Darwin Plus

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Round 10

2021 – 2022

These guidance notes provide information on:

- what can be funded
- how to apply
- the process used to select projects for funding

Applicants should also read the Finance Guidance, which explains:

- what budgetary information you need in your application
- how the payments will be made if your application is successful, and how you should manage your budget
- when reporting is due and how it is linked to payments

Applications are made through the online application portal **Flexi-Grant** at ltsi.flexigrant.com
All guidance is available via the Flexi-Grant portal, and replicated on the Challenge Fund website below.
Applications are administered independently by NIRAS-LTS International.

Please read all the available guidance including the separate Finance Guidance before requesting additional assistance, as these provide answers to most queries.

Further resources and templates to support your application are available on the [Forms and Guidance Portal](#), including:

Application Forms (for drafting purposes)	Change Request Forms
Application Templates	Terms and Conditions
Flexi-Grant User Guide	Reporting Forms
Claim Forms	Project Database

If you can't find the answer, please contact the Darwin Plus Administration Team:

Darwin Plus

[www.dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk](#)	[darwin-applications@ltsi.co.uk](#)	+44 (0) 131 440 5181

For queries specific to using the Flexi-Grant system, email: [flexigrant@ltsi.co.uk](#)

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1. Introduction

Darwin Plus is one of Defra's Biodiversity Challenge Funds. The aim of Darwin Plus is to help deliver long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment in the UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

Biodiversity in the OTs is globally significant, with the OTs boasting some of the world's most delicate and complex ecosystems, and habitats containing many endemic species. It is estimated that the OTs contain an estimated 90% of the biodiversity found within the UK and the Territories combined.

Darwin Plus can therefore help deliver UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 14 (life below water), as well as meeting targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity and international commitments under other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, applicable to many UKOTs. These include the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Cartagena Convention for the Caribbean, and the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution.

In Round 10, the fund will achieve its objectives by supporting both:

- **Darwin Plus projects** focused on environment and climate change issues in the UKOTs

- **Fellowships** for promising individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that will contribute to achieving Darwin Plus objectives

What kind of projects can be funded by Darwin Plus?   Projects may be new or novel ideas, or build on existing or previous work, however applicants will be expected to demonstrate why the intervention is needed and how it will benefit the environment, demonstrating sustainability whilst ensuring value for money.

The Fund is not intended as a substitute for activities that would normally be part of a UKOT government's core functions (see Section 1.1)

1.1   Objectives of the fund

Darwin Plus supports projects working on environment or climate change issues in the UKOTs.

The key priorities for Darwin Plus in Round 10 are:

- to increase the area of coverage, effectiveness and condition of protected areas in pursuit of global targets;
- the conservation, restoration and effective management of coral reefs, seagrass meadows, mangrove forest ecosystems and wetlands;
- to tackle the threat of invasive non-native species;
- preventative action to halt the extinction of endemic species;
- the design and implementation of waste management strategies, particularly those with a focus on plastics;
- to respond to, and mitigate against, the impacts of natural disasters on the OTs;
- other climate change mitigation adaptation;
- the implementation of National Biodiversity or Environment Action Plans;

In this round, we are particularly keen to see projects which:

- focus on improving the terrestrial environment;
- have strong buy-in and collaboration with OT governments;
- focus on delivering practical conservation work delivering real benefits on the ground;
- involve partnerships with local OT-based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in order to provide greater capability for the partners involved to deliver environmental projects;
- aim to test or pilot an approach or idea that has the potential to be developed into a larger project in future;
- incorporate the use of natural capital and nature-based solutions;
- look at the opportunity for synergies between tackling climate change and halting or reversing biodiversity loss.

There are some activities which are not eligible for funding through Darwin Plus:

- activities that would normally be part of a UKOT government's core functions (such as full-time staff salaries or routine management activities);
  - Note that funding can be used for discrete pieces of work that provide data to feed into core activities, for example, mapping OT habitats and soils to inform future environmental management.
- long-term research;
- ongoing maintenance of habitats or protection of species;
- work where the main focus is built heritage.

1.2 The UK Overseas Territories

From Round 10 Darwin Plus is open to applications from both ODA and non-ODA eligible OTs.

The 14 Overseas Territories are:

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic Territory (BAT)
- British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)
- British Virgin Islands (BVI)
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands (FI)[1]
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands
- St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI)
- Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia (on Cyprus)
- Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI)

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[1] When completing the application on the Flexi-Grant portal the Falkland Islands is listed as 'Falkland Islands (the) [Malvinas]. This is something that cannot currently be changed within Flexi-Grant but reference to the Malvinas will be removed before any documents are made public.

Regional or multi territory projects are encouraged.

2. Project Requirements

2.1 Lead Partner and Project Leader

Applications must made by the Lead Partner, not an individual, agreeing to the Terms and Conditions including managing the grant, its finances, reporting and governance.

The **Project Leader** is the individual with the necessary **authority, capability and capacity,** and a full understanding of their role and associated obligations to take **responsibility** for delivering value for money, manging risk and financial controls whilst fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant.

The Project Leader and Lead Partner can be based in any country. Projects led by in-territory partners/organisations are encouraged.

There is no limit on the number of applications a Lead Partner may submit, but we would encourage internal co-ordination to ensure all submissions are competitive. Defra may consider the number of applications from a single organisation as part of their decision-making process.

2.2 Partners

Projects are strengthened through collaboration and partnership as the **resources** and/or **technical capability and capacity** to deliver complex environmental projects rarely exist within a single organisation. Additionally, Partners can bring **local experience, knowledge and networks** to the project, or **best practices and lessons learned** from elsewhere.

All Darwin Plus projects are expected to seek in-territory partners, and the meaningful engagement of stakeholders and OT governments.

Partners differ from stakeholders as they have a **formal governance role** in the project, and a **formal relationship** with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities. In contrast, **Stakeholders** would not have a budget management, or a formal governance role, within the project but are engaged and participate in project activities.

2.3 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person or organisation is in a privileged position (i.e. has access to information or influence over an activity or decision) and could use that position to give themselves or someone they are connected to an advantage (financial or otherwise) elsewhere.

It is often important to consult those involved in a particular field of work in order to get key information and to achieve objectives. Therefore the identification of a possible conflict does not always lead to the exclusion of that person or organisation in the activity in question, however it does allow all parties involved to make an informed decision about how they should proceed.

Any potential conflicts of interest should be referenced in the covering letter at Stage 2 along with your proposals to mitigate against any allegations of impropriety.

Should a potential or perceived conflict of interest arise during the lifetime of the project the Darwin Plus Administrator should be made aware of this immediately.

2.4 Gender Equality

Depending on the context in which you are working, this section may be more or less relevant to your project. It is recognised that some UKOTs do not have a permanent resident human population. You may also find it relevant to consider the gender context of your project's staffing and governance.

Evidence from the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (www.espa.ac.uk) programme demonstrates that **women and men use resources differently**. To shape and inform all environment and conservation actions, it is **vital to understand** gender-differentiated practices, gendered knowledge acquisition and usage, as well as gender inequalities in control over resources.

Where appropriate projects must consider how they will contribute to reducing inequality between genders, with activities expected to generate net benefits for women and children.

The approach taken to **Gender Equality** will be assessed at the proposal stage, and projects are likely to **score more highly** if they are able to demonstrate a strong **understanding of gender**, with it **integrated throughout** the **project design**.

All projects are expected to report **indicators disaggregated by gender** where possible.

Some questions to consider early on:

- What are the prevailing gender norms in the host country in relation to division of labour, access and control of resources, and ability to participate in decision making?
- How do these prevailing norms affect the project, in terms of what it can achieve, how will it engage with stakeholders and how it needs to be designed?
- How will the project impact (positively and negatively) girls, boys, women and men in their domestic, economic and community roles and responsibilities and in term of access to and control over assets?
- How will the project provide opportunities for girls, boys, women and men to influence and participate in decision making?
- Does the intervention address underlying barriers that prevent girls and women from accessing opportunities created?
- How will risks and unintended negative consequences be identified, avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?

Girls and women are not a homogenous group, with additional layers of diversity including ethnicity, caste, age, religion, sexuality and disability status that need to be considered.

Further resources include:

- Convention on Biological Diversity – Gender in the conservation of protected areas
- IIED – Gender and Biodiversity
- Nature – Gender in conservation and climate policy
- UN Environment Programme – Why gender is important for biodiversity conservation
- WWF – Gender and Conservation

2.5   Value for Money

Projects must demonstrate good Value for Money in terms of the scale and legacy of the expected impact relative to cost.

Value for Money is delivered through a combination of:

- strong budget forecasting and management
- efficient and effective use of funding to deliver the desired outputs
- sustainability of the intervention
- equitable distribution of any results.

For further guidance on how value for money is assessed, please refer to ICAI's report on effective aid that delivers value for money: https://icai.independent.gov.uk/report/icais-approach-effectiveness-value-money

Funded projects should not significantly cut across or duplicate work, especially that being funded through other environment or research programmes.

Projects should consider evidence from relevant historical and existing initiatives, and reflect this in project design, incorporating lessons learnt, to maximise the chance of success.

Projects must deliver new and additional activity, above and beyond what might otherwise have occurred without the project.

Funding is for distinct projects with a clear end date and specific, measurable results, although they can be an identifiable project within a larger programme if it is made clear in the application.

Darwin Plus will not fund ongoing organisational running costs.

2.6   Ethics

Projects are expected to meet the **key principles of good ethical practice**, and provide evidence to demonstrate this in your application. All projects must:

- meet **all legal and ethical obligations** of all countries involved in the project, including relevant access and benefit sharing legislation pertaining to the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge
- follow **access and benefit sharing best practice** where legislation is incomplete or absent
- include strong **leadership and participation from Overseas Territories** and the communities involved to enhance the incorporation of their perspectives, interests and knowledge, in addressing the wellbeing of those directly impacted by the project.
- recognise the value and importance of **traditional knowledge**, alongside international scientific approaches, and methods
- respect the **rights, privacy, and safety of people** who are impacted directly and indirectly by project activities
- use **Prior Informed Consent** (PIC) principles with communities
- protect the **health and safety** of all project staff
- uphold the **credibility of evidence**, research and other findings

Funding may be frozen or withdrawn in the event that these principles are not met.

Staff involved in the design or conduct of research should maintain the independence and integrity of the process, including intellectual detachment from personal convictions relating to the topic.

2.7 Safeguarding

Defra believes that everyone involved in delivering projects, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnicity has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. **Defra will not tolerate abuse and/or exploitation by staff or associated personnel involved in Defra-funded projects.**

It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner to have appropriate and proportionate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, to protect not only direct and indirect beneficiaries but also employees and associated personnel of any organisation or delivery partner.

Safeguarding can be addressed through the four pillars of **prevent, listen, respond and learn.**

In order to receive funding, the Lead Partner must:

- have a **safeguarding policy**, which includes a statement of your commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse;
- keep a detailed **register of safeguarding issues** raised and how they were dealt with;
- have **clear investigation and disciplinary procedures** to use when allegations and complaints are made, and have clear processes in place for when a disclosure is made;
- share your safeguarding policies with downstream partners;
- have a **whistle-blowing policy** which protects whistle blowers from reprisals and includes clear processes for dealing with concerns raised;
- have in place a **Code of Conduct** for staff and volunteers that sets out clear expectations of behaviours - inside and outside the workplace - and make clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards.

2.8 Communications

It is important to be able to clearly communicate how funding is being utilised. Each applicant is asked to provide a very short, plain English summary of what the project will do, which if successful will be used in communication activities. This summary should be written for a non-technical audience with little or no prior knowledge of the issue, and clearly describe the project plan and intended outcome.

During delivery, successful projects will be engaged to support wider communications and awareness raising activities.

2.8.1 Open access policy and data sharing

The UK government is committed to "push for a global transparency revolution" in the availability and use of data to improve accountability, decision making, and to help deliver sustainable development outcomes to people living in poverty. It is also a crucial part of our commitment to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Darwin Plus projects are likely to generate significant outputs including datasets, peer-reviewed journal articles and technical reports which will be of interest to OT Governments and other countries and stakeholders. All outputs from Darwin Plus projects should therefore be made available on-line and free to users whenever possible. This includes all derived and raw data on species, land cover and land use, through appropriate national, regional and global databases.

In your application, please consider the project outputs you expect and how this information can be shared with others. You may include appropriate costs in your budget for open access publishing but be realistic about when articles will be published. It is likely that dates will fall outside the formal project so it is worth considering matched funding for these costs.

Further information on open and enhanced access can be found on GOV.UK.

2.8.2 Transparency

In order to support understanding of ODA spend, and in line with the aim of Darwin Plus, successful project **applications**, along with subsequent **reporting**, **will be published** on the Darwin Plus portal and elsewhere.

If there are **any sensitivities** within any of these, for example detailed species location data that would increase threats, please bring this to our attention and these can be considered for **redaction prior to publication**.

2.9 Monitoring and Evaluation

Robust monitoring framework supports both the efficient delivery of the project as well as the capability to demonstrate the impact and value for money achieved.

Further guidance can be found at Annex D.

2.10 Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants will be issued a grant award letter with the Terms and Conditions that will apply to the grant, including the grant purpose, value, period, and reporting and financial arrangements. Copies of the current terms and conditions are available (see page ii), and you should understand these before making an application to ensure compliance will not be an issue. Defra retains the right to amend these conditions at any time.

3. Darwin Plus Projects

3.1 Size and duration of projects

There is no minimum or maximum award size for Darwin Plus main projects. The overall funding pot in any given year is, however, limited. The average project award last year was a little under £100,000 a year, however we also welcome small, discrete projects. We would not expect to see projects exceed £500,000, however if additional funds can be justified in the proposal, projects over this amount will be considered. Project budgets should preferably show an even spread over the funding period and as a general rule should not be front-loaded, as this restricts the number of new projects that can be awarded in any year.

The minimum length of a project is 6 months and the maximum length is 3 years. Any budget commitment must end by 31 March 2025.

Applicants for Round 10 of Darwin Plus:

- should plan to start on or after 1 May 2022. You cannot start earlier and it is unlikely the final list of projects will be accepted before 31 March 2022 at the earliest.

- must ensure their budget commitments end by 31 March 2025.

Please ensure that your budget is set out by financial year (**1 April – 31 March**). As set out in the Finance guidance, budget cannot be moved between financial years, except in exceptional circumstances. Applicants should take this into account when designing project proposals, considering

carefully the level of risk of delay with any activities proposed for the fourth quarter (January – March) of the financial year.

You should have a realistic budget and timeframe for your project, and logframe targets should be achievable. Do not be overambitious.

An application **will not score more highly if it is a large project** seeking a grant towards the maximum available finance or duration. Smaller projects, seeking smaller grants or running for shorter periods of time, are also encouraged.

The **value for money assessment** in terms of the scale and legacy of the expected impact relative to cost (see Finance Guidance), is a more important consideration than the absolute size of the project. Each project should have a realistic, and not an overly ambitious, budget and timeframe.

All financial commitments within the budget **must be completed by the project end date** and within the maximum duration of the grant, as indicated under each grant.

3.2 Darwin Plus Round 10 Timetable

The timetable for this round of Darwin Plus funding for 2021-22 is as follows:

> Stage 1 Applications (via Flexi-Grant only) Deadline – **23:59 BST** (GMT +1:00) on Monday **20 September 2021**
>
> Results of Stage 1 and invite to Stage 2, expected at the end of **November 2021**
>
> **The Stage 2 application is accessed through the email confirming the Stage 1 result and is by invitation only.**
>
> Stage 2 Application (via Flexi-Grant only) Deadline – **23:59 GMT Monday 10 January 2022**
> Results expected at the end of **March 2022 at the earliest**
>
> Projects expected to start from **1 May 2022**
>
> **All applications will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the funding round close. If you have not heard after 5 days, please contact the Darwin Plus Administration Team.**

4. How to Apply for Darwin Plus funding

4.1 Completing the application form

All applications must be submitted:

- through Flexi-Grant, using approved templates where appropriate
- with fully answered questions, referencing evidence where possible, the word count indicates the level of detail required; if appropriate, n/a is acceptable.
- in English, and
- signed, with a PDF signature uploaded as part of the Flexi-Grant application.

Competition for funding is strong, applications which:

- are incorrect or incomplete
- do not match all published criteria, including eligible dates
- are submitted using the incorrect template
- do not support work in an eligible UKOT

will be rejected as ineligible.

4.2 Supporting documents

If the following **essential** material is not included **with your completed application form**, your application **may be rejected as incomplete**. All material must be uploaded to Flexi-Grant as either PDF or Excel (JPEG is only acceptable for application signature).

Application	Essential materials for eligible application	Optional materials for application
Stage 1 Application	Stage 1 application completed on Flexi-Grant	Additional materials (e.g. maps, references, Theory of Change diagram) not exceeding 5 pages.
	Completed logframe using Stage 1 Darwin Plus template submitted as a PDF document	
	Cover letter to outline how you have addressed previous feedback and/or stakeholder input if this is a resubmission.	
Stage 2 Application	Stage 2 application completed on Flexi-Grant Other materials can be uploaded within Flexi-Grant (e.g. letter of support from OT Government)	Letters of support from stakeholders
	Brief covering letter – this should outline how you have addressed any feedback from Stage 1. The letter should explain how you addressed the comments and the application should clearly reflect those changes. The letter should also contain a reference to any potential conflicts of interest.	Additional materials (e.g. maps, references, Theory of Change diagram) not exceeding 5 pages.
	Budget table in correct Darwin Plus template (N.B. there are different templates for <£100k and >£100k) in Excel including exchange rate, source and project dates and details of all project funding	
	Completed logframe using Stage 2 Darwin Plus template submitted as a PDF document	
	Project timeline in Darwin format using Word template	
	Letters of support **from all project partners (including Lead Partner)** (Including UKOT Government regardless of whether they are project partners or not) who are essential to the success of the project **combined in one PDF**.	
	Lead Partner's last 2 sets of signed and audited or independently verified accounts, clearly identifying currency shown. Please send as separate PDF documents i.e. two documents. Maximum file size each 5MB.	

Application	Essential materials for eligible application	Optional materials for application
	Evidence of past experience and previous contracts/ awards (if new to Darwin as a lead organisation). Note that contracts must be with external organisations/grant bodies (not from within your own organisation). **This is part of the application form and not a separate document.**	
	1 page CVs or job descriptions for key project personnel named in application as **one PDF**.	
	A copy of the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy	

4.2.1 Cover Letter

The cover letter is an opportunity to support your application, it should be brief (2 sides maximum) and where possible refer to the main application for further details rather than repeating them here. The letter can set out clearly how you have responded to feedback and/or stakeholder input from previous applications (or application stage where appropriate) or during the design phase. The letter should also contain a reference to any potential conflicts of interest.

The Cover Letter should be uploaded as a PDF file.

4.2.2 CVs and Job Descriptions

One-page CVs or job descriptions of all the key project staff **named in the application form and budget**. If you cannot secure a CV from a named Project Staff member, please provide an explanation why, along with a summary of the skills and experience of the team member concerned. These CVs/job descriptions should be merged and uploaded as **a single PDF file**.

4.2.3 Letters of support

Letters of support are required from all named partners (including the Lead Partner) and relevant OT Governments. Letters of support can also be supplied for other project stakeholders e.g. Governor's office but are not required. Letters of support should be on **headed paper and must be in English** (or with an English translation). Those written by high profile stakeholders or project partners are expected to be stronger, than from others, and act **as evidence of:**

- **support** for the application and the **importance** of the work to your organisation
- your **relationship** with partners and actors within the **OTs**
- **support** for the need of the **proposed project** (including any proposed Fellows)
- your **ability** to achieve high **quality results** and productive **partnerships**

Formal letters of support (LoS), in particular from OT Governments, are only required at Stage 2. However, it is expected that you will have engaged with the OT Government(s) and with all intended partners at Stage 1 and have, in principle, an agreement that the project will be supported at Stage 2. There is a check box on the Stage 1 application form to confirm this. If it is found that you have not engaged with the OT Government(s) at Stage 1 your application may be rejected. Verification checks on engagement with OT Governments may be undertaken at Stage 1.

If it is not possible to obtain a letter of support from any of the project partners, please explain why.

These Letters of Support should be merged and uploaded as a **single PDF file**.

4.2.4 Safeguarding Policy

A copy of the Lead Partner safeguarding policy which includes a **statement of commitment to safeguarding** and a **zero-tolerance statement** on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and must be submitted at Stage 2.

4.3 Additional Materials

Only requested materials should be submitted.

However, a **map** or list of **references** can be submitted to support your application; but kept to an absolute minimum and submitted as a single combined PDF file.

The application form **provides sufficient space to make your case**, and the use of unrequested additional material can potentially **detract from your application** especially if it is considered to be an attempt to avoid the word limits of the application form.

Non-essential additional materials **must not exceed 5 pages in total**, exceeding this will make your application ineligible.

5. Darwin Plus Fellowship Awards

Darwin Plus Fellowship funding is aimed at building capacity within the UKOTs. It does this by offering training opportunities for UKOT nationals. For Territories without a permanent resident population, this training is for individuals who are committed to providing support to their chosen Territory and can demonstrate an existing relationship with that Territory. It is intended to support Fellows to draw on wider UK technical and scientific expertise in the fields of biodiversity and the environment to broaden their knowledge and experience. A Fellowship should enable the beneficiary to increase their knowledge and ability to deliver long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment in the UKOTs.

5.1 Eligibility of the individual

Support is available for nationals of UKOTs who have previously worked on a Darwin or Darwin Plus project in an OT or who are currently working in the UKOTs on environment and climate change issues. For Territories without a permanent resident population, individuals who can demonstrate an existing relationship with that Territory may be considered.

Before applying please also check the likelihood of any necessary visas being obtained by the prospective Fellow.

5.2   What can be funded?

Where needs are clearly identifiable and demonstrable, Defra is willing to consider support for Fellows:

- broadening their own experience of working in natural resource management through appropriate related work experience. This may include training on how to write applications for funding or a period of mentoring/networking with partner organisations;
- developing policy skills (for example, attendance at relevant national or international workshops or meetings);
- undertaking formal qualifications (where these are linked to the broader criteria of the scheme and fall within a Fellowship length of 24 months).

5.3   Project Leader

The Project Leader for a Fellowship should be the lead individual who will work closely with or supervise the Fellow.

5.4   Eligible costs

Eligible costs (depending on the nature of the Fellowship) include a monthly subsistence, host organisation expenses, travel costs and fees for academic qualifications.

Applications will be considered on their merits in the light of available resources. Defra may not be able to fund all eligible applications.

5.5   Length and start date

Darwin Plus Fellowships can last for up to 24 months.

Start dates can be flexible (to match academic years for example) but Fellowships should not start before **1 May 2022** and must end within 24 months of the start date.

Be aware that the Darwin Plus financial year runs from **1 April to 31 March** and project finances for each year are required to report to these dates.

5.6   Darwin Plus Fellowship Timetable

The timetable for this round of Darwin Plus Fellowship funding for 2021-22 is as follows:

Application (via Flexi-Grant only) Deadline – **23:59 GMT Monday 10 January 2022**

Results expected in week commencing **28 March 2022**

All applications will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the funding round close. If you have not heard by 15 January, please contact the Darwin Plus Administration Team.

6. How to apply for a Darwin Plus Fellowship

6.1 Completing the application form

All applications must be submitted:

- through Flexi-Grant, using approved templates where appropriate
- with fully answered questions, referencing evidence where possible, the word count indicates the level of detail required; if appropriate, n/a is acceptable.
- in English, and
- signed, with a PDF signature uploaded as part of the Flexi-Grant application.

> **Competition for funding is strong, applications which:**
>
> - are incorrect or incomplete
> - do not match all published criteria, including eligible dates
> - are submitted using the incorrect template
> - do not support work in an eligible UKOT
>
> **will be rejected as ineligible.**

6.2 Supporting documents

If the following **essential** material is not included **with your completed application form**, your application **may be rejected as incomplete**. All material must be uploaded to Flexi-Grant as either PDF or Excel (JPEG is only acceptable for application signature).

Essential materials for eligible application	Optional materials for application
Darwin Plus Fellowship Application completed on Flexi-Grant	Brief covering letter
Darwin Plus budget table including exchange rate and its source	Letters of support from stakeholders
Letter of support from the Lead Partner expressing their intention to collaborate and endorsement of the proposed Fellowship, and the value of the proposed Darwin Fellowship to the Fellow's Territory	Details of any dialogue with the relevant Governor's Office in the host territory/ies
Letter of support from the proposed Fellow's employer or government of the expected value of the Fellowship.	
1 page CVs for Fellow and proposed Project Leader and any other key project personnel named at Q8 as one PDF.	
A project implementation timetable/workplan using template provided	

Additional documents or annexes falling outside of the list above will not be passed to the Advisory Group (see 'Assessment process' below) for their consideration unless they have been specifically requested by or on behalf of the Advisory Group.

7. Assessment Process for all funds

Applications will be assessed by the Darwin Plus Advisory Group (DPAG) made up of UK government officials, representatives from relevant statutory advisory bodies and the UK Overseas Territories Association and external experts with experience of working in the OTs. The group will assess the projects against how they meet the funding priorities, the overall impact and technical excellence of each project. Further details on the assessment are set out below.

Arrangements are in place to ensure there are no potential conflicts of interest.

An overview of the process for assessment is:

1) **Initial review:** Applications that do not meet the essential eligibility criteria will be rejected. You will be informed of the reasons for rejection.

2) **Expert review:** Eligible applications are scored by at least three DPAG members against the assessment criteria set out below.

3) **Moderating panel:** The DPAG discusses the comments and scores of the strongest applications to draw up a shortlist to recommend for funding.

4) **Final result:** the DPAG make recommendations to Ministers on which projects should be funded. Ministers make the final decisions.

7.1   UKOT Government Priorities

As made clear in this guidance all applicants are required to consult the relevant OT Government (unless the applicant is a UKOT government organisation) in the development of their project and letters of support should be provided.

Relevant UKOT Governments will be contacted for feedback on all Stage 2 applications which will assist the DPAG in their overall assessment and recommendations.

7.2   Results of applications

Once the Funding Decision has been made, **all Lead Applicants** (both successful and unsuccessful) **will receive notification** via email from Flexi-Grant.

If you are successful you will receive an offer of funding or, in the case of a Stage 1 proposal, an invitation to Stage 2.

Darwin Plus retains the **right to clarify any issues** raised during the application process or to award funding **subject to required amendments**. If the applicant is subsequently unable to meet the requirements of the award, Darwin Plus retains the right to withdraw the offer.

7.3   Resubmission of applications

If your application is unsuccessful, you may submit a revised application to a subsequent Round. A resubmitted application for a particular project will only be accepted on one occasion, unless there is prior agreement owing to exceptional circumstances or the proposed project is significantly different to the original application. Applicants should re-submit in the correct format and in accordance with the guidance applicable to the round in which the resubmission is made. Please include a cover letter with your Stage 1 application, outlining how you have addressed previous feedback.

8. Assessment Criteria – Darwin Plus Projects

The application will be assessed by the DPAG against the criteria below to generate a score (see **Annex A**). However, a successful project does not need to meet all of the criteria listed below. The DPAG will use these three scores to determine the suitability of projects for funding.

Policy Priorities

- The project contributes to the priority issues for Round 10
- The project demonstrates measurable environmental and/or climate change outcomes
- The project contributes to the delivery of existing commitments such as those set out within the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) Communiqués or individual Territories, national biodiversity strategies, environmental action plans and roadmaps, or equivalent
- The project has good local ownership, as evidenced by commitment from relevant local stakeholders including UKOT Governments
- The project outcomes will contribute to embedding good environmental decision-making in UKOT policies and processes

Impact

- The project applicant has the capacity and capability to deliver the project
- The project contributes to environmental goods and services within the UKOT(s)
- The project is sustainable – the outcomes will be sustained after the funding is finished, including building capacity within the UKOT(s)

Technical Excellence

- The project has been well-planned and has a clear goal, purpose and outputs. The activities are practical and achievable. The risks are identified and well managed.
- The monitoring and evaluation plan ensures changes are measurable and exhibits a clear understanding of the evidence needed to demonstrate these changes. A well-defined exit strategy is in place from the start of funding.
- The project represents value for money

9. Assessment Criteria – Darwin Plus Fellowships

The application will be assessed by the DPAG against the criteria below to generate a score (see **Annex A**). The DPAG will use these three scores to determine the suitability of projects for funding.

- The Fellowship will result in the **transfer of knowledge** and/or technology to the UKOT relating to environment and/or climate change

- The Fellowship is **collaborative**, involving the Darwin Plus Fellow and the Lead Partner at all stages (including development of the proposal). Where relevant, the Fellow should demonstrate their own consultation and collaboration with local institutions or communities in the target country/ies

- The Fellowship will **contribute, directly or indirectly**, towards implementation of long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment in the UKOTs

- Where appropriate, the Fellowship will **raise awareness** of the potential worth of natural resources and encourage their sustainable use directly or indirectly

- The Fellowship will be of **high quality and scientific** (or other appropriate professional) **excellence**

- The Fellowship will **leave a legacy**, through a real and lasting impact on the Fellow's capacity to help his/her territory meet its long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment

- The Fellowship should **be additional** – that is, the outputs and outcomes of the Fellowship will not cut across work being funded through other mainstream environmental or research programmes. Research projects, in particular, must tackle work in an area of natural resource management that has previously been neglected or undervalued

- The Fellowship should be, wherever possible, **innovative and distinctive**. It should show a new approach to a problem or issue and not cover old ground - although tested methodology may be used for a new area or issue. To ensure Fellowship work is distinctive, applications should identify how any outputs will be badged and how the Darwin name and logo would be used to help raise the Darwin profile

- The Fellowship demonstrates **good value for money**. Both in terms of actual results from the Fellows work, as well as the benefits of the Fellowship to the Fellow and the UKOT's capacity to meet long term strategic outcomes will be considered

Annex A.   Assessment Scoring

Score	Description
6	The proposed project **meets all the of assessment criteria.** The majority of the assessment criteria are met to a high standard. There are few minor issues which if addressed may improve the project but they are unlikely to be detrimental to the delivery of the project and should not prevent it from being funded without changes being made.
5	The proposed project **meets most of the assessment criteria.** The criteria it does meet are mostly to a high standard. There are minor issues that could improve the project but these are unlikely to significantly impact the project's success and should not prevent it from being funded. It is likely to significantly contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Plus scheme.
4	The proposed project **meets most of the assessment criteria.** The criteria it does meet are often to a good standard. There are a few minor issues that would improve this project which they would be advised to consider if funded. It is likely to contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Plus scheme.
3	The proposed project **meets most of the assessment criteria.** Those criteria it does meet are largely to an acceptable standard. It is likely to contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Plus scheme. The project has some issues with design which the team would be recommended to review to increase its suitability for funding.
2	The project **meets some of the assessment criteria**. Those criteria it does meet are to a modest standard. Overall however, it is inconsistent in terms of the assessment criteria. The application requires changes to make it suitably address the assessment criteria to make it competitive.
1	The proposed project is unsatisfactory and **meets only a few of the criteria** outlined The proposed project is likely to require significant alterations to make it address the assessment criteria.
0	For special cases e.g. flawed in scientific approach, subject to serious technical difficulties, unclearly written that it cannot be properly assessed, success depends on the project student or is duplicative of other research **Fails to meet any of the criteria outlined.**

Annex B   Project Team CV

All key project staff should be named in the application form and budget. Key Project Staff includes those that make up the main project team, are critical to project success, but can be from any of the Project Partners.

You must provide a **one-page CV or job description** (if not yet recruited) for these named project staff, to demonstrate that the project will have the capability and capacity to deliver the outcome.

The table below provides a guide to relevant and useful CV information, and information that is less relevant or useful in providing the required assurance and evidence of the Project Team capability.

Useful information	What it demonstrates	How reviewers will use this
Previous roles/ positions on similar projects	Up to date and relevant expertise	If the roles listed are relevant to the proposed project, it will demonstrate appropriate experience leading or working on a similar type of project.
Skills and knowledge	Technical or Specialist skills and knowledge relevant to the proposed project role	Relevant skills and knowledge tailored to the project; it will provide evidence of the individual's match to the project
Country experience	This individual has recent experience of working in project environment (political, social, legislative etc.).	We do not expect all of the team to have worked in the host country but, we do expect some will have experience working in similar countries. This is especially valued in the senior project roles.
List and scale of project funding received	The individual is good at leading projects, managing the budgets and fulfilling reporting requirements.	Good evidence of an experienced Project Leader in running projects
Less useful information	What it demonstrates	How reviewers will use this
List of courses/ lectures given	The individual is a recognised teacher	Gives no indication of their ability in a non-academic setting.
List of job titles held	Range of experience	If this is a list of job titles i.e. lecturer, coordinator, researcher then it is unlikely this list will provide much useful detail.
List of published papers	Academic or scientific achievement but may not be relevant to the project	A list of all papers ever published is of little interest to reviewers. A tailored list of papers, relevant to the project, will demonstrate expertise in this area.
List of Post Graduate Students	This individual is a recognised research supervisor	Doesn't show that the individual is capable of undertaking project work, although may be relevant if the project involves significant mentoring of local students

Annex C　　　Awarded Grants

The award is made to the Lead Partner, not to an individual. The Project Leader will be the first point of contact for all aspects of project management (including financial management), and will be responsible for the overall management of the project and accountability of the award, on behalf of the institution they represent.

Contact details will be required for a nominated individual from the finance section of the institution to whom the award is made. This person may be identified once the grant has been offered.

Reporting Requirements

Projects must provide Annual and Half Year progress reports that are reviewed each year. These reports must provide robust reporting against intended objectives and include information on outputs and ethics and environmental impact.

All projects are required to submit a Final Report at the end of the award.

To continue receiving funding from Darwin Plus reports must be complete and within deadlines. If you do not meet these requirements your funding can be stopped.

Project datasets

Data collection, analysis, management and storage protocols should be established to ensure the integrity of research findings and their subsequent use within the research team, Darwin Initiative and eventual wider public domain.

The application should demonstrate that the publication of results and secure data storage has been thought about, a plan exists, and appropriate resources are included.

We encourage that where possible and appropriate data is shared directly or indirectly with Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF.org) for wider accessibility.

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the Privacy Notice, available from the Forms and Guidance Portal.
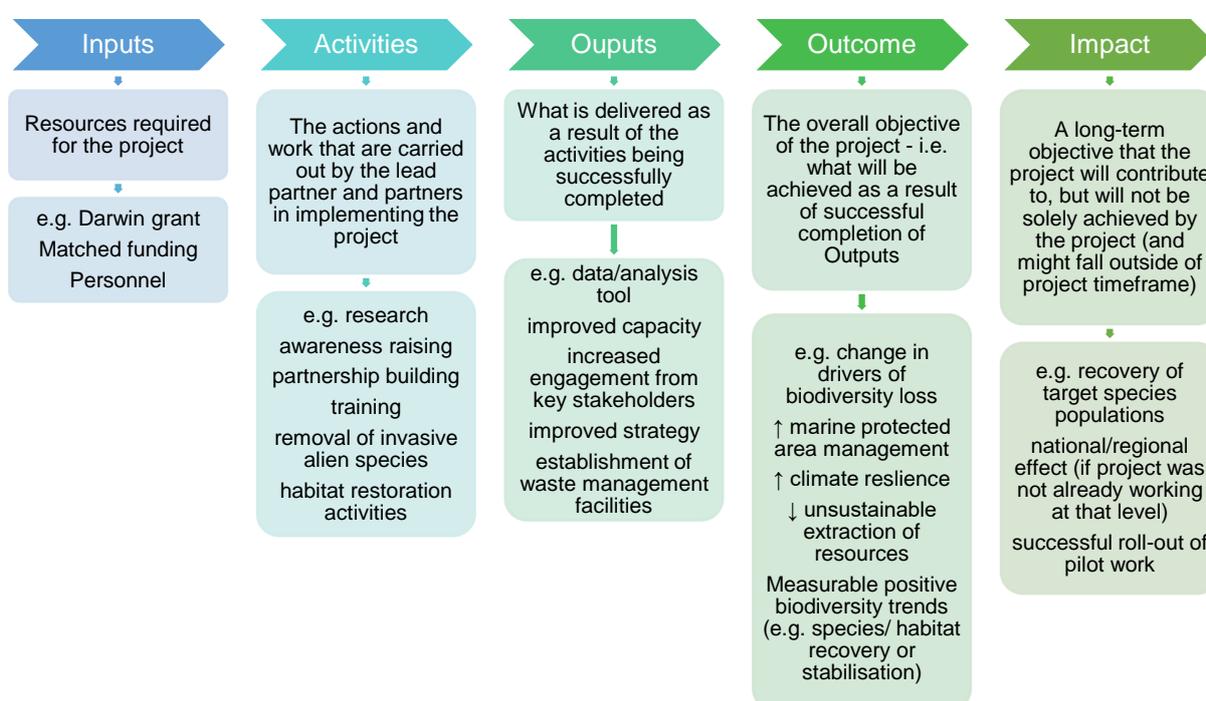
This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising Darwin Plus including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Annex D Monitoring and Evaluation – guidance on the logical framework

Developing a pathway to impact

We want Darwin Plus to make a real difference on the ground, through practical action. This means that it is important that we can measure the effect of the projects we fund and that we can learn from what works where and what does not so that this can be adapted and applied elsewhere.

A logframe is an expression of the 'results chain'. That is, the results you expect to achieve as a result of the project outlined in your proposal. The figure below provides an example of a results chain:

Inputs	Activities	Ouputs	Outcome	Impact
Resources required for the project	The actions and work that are carried out by the lead partner and partners in implementing the project	What is delivered as a result of the activities being successfully completed	The overall objective of the project - i.e. what will be achieved as a result of successful completion of Outputs	A long-term objective that the project will contribute to, but will not be solely achieved by the project (and might fall outside of project timeframe)
e.g. Darwin grant Matched funding Personnel	e.g. research awareness raising partnership building training removal of invasive alien species habitat restoration activities	e.g. data/analysis tool improved capacity increased engagement from key stakeholders improved strategy establishment of waste management facilities	e.g. change in drivers of biodiversity loss ↑ marine protected area management ↑ climate reslience ↓ unsustainable extraction of resources Measurable positive biodiversity trends (e.g. species/ habitat recovery or stabilisation)	e.g. recovery of target species populations national/regional effect (if project was not already working at that level) successful roll-out of pilot work

Measuring impact

Robust monitoring and evaluation allows projects to review their progress and evaluate their success in reaching their identified objectives, and will allow us to measure the impact the Fund has made.

The definition of evaluation agreed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and widely accepted by the international development community is:

"The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results in relation to specified evaluation criteria."

Guidance on how to fill in the Logical Framework ("logframe")

Before you develop your logframe it may be useful to consider and discuss with your project partners the following questions about your intended project:

What is the project trying to achieve?

How will it achieve its objectives? What activities will be carried out?

What resources, people, and equipment will you need?

What potential problems or risks may affect your delivery?

How can you mitigate any potential problems or risks?

How will the progress and ultimate success of the project be measured?

Impact

The Impact statement is a statement of the project's long-term objective, as a contribution to a wider advance on, for example, conservation and economic and social development. The impact:

- will not be achieved solely by the proposed project

- will be achieved outside of the timeframe of the proposed project

Outcome

The Outcome statement is a project's objective; what do you expect to achieve as a result of this project? There can only be one Outcome for a project which should identify what will change, and who will benefit. There should be a clear link between the Outcome and the Impact.

Indicators for measuring Outcome

Indicators are the tools and mechanisms you will use to measure the changes your project is making. Indicators should be useful both for project planning and external reporting. They should allow you to demonstrate what you have achieved and when.

Indicators used to measure Outcome may not be achieved until in the closing stages of your project. It is therefore advisable to break these indicators down into milestones so that project progress can be assessed at regular intervals, not just at project end.

Darwin Plus strongly encourages the use of SMART indicators. That is:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant, and
- **T**ime-bound

Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative. It is unlikely that one indicator will be broad enough at this level to capture progress across outcomes. The indicators should ideally cover all aspects of the project, whether they are environmental, social, economic or institutional aspects of intended change.

The indicators provide the detail of what you will measure to assess your progress towards achieving the Outcome. You should be able to state what the change you expect to achieve as a result of the project i.e. the difference between the existing state and the expected end state.

Verifying Outcomes

At the design stage you should identify the materials you will use to verify your Outcome. This is the 'source' material that supports your accounts of achievement.

To evidence the Outcome indicators, you can rely on a range of data sources. For example, these could include secondary data produced in CITES reports, government produced statistics, prosecutions,

reports produced by external entities etc. or could include primary data you have collected, as long as this has been collected in a robust and credible manner.

In some cases it may be difficult to rely on independently produced materials to meet the timelines you require. For example, government statistics could be delayed in their production. It is useful therefore to rely on a range of materials from a variety of sources including those produced by your own project and those produced by independent sources.

Understanding important assumptions and managing risks at the Outcome level

Project achievements will often dependent on external conditions outside the control of the project. Project design should reflect these risks and assumptions. Risks and assumptions should be monitored. If the situation changes a change in approach for your project may be needed.

Outputs

Outputs are the specific, direct deliverables of the project. These will provide the conditions necessary to achieve the project Outcome; if the outputs are achieved then the logic is that the Outcome will also be achieved. The logic of the chain from Output to Outcome therefore needs to be clear. Most projects will have three or four outputs in order to achieve the intended Outcome. More than five outputs for a Darwin project is likely to be excessively complex. Often, two or more outputs can be combined since they are steps in the same deliverable.

Understanding important assumptions and managing risks at the Output level

Outputs can also be dependent on, or affected by, external events outside the project's control. Risks and assumptions should also be recorded, and monitored, for Outputs. Often risks at Output level can be managed by the project, but it is still possible that the project's approach may need to change because of external events.

Activities

Activities do not need indicators; their completion should be sufficient. Only summarised main activities are required. These should be numbered against the Output that they relate to. The Stage 1 logframe template does not ask for detail on activities, but the Stage 2 template does.

Other resources

This annex is not intended to be a fully developed resource for undertaking project level monitoring and evaluation. There are numerous resources available that provide useful step-by-step instructions for developing project level monitoring and evaluation systems including handy toolkits. Whilst some of these use different terminology for the components of a logframe, the principles remain the same. Some of useful resources include:

- Darwin Initiative Logframe Information Note
- FCDO How to Note: guidance on using the revised Logical Framework
- FCDO: Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in International Development
- The Magenta Book: HM Treasury guidance on what to consider when designing an evaluation
- Better Evaluation