

Expressions of Interest

Improved Cattle Discharge Platform Design and Field Trial

Proposal due: 21 April 2026

Submit to: nbaker@livecorp.com.au

The Livestock Export Program (LEP)

The Australian Livestock Export Corporation (LiveCorp) is the rural Research and Development Corporation for the livestock export industry in Australia. LiveCorp's mandate is to provide research, development, extension (RD&E) and marketing services that maximise the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of Australia's livestock export industry.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is a research development corporation representing Australia's livestock producers.

LiveCorp and MLA have an active collaboration through a joint program known as the Livestock Export Program (LEP). The LEP delivers animal welfare improvements in Australia and overseas markets through funding programs in:

- Livestock management, health and welfare
- Market access and development
- Supply chain improvements
- Communication and stakeholder relationships
- Research, development and extension.

Background

Live cattle exported from Australia are discharged from vessels at destination ports using temporary or fixed discharge platforms which connect ship unloading ramps to waiting livestock trucks. A discharge platform is a steel structure used to transfer cattle from vessels onto waiting trucks. It connects the ship's unloading ramp to the transport vehicles and is used to manage cattle movement during disembarkation.

Previous industry research identified infrastructure constraints that can cause operational delays and inefficiency. These include poor alignment between vessel ramps and trucks, disruption of connection between discharge platform and vessel due to vessel movement during tide changes, restricted operator visibility and inefficient truck changeover.

Improving the design of discharge platforms presents an opportunity to enhance:

- Livestock handling outcomes, including reduced risk of injury during unloading
- Safety for personnel working around livestock
- Operational efficiency during vessel discharge

The LEP RD&E Program intends to support the development and testing of an improved discharge platform concept that addresses these challenges.



Figure 1: cattle discharging from vessel on to livestock trucks in Indonesia.

Overview of project

The LEP RD&E Program is seeking Expressions of Interest from capable engineering, design, manufacturing, and innovation service providers to support the development and field testing of an improved cattle discharge platform used in live cattle export supply chains.

The project will involve the design, fabrication, and real-world testing of a prototype discharge platform intended to improve the safety, efficiency and livestock handling outcomes during the unloading of cattle from export vessels. The majority of the project's implementation and testing will occur in Indonesia, in collaboration with local supply chain partners.

The Expression of Interest process will identify organisations with the technical capability, practical experience and operational flexibility to deliver this project before inviting a small number of shortlisted providers to participate in a more detailed procurement process.

Project Scope

The selected service provider will work with the LEP RD&E Program and industry stakeholders to:

1. Develop an improved engineering design for a mobile cattle discharge platform appropriate for use in Indonesian ports.
2. Fabricate a prototype unit suitable for commercial operating conditions.
3. Deploy and field test the platform in Indonesia.
4. Evaluate operational performance, including operator safety and discharge efficiency.

Testing will occur under commercial conditions at a participating Indonesian port in collaboration with importers, transport operators and stevedoring companies. Access to the port and stakeholders will be facilitated by the RD&E Program and the project manager, Patrick Coole (Impetus Animal Welfare Ltd).

Additional context is provided in the appendices to assist respondents in understanding the current discharge platform arrangements and operating environment. **Appendix 1** outlines concept notes and indicative features of the prototype discharge platform and existing discharge platform designs currently used in the industry.

The outcome of the project will inform whether improved discharge platforms should be adopted more broadly across the Indonesian and other live cattle export supply chains.

Indicative project activities

While the detailed methodology will be developed with shortlisted respondents in the next phase of procurement, the project is expected to involve two broad stages.

Stage 1 – Design and fabrication

- Review of existing discharge infrastructure and operational constraints
- Consultation with supply chain stakeholders
- Development of detailed engineering designs
- Preparation of engineering drawings and specifications

Stage 2 – Field testing and evaluation

- Fabrication of a prototype discharge platform
- Deployment of the platform at an Indonesian port
- Field testing under commercial unloading conditions
- Collection of operational data and stakeholder feedback
- Assessment of performance against efficiency, animal handling and safety objectives
- Production of design and fabrication instructions for broader use.

Ideal service provider

The LEP RD&E Program is seeking organisations with capabilities in applied engineering, prototype development and field testing in operational environments, with demonstrated experience in the design of cattle handling or livestock infrastructure. Experience working in Indonesia, including an established local presence, partnerships, or delivery of projects in similar operating environments, will be considered advantageous. Experience operating in international or developing market contexts is also desirable. Consortia or partnerships between organisations are welcome.

The ideal provider may include:

- Engineering design firms with experience in livestock infrastructure
- Industrial designers with experience in animal handling systems
- Prototype manufacturers with exposure to agricultural or livestock equipment
- Agricultural or livestock equipment developers

- Innovation or product development companies with relevant livestock infrastructure experience

Desired Capabilities

Expressions of Interest should demonstrate experience in several of the following areas:

- Mechanical or structural engineering design
- Design and development of equipment for heavy-duty or operational environments
- Prototype fabrication, iteration and product development processes
- Planning and conducting field testing, including performance evaluation
- Working in international or developing market contexts
- Coordinating projects involving multiple stakeholders and operating environments

EOI Submission Requirements

Interested organisations should submit a brief Expression of Interest (approximately 2–3 pages) outlining:

1. Organisation overview and relevant experience
2. Examples of similar projects delivered
3. Relevant technical capabilities
4. Experience working in international environments (if applicable)
5. Key personnel who would be involved in the project
6. Any partnerships or collaborators that would support delivery

At this stage, detailed project methodology or pricing is not required. However, indicative pricing or high-level cost estimates would be beneficial where available. Respondents are encouraged to review the appendices to better understand the context and operating conditions relevant to this project.

Project timing

It is anticipated that the design, fabrication and field trial phases would be delivered within approximately three months from contract signing. The proposed timing and sequencing of activities will be discussed and agreed with shortlisted respondents during the next stage of the process, including whether any adjustment to the overall timeframe is required.

Budget

At this stage, respondents are not required to provide detailed pricing. High-level indications of cost drivers or considerations may be included if relevant. Detailed budgets, including resource requirements and any subcontractor arrangements, will be requested from shortlisted respondents in the next stage of the process.

Tender selection during next phase

The LEP RD&E Program will review all Expressions of Interest and shortlist a small number of respondents to progress to the next stage of the procurement process at which time those selected will be invited to tender a detailed project proposal. The LEP RD&E Management Committee will review each proposal. The Management Committee will select the proposal that offers the most appropriate project plan and demonstrates the best value for money.

Resources and skills required

The response should include all resources and personnel required to undertake the project together. This includes any subcontractors and their roles in the trial. Respondents should demonstrate the skills and qualifications that position the proposed team as being the most appropriate for the project execution, including two examples of previous work completed that is relevant to this project.

Confidentiality

The terms and details of any response will be treated as confidential.

Conflict of interest

Where respondents identify that a conflict of interest might arise in the provision of goods or services contemplated by this request for expressions of interest, respondents are to identify that potential conflict of interest in their response.

Further information

If you have questions regarding this project, contact:

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Appendix 1 – Concept notes for design

The following outlines indicative features and considerations for the discharge platform, based on previous industry research. These are provided to support understanding of current concepts and operating conditions only. Final design requirements will be developed in consultation with the LEP RD&E Program and relevant stakeholders during the early stages of the project.

Functional Requirements

- Provide a safe, mobile facility to direct cattle from a single-file ramp onto awaiting trucks
- Allow cattle to be held or blocked prior to truck entry
- Enable truck doors to be fully closed before departure
- Provide clear line of sight for cattle counting
- Minimise cattle visibility of external distractions
- Eliminate potential leg traps and other injury risks
- Support smooth cattle flow, avoiding sharp turns or right angles
- Enable switching between trucks without disrupting flow
- Operate as a fully manual system
- Allow for installation of lighting suitable for both operator visibility and cattle movement

Mobility and Handling

- Capable of being moved via tow hitch or tow ball
- Suitable for lifting by forklift and crane
- Equipped with wheels to allow movement in response to tidal changes during discharge

Truck Interface

- Compatible with a range of rear truck door configurations
- Adjustable to accommodate varying truck loading heights (approximately 1000–1400 mm)
- Adjustable to suit different truck widths
- Incorporate self-aligning bumpers to assist positioning

Ramp Interface

- Capable of interfacing with a range of vessel ramp widths and heights
- Minimise gaps at ramp junctions to reduce risk to animals and operators
- Allow for movement at connection points due to tidal variation

Structural and Design Considerations

- Designed to achieve a balance between strength and manageable weight
- Consideration for compactness, including the ability to fold or reduce size for storage

- Constructed to withstand harsh operating conditions, including coastal environments
- Galvanised or otherwise treated to resist corrosion

Animal Handling and Flooring

- Incorporate non-slip flooring (e.g. rubber) suitable for use with sawdust
- Designed to promote steady cattle movement and reduce stress

Operator Safety and Positioning

- Provide designated operating positions for personnel
- Position operators away from the direct path of cattle
- Ensure clear visibility of cattle for monitoring and counting
- Include provision for shade and seating where practical
- Allow for installation of lighting suitable for both operator visibility and cattle movement

Examples of existing designs that are common use in livestock export supply chains are available through this link: <https://livecorp.com.au/publication/2x7KBabFjzL5Sykiu9CIJD>

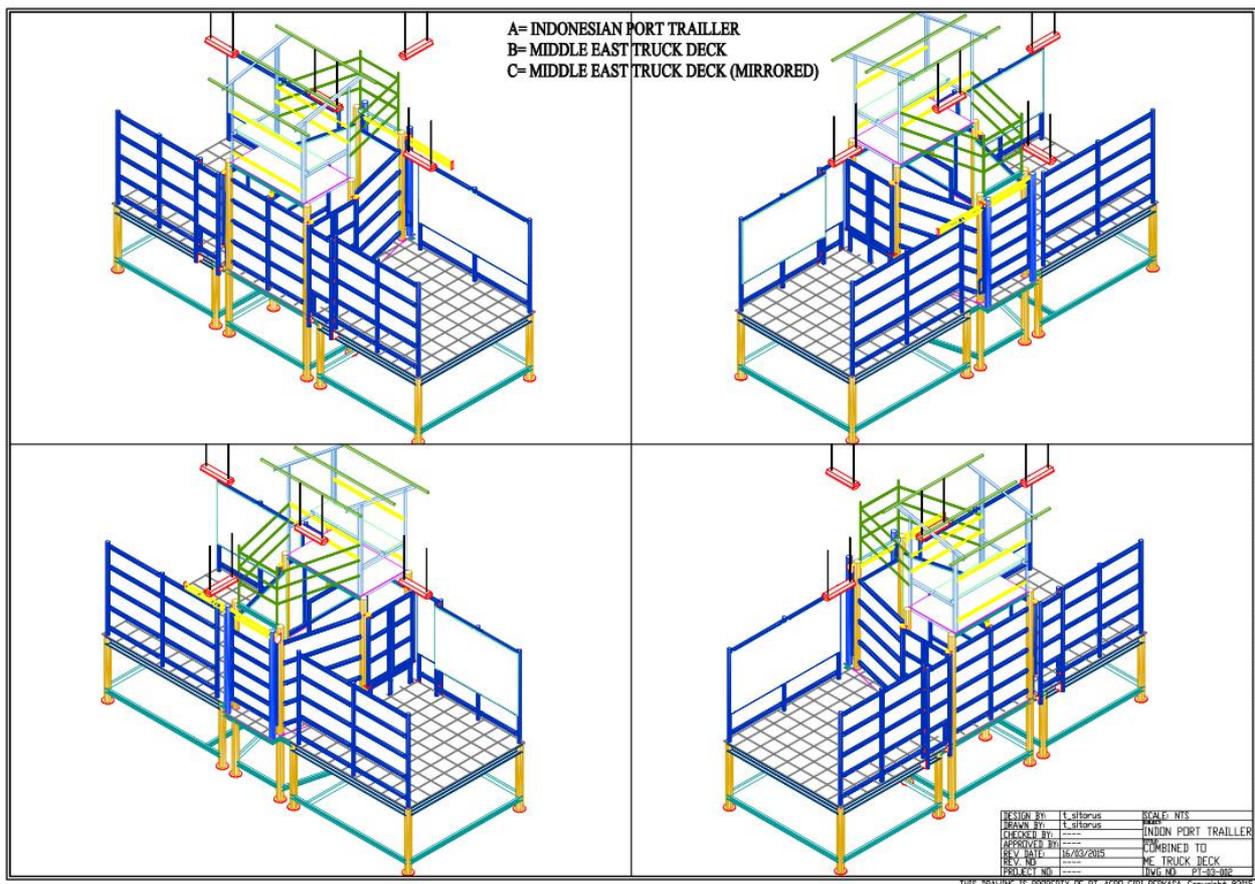


Figure 2: Example of existing discharge platform designs