

SMALL MILLING RESEARCH PROJECT INVESTMENT

2025/26 GUIDELINES

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1 Introduction

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and adoption (RD&A) projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry.

The Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment scheme was developed to deliver investment in relatively low cost, short-term, industry-identified and preferably industry-led research projects. These projects should be targeted to develop a product, service or process to solve specific problems in sugar mills and deliver tangible outputs with almost immediate outcomes. In the process, the scheme will strengthen collaborations between industry and research through the direct involvement of the milling sector in SMRPs and increase research skills and capability in sugar mills.

SMRP investment is specifically aligned with [SRA Ten-Year R&D Plan](#) and SRA's Research Mission 1 (PROFITABLE AND PRODUCTIVE - Continuous improvement in farming and milling profitability).

SRA expects that all outcomes generated from SMRPs will be made freely available for adoption by the Australian sugar industry.

Applications for SMRP investment will be assessed against the selection criteria outlined in these Guidelines. Projects will be competitively awarded or may, in exceptional circumstances, be specifically commissioned to solve a high-priority industry-identified problem.

SMRP investment by SRA will be restricted to a maximum of \$75,000 per project, with the entire scheme capped at \$250,000 per year. There is also a capital expenditure restriction on SMRP investments to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. All successful projects are expected to be completed within 12 months of the starting date.

These Guidelines provide information to assist applicants in the preparation of SMRP applications for competitive funding in 2025-26.

2 General advice for applicants

To maximise the likelihood of success, applications must be of high quality and clearly align with milling and SRA RD&A priorities. Projects should not repeat work that has been done before or appear to include business as usual activities.

Proposed research projects should be attempting to solve industry-identified issues and aim to deliver almost immediate outcomes that will be readily adopted. Examples of SMRP project activities are the development or testing of new products, services or processes to provide solutions for sugar mills. Applicants are encouraged to engage broadly across the industry to develop projects that would have impact.

The scheme encourages applications from milling organisations, equipment manufacturers or suppliers, consultants, research organisations and other organisations. **However, at least one of the project participants must be from a milling organisation.** This will ensure that projects are practical and focused on delivering industry benefit.

All applications must specify the industry need for the proposed activities, provide a clear description of outputs, outcomes and industry benefit, and describe plans for their subsequent adoption. The industry benefit or business case is particularly important – if the application cannot demonstrate a significant and demonstrable value proposition, it is unlikely to attract investment.

The potential suitability of applications will be enhanced by financial co-investment within the project.

3 Investment amount and period

Project funding: SMRP investment by SRA will be restricted to a maximum of \$75,000 per project, with the entire scheme capped at \$250,000 per year.

Project period: All successful projects are expected to be completed within 12 months of the starting date.

4 Eligibility criteria

All successful proposals must satisfy the following eligibility criteria for funding:

- the Lead and Partner Organisations must be a legal entity with which SRA can contract. The application must describe and provide evidence of the legal status of the lead and partner organisations, including an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- At least one of the project participants must be from a milling organisation.
- All partners must provide a letter of support indicating commitment of resources.

Only applications that satisfy all eligibility criteria will be considered. The eligibility criteria will not be waived under any circumstances. The SRA Executive Manager Research Planning and Evaluation makes the final decision about whether an application meets the eligibility criteria and decisions will not be reviewed.

5 Expenditure

What can SMRP funds be used for?

- Research funds can be used for salaries, capital, travel and operating expenses. Salaries can only be requested for staff and/or contractor inputs that are essential for the project. Small staff inputs into projects should be provided as in-kind contributions.
- As SMRP projects are relatively small, salary and contractor overheads should be minimised and may be subject to review.
- All travel requested must be essential to conduct project activities. International travel will not be supported.
- Capital purchases may be considered but must be essential to conduct project activities. Capital expenditure is capped at a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

Lead and Partner Organisations must incur the project expenditure between the project start date and end date for it to be eligible. Projects may start from the date of the letter of offer. SRA is not responsible for any expenditure Lead and Partner Organisations incur until a Research Agreement is executed.

6 Assessment

Your application will be assessed against the following assessment criteria. We will only award funding to applicants that are competitive against all assessment criteria, as these represent best value for money. The Assessment criteria, relevant section in the application form and weighting is outlined below:

	Assessment Criteria	Relevant Application Form Sections	Weighting
1	Significance of the issue being addressed	1(b), 1(c), Letter of support	30%
2	Scale and significance of the project's expected social, environmental, and economic impact	2(a), 2(b), Letter of support	30%
3	Likelihood of delivering the desired project outcomes	1 (c), 1 (d), 2 (a), 2 (b), Letter of support	15%

	Assessment Criteria	Relevant Application Form Sections	Weighting
4	Likelihood of project outcomes adoption outside of the milling company where the project work will be conducted, and credibility of the proposed adoption pathway	1 (c), 1 (d), 2 (a), 2 (b), Letter of support	15%
5	Appropriateness financial and other contributions (especially time) from participating organisations	1 (c), 1 (e), 3 (a), 3(b), 5 (b), 5 (c), Letter of support	5%
6	Extent and value add of involvement of mill-based technologists in the project	1 (c), 1(d), 1 (e), 3(a), 3(b), 5 (b), 5 (c), Letter of support	5%

In assessing applications SRA will consider the guidelines, the application, SRA's Strategic Plan 2021-26 and any other relevant material.

7 How to apply

Before applying, Lead and Partner Organisations should read and understand these guidelines. Applications must be completed using the SMRP Application Form and submitted to SRA by email to sraresearchinvestments@sugarresearch.com.au by 5 pm AEST on 17 February 2025.

Applicants must provide the following documents:

- An application form within the provided template form
- A declaration from each project partner on their contributions to the project (Appendix A).

8 The application selection process

SRA will first review applications against the eligibility criteria before assessing eligible applications against the assessment criteria.

Stage 1: The SRA Commercial Development team will assess eligible applications against the assessment criteria with technical input from Milling Research Advisory Committee (MRAC), which comprises technical experts from the sugarcane milling sector. SRA may seek additional advice from independent technical experts.

Stage 2: Following assessment, the SRA Commercial Development team will recommend to the SRA Research Funding Panel (RFP) a set of applications for funding and subsequently to the SRA Board for final approval.

9 Timelines

SRA's 2025-26 Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment round will involve the following steps.

Activity	Dates
Call for SMRP applications opens	20 December 2024
Applications close at 5pm AEST	17 February 2025
Successful: Grant Agreement negotiation Unsuccessful: Feedback provided	12 May 2025
Contracted project to commence	01 July 2025

These dates may be subject to minor changes. Any changes will be updated in the Guidelines on the [SRA website](#).

10 SRA rights and conditions of lodgement

10.1 SRA Rights

SRA reserves its rights at law or otherwise to:

- cease to proceed with or suspend the Proposal process
- alter timing of the Proposal process
- vary the Proposal structure
- vary any time or date specified in the Proposal
- require additional information or clarification from the applicant
- enter into negotiations or discussions with more than one applicant
- request a new Proposal
- reject any Proposal received after the closing date as described in this document.
- reject any Proposal that does not comply with the requirements as described in this document, negotiate, and enter final contractual documentation with respect to the project with any counterparty without prior notice
- not attribute any reasons for actions or decisions taken, including on the exercise of any or all the above-mentioned rights
- take such other action as they consider appropriate in relation to this SMRP investment process.

10.2 Conditions of Lodgement

The applicant agrees, by lodging a Proposal, that it is bound by these conditions:

- it warrants that all information in the application is accurate and complete
- that it has declared any actual or potential conflict of interest
- that it will bear all costs for preparing the application submission, including any meetings that may be required related to the submission prior to the contracting stage
- that it will keep confidential any confidential information provided by SRA in connection with the application
- that it will make any inquiries relating to the application process only through the contact details provided
- that pursuant to the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) it will be bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in respect of any act done or practice engaged in by the respondent in connection with this application process.

11 Successful applications

The offer to successful applicants will be conditional upon a Research Agreement being signed by all parties.

12 Announcement of investments

SRA may announce investment decisions for each round of Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment in various sugarcane industry publications and media outlets including social media.

13 How SRA monitors and supports project activity

SRA will expect successful applicants to:

- report on progress on agreed project milestones and provide additional information as required by SRA. The payment schedule will be milestone based, with the final payment conditional on submission of a Final Report and Financial Acquittal
- contribute to Australian sugarcane industry publications and events as requested by SRA
- provide a Final Report using the SRA template
- provide an IP register at the start and end of the project
- acknowledge SRA in all communications, publications, and events.

14 Probity

SRA will ensure the funding opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the SRA Board and Management Policies.

- conflicts of interest need to be declared in the application form
- conflicts of interest in the assessment process will be declared and managed according to SRA Policies.

15 Enquiries

For any enquiries, questions or clarifications about SRA's Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment please email sraresearchinvestments@sugarresearch.com.au.

16 Appendix A: Template declaration from each project partner on their contributions to the project

[Partner Organisation official letterhead]

Sugar Research Australia Ltd

[Date]

Dear,

Re: Letter of support SRA Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment scheme

[A brief profile of the Partner Organisation.]

[Details regarding how the Project aligns with the Partner Organisation's strategic objectives]

[Partner Organisation's expectations about industry outcomes, products and/or market value]

[Details/information of the Cash and/or In-Kind Contributions from the Partner Organisation for the project]

[Partner Organisation name] expects the following outcomes from the project:

[Partner Organisation name] will make the following Contributions to the project:

CONTRIBUTION TYPE	AMOUNT (\$)	DESCRIPTION
Cash		
In-kind		
Total		

Declaration

I declare that I have read and understood the SRA Small Milling Research Project investment scheme guidelines.

I declare that the proposed project outlined in this application and any associated expenditure has been endorsed by the applicant's board/ management committee or person with authority to commit the applicant to this project.

I declare the information contained in this application is to the best of my knowledge, true, accurate and complete.

I declare I am authorised to sign and submit this declaration on behalf of *[Partner Organisation name]*.

By signing below, I confirm all the above statements to be true.

Yours sincerely,

[CEO/Delegate signature]

[CEO/Delegate signature block]

Electronic signatures are accepted.



Sugar Research Australia

E sraresearchinvestments@sugarresearch.com.au

Brisbane Office Suite A, 10th Floor 300 Queen St Brisbane QLD 4000

Postal Address GPO Box 133, Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia

sugarresearch.com.au