

LIVESTOCK EXPORT COLLABORATIVE FUNDING PROGRAM (LEP CO-FUNDING PROGRAM) 2022-23

OVERVIEW

The **Livestock Export Collaborative Funding Program (“Co-Funding Program”)** is a key initiative of the MLA and LiveCorp Livestock Export Program (LEP) established to support commercial participants (exporters and producers) in developing and implementing strategic welfare and productivity improvements in the Australian live export sector.

The **aim of the Co-Funding Program** is to assist exporters and producers in the delivery of risk mitigation strategies and adoption of best practice livestock management to support the growth, productivity improvements and sustainability of the livestock export industry. The Program also aims to join the improvement of supply chain productivity and efficiency with business development to improve operator competitiveness and trade sustainability. Importantly, it has been developed to facilitate the uptake and extension of research and development (R&D) outcomes, as well as assist with the processes involved in shipment preparations and on-board vessel activity during voyages.

The Co-Funding Program is designed to facilitate projects that are additional to normal commercial arrangements and which are outside of daily and routine in-market exporter staff, producer or consultant activities. That is, projects that will stimulate and facilitate broader industry and trade benefit, as well as enhancing the efficiency of individual commercial operators. By leveraging producer and exporter funds, the Co-Funding Program will contribute to the delivery of key strategic priorities of Red Meat 2030, including:

- **Our Markets:** Improving the economic resilience for our industry by increasing access to, and the performance of existing and new markets.
- **Our Systems:** Maintaining our valued integrity systems, built on trust and respect that supports strong partnerships and sharing of information, reducing unnecessary industry and government regulation.
- **Our Livestock:** Setting the standard for world-class animal health, biosecurity and production practices.

The Co-Funding Program requires participants to submit an **Annual Plan** of activities that, once approved by the LEP, will be funded on a 50:50 cost shared basis or up to 100% LEP funded via reimbursement (depending on the nature of the project submitted). The LEP will not cost share components of the Activity which leverage customers’ or other organisations’ activities. Funding criteria and administration procedures are detailed in the following pages.

Examples of eligible activities and program areas are provided in Section B.

The LEP will use merit-based assessment criteria to review each application in accordance with Section C.

GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

A. Eligibility Assessment and Co-Funding Criteria

1. The Co-Funding Program is open to all Australian companies (with a registered ABN) who are:
 - a. Livestock exporters with a valid livestock export licence and LiveCorp membership
 - b. Willing to collaborate with MLA to deliver measurable and impactful results which provide benefit and value to stakeholders and overall sustainability of the Australian livestock export industry
2. The LEP will consider applications within program funding limits and in accordance with the LEP funding ratio of 50:50 or up to 100% LEP funded per project.
3. Funding is available across all states and export regions and no district or regional limits apply.

B. Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses

The LEP **WILL** fund Activity Proposals and provide support for activities and expenses that align with the following overarching LEP Programs of Work and Red Meat 2030 Priority Areas.

The following table is not an exhaustive list and provides applicants with a guide.

Red Meat 2030 Priority Areas	LEP Programs of Work
Our Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market segmentation, insights and marketing • Market access • Business development and innovation • Education, adoption and extension of R&D • Communications strategy • Strategic partnerships towards value-based trading
Our Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live export data pipeline
Our Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal welfare • Risk mitigation • Livestock productivity • Education, adoption and extension of R&D

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

1. **Vaccination of Australian cattle for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), on arrival in Indonesian feedlots:**

The Co-Funding Program will reimburse exporters in the short term so that industry is assured that Australian slaughter and breeder cattle entering Indonesia are appropriately vaccinated, therefore limiting their chances of contracting FMD and also contributing to decreasing the prevalence of disease in Indonesia. The intention is that as Indonesia progresses with a large scale vaccination program and vaccine procurement becomes easier, commercial operators will routinely vaccinate cattle as part of their biosecurity plan. The LEP AUSVET Biosecurity Project will support this in parallel. This project will only be available for the short term, with financial support ceasing once funds have been utilised.

 - a. **Claim period:** 4 August 2022 to 31 December 2022 (inclusive).
 - b. **Costs covered include:** FMD vaccine plus consumable equipment used to administer the vaccine. Exporters are eligible for 100% reimbursement of vaccine and the consumable equipment and materials required to administer the FMD vaccine, including: two doses of FMD vaccine (initial dose + booster), needles, vaccination guns and disinfecting vaccine-related equipment.
 - c. **Costs NOT covered include:** labour, travel, accommodation, meals, consultant fees, personal protective equipment (PPE), cold storage and capital equipment.

2. **Infrastructure support** in Indonesian abattoir facilities for repairs and maintenance to meet regulatory compliance, aiming to increase good practices in the supply chain and improve animal welfare standards:
 - a. *Exporters are eligible for 75% reimbursement of total project costs*
3. **Best practice animal welfare, biosecurity and welfare** initiatives on farm and in-market facilities:
 - a. Improvements in feedlot efficiency, feedlot management, feed conversion and nutrition
 - b. Improved breeder cattle reproductive performance and efficiency for smallholder production and integration under palm
 - c. Improved breeder cattle performance, productivity gains, livestock performance and efficiency
4. **Pre-/post-arrival shipment processes**, including shipment preparations, on-board vessel activity and discharge procedures upon arrival at destination
5. **Education and training** workshops or practical courses (point of slaughter and animal handling)
6. **Value-add initiatives** such as “Train-the-trainer” programs with measurable outcomes and impacts
7. **R&D adoption**: Linking on-farm R&D outcomes and adoption in market such as implementation of heat stress mitigation strategies in MENA feedlots
8. **In-market management programs** in preparation for cultural festivals (Eid Al Adha/Korban/Ramadan), targeted at reducing stress on livestock, controlled slaughter and stunning, improved sales systems and processes
9. **Improved competitiveness** in higher value retail channels in overseas markets and consumer awareness both domestically and in overseas markets
10. **Delegation visits**, particularly relevant at Australian industry events (e.g. LIVEXchange) that facilitate improve knowledge transfer and increased awareness of Australia’s animal health and welfare standards
11. **Feasibility studies** of new supply chains, focussing on new markets and conducting gap analyses in new supply chains and markets with strong value propositions
12. **Improving digital connectivity** of data flow and integrity up and down the supply chain, enhancing shared value feedback systems and data pipelines between stakeholders.

CLAIMING EXPENSES

Eligible expenses generally accepted (unless otherwise stated for specific Activities) include:

- Salaries/contractor fees, travel (economy airfares only), accommodation and meals.

All expenses incurred during project activities must include relevant proof of payment and receipts when submitted to MLA.

The LEP will **NOT** match or co-fund the following activities or expenses:

1. Activities that are categorised as on-farm or livestock export everyday business, commercial or sales operational expenses.
2. While companies are encouraged to leverage customers (importers/feedlots/abattoirs) and other organisations’ funds towards this Program, these funds will **NOT** be eligible for LEP co-funding. The LEP will only match the exporter’s or producer’s contribution.
3. Any activities supported via another program, such as Austrade or other government programs.
4. Any expenses used by government bodies or officials.

C. Assessment Process

Prior to submitting applications via the online portal, the LEP highly recommends participants to refer to the [Project Development Checklist](#). This document explains how to build a business case through identifying a problem and considering goals rather than activities in the first instance.

Activity Proposals will be reviewed and assessed in consideration with the following merit-based assessment criteria:

1. Scope and extent of likely impact on animal welfare improvement (risk mitigation and continuous improvement). Animal welfare focussed projects will receive high priority on funding allocation.
2. Benefits in capacity development across the post-arrival supply chain (training locally engaged staff).
3. Alignment with and likely capacity to promote the implementation and adoption of research outcomes from the live export research and development program.
4. Communal benefit to the industry, market and other exporters and producers.
5. The strategic risk of the market and the supply chain.
6. The strategic alignment of the project with Red Meat 2030 Priorities.
7. Likelihood of delivery within budget and timelines.
8. Risk mitigation strategies, particularly for beef breeders.
9. Ability of the company to fully abide by the Program Guidelines, in particular, the measurement and reporting on the effectiveness of the Activity being proposed.

D. Reporting Requirements

Exporters will be required to complete and submit Milestone reporting against their planned objectives and activities, along with corresponding invoices, as outlined in their Activity Proposals. All reporting is to be submitted via the LEP online portal.

E. Confidentiality and Reporting

MLA and LiveCorp will not publish or share information about individual projects. MLA and LiveCorp will report on the Co-Funding Program in their respective Annual Reports, and information on the Program may also be published in other reports, or on the MLA or LiveCorp websites. MLA's Annual Report may include the following type of information:

- List of all companies with the total amount of MLA funding they received for the fiscal year
- Summary of Program outcomes.

F. Private/Personal Information

The information provided to MLA by an exporter or producer (Participant) during the application process for the Co-Funding Program may be personal information under the Privacy Act. By providing MLA with personal information, the Participant consents to the collection and handling of personal information in accordance with **MLA's privacy policy**, which can be viewed at <http://www.mla.com.au/General/Privacy> or obtained directly from MLA by calling 1800 023 100.

Participants may access and correct any personal information held by MLA on request. Where a Participant provides the personal information of others to MLA, the Participant represents that it is entitled to disclose such information having taken all steps required under the *Privacy Act* including that the Participant will be disclosing such personal information to MLA for the purposes of the Co-Funding Program. The Participant agrees to direct such individuals to MLA's privacy policy. If the Participant becomes aware of any breach or alleged breach of the *Privacy Act* concerning information disclosed by the Participant to MLA or by MLA to the Participant, then the Participant must notify MLA immediately and comply with any reasonable directions of MLA with respect to such breach.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Online application

- Applicants wishing to participate in the 2022-23 LEP Co-Funding Program need to apply online for their participation in the Program via the following online portal website:
<https://lepcofunding.mla.com.au/>
- Only applicants who agree to the Terms and Conditions of the Program will be able to submit Activity Proposals for consideration by the LEP and participate in the Program.
- Log in using your myMLA login. If not a user, please create an account.
- **Step 1:** Participants will need to complete an eligibility assessment and if eligible, read and agree to the Program Terms and Conditions.
- **Step 2:** Enter company details and relevant program areas under which Activities will be co-funded.
- **Step 3:** Complete the Annual Plan template online with an estimate of quarterly budgets. Once this is complete, submit for LEP to assess for funding.

Application assessment

- Applications and LEP contributions will be assessed based on the Assessment Process and the Annual Plan to ensure all objectives and budget requests are reasonable.
- For successful applications, MLA will provide a budget allocation to enable the Participant to start developing Activity Proposals.
- For applications that require amendment, MLA will provide guidance as to what amendments are required.

Activity Proposals

- Once the Annual Plan and budget has been approved, Participants need to submit their individual Activity Proposals, which MLA will review and confirm online.
- Once confirmed, the Participant may amend the budget or finish date of the Activity.
- *MLA must be aware of any planned activities PRIOR to the start of the activity, with the Activity Proposal submitted online PRIOR to the Activity commencement date.*

Activity Reports

- Participants have **six weeks from the Activity finish date** to submit claims. Participants will receive an email reminder for the Activity due date. *NB: for May and June Activities, claims must be submitted by 7 July 2023.*
- **Each claim must include:**
 1. Invoice to MLA from Participant
 2. Copy of invoice(s) from third party that provided the service
 3. Evidence to show that the Participant has paid the third party
 4. Comment on Activity outcome
 5. Image evidence of completed Activity (if applicable)
- **Late claims:** Unless previously advised to MLA, if a claim is not submitted for an Activity within eight weeks of the finish date, the Activity status will be changed to **Expired**.
- **Claims exceeding approved activity amount:** If the invoice amount is greater than the amount originally approved for the Activity, Participants can still make the claim, provided there is sufficient budget in the associated Annual Plan quarter. If the claim exceeds the quarterly budget, a reason will be required in the Comments section.

Budget revisions

- Program budgets will be reviewed in **January 2023**, where Participants will be required to adjust their planned budgets for Q3 and Q4. If the Q3 and Q4 planned amounts exceed the initial budget allocation, MLA will consider requests for more funding, provided sufficient unallocated funds are available. A similar budget review process will take place at the beginning of **April 2023** for Q4 plans.
- Participants can adjust budgets online between objectives and quarters where necessary, for current and future quarters.
- At the end of each quarter, the planned amount will be replaced with the actual amount claimed in that quarter.

Annual Report

- On completion of all Activity Reports, Participants are required to complete the final step of the Co-Funding Program by submitting the Annual Report. This report measures the effectiveness of the full year Program, in relation to meeting objectives and overall outcomes achieved according to each Participant's Annual Plan.
- Annual Reports are due **31 July 2023**. Participants will need to complete an Annual Report before participating in the following year's Program.

Application and any administrative queries should be directed to the LEP Co-Funding Program Manager, Rashelle Levonian at rlevonian@mla.com.au or +61 2 9463 9344 / +61 447 419 441.