GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PRELIMINARY NLGC PROPOSALS
2023/24 National Livestock Genetics Consortium (NLGC) MDC Project Call

Application process

MLA and the National Livestock Genetics Consortium (NLGC) Taskforce invites applicants to submit preliminary proposals to the 2023/24 NLGC annual Project Call for sheep and cattle genetics research development and adoption (RD&A). A 1–2-minute video pitch on the project will also need to be submitted with the preliminary proposal. This call process is open for submissions until 11:59pm AEDT on the 15th March 2024.

Preliminary project applications on the NLGC proposal template submitted to **livestockgenetics@mla.com.au** by this date will be reviewed by the NLGC Taskforce in April 2024. The NLGC Taskforce acts in an advisory capacity to recommend appropriate projects to be funded by levy or MLA Donor Company funds. Final project approval will be subject to internal MLA governance processes, funding availability and contractual agreement between the applicant/s and MLA. Feedback will be provided for full proposals to be submitted to the NLGC for review in July.

The aim of the preliminary proposal is to give the NLGC an indicative outline of what the project aims to achieve, who is involved and an estimate of cost. **Please keep answers and overviews brief.**

Acknowledgement

The details provided in the preliminary proposal as well as any further information provided throughout the NLGC project call process (including full proposal & feedback) will be used to develop papers for MLA's internal governance process as well as final contracting agreements, once endorsed and 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), 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 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.

Proposal template

The NLGC Annual Project call is seeking preliminary proposals, please use the headings in the preliminary proposal template and comply with the guidelines below. Proposals that do not follow and comply with the guidelines will not be assessed, including word limits and adequate budget information.

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

The completed Preliminary Proposal and video pitch must be submitted electronically to MLA by 11.59pm AEDT (NSW time) on 15th March 2024 to: **livestockgenetics@mla.com.au**

The following notes in conjunction with *italicised instructions* in the Preliminary Proposal template are designed to assist completion of the application. Applicants of Preliminary Proposals that do not follow and comply with the guidelines will be notified that proposals will not be assessed by the NLGC.

Carefully read and adhere to these GUIDELINES for preparing NLGC Preliminary Project Proposals. All fields in the Preliminary Proposal template must be completed. Please direct any queries around completing the proposal template to livestockgenetics@mla.com.au or Sarah Day sday@mla.com.au

---

GUIDELINES

---

*Note that this is a Preliminary Proposal only for review therefore please keep answers brief and as a high-level overview of the project.

Project title

Project title must be brief and specific, maximum of 20 words.

Research organisation

Include the name, ABN number, street address and postal address of the lead organisation involved with the project.

Principal investigator

Include the name, mailing address, phone number and email address of the project lead investigator of this project. This lead principal investigator must be an employee or the listed research organisation.

Agent(s)/subcontractor(s)

An agent/subcontractor is a company/person that provides a service or performs work for a business but is not an employee of that business. Subject to approval by MLA, an agent/subcontractor may be contracted by the Research Organisation to carry out any part of the Project activities outlined in the agreement between MLA and the Research Organisation, using the same terms and conditions as between MLA and the Research Organisation. MLA may request to approve the terms and conditions of the agent/subcontractor prior to commencement of the Project.

Administration contact details

Include the name, mailing address, phone number and email address of the administration contact for the lead research organisation.

Species type (i.e. sheep, Northern beef, Southern beef)

Tick one or more boxes with the species type that this project will be conducting the research on or the outcomes will impact.

Location/s of research work

Where will the research being conducted take place?

Which state/s is the research most relevant to

Tick one or more boxes where the research taking place will be most relevant to.

2023/24 Terms of Reference priority addressed by this preliminary proposal

The 2023/24 NLGC Genetics Project Terms of Reference (ToR) priorities have been published on the MLA website as part of the MDC call process. Tick one or more ToR that your proposal is directed. The ToR is key to assessment of the relevance of your proposal to industry needs and expectations.

Summary

Brief summaries of projects are used for project review as well as MLA's internal process and project management. In a maximum of 200 words provide a plain English summary of the projects reason and aims.

Outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project

Define the outputs (products, services, technologies, knowledge, innovations, etc) - and describe the outcomes created or contributed to by this project. This should be considered in relation to a central research question or hypothesis and should not be confused with completion of work phases or milestones.

- Outputs are the tangible objectives of the project and should be described in a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) format
- Outcomes should relate to changes in practice and behaviour (qualitative and quantitative) that lead to a measurable changes (impacts) in productivity and/or profitability

Background of research work

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 2023/24 Genetics Projects ToR?

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 one page, including a list of cited references. If additional references are required they can be supplied as an appendix.

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

- Red Meat 2030 (RMAC)
- MLA Strategic Plan 2025 (MLA)

Brief project design and methodology

The NLGC skills-based Taskforce review project for alignment with priorities as well as technical merit. 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.

Establish the relevant information required for review briefly. Appendixes can be used to supply associated information when required.

.

R&D adoption – Pathways to adoption

Describe the proposed extension and/or adoption pathways that will enable sheep and cattle 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) sheep and/or cattle producers are impacted by the issue/problem(s)?
- What are the main impacts on/benefits for sheep and cattle 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?
- What engagement and capacity building activities are required?

R&D adoption – Commercial pathways

If the objective for the project 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.

Confidential external review

MLA has established the National Livestock Genetics Consortium (NLGC) Taskforce to review and rank RD&A proposals submitted to the NLGC annual project call. A peer review panel process delivers independence, quality, objectivity and transparency to project review and selection by MLA. Genetics RD&A proposals will only be considered for funding by MLA if you consent to external review by the NLGC Taskforce.

Intellectual Property (IP)

Note all IP matters that may require attention in a full proposal, including the following:

1. an outline of anticipated IP (or type of IP) which will be created as a result of this project.
2. proposed ownership of IP created as a result of this project - an outline of how the background IP will be used by industry.
3. any background or existing IP being brought into the project, ownership of that background IP or any encumbrances (such as a licence) and any obligations that could influence adoption of project IP. In addition, include detail on how the background IP will be incorporated in project IP.

Definitions

- **Background IP** means Intellectual Property owned, licensed or held by a party and made available by the party to the Project, including any Intellectual Property specified as such in the schedule;
- **Intellectual Property** means all patents, patent applications, trade marks, service marks, designs, plant breeder's rights, copyright, know-how, trade secrets, eligible layout rights, domain names, internet addresses, rights in confidential information and all and any other intellectual property rights whether registered or unregistered and rights to apply for any of the same, and includes the Confidential Information;
- **Project IP** means Intellectual Property which arises out of the Project.
- **Breeding Value Services** means any service which involves estimation of genetic or genomic breeding values for cattle and sheep, including without limitation the BREEDPLAN software and OVIS software;
- **National Data Platform** means database or network of databases and analytics infrastructure established to store, process and enable access to, in accordance with defined IP rights, data, IP, products and tools relevant to livestock genetics;

Service providers

Provide the name and job title, research organisation and Australian Business Number (ABN), role and responsibilities of the participant for the project and % full time equivalent. You should note whether these organisations will be contracted by MLA or by the funding partner.

Source of funds

This table outlines how the entire project (including Project Administration Fee) that will be funded.

MLA Donor Company Limited (MDC) can fund a maximum of 40% of the project. The remaining funds will be provided by your company and any other funding partners. All sections of the table are required to be completed.

MLA is not able to match funds sourced from other Australian Federal Government programs and may be able to match only in limited cases funds from Australian State Governments.

Funding sources may include the following:

- Australian or International (funding directly provided by partner).
- Commonwealth (funding provided by the Commonwealth for use in the project however not able to be matched).
- State (funding provided by State governments which may be able to be matched with some conditions).

The source of funds total must match the expenditure and milestones totals, including project administration fees. Proposals with total funds that don't add up or match will not be reviewed.

The **Project administration fee** is currently either 8% or 12% of the net value of the project, shared between MLA Donor Company and the partner at the same agreed funding split. This fee is calculated on the net project cost and will be invoiced quarterly. If the project takes longer than the contracted timeframe additional administration fees will be proportionally applied, so please think carefully about the dates and duration of your milestones.

Industry levy payers will pay 8% for their project administration fee. All other partners will pay a 12% administration fee.

Overall budget (project "expenditure")

Provide a breakdown of the services by financial year. This should include:

Salaries & wages – Labour costs (including on-costs and fixed costs) incurred by each service provider.

Operating expenses – classified into the following areas:

- Travel (T) – flights, accommodation, meals and mileage etc.
- Materials (M) – steel, system controllers, cable, drive motors, sensors etc.
- Consumables (C) – water, electricity, gas, telephone calls, chemicals etc.

Capital - Items that would be treated as a depreciated capital asset and are required for the purpose of undertaking the project e.g. livestock if these can be resold, computers, off the shelf equipment more than $1,000, motor vehicles, machinery.

Risk assessment

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 and added into the risk assessment. Once mitigation plans have been developed, the risks should be assessed again for the residual risk and entered into the Risk Assesment Table.

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.

Please refer to the below Risk matrix guide in completing the Risk Assessment.

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

	Consequences				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Safety	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
Reputation	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
Financial	< $50,000	$50,001 - $250,000	$250,001 - $2M	$2M - $10M	> $10M
Organisational	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

Likelihood	5	**Almost Certain**	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	**Likely**	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	**Possible**	Has occurred at least once in our history or is considered to have a 5% chance of occurring in the current planning cycle
	2	**Unlikely**	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	**Rare**	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**
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

Likelihood

Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Extreme**