Applicant: Martin, Gary Organisation: Global Diversity Foundation Funding Sought: £59,900.00

# CV19RR\1005

# Online local product commercialization, marketing and promotion sustains biodiversity-friendly livelihoods

We assist rural cooperatives and enterprises in High Atlas key biodiversity areas to commercialise their cosmetic, craft and culinary goods through COVID-adapted online approaches that shorten market chains and favour local direct sales. Social media campaigns that educate the general public about the value of purchasing biodiversity-friendly local products that support community livelihoods complement websites developed with open-source software, together promoting local goods derived from sustainably harvested and equitably traded biological resources and portraying the people who produce them.

# **Section 1 - Contact Details**

#### **PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS**



#### **GMS ORGANISATION**



## **Section 2 - Project Title & Previous Applications**

#### **Q3. Project Title:**

Online local product commercialization, marketing and promotion sustains biodiversity-friendly livelihoods

#### **Q4. Existing project**

Q4a. Does your organisation have an existing (or recently finished) project under either Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund?

• Yes

If yes, please list the project reference and title of relevant projects (e.g. 25-001, DPLUS090, IWT099).

**Reference of current/recent project:** 

Title of current/recent project:

#### Q4b. Is this proposal directly relevant to one of the projects listed above?

• Yes

#### If yes, please list the relevant project reference and title.

27-001 Conserving High Atlas agrobiodiversity to improve Amazigh livelihoods ...

#### Section 3 - Countries, Dates & Budget Summary

# Q5. Which Fund's objectives will your project most directly address? (please only select one)

• Darwin Initiative

#### Q6. Country(ies)

#### Which eligible country(ies) will your project be working in?

Country 1	Morocco	Country 2	No Response
Country 3	No Response	Country 4	No Response

#### Do you require more fields?

• No

#### Q7. Project dates

Start Date:	End date:
01 January 2021	31 March 2021

#### **Q8. Budget summary**

**Darwin/IWT Funding Request** 

Total request 2020/21:

Please note all spending <u>must</u> fall between 1st January 2021 - 31st March 2021 59,900.00

#### Q8a. If any matched funding arrangements are proposed, please detail them here.

Complementary but not duplicate funds have been requested from the MAVA Foundation for 'Keeping nature at the heart of post-COVID recovery' and 'Supporting rural entrepreneurs in Morocco to promoting

sustainable land-use practices'. We have related co-funding from current Open Society Foundations and MAVA Foundation grants on biodiversity and wellbeing.

# **Section 4 - Project Outcome and Summary**

#### **Q9. Outcome**

#### What is the expected Outcome of this project?

Rural cooperatives and entrepreneurs will increase their revenues through effective online marketing of local products derived from traditional land use practices that contribute to the conservation of High Atlas biodiversity.

#### Q10. Summary of project

#### Please provide a brief summary of your project, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking. Please note that if you are successful, this wording may be used by Defra in communications e.g. as a short description of the project on GOV.UK.

We assist rural cooperatives and enterprises in High Atlas key biodiversity areas to commercialise their cosmetic, craft and culinary goods through COVID-adapted online approaches that shorten market chains and favour local direct sales. Social media campaigns that educate the general public about the value of purchasing biodiversity-friendly local products that support community livelihoods complement websites developed with open-source software, together promoting local goods derived from sustainably harvested and equitably traded biological resources and portraying the people who produce them.

# **Section 5 - Project Partners**

# Q11. Project partners

Please list all the partners involved (including the Lead Organisation) and provide a summary of their roles. Please upload letters, emails or other confirmation of support from any new partners.

Lead Organisation name:	Global Diversity Foundation
Other partners involved:	Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA; https://www.mblaassociation.org/), Provincial Department of Agriculture – Marrakech, (DPA-Marrakech), Emerging Business Factory (EBF; https://www.emergingbusinessfactory.com/); Studio Rif (https://studiorif.com/).

Summary of roles and responsibilities in project:	Mohamed Ouknin and Hafida Mazoud of MBLA's local product commercialisation team will liaise with representatives of rural cooperatives and enterprises to guide their participation and coordinate the social media campaign, and Rachid Elouahsoussi will be responsible for communications, including writing descriptive and narrative texts for social media; DPA-Marrakech will assist in engaging entrepreneurs beyond the rural communes where GDF-MBLA currently work; Nabil Izagaren of Studio RIF, Taoufik Aboudia of Webpick (https://webpick.info/) or another digital enterprise will be chosen to assist these community organisations to design and create websites. EBF will coordinate the participation of Laïd Liazid of Falyakun Studio freelance digital media specialist Saoussane Abdelli ( and PokeMag General Manager Nawfal Ouaadil Gary Martin of GDF will ensure overall coordination for the project.
If you have not provided evidence of support from the Lead Organisation or partners above, please explain why:	MBLA and DPA-Marrakech are partners of our current Darwin Initiative grant (27-001 Conserving High Atlas agrobiodiversity to improve Amazigh livelihoods in Morocco) and letters were submitted with the proposal. They have been advised of the submission of this new proposal and their anticipated participation fits our ongoing collaboration.

# Please provide a combined PDF of letters of support from the lead organisation and partner(s) as relevant.

- A Covid-19-rapid-response-round-support-letters
- ₿ 02/11/2020
- ③ 18:42:25
- pdf 4.28 MB

# **Section 6 - Project Staff**

### Q12. Project staff

Please identify the core staff on this project, their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project. Further information on who should be classified as core staff can be found in the guidance. Please provide a 1 page CV for the proposed Project Leader and any co-Project Leader if relevant.

Name (First name, surname)	Role	% time on	1 page CV
		project	attached?

Gary Martin	Project Leader	25	Checked
Mohamed Ouknin	co-Project Leader	50	Checked
Hafida Mazoud	Local Product Development Coordinator	75	
Rachid Elouahsoussi	Communications officer	100	

#### Do you require more fields?

• No

# Please provide 1 page CVs for the proposed Project Leader and any co-Project Leader listed above as a combined PDF.

Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

- A GDF Martin and Ouknin CVs
- 菌 31/10/2020
- ③ 20:38:57
- pdf 508.47 KB

## **Section 7 - Problem, Method and Change Expected**

## Q13. Problem the project is trying to address

#### Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of Covid-19 and its impact on biodiversity or IWT and sustainable livelihoods. For example, what are the drivers of loss of biodiversity that the project will attempt to address? Why are they relevant, for whom? How did you identify these problems? Please cite the evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem (references can be listed in an additional attached PDF document).

Covid-19 threatens the viability of a nascent green economy in Marrakech and its hinterland. A recent emergence of organic agriculture and permaculture initiatives accompanied a resurgence of biodiversityfriendly traditional agroecology; agritourism and ecotourism increased in popularity; and systems of local direct trade augmented the flow of benefits to artisans, farmers and other producers. Cosmetic, craft and culinary products from regenerative production systems – commercialised by rural cooperatives and enterprises – began to appear in farmers' markets, retail outlets and special stands in large supermarkets. These trends strengthened the socio-economic sustainability of cultural practices that conserve animals and plants in the High Atlas and other biodiversity hotspots in this Mediterranean climate zone. Recently conducted SWOT analyses in the rural communes where we work, complemented by discussions with diverse colleagues from academia, government agencies, non-profit organisations and social enterprises in Marrakech, reveal various threats to these positive developments. These include a decrease in demand and price of local products, disruptions in distribution systems and a concomitant reticence to engage in traditional land use practices, including agriculture. Lack of infrastructure to conserve and store local products - including organic apples, barley and wheat couscous, almonds and walnuts, honey and medicinal and aromatic plants - lead to losses of harvested produce. This ensemble of challenges is contributing to greater poverty and unemployment in rural zones, negatively impacting the stewards of High Atlas biodiversity and cultural landscapes. Community members are seeking assistance as they take

concrete actions to adaptively manage the crisis by (1) creating and maintaining online platforms to commercialise and promote local products; (2) improving branding, certification, labelling and social media marketing; and (3) designing agricultural, culinary and ecological tourism circuits for a domestic audience that publicise local products and encourage small group visits, allowing communities to represent and commodify their biocultural diversity.

# Q14. Methodology

# **Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve** your intended Outcome. **Provide information on:**

- How you have analysed historical and existing initiatives and are building on or taking work already done into account in project design. Please cite evidence where appropriate.
- The rationale for carrying out this work and a justification of your proposed methodology.
- If relevant, how this project links to an ongoing Darwin/IWT project.
- How you will undertake the work (materials and methods).
- How you will manage the work (roles and responsibilities, project management tools etc.).

# Projects should also consider how best they can address inequality, especially gender inequality, as per the existing guidance for each fund.

# Please make sure you read the Guidance Notes, particularly Section 3, before answering this question.

The OECD has shown the COVID-19 crisis is accelerating an expansion of e-commerce towards new firms, customers and types of products, shifting transactions from luxury goods and services to everyday necessities relevant to a large number of individuals. Together with the World Bank, they recommend targeted information campaigns, trust-building initiatives, capacity-building and public-private partnerships to ensure the equitable participation of low-income households in rural areas. Based on this rationale, and in consultation with a collective of actors from government, non-profit organisations and social enterprise, we established a skilled creative team to implement an action plan achievable in the first three months of 2021. Some activities are adapted to current restrictions on assembly and travel while others anticipate a limited resumption of face-to-face events, tourism and trade. From the outset MBLA staff, in consultation with DPA-Marrakech and other partners, will choose beneficiary rural cooperatives and enterprises based on their capacity, interest and need. Nabil Izagaren of Studio RIF will assist these community organisations to design and create websites that commercialise their cosmetic, craft and culinary products. Digital marketing specialist Saoussane Abdelli will provide training in Moroccan Arabic (Darija) on social media use to inform the general public about biodiversity-friendly local products that support community livelihoods. Laïd Liazid of Falyakun Studio will provide packshots of local products as well as photo-documentaries and short videos that portray local producers. Nawfal Ouaadil of Mind7 and Pokemag, building on an approach he developed with the Regional Council of Marrakech-Safi and Moroccan Tourism Board, will create photo essays and video stories to promote agricultural, culinary and ecological tourism circuits that encourage visits by small groups of domestic travellers, especially young Moroccan adults. Rachid Elouahsoussi, MBLA communications officer, will assist in generating descriptive and narrative texts for social media on local goods and producers. Mohamed Ouknin and Hafida Mazoud of MBLA's local product commercialisation team will liaise with the communities to ensure effective interactions with this creative team throughout the product.

The project adds online, web-based social media components to our current and past Darwin Initiative

projects, alongside complementary ones funded by MAVA Foundation and Open Society Foundations, that seek to strengthen the socio-economic sustainability of cultural practices that enhance biodiversity. These include efforts to (1) encourage increased production and successful commercialization of biodiversity-friendly local products; (2) restore agropastoral ecosystems and cultural landscapes; (3) promote traditional and farmer-selected animal breeds, agricultural varieties and useful plants; (4) build the capacity of small farmers, shepherds, rural entrepreneurs and cooperative members, through farmer field schools and workshops, to engage in land-use practices that improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity; (5) inform and support governmental policy that further these goals; and (6) disseminate the results through an innovative communications approach. Throughout this programme we address inequality by ensuring benefits are broadly spread among community members, including through the traditional practice of tiwizi (mutual support). In addition, a deep understanding of gender-differentiated roles in High Atlas agricultural production facilitates equity and inclusion for both women and men in market value chains and e-commerce.

## Q15. Change expected

Detail the expected changes this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who will benefit a) in the short-term (i.e. during the life of the project) and b) in the long-term (after the project has ended). Please describe the changes for biodiversity/environment and for people in developing countries, and how they are linked. If you are proposing building on a current or past project, be clear how additional benefits will be delivered through this project.

# When talking about people, please remember to give details of who will benefit and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used. If possible, indicate the number of women who will be impacted.

Through this project, local communities will come to represent their own cultural products and people who are stewards of biodiversity of the High Atlas will receive direct benefits that sustain their livelihoods. In the short-term, five rural cooperatives will be provided e-commerce websites that will achieve greater visibility and demand for their local products and lead to higher revenues, helping them to recover from the economic losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirty cooperative members will become familiar with social media and website management. Stockpiles of local products will diminish, avoiding losses due to spoilage. Responsible tourism will bring benefits to the communities as small groups of visitors resume domestic travel. In the mid-term, another ten cooperatives will benefit from websites adapted to their needs, contributing to the normalisation of e-commerce in the High Atlas. An online consumer guide will increase visibility of over 100 diverse cosmetic, craft and culinary products, and online marketing will be integrated into a rural entrepreneurship programme. In the long-term, members of these cooperatives will become proficient in the use of social media platforms and websites, boosting their revenues while making them more resilient to economic, public health and social challenges. An increase in payment services provider options will lower costs of e-commerce and there will be increased trust in the reliability of goods and services delivered.

# If necessary, please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams, references etc., as a PDF using the File Upload below:

公	Description, map, KBAs and cooperatives of M
	arrakech and its hinterland

₿ 02/11/2020

- ③ 18:54:59
- 🛽 pdf 1.5 MB

# Section 8 - Aims, Objectives and Exit Strategy

## **Q16.** Aims and objectives

#### Clearly outline the aim and objectives of the project and how the achievement will be measured. Use SMART objectives if possible.

The aim of this project is to shorten market chains, increase visibility of biodiversity-friendly products and favour local direct sales through e-commerce, benefitting consumers and producers alike. The objects are: 1) Create a prototype e-commerce website using open-access software within one month;

2) Adapt the prototype website for five rural cooperatives by project end, including .com domain

subscription, hosting, web design, e-commerce functionality, up to four product category pages with up to fifteen items and remote technical support for a year;

3) Produce high-quality packshots of 100 local products, accompanied by descriptive texts, for use in online marketing and promotion within two months;

4) Develop one photo-documentary and one short video for each of the rural cooperatives, highlighting specific products and producers by project end;

5) Provide training to 30 cooperative members in management of social media campaigns and website within two months;

6) Generate 10 photo-essays and video stories by project end to promote agricultural, culinary and ecological tourism circuits that encourage visits by small groups of domestic travellers, especially young Moroccan adults;

7) Submit at least one proposal to extend the reach of this programme to an additional ten cooperatives by project end.

# Q17. Exit strategy

# State how the project will reach a stable and sustainable end point, and explain how the outcomes will be sustained, either through a continuation of activities, funding and support from other sources or because the activities will be mainstreamed in to "business as usual".

The project follows a dual exit strategy of (1) delivering finished packshots, photo-documentaries, videos and websites within three months that will continued to be used by cooperatives to promote commerce of local products in the future and (2) building the capacity of rural cooperative members and entrepreneurs to continue to develop these marketing tools and their social media skills after the project finishes. We will seek funding and support from other sources to expand the programme to additional cooperatives after the end of the programme. In the long-term, the activities are expected to be mainstreamed into "business as usual" once the revenue streams are sufficient and cooperative members are proficient in social media and website maintenance.

# **Section 9 - Budget**

## Q18. Budget

#### Provide a detailed breakdown of costs to be funded by the Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus/IWT Challenge Fund in GBP.

See <u>Finance for Darwin/IWT</u> for which costs sit under which budget line.

Budget Line	Cost in £ (GBP)
Staff costs	
Consultancy costs	
Overhead costs	
Travel and subsistence	
Operating costs	
Capital equipment*	0
Other costs	0
Total (Must be less than or equal to £60,000)	59,900.00
*If you are proposing to purchase any capital items over £1,000 please detail these here and provide justification below	N/A

### **Q19. Financial Risk Management**

#### This question considers the financial risks to the project. Explain how you have considered the risks and threats that may be relevant to the successful financial delivery of this project. This includes risks such as fraud or bribery, but may also include the risk of fluctuating foreign exchange and internal financial processes such as storage of financial data.

Risks and threats to the successful financial delivery of this project are minimal. In the seven years we have managed Darwin Initiative funds for Moroccan High Atlas projects we have never encountered corruption, foreign exchange fluctuations or financial data storage issues. Financial transactions for e-commerce will be in the hands of cooperatives and social enterprises, and our digital consultants will assist them to implement the high level of security in online payment mechanisms. We vet all potential partners with third parties who know them through prior engagement and assessment. We engage mainly with community-level authorities, public sector institutions, decentralised regional offices of government agencies and small civil society organisations. Any funds and benefits directed to these local and provincial institutions are modest, and do not represent any corruption risk. The local partner with significant responsibility for the budget is MBLA, our affiliate NGO in Morocco. GDF monitors attentively and on a monthly basis the detailed accounts and bookkeeping from MBLA, which are included in our Charity

Commission annual accounts. We have a code of conduct – including conflict of interest and whistleblower policies – to maintain the highest degree of ethical conduct amongst all our staff and associated personnel.

# Q20. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin/IWT funding, please indicate what you anticipate will happen to the items following project end. If you are requesting more than 10% capital costs, please provide your justification here.

N/A: We do not have to invest in hardware for this digital project because the cooperatives we are working with already have computers and smartphones with at least 4G access (if not WIFI), allowing them to connect to the internet and manage social media platforms and websites.

# Q21. Value for Money

# Please describe why you consider your application to be good value for money including justification of why the measures you will adopt will secure value for money.

This application is good value for money because it adds a now crucial digital element to a well-funded analogue local product commercialisation and rural entrepreneurship programme funded by Darwin Initiative and MAVA Foundation. Given restrictions on assembly and travel in Morocco that are likely to be maintained in the first three months of 2021, we emphasise consultant (45.1% of the budget) and GDF/MBLA staff time (19%) to work primarily remotely to minimize the digital exclusion of rural cooperatives and entrepreneurs. All digital communication and marketing consultants are Moroccan citizens, based in Marrakech, and many of them trace their origins to the rural hinterlands of the city. As a 'made in Marrakech' project, consultants' fees are competitive on a global scale at the outset, and further reduced in solidarity with the rural communities who are the beneficiaries of the services. Operating costs (19.2%) are dedicated entirely to support community members – especially women and youth – to learn and develop digital skills and to increase their internet connection speeds and data limits as needed. A small travel budget (7.5%) will allow urban-based communications specialists, photographers and videographers to visit rural cooperatives. We have kept the overheads for the project to a modest 9.2% of the overall budget.

## **Section 10 - Ethics and Safeguarding**

# Q22. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting Darwin/IWT's key principles for ethics as outlined in the guidance note. Additionally, are there any human rights and/or international humanitarian law risks in relation to your project? If there are, have you carried out an assessment of the impact of those risks, and of measures that may be taken in order to mitigate them?

The International Society for Ethnobiology's Code of Ethics inform GDF's work. We develop and implement our action-research approach in partnership with communities, ensuring that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is provided for all activities and maintained through regular monitoring, communications and consultation. Individual agreements regarding the rights, privacy and safety of participants are established before conducting interviews or surveys. These approaches extend to the commercialisation of local products by community cooperatives entrepreneurs, ensuring they control benefit-sharing decisions while receiving expert support and supervision to ensure equitability and respect for international agreements on agriculture, biodiversity conservation and human rights.

#### Q23. Safeguarding

Projects funded through the Darwin Initiative/IWT Challenge Fund must fully protect vulnerable people all of the time, wherever they work. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place. The award Terms and Conditions set out clear requirements on safeguarding. Please confirm you have read and understand these and that you comply with them all.

Checked

### **Section 11 - Key Milestones**

# Q24. Provide an overview of your proposed project, outlining key milestones.

N.B. This should cover the period of your requested project only and the start/end dates should match with those provided in Question 7.

Date	Key Milestone
01 January 2021	START
31 January 2021	Prototype e-commerce website using open-access software developed
31 March 2021	Prototype website adapted for five rural cooperatives, including .com domain subscription, hosting, web design, e-commerce functionality, product category pages, items and remote technical support
31 January 2021	High-quality packshots of 100 local products produced, accompanied by descriptive texts, for use in online marketing and promotion
31 March 2021	One photo-documentary and one short video developed for each of the rural cooperatives, highlighting specific products and producers
28 February 2021	Training provided to 30 cooperative members in management of social media campaigns and websites

31 March 2021	10 photo-essays and video stories generated to promote agricultural, culinary and ecological tourism circuits that encourage visits by small groups of domestic travellers
31 March 2021	One proposal submitted to extend the reach of this programme to an additional ten cooperatives
No Response	No Response
31 March 2021	FINISH

## **Section 12 - Certification**

## **Q25. FCDO notifications**

Please check the box if you think that there are sensitivities that the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will need to be aware of should they want to publicise the project's success in the Darwin/IWT competition in the host country.

#### Unchecked

Please indicate whether you have contacted your Foreign Ministry or the local embassy or High Commission (or equivalent) directly to discuss security issues (see Guidance Notes) and attach details of any advice you have received from them.

• Yes (no written advice)

### **Q26.** Certification

#### On behalf of the

trustees

#### of

Global Diversity Foundation

#### I apply for a grant of

£59,900.00

I certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the statements made by us in this application are true and the information provided is correct. I am aware that this application form will form the basis of the project schedule should this application be successful.

(This form should be signed by an individual authorised by the applicant institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)

• I have enclosed a CV for the Project Leader/co-PL and letters or confirmation of support (uploaded at appropriate points in application)

Checked

Name	Gary Martin
Position in the organisation	Founder and consultant
Signature (please upload e-signature)	<ul> <li>▲ GJM signature</li> <li>▲ 02/11/2020</li> <li>④ 08:05:36</li> <li>☑ jpg 12.75 KB</li> </ul>
Date	02 November 2020

## **Section 13 - Submission Checklist**

## **Checklist for submission**

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including the "Guidance Notes for Applicants" and "Finance for Darwin and IWT Challenge Fund".	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for the relevant fund.	Checked
l have provided actual start and end dates for my project.	Checked
I have provided my budget in GBP.	Checked
The application has been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
(If copying and pasting into Flexi-Grant) I have checked that all my responses have been successfully copied into the online application form.	Checked
I have included a 1 page CV for the Project Leader (and co-Project Leader if relevant).	Checked

#### I have included a letter or electronic confirmation of support from the lead organisation and main partner organisation(s) identified at Question 11, or an explanation of why not.

Checked

l have checked the website on GOV.UK immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on GOV.UK.	Checked

#### Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in this application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the latest copy of the Privacy Notice for Darwin, Darwin Plus and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund available <u>here</u>. 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 the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead organisation, location, and total grant value) on the GOV.UK and other websites.

Information relating to the project or its results may also be released on request, including under the 2004 Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, Defra will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor will we act in contravention of our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).