

final report

Project code: B.GOA.0096

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Date published: June 2014

ISBN: 9781740362283

PUBLISHED BY
Meat & Livestock Australia Limited
Locked Bag 991
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Operational upgrade of KIDPLAN materials

Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

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Abstract

KIDPLAN commenced receiving data in 1997 and since that time a total of 22 seedstock breeders have at some point been a member. As at 2014, there were nine active members submitting data. Usage of KIDPLAN peaked around the year 2000 and the KIDPLAN material to help producers engage with KIDPLAN dated back to 2000.

Based on recommendations from the 2012 Seedstock Industry report project B.GOA.0096 reviewed KIDPLAN communication materials as well as *Module 5 - Goat selection* of the *Going into Goats: Profitable producers' best practice guide* to ensure these resources provide accurate and timely information in a readily accessible format.

Executive summary

The objective of KIDPLAN is to provide simple, practical information for goat breeders and producers on the genetic potential of their animals, by ranking them for various production characteristics, in the form of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).

KIDPLAN commenced receiving data from goat breeders in 1997 and since that time a total of 22 seedstock breeders have at some point been a member with usage peaking in the year 2000. As at 2014, there were nine active members submitting data.

Most of the communication material available to producers regarding KIDPLAN dated back to 2000 and was in need of review to ensure relevance and consistency with LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT; similar programs also run by Sheep Genetics for sheep and wool industries.

Based on recommendations from the 2012 Seedstock Industry report, project B.GOA.0096 reviewed existing KIDPLAN communication materials as well as *Module 5 - Goat selection* of the *Going into Goats: Profitable producers' best practice guide* to ensure these resources provide accurate and timely information in a readily accessible format.

Schuster Consulting Group Pty Limited approached this task through two distinct stages, with the first stage being a prerequisite for the second stage:

- 1) Analysis of the communication needs of the target audience/s.
- 2) Review of existing communications materials and assessment of "fit for purpose".

In considering the communication needs of KIDPLAN's target audiences, it was found that:

- KIDPLAN has a broader target audience than just seedstock producers and can also appeal to commercial goatmeat producers.
- Communication channels and methods have in the past been utilised in a non-specific, "one-size-fits all" manner rather than a strategic audience-based approach.
- Value propositions to guide the development of key messages and communication materials had not been developed.

The project has delivered analysis of target audiences, recognised the different uses of KIDPLAN by different users and identified the appropriate communication approach required for the target audiences. The need to integrate objective and subjective assessment has been identified as integral to further adoption of KIDPLAN by industry.

The project has delivered two series of communication materials by rewriting and repurposing existing materials to meet the needs of two target audiences: introductory and intermediate users. Recommendations are provided to fill the communication gaps identified through the research.

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1. Background

KIDPLAN was developed by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) to provide goat breeders and producers with simple, practical information on the genetic potential of their animals. In a similar manner to LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT, KIDPLAN ranks the genetic potential of goats for various production characteristics in the form of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).

KIDPLAN commenced receiving data in 1997 and since that time a total of 22 seedstock breeders have at some point been a member. As at 2014, there were nine active members submitting data. Usage of KIDPLAN peaked around the year 2000 and then slowly lost momentum up until 2011 when a total of four new members joined as part of the Boer Select group.

KIDPLAN, like LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT, is a technically sound genetic benchmarking tool. There is little criticism of the service within the industry with most breeders admitting lack of understanding as the main reason for not being involved. There have been limited resources directed to increasing the knowledge of breeders either by MLA over the last 10 years.

Prior to this project being undertaken, the KIDPLAN material available via the KIDPLAN website dated back to 2000 and the KIDPLAN website is not consistent with the MERINOSELECT or LAMBPLAN sites in either presentation, available information or functionality.

This project addresses two of the recommendations made within the 2012 Seedstock Industry report in relation to KIDPLAN to overhaul services and improve the situation:

- 1. The KIDPLAN website requires updating and bringing into line with LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT. This will not only provide access to better information but also give confidence to the goat seedstock industry that MLA and Sheep Genetics sees value in them as stakeholders / clients. Access to breeding values on the website, as is the case with the LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT websites will be an important part of this upgrade.
- 2. Redevelopment of current extension materials for producers. The full suite of KIDPLAN supporting material requires rewriting. The majority of the currently available material is more than 10 years old and well out of date.

As a result, MLA commissioned Schuster Consulting Group Pty Limited (SCG) to review KIDPLAN communication materials as well as *Module 5 - Goat selection* of the *Going into Goats: Profitable producers' best practice guide* (GiG Guide) to ensure these resources provide accurate and timely information in a readily accessible format (project: B.GOA.0096).

1.1. Project objectives

The objectives of project B.GOA.0096 were to:

- 1. Identify the target audiences for KIDPLAN and the Goat selection module.
- 2. Review all existing KIDPLAN materials as well as the Goat selection module and assess for currency and relevance in consideration of the target audiences.
- 3. Update existing KIDPLAN materials and the Goat selection module and repurpose as required.
- 4. Develop specific goat genetics section to augment the Goat selection module.
- 5. Ensure appropriate integration between KIDPLAN and the Goat selection module.
- 6. Deliver the updated and repurposed KIDPLAN material in a format that may be integrated into the KIDPLAN area of the Sheep Genetics website.
- 7. Deliver the updated Goat selection module in Word format (design and layout to be managed in house by MLA).
- 8. Develop two Tips & Tools documents to complement the Goat selection module. These will be delivered in Word format (design and layout to be managed in house by MLA).
- 9. Identify gaps in existing materials and make recommendations for how these gaps may be addressed.

1.2. Scope

This project was limited to the rewriting and repurposing of existing material. Where the need for new material was identified, this was to be noted; however, the development of such new material was beyond the scope of this project.

Primary research involving KIDPLAN users and producers was beyond the scope of this project.

2. Methodology

In conducting this project, the following steps were undertaken:

- Identification of the key target audiences for KIDPLAN based on discussions with key Sheep Genetics and MLA staff.
- Identification and collation of all existing communication materials.

- Development the 'Buyer's Journey' model for KIDPLAN (used recently to better align MERINOSELECT and LAMBPLAN communication activities with target audience needs) and application of this model to the target audiences identified for KIDPLAN.
- Identification of key drivers for the different target audiences.
- Development of an appropriate communication approach to be applied in reviewing existing communication material.
- Identification of the appropriate style, content and language for each target audience.
- Review of existing (provided) materials for relevance to target audience, proposed communication approach and structure.
- Identification of gaps in communication materials.
- Rewriting and/or repurposing of existing materials based on proposed communication approach, structure and style(s) and gap analysis.
- Review of Module 5 Goat selection from the GiG Guide which involved comprehensively rewriting the module and renaming to Module 5 - Goat selection and breeding in order to better address both objective and subjective selection criteria and integrate with additional KIDPLAN communication materials.
- Drafting of two tools to complement Module 5 Goat selection and breeding and other KIDPLAN communication materials.
- Review of updated materials by Tom Hooke (Sheep Genetics) for accuracy and relevance.
- Development of recommendations.
- Final report preparation.

2.1. Application of 'Buyer's Journey' model

The 'Buyer's Journey' is a model often used to help describe the different levels of awareness and understanding about a product, in this case KIDPLAN, by the different target audiences. Use of the Buyer's Journey model helps organisations avoid using a "one size fits all approach" in their communication and engagement activities.

The Buyer's Journey is essentially a cognitive decision making journey individuals follow when considering buying, adopting or consuming products, services or offerings. Within the Buyer's Journey, each individual (a "buyer") must personally traverse a pathway leading from

a stage of total lack of awareness (What?) through an apathy stage (Do I have a need?) to a commitment stage (How can I get this?). An example of a basic Buyer's Journey is shown in Figure 1.

The aim of communication materials and activities should be to move as many potential buyers from the unaware stage to the aware and using stage (Figure 1). This means that each target audience needs to be engaged with slightly differently and therefore, there may need to be subtle variations in how to approach different buyers within each audience.

The aim is to move buyers towards the right hand column

	Unaware	Aware – no opinion	Aware - confused	Aware – unconvinced	Aware - want to learn	Aware - want to use	Aware – using
Knowledge	None	Low	Low to Moderate, confused	Low to Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Opinion	Untroubled	Unconcerned	Unformed	Unconvinced	Good	High	High
Recognise value	No	No	Partially	Partially	Almost	Yes	Yes
Understand use	No	No	Partially	Not fully	Almost	Almost	Yes

Figure 1: Example Buyer's Journey

At each step on the journey, the buyer, in this case the user of KIDPLAN, has a number of questions that must be answered before they progress. The journey stalls or ends whenever the person fails to have their questions answered or fails to find sufficient information that is trustworthy, compelling and understandable. Buyers may start the journey at different points but all have same end point - use, purchase, consumption etc.

Understanding this Buyer's Journey helps organisations develop appropriate communication tactics and materials for the particular stage each buyer may be on with the objective of assisting them progress along their cognitive pathway.

The primary purpose of utilising the Buyer's Journey is to allow an organisation to profile more definitively the various segments within their target audience. The Buyer's Journey provides a framework that enables the organisation to identify:

- The mindset of the buyer at each stage in their journey.
- Key messages for each level.
- Potential barriers to progressing their journey (ie adoption).
- Appropriate channels and materials at each level.

The target audiences identified in section 3.1 have been further profiled using the Buyer's Journey concept to ensure that the rewritten and repurposed communication tools meet their needs.

The Buyer's Journey model was considered during the rewriting and repurposing of the KIDPLAN communication materials, primarily to assist in the structure of different levels of communication.

For example, the introductory factsheets "KIDPLAN for commercial producers" and "KIDPLAN for breeders" are pitched at those who may not be aware of KIDPLAN, while the factsheets in the series "Using KIDPLAN in your goat herd" target producers who wish to learn how KIDPLAN can be applied to achieve their breeding and/or production objectives.

3. Findings and outcomes

3.1. Identification of target audiences

Based on discussions with key Sheep Genetics and MLA staff, a range of target audiences for KIDPLAN were identified which can be broadly classified as: Breeders and commercial producers. For the purpose of rewriting and repurposing existing communication material, this was further broken down to:

- Existing breeders
- Potential breeders
- Existing commercial producers
- Potential commercial producers

Each has different interests and needs and can be profiled as follows:

Breeders

 Existing breeders (or seed stock producers) – Producers who breed meat goats with the primary aim of selling animals as breeding (seed) stock to other producers. Existing KIDPLAN users are in this group, but there may be others who are not aware of, or do not know how to use, KIDPLAN Potential breeders – Producers investigating the possibility of breeding meat goats with the primary aim of sale as breeding stock to other producers. They may not be aware of KIDPLAN.

Commercial producers

- Existing commercial producers Producers already producing meat goats
 with the primary aim of slaughter. These producers have managed herds with
 controlled breeding programs and buy in animals to improve the genetic
 potential of herd. They may or may not be aware of KIDPLAN.
- Potential commercial producers Producers investigating the possibility of improving production though the improved genetic potential of the herd. This audience could also include producers who primarily harvest goats from rangeland herds but are seeking to improve productivity, or those who do not run a commercial goat herd yet. They may or may not be aware of KIDPLAN.

The particular needs of these target audiences was considered in rewriting and repurposing the existing KIDPLAN communication materials.

3.2. Different uses for different users

How KIDPLAN is currently and may be used by different sectors of the industry was also considered important, along with how KIDPLAN may complement other existing goat selection tools such as visual selection.

- Breeders use KIDPLAN to:
 - Generate EBVs,
 - Use those EBVs to market animals to other producers, and
 - Use those EBVs to refine their own breeding and selection decisions.
- Commercial producers use KIDPLAN to:
 - Determine the EBVs most suited to their breeding and/or production objectives,
 - Seek breeders who can supply animals with such EBVs, and
 - Use those EBVs during selection decisions.

The different uses of KIDPLAN by breeders and commercial producers were taken into consideration during the rewriting and repurposing of existing communication materials.

For example, materials aimed at commercial producers focus on strategies that target production goals (such as liveweight and carcase traits), while those for breeders focused on reproductive traits and meeting the needs of their clients.

3.3. Appropriate communication approach

When considering the currency and relevance of existing KIDPLAN materials to the target audiences, the target audience profiles and their stage within the Buyer's Journey was considered.

For example, if an existing commercial producer is wanting to improve growth rates but has not heard of KIDPLAN (they are unaware), a key message for this producer is that animals with particular growth EBVs are more likely to have progeny that grow out quicker.

This audience does not need to know the specifics of how data is collected or how to interpret other EBVs but does need to know what EBVs mean for the growth rates of their animals.

Conversely, for a breeder who is aware of KIDPLAN and wants to start marketing animals using EBVs but is not sure about how to go about this, the most appropriate material for them is a step by step guide of how to participate in KIDPLAN including collecting data and presenting EBVs to potential customers.

3.4. Integrating objective and subjective assessment

The discussions with Sheep Genetics staff indicated that while the KIDPLAN communication material should provide specific information about genetic selection based on metrics or objective measures, it should also consider more traditional selection methods such as visual assessment. While this requirement was considered throughout the development process, the Goat Selection module of the GiG Guide was considered to be a particularly important resource for establishing the relationship between objective and subjective assessment and introducing KIDPLAN.

3.5. Existing materials

The existing communication materials provided by Sheep Genetics or found via internet searches and listed below were predominately two-page brochure publications which appeared to have been developed in an ad hoc manner with little regard for the requirements of a particular target audience.

- An Introduction to KIDPLAN
- KIDPLAN Goat genetic system (MLA On-farm Tips & Tools Genetics LP.03)
- KIDPLAN EBV Definitions
- Understanding KIDPLAN Reports
- Buck Selection Worksheet

The KIDPLAN website, accessed via the Sheep Genetics website, was also considered through the review process. Appendix 1 presents a detailed analysis of each item along with recommendations which were applied in the rewriting and repurposing process. Central to

this rewriting and repurposing of these materials was consideration of the target audiences identified in section 3.1 and their position in the Buyer's Journey.

3.6. Rewritten and repurposed materials

The following rewritten and/or repurposed communication materials have been provided as the primary outcome of this project:

- KIDPLAN for breeders This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- KIDPLAN for commercial producers This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- How can I use EBVs? This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- How can I use indexes? This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- How do I read EBV tables and KIDPLAN reports? This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- *Understanding terminology* This factsheet has been written for use online, downloaded and/or printed (see 4.1)
- Updated Module 5: Goat selection and breeding To replace the goat selection module as part of the online Going into Goats Guide (see 4.1)
 - Tool 1 KIDPLAN Estimated Breeding Values definitions
 - o Tool 2 How to use KIDPLAN results
 - Tool 3 Visual Goat Scores when available. To be delivered under the PDS being facilitated by Ben Swain of BCS Agribusiness (June 2014)
- Case Study: Breeding meat goats for meat producers (repurposed from Goats on the Move eNewsletter, July 2013, with the permission of Colin Ramsay)

The two Tips & Tools required under Objective 8 of this project have been delivered as tools complementing the Goat selection module. Insufficient information was available to support the development of independent Tips & Tools.

The Buck Selection Worksheet was not included in this review as it was considered to be too complicated for public use and better suited for use in its current form in a workshop setting or with one-on-one assistance from an appropriately experienced person. Furthermore, Sheep Genetics suggested that the worksheet be discontinued as it is not consistent with the material published for LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Following the identification of target audiences, the existing KIDPLAN materials were rewritten and/or repurposed to better suit the needs of these audiences. The goat selection module of the GiG Guide was also comprehensively rewritten to both enhance the existing content and complement the rewritten and repurposed KIDPLAN material. These materials can now be used as the basis of an upgrade to the KIDPLAN website.

The scope of the project did not extend to the development of new resources except where this occurred through the repurposing of existing material to meet the needs of the target audience.

4.1. Identification of gaps and recommendations for improvement

Gaps and inadequacies in the KIDPLAN material were identified throughout the project and are listed below together with recommendations for how these may be addressed:

- Website (or webpage) The existing website provides very little explanatory information on KIDPLAN. This will improve through linkage to the resources developed through this project; however, the functionality of the website should be optimised to ensure goat producers have access to relevant and up to date information at all times, through a logical search method. This should include the introduction of dedicated KIDPLAN webpages rather than KIDPLAN information via the Sheep Genetics website. The materials developed through this project could be used as content for pages on such a website as well as being available as downloadable and/or printable resources. Appendix 2 provides an overview of how the KIDPLAN communication materials produced through this project may be made available through the KIDPLAN section of the Sheep Genetics website in the absence of a dedicated KIDPLAN website and dedicated website content.
- A series of frequently asked questions (FAQ) complete with answers should be developed and made available through the website.
- All references to KIDPLAN on the Sheep Genetics website should be checked to ensure the consistent use of terminology and where necessary reorganised in a logical sequence as KIDPLAN resources. For example the page www.sheepgenetics.org.au/Getting-started/ASBVs-and-Indexes states "ASBVs (and Indexes) are the units of measurement LAMBPLAN, MERINOSELECT and KIDPLAN used to analyse animals." This is incorrect. EBVs are the units associated with KIDPLAN rather than ASBVs. These inconsistencies need to be rectified.
- All links to the Selection module on the website <u>www.rangelandgoats.com.au</u> should be updated to reflect the new title of the module, Goat Selection and Breeding.

- Case studies Case studies can be an extremely effective tool to encourage adoption and illustrate key messages. Very few KIDPLAN case studies exist and it is recommended that a series of these be developed to complement the new KIDPLAN material and for use in a broader information and awareness campaign to be extended via the MLA and Sheep Genetics websites and the Goats on the Move eNewsletter
- Technical Guide A guide is required for KIDPLAN. This should be similar to the guides already produced by Sheep Genetics for LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT and include details for breeders of how to collect and input data into KIDPLAN.
- While the redeveloped material provides a good high-level introduction to KIDPLAN, there may be a need in the future for more detailed instructional information on how to participate in KIDPLAN as a breeder if interest increases. This should include the technical guide described above as well as steps for subscription, data collection, guidelines about how to present/market KIDPLAN reports and tips on marketing breeding animals, as well as additional case studies.

4.2. Additional recommendations

In addition to the recommendations made above, the following research and extension gaps have been identified during the preparation of this report. This research and extension would enable the development of additional communication materials as described.

- Performance of other breeds and their crosses in the rangeland environment Little evidence is available relating to the production benefits that could be achieved through introducing non-rangeland genetics into the rangeland environment. The same can be said for the gains that could be made in placing some degree of selection pressure on rangeland herds. A demonstration site may be established to provide an appropriate research environment to explore this issue and could be leveraged to allow rangeland producers to experience the benefits of being more active in their breeding and selection programs. Further factsheets could be generated from these demonstration sites, including case studies.
- Induction of goats into the rangeland environment There is little information available to producers to assist them in introducing outside genetics into the rangeland goat production environment. A research and extension program to clarify best practice for goat induction would help provide producers with the confidence to introduce non-rangeland goats to the rangelands. This information could be presented as part of the advanced series of communication materials.
- KIDPLAN Indexes The current suite of KIDPLAN Indexes would benefit from review and augmentation based on consultation with KIDPLAN participants and goat producers more generally.

Appendix 1: Materials review findings

An Introduction to KIDPLAN

	Current	Recommended
Target audience	Goat breeders (bucks and does), specifically those using Boer goats	Versions for breeders and commercial producers – with different key value propositions for each target audience
Target 'buyers stage'	All	Unaware and Aware – no opinion
Content	Too detailed for this stage	Needs key message upfront – "genetics can improve profit" and "what it means to you" (see example)
Language	Too technical	Simplify
		More visual cues – link to visual selection tools wherever possible
Format	2 pages	1 page - factsheet
Delivery	Not described/apparent	Web and handouts
Accessibility	Not described/apparent	Home page
Туре	Reference material	Reference material
Other		New title – 'KIDPLAN for breeders' and 'KIDPLAN for commercial producers'
		Version for breeders and version for commercial producers

Example – KIDPLAN for breeders --> Why use KIDPLAN?--> KIDPLAN can help you:

Improve the profitability of your herd by using genetics that better match market specifications,

Better refine your breeding objectives by reducing the risk associated with goat selection,

Speed up the rate of genetic gain in your seed stock and/or commercial herd,

Track the level of improvement in the genetic makeup of your herd by using a benchmarking system, and

Produce more kilograms of saleable meat per hectare for your clients.

KIDPLAN – Goat genetic system (MLA On-farm Tips & Tools Genetics LP0.3)

	Current	Recommended
Target audience	Goat breeders (bucks and does), specifically those using Boer goats	All
Target 'buyers stage'	All	Unaware and Aware – no opinion
Content	Good key messages in 'Key Tips' section	Combine 'Key Tips' section with content from 'An Introduction to KIDPLAN' under 'KIDPLAN for breeders' and 'KIDPLAN for commercial producers'
	Remaining content quite detailed	Repurpose remaining content (see below); some content may be duplicated in other existing documents
Language	Good	No change
		More visual cues – link to visual selection tools wherever possible
Format	2 pages	2 page – factsheet (as repurposed document)
Delivery	Web and handouts?	Web and handouts
Accessibility	Via internet search	Home page
Туре	Reference material	Reference material
Other		Repurpose remaining content as 'Using KIDPLAN - terminology' and as part of other documents

KIDPLAN EBV Definitions

	Current	Recommended
Target audience	Not clear (possibly goat breeders)	All
Target 'buyers stage'	Not clear	Aware – want to learn Aware – want to use Aware – using
Content	Good	No change, but possibly more explanation about indexes
Language	Appropriate	Simplify where possible (see example)
		Try linking to visual selection tools wherever possible
Format	2 pages	2 pages – as required
Delivery	Web and handouts	Web and handouts; part of training packages
Accessibility	?	Via 'KIDPLAN' page
Туре	Reference material	Reference material
Other		As is, this should be used as reference material only, not as promotional material.
		Repurposed as part of a series 'Using KIDPLAN in your goat herd – how can I use EBVs' and 'Using KIDPLAN in your goat herd – how can I use indexes' based on the definitions

Example - How can I use EBVs?

You can use estimated breeding values (EBVs) to help select the best animals for your herd to reach your breeding objective. EBVs can be used to refine the breeding objectives of a seed stock herd, or they can be used to lift the productivity of a commercial herd, whether based primarily on a specialist meat goat such as the Boer goat, or rangeland goats.

Worm egg count EBV: for healthier goats

Worm egg count (WEC) is the likelihood that an animal's progeny will be affected by worms based on its genes. A more negative EBV means the animal is likely to have kids with greater worm resistance.

Understanding KIDPLAN Reports

	Current	Recommended
Target audience	Not clear	Breeders and commercial producers
Target 'buyers stage'	Not clear	Aware – confused
Content	Good	No change
Language	Ok	Simplify where possible (see example)
		Try linking to visual selection tools wherever possible
Format	1 page	1 page - factsheet
Delivery	Not described/apparent	Web and handouts; part of training packages
Accessibility	Not described/apparent	Via 'KIDPLAN' page
Туре	Reference material	Reference material
Other		Repurposed as part of a series 'Using KIDPLAN in your goat herd – how do I read KIDPLAN reports?' based on existing document

Buck selection worksheet

	Current	Recommended
Target audience	Not clear	Goat breeders and commercial producers
Target 'buyers stage'	Not clear	Aware – want to learn
Stage		Aware – want to use
		Aware - using
Content	Good	No change
Language	Ok	Simplify where possible (see example)
		More explanation about why and how to use
		Try linking to visual selection tools wherever possible
Format	2 pages	2 pages – part of guide? Or as a factsheet?
Delivery	Not described/apparent	Web and handouts; part of training packages
Accessibility	Not described/apparent	Via 'KIDPLAN' page
Туре	Reference material	Reference material
Other		Need to explain how price can be factored into decision making process.
		Steps need to be better explained.
		Remove this document from communication until it can be further refined, possibly for use only in workshop situations.

Appendix 2: Outline of website structure reflecting materials

