
2	<i>First year communications material collated and provided to MLA.</i>	
3	<i>Second scan and analysis completed.</i>	
4	<i>4.1 Final report submitted to MLA. 4.2 Paper submitted to and accepted by peer reviewed journal.</i>	

### Example cash flow table template

Payment Date	Milestone	Fees	Expenses	Capital	Total
	1 *	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2 **	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	3 **	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	4 **	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	5 ***	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>AUD \$0.00</b>

\*or on signing of this agreement

\*\*on acceptance and approval of corresponding milestone report, with tax invoice and copy of receipts attached

\*\*\*on receipt and acceptance of final report by MLA, with tax invoice for payment attached

*NB: any money uncommitted at the end of the Project must be returned to MLA*

### Commercialisation

If the objective for the project is for outputs to be licensed, sold or otherwise commercially exploited, please provide details on any initial commercial discussions (if any), the sector/type of commercial partner required and any current obligations over the IP by any commercial interests.

### R&D Adoption pathways

Describe the proposed extension and/or adoption pathways that will enable live export, grainfed beef and/or goat producers to benefit from this project during and after implementation:

- What practical, on-farm issue/problem does this proposal will address?
- How many (or what proportion of) live export, grainfed beef and/or goat producers are impacted by the issue/problem(s)?
- What are the main impacts on/benefits for live export, grainfed beef and/or goat businesses from this proposal?
- What practices will be adopted as a result of this proposal? How?
- Describe the target audience. What proportion of the target audience is likely to adopt the project outputs/ practices? Use [CSIRO ADOPT](#) to evaluate and predict the likely level of adoption proposed technologies and/or practices for the target audience.
- What engagement and capacity building activities are required?

Describe how producers will be involved in the project from start to end.

### Benefit Cost Analysis

An economic assessment is a key criterion in assessing whether many projects should be funded.

Undertaking a meaningful benefit cost analysis can be challenging. Where possible, principal investigators should seek advice from colleagues with training in agricultural economics or other relevant disciplines.

MLA managers are well-versed in benefit cost analytical procedures such as those employed by the Rendell McGuckian model. To help MLA model the value of outcomes, please provide responses to the following questions:

1. **On-farm productivity impact:** describe and if possible quantify the likely changes in farm practices and productivity (such as stocking rate, growth, weaning, or mortality rates) and changes in unit cost or profit resulting from adoption of the technology stemming from this work.



2. **Farm level costs:** will there be costs associated with adopting the outputs? Estimated capital costs and/or ongoing variable costs (\$/farm, \$/head or \$/ha)?
3. **Adoption of the innovation:**
  - a. Who or which sector(s) of industry will benefit from the R&D (scale of enterprise, agro-climatic zone, applicable total area)?
  - b. How long before adoption would commence (years from completion of R&D)?
  - c. Peak adoption (such as % of farms; number of dry sheep equivalents or ha's)
  - d. Time to peak adoption?
4. **Will this work require further research or development or extension costs until there is a usable or commercial product:** time required and likely additional costs?
5. **What are the likely environmental, animal welfare and social outcomes:** describe any likely social or environmental impacts from adoption of the resultant technology. Where possible quantify potential outcomes
  - a. **Environmental:** are outputs from the RD&A Program likely to have an impact on natural resource management?
    - On-farm factors: soil health (pH, organic matter); ground cover, weed populations, dry land salinity, residues, greenhouse gas emissions, water use efficiency, etc.
    - Off-farm factors: water quality (sediment, nutrient loads), weeds, residues; aspects of biodiversity, aesthetics, greenhouse gas emissions, water use efficiency, etc.
  - b. **Animal welfare:** are outputs from the RD&A Program likely to have an impact on animal welfare?
    - On-farm factors: physical and behavioural impacts (fear, distress, pain, injury, disease, discomfort, hunger, thirst).
    - Off-farm factors: community perceptions / expectations.
  - c. **Social:** are the outputs from the RD&A likely to have an impact on the farm family, labour or the rural community?
    - On-farm factors: farm family labour, lifestyle (work-life balance), work quality, fatigue, work health and safety, producer satisfaction.
    - Off-farm factors: farm family support and networking, professional development support, rural community benefits and perception, scientific community capacity and skills.

### **Risks**

Risk assessments are important to effectively manage issues and risks that may threaten the delivery of the project's anticipated benefits. MLA seeks to identify risk management processes pertaining to each project so that the likelihood of achieving outcomes is increased. Risk management processes may also establish a reliable basis for planning and decision making.

Identifying key risks require an understanding of the root cause of the risk and what the impact / consequence of the risk occurring may be. Once these risks have been identified, they should also be assessed for the consequence and likelihood of occurrence to be able to better evaluate the size of the risk before any mitigation plans are in place (inherent risk). As such, mitigating activities should be formulated to control / manage these risks to an acceptable level. Once mitigation plans have been developed, the risks should be assessed again for the residual risk.

Project proposals should identify a range of risks that may derail the delivery of the outcomes. For example, risks may be considered in a number of areas such as:

- *Adoption or extension failure* – e.g. Lack of buy-in from producers or processors, lack of uptake by the industry, value of the project is not understood, limited capability in the industry to drive adoption or extension services
- *Negative reputational exposure* – e.g. Non-cooperation from industry and community with social research, stakeholder relationships are not managed, work is discredited as being biased or too narrow in sampling

- *Ethical issues* – e.g. Animal welfare concerns, environmental concerns, WHS concerns
- *Legal or regulatory issues* – e.g. Legal issues in using particular devices or methods in each state, working outside of the boundaries of regulatory areas (i.e. genetic manipulation etc), conflicts of interest between researcher and potential future commercial partner
- *Intellectual Property (IP) related risks* – e.g. Freedom to operate issues stemming from infringement of IP, unidentified ownership of IP, unmanaged IP interests
- *Technical risks* – e.g. Risk of design, technological, scientific or experimental constraints
- *Resource, personnel or facility issues* – e.g. Over-reliance on a small pool of resources, limited facilities to conduct research or limited availability of subject matter experts
- *Weather / climate constraints* – e.g. Research is derailed due to variable weather, soil composition is changed due to adverse weather
- *Ineffective communications or engagement with industry or community stakeholders / participants* – e.g. Limited participation from relevant industry or community groups, potential miscommunication of objectives and outcomes to participant groups, mismanaged stakeholder expectations
- *System or technological failure* – e.g. System issues impacting data collection, management, retention and ownership (breach in privacy law) or equipment malfunction and breakdown
- *Financial risks* – e.g. Failure to account for fluctuations in foreign exchange rates, delayed milestones, potential for additional costs

*Tip: Considerations for risks should not be limited to those listed above. They should be based on your expertise on the subject matter.*

### **MLA Standard Terms and Conditions**

MLA supplied a copy of the MLA standard terms and conditions for RD&A projects with the invitation to submit a Full Proposal. Please ensure the appropriate officer/s in your organisation review the MLA standard terms and conditions. In the Full Proposal, record your organization's acceptance of, or concerns with the MLA standard terms and conditions, or any existing terms and conditions that apply to your organisation.



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Project Team**

On a maximum length of 1 page per project team participant, provide: name, qualifications, current institution, position title and previous positions held during the last 10 years.

In up to 300 words describe your contribution to this field or relevant fields over the last 10 years.

Provide a list of significant publications, reports, extension material (including internet links) or equivalent that you have produced during the last 5 years and your 10 career best publications or equivalent (in particular, as related to this work<sup>#</sup>). List your current research projects and projects/grants completed over the last 5 years using the following template. Mark<sup>#</sup> those relevant to this project. Note whether final reports were on time or how late in months.

#### **Example project team table**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Investigator names % FTE<sup>*</sup></b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Reports delivered on time or late</b>

<sup>#</sup>Same research area as proposal

<sup>\*</sup>Full time equivalent. Proportion of each investigators time contributed to each project

### **Appendix 2: Budget Planning**

Attach the budget planning spread sheets used to calculate costs. MLA does not have a preferred template for budget planning.

For salaries, please provide detail about multipliers used to estimate in-kind contributions for all salaries included as in-kind for this project.

For operating costs, please provide an explanation of each line item, how this was calculated and how this expenditure relates to achieving the project outcomes.

In no more than 1 page:

- justify each budget item requested from MLA
- describe how non-MLA contributions (cash and in kind) support the proposed project
- include a breakdown of any institutional overhead charges and their contribution to the project.

### **Appendix 3: Risk assessment table**

Identify the key risks to the project by completing the risk assessment table, using the risk matrix guide in Appendix 4 to assess the consequence and likelihood.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Potential Causes</b>	<b>Potential Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Plans</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Residual Risk Rating</b>
Research results are not valid.	Methodology for testing is not robust; poor assumptions applied.	Research funds wasted. Reputation may be compromised.	Research methodology is discussed and approved by a taskforce or committee comprising relevant subject matter experts (SMEs). Regular meetings will be held to discuss potential issues and interim findings.	4	2	Medium
Research results are limited in scope, not representative of the population.	Limited number of samples utilised for research, from a limited area.	Results are skewed, can only be applied to a small population, or is not considered credible / reliable. Results cannot be used in a meaningful way.	Sampling population is large and diverse in terms of location, age, gender and socio-economic status.	4	3	High

### **Appendix 4: Risk matrix guide**

Refer to the consequence and likelihood tables below as a guide to assess and rate risks. Consequence categories are not limited to those in the table below and should take into account relevant consequences to your project.

Consequence table

	Consequence				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Safety</b>	Ailments not requiring medical treatment	Minor Injury	1 serious injury causing hospitalisation or multiple minor injuries	1 life threatening injury or multiple serious injuries causing hospitalisation	1 death or multiple life threatening injuries
<b>Reputation</b>	Self-improvement review	Internal reviews required to reverse decline in reputation	Scrutiny required in the form of external reviews and/or investigations	Intense public, political and media scrutiny e.g. parliamentary enquiry or legal action	Complete loss of integrity with key stakeholders e.g. would result in loss of funding
<b>Financial</b>	< \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$250,000	\$250,001 - \$2M	\$2M - \$10M	> \$10M
<b>Organisational Objectives</b>	Very little consequence to achievement of objective	Would require some adjustment to achieve objective	would require significant adjustment to achieve objective	Would threaten achievement of the objective	Would stop achievement of the objective

Likelihood scale

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	<b>Almost Certain</b>	Expected in most circumstances. Has occurred on an annual basis in the past or circumstances are in train that will cause it to happen
	4	<b>Likely</b>	Has occurred in the last few years or has occurred recently in other similar organisations or circumstances have occurred that will cause it to happen in the short term.
	3	<b>Possible</b>	Has occurred at least once in our history or is considered to have a 5% chance of occurring in the current planning cycle.
	2	<b>Unlikely</b>	Has never occurred in our past but has occurred infrequently in other similar organisations or is considered to have around a 1% chance of occurring in the current planning cycle.
	1	<b>Rare</b>	Exceptional circumstances only. Is possible but has very much less than a 1% chance of occurring in the current planning cycle.

		Consequence					
		1	2	3	4	5	
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic	
Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	5	10	15	20	25
	4	Likely	4	8	12	16	20
	3	Possible	3	6	9	12	15
	2	Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
	1	Rare	1	2	3	4	5

  

Low	Medium	High	Extreme
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Guidelines