

Applicant: **Davies, Mary**
Organisation: **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**
Funding Sought: **£599,457.00**

DIR31S2\1042

Vultures, Cows and People – Strengthening an Ancient Relationship

This project pilots an approach connecting vulture population restoration with improved livelihoods for farmers whilst addressing the problem of feral cattle in and around Shuklaphanta National Park in Nepal.

Vultures need safe food and mostly feed on dead livestock. Cattle provide a key source of income - but pose challenges when unproductive due to their religious significance.

By establishing vulture-friendly dairy livelihoods and making shelters for abandoned cattle financially viable, an improved co-existence for vultures and communities can be achieved.

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

Title	Mrs
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DIR31S2\1042

Vultures, Cows and People – Strengthening an Ancient Relationship

Section 1 - Contact Details

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

Title	Mrs
Name	Mary
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Tel (Work)	
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Address	

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Phone (Work)	
Email	
Website	
Address	

Section 2 - Title, Ecosystems, Approaches & Summary

Q3. Project title

Vultures, Cows and People – Strengthening an Ancient Relationship

Please upload a cover letter as a PDF document.

 [RSPB cover letter - Darwin November2024](#)

 28/11/2024

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 pdf 209.76 KB

What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DIR31S1\1123

DIR31S1\1524

Q4. Response to Stage 1 feedback

You must explicitly set out how and where you have addressed all the comments/feedback in the application form: briefly restating the feedback point, then clearly setting out how you have responded to it in the application.

- Level of confidence that project assumptions will be met:

We have added comments to the logframe regarding levels of confidence in our assumptions. In all, we are confident that most assumptions will hold true. The assumptions related to political unrest and natural calamities are beyond our control and they may cause the project to pause for a duration or plans to change. In these two cases, the project team will be closely communicating with the respective Government authorities and act according to our Emergency Response Plans.

- Publication of project results:

There are activities and multistakeholder workshops planned within the project to disseminate project results during the project implementation. An inception workshop will be organised at the onset of the project to inform the stakeholders about the activities and objectives of the project. A mid-term review is planned to reflect with communities and stakeholders on the effectiveness of ongoing interventions and to make project adjustments if necessary. A closing workshop will be organised inviting local and national level stakeholders to disseminate learning and results from the end line evaluation. Project partners will disseminate ongoing project interventions and results including case studies through project publications, social media and respective partners' websites in consultation with Darwin Initiative. Scientific publications will be produced in relevant peer reviewed journals, and various forums will be utilised to highlight the project results.

- Fostering changes in attitudes and behaviour of local people to vultures:

Qu15 has been strengthened to highlight the inclusion of engagement with local stakeholders and the importance of awareness raising activities in supporting vulture conservation. These are also included in the workplan. A key component of establishing a Vulture Safe Zone is to increase awareness and infuse change in the mindset and behaviour of community members through evidence-based advocacy and campaigns. These campaigns will be further materialised through effective communication and enforcement of Government policies. In relation to adopting new technologies and livelihood interventions, the project will adopt social behaviour change approach in all its training, awareness and capacity building activities. The capacity building activities will be tailored in consultation with respective stakeholders.

- A clearer narrative on the target beneficiaries and the pathway to change, better linking activities supporting poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation;

Qu18 and 19 have been strengthened to include a clearer narrative. We have also included more details on the target beneficiaries in the Logframe.

The project will work with dairy farmers who are raising cows and buffaloes. While we are building their capacities on dairy farming, including veterinary support for husbandry and health of cattle, we will be introducing awareness of vulture conservation and demonstrating how vulture friendly practices (e.g. not using toxic NSAIDs or poison baits), can not only be done alongside sustainable livestock management, but can also be beneficial. Vultures have a societal value in safely disposing of carcasses. There is also potential for more tangible economic value through wildlife viewing at vulture feeding sites connected to cow shelters.

Ensuring the sustainability of cow shelters is a vital component to the project as this will not only provide safe reliable food for vultures, but also a reliable facility for unwanted cattle from the community, and at the same time enable the cow shelters to generate sufficient income so that they can run on their own.

Through this project we will be directly reaching 1,439 households (6,317 people) through various project interventions, enhancing the livelihoods of 80% of these. We will be working with 100 Lead Farmers to improve livelihoods for 500 farmers, and we will be improving the sustainability of five cow shelters, with significant investment in two of these with a view to scaling up this approach at the end of the project. We will be engaging 27 local and 8 national level organisations and Government Institutions with a view to enhancing their capability and capacity. Ultimately through this integrated approach we will deliver a project to support both poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

- GESI - more information on the current situation and approach;

Qu17 has been strengthened to include more detail on the current situation and approach, referencing marginalised communities and under-represented groups and explaining who they are in the project context. GESI has also been integrated into the application more generally, specifically in the logframe, and the problem and methodology statements.

The project will foster inclusive participation by actively involving diverse genders and social backgrounds, prioritising women, marginalised communities, and underrepresented groups in decision-making, training, and community activities. Safe and supportive spaces will be created to value their perspectives.

A gender perspective will be integrated into activities wherever possible, ensuring that at least 50% of Lead Farmers and small holder farmers are women, and prioritising dairy cooperatives with a strong track record of involving and benefitting women and marginalised communities. Capacity building, livelihood enhancement, and awareness activities will offer enhanced opportunities for women.

In the project areas, women and some ethnic groups (such as Tharu, Magar and Dalits) are marginalised in local community groups and committees. To enhance their involvement and engage them in decision making, we will ensure a greater and more explicit focus on GESI, and will build in ongoing processes of change to achieve GESI.

We will build the capacity of marginalised groups, economically improving their situation through improved dairy livestock farming and business skills. We will advocate to increase their representation in various groups and committees, and we will encourage others in these communities to influence change in the formation of such groups, as well as in decision making processes. The changes will be institutionalised by reviewing the committees' by-laws.

- Strengthened Logframe;

- o more precision on the beneficiaries, baselines, targets and timelines;

- o Outcome indicators to include monitoring indicator species;

- o measures of livelihood improvement in Outputs 2 and 3.

All three of these points have been clearly addressed in the strengthened logframe. Specifically, there is a new indicator 0.5 to include monitoring vultures. We have included measures of livelihood improvement in indicators 2.1 and 3.4.

Q5. Key Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Select up to 3 biomes that are of focus, up to 3 conservation actions that characterise your approach, and up to 3 threats to biodiversity you intend to address, from dropdown lists.

Biome 1

Savannas and grasslands

Biome 2

Tropical-subtropical forests

Biome 3

No Response

Conservation Action 1

Species Management

Conservation Action2

Livelihood, Economic & Moral Incentives

Conservation Action 3

Awareness Raising

Threat 1

Agriculture & aquaculture (incl. plantations)

Threat 2

Human intrusions & disturbance (recreation, war)

Threat 3

Other threats

Q6. Summary of project

Please provide a brief non-technical summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking.

This project pilots an approach connecting vulture population restoration with improved livelihoods for farmers whilst addressing the problem of feral cattle in and around Shuklaphanta National Park in Nepal.

Vultures need safe food and mostly feed on dead livestock. Cattle provide a key source of income - but pose challenges when unproductive due to their religious significance.

By establishing vulture-friendly dairy livelihoods and making shelters for abandoned cattle financially viable, an improved co-existence for vultures and communities can be achieved.

Section 3 - Countries, Dates & Budget Summary

Q7. Country(ies)

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

Country 1

Nepal

Country 2

No Response

Country 3	No Response	Country 4	No Response
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Do you require more fields?

☒ No

If you are proposing to work in an Upper Middle Income Country (see Annex A), please demonstrate your case for support with reference to one or more of the criteria in Section 2.8.

No Response

Q8. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
01 April 2025	31 March 2028	3 years

Q9. Budget summary

Year:	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total request £
Amount:	£179,583.00	£220,044.00	£199,830.00	£0.00	£0.00	£ 599,457.00

Q10. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

☒ Yes

Please ensure you clearly outline your matched funding arrangement in the budget.

Q11. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how you will deliver the project if you don't manage to secure this?

Local Governments, cooperatives and farmers are expected to fund £14417 for renewable energy technology and dairy livelihoods interventions and for the construction of infrastructures nearby cow shelters for safe carcass disposal at vulture feeding area including for building hides. Local Governments and Buffer Zone Management Committee have provided support letters to this project and have financially contributed to our ongoing and past projects. We have learnt that contribution by key local stakeholders enhances ownership and sustainability of project interventions. We are very confident that these will be received but if they are not match funding will be provided by RSPB.

Q12. Have you received, applied for, or plan to apply for any other UK Government funding for your proposed project or similar project?

Section 4 - Problem statement

Q13. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of biodiversity and its relationship with multi-dimensional poverty.

The relationship between humans and cattle in South Asia has been closely entwined for millennia with cows having significant economic and religious importance in most Hindu countries. As obligate scavengers, vultures feed almost entirely on dead cows from South Asia's significant dairy farming industry. This historically meant extraordinary populations of vultures. One species - the White-Rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) - was considered the most numerous large raptor species on earth. But in the 1990's, diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), became popular for treating illnesses in cattle. This drug proved toxic to the vultures feeding on carcasses and almost led to the extinction of several species (1).

Whilst diclofenac has been banned and the vulture populations are gradually recovering in some areas (2), populations are still small, and threats persist in the form of poisoning from new toxic drugs (3) and the use of poison baits (4). Other scavengers such as dogs and jackals have increased and feed on carcasses, risking the security of livestock and making disease control less effective which can directly impact on human health (5). Retaliatory poisoning has increased and has become a threat to wildlife, including vultures. Vultures need a safe food source free from both toxic drugs and poison baits.

Nepal is a recognised low income country and the project area is one of the poorest, with limited access to resources, services, markets and economic opportunities, as well as implications of climate change. Livestock are a significant source of income for smallholder farmers but productivity from dairy cattle is often low, due to lack of advanced knowledge on dairy farming, refrigeration and processing facilities (6). Low income and marginalised rural communities, and particularly women and disadvantaged groups, are excluded or disadvantaged by the way the market operates. Livestock are also at risk from feral dogs and jackals. In this situation the conservation of vultures is unlikely to be a priority.

There are also increasing numbers of feral cattle, as unproductive or unwanted cows are abandoned and left to roam. Livestock intrusion into national parks increases incidences of human wildlife conflict, and impacts negatively on conservation efforts. The capture and management of feral cattle presents an additional burden to National Park staff and resources. 'Gaushalas' or cow shelters are therefore important facilities where feral and unwanted cattle can be housed and looked after until they die. However, cow shelters often suffer from a lack of management capacity and funding, and cattle are allowed to roam freely where they become a problem for local communities: eating crops, causing traffic accidents, or intruding into protected areas(7). Additionally, cow shelters may use vulture-toxic drugs in their veterinary care of cattle, or bury carcasses, reducing the availability of safe food for vultures. Local governments are keen to find income generation / sustainable models for cow shelter operations.

By connecting vulture conservation to the livelihood needs of communities and improving the productivity and sustainable management of cattle, this project addresses the interplay between biodiversity and some causes of multi-dimensional poverty.

Section 5 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q14. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q14a. Your project must support the commitments of one or more of the agreements listed below. Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported.

- ☒ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ☒ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- ☒ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- ☒ Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Q14b. National and International Policy Alignment

Using evidence where available, please detail how your project will contribute to national policy (including NBSAPs, NDCs, NAP etc.) and in turn international biodiversity and development conventions, treaties and agreements that the country is a signatory of.

National:

The project aligns with Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan by addressing key priorities and objectives. Specifically, this includes conserving endangered species, promoting sustainable land use practices, strengthening community-based conservation efforts, and fostering and enhancing biodiversity-friendly livelihoods. This project also supports effective management of protected areas and buffer zones. By restoring vulture populations and engaging local communities, the project contributes to the successful implementation of Nepal's NBSAP.

The project also aligns with Nepal's 16th 5-year plan, endorsed in May 2024, in relation to promoting wildlife conservation, people's livelihoods and increasing the use of renewable energy.

This project supports the implementation of the Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2023-2027, the objective of which is to maintain viable wild populations of all the species of vultures through the provision of safe food and maintenance of suitable habitats.

This project aligns with Nepal's Nationally Determined Contribution by promoting the use of clean energy and livestock waste management.

International:

Nepal is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which aims to conserve biodiversity, ensure its sustainable use, and promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources. The project directly contributes to:

'Target 4: Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts' by conserving vulture species and their habitats, and;

'Target 11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People' by restoring the ecological balance and preserving vultures' vital role in ecosystem functioning.

Additionally, the project promotes community-based conservation and sustainable livelihoods, which align with the CBD's principles of involving local communities in conservation efforts.

Nepal is a signatory to the CMS Raptors MoU. BCN is a core partner of the SAVE consortium (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction) which brings together partners from across South and Southeast Asia, focussing on regional priorities as highlighted in the SAVE Blueprint Recovery Plan. This project aligns with SAVE priorities and results will be shared with this consortium. SAVE priorities are highlighted in the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP).

The project supports multiple Sustainable Development Goals, including:

Goal 1: No Poverty. By promoting sustainable livelihoods and income generation activities for marginalised

communities living in the project area. Target 1.1.

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy. The project promotes the use of renewable energy. Target 7.2.

Goal 15: Life on Land: The project directly contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, aiming to preserve vulture populations and their habitats. Target 15.5.

Goal 17: Enhance global partnership for sustainable development. Target 17.6.

Section 6 - Method, Change Expected, GESI & Exit Strategy

Q15. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and contribute towards your Impact. Provide information on:

- how you have reflected on and incorporated **evidence and lessons learnt** from past and present similar activities and projects in the design of this project.
- the specific approach you are using, supported by **evidence** that it will be effective, and **justifying why you expect it will be successful** in this context.
- how you will undertake the work (activities, materials and methods)
- what will be the **main activities** and where will these take place.
- how you will **manage the work** (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

Led by RSPB and in partnership with Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and Renewable World (RW), this project builds on the existing vulture programme and the strong partnership between RSPB and BCN, and develops an additional new relationship and approach with RW. RSPB will assume overall project delivery responsibility, supporting and providing expertise to BCN and RW, who will be leading on project implementation. We will collaborate with a local NGO partner (as yet not identified), selected specifically based on their proven track record of integrated conservation and livelihoods work in the project location, and their existing strong relationships with the intended project communities.

Vulture conservation in Nepal has been successful in recent years. The celebrated declaration of the world's first Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) in Gandaki-Lumbini, Southern Nepal, took place in 2021 following a dedicated programme led by BCN and supported by RSPB. BCN, with support from RSPB have undertaken some initial VSZ work in the Shuklaphanta area. This experience supports Output 1.

BCN and RW conducted field work in July 2024 including meetings with community groups and cooperatives, dairy farmers and local governments, and site visits to cow shelters in the buffer zone of Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP). This made clear: the needs and challenges of community members reliant on dairy livelihoods; the financial and capacity challenges faced by the cow shelters; the commitment of local governments; and the scope for uptake of renewable energy technology solutions and regenerative farming approaches.

RW has proven experience working in the buffer zones of Shuklaphanta and other National Parks (Banke and Bardiya) on clean energy and livelihood projects. Specifically, RW has piloted bag (as opposed to concrete) biogas digesters in rural Nepal.

From the combined expertise of all partners, we believe an integrated approach to link vulture conservation with addressing some aspects of multi-dimensional poverty will lead to an effective and scalable project.

This project has identified activities to achieve the outputs and ensure effective delivery and management.

Output 1: Establish Nepal's second Vulture Safe Zone. BCN will monitor vultures to understand productivity and trends, research movements and understand causes of mortality in/around Shuklaphanta. BCN will undertake pharmacy surveys to evaluate the level of threat from NSAIDs. RSPB will support the technical and scientific

approach, providing necessary skills and expertise as required. BCN will carry out awareness campaigns and advocacy to foster changes in attitudes and behaviour of local people to vultures, raising awareness about the ecological importance of vultures and advocating for their conservation.

Output 2: Improve livelihoods of local cattle/livestock owners. RW will build the capacity of 100 Lead Dairy Farmers (at least 50% women) to embed improved, vulture-friendly, sustainable cattle health and husbandry among at least 500 farmers (at least 50% women). BCN and RW will promote improved cattle nutrition and husbandry techniques to increase milk yields. RW will work with two dairy co-operatives to provide solar-powered chillers and other support required to sustainably tackle the exclusion or dysfunction in the dairy market felt by smallholder farmers. BCN will support farmers to improve the security of livestock shelters to reduce predation risk and human wildlife conflict. BCN will also work with and train local veterinary practitioners to run cattle health camps, advocate for the use of vulture safe medications, and undertake dog sterilisation campaigns.

Output 3: Improve sustainability of cow shelters around Shuklaphanta National Park. We will work with five cow shelters in total. BCN will work with these cow shelters to support the establishment of secured (fenced) carcass dumps as vulture feeding/viewing sites, encourage vulture friendly practices and (with RW) establish more secure funding commitments from local governments and communities. RW will work with two cow shelters to build management capacity and pilot renewable energy-based income generation opportunities to assist with ongoing management costs e.g. biogas and compost/fertiliser production from bag digesters (an innovation piloted in Nepal by RW).

Output 4: Engagement and advocacy with decision makers to ensure effective delivery of vulture conservation. BCN will organise meetings of the Nepal Vulture Recovery Committee to contribute to coordinated efforts, collaborating with national members and engaging with international fora on regional and global plans. BCN and RSPB will collaborate with relevant national authorities and stakeholders to enforce regulations and ban the use of all vulture-toxic NSAIDs and promote the safe NSAIDs in veterinary practices.

The partnership will share learnings of this approach as piloted under this project. Project partners will disseminate ongoing project interventions and results including case studies through project publications, social media and respective partners' websites.

Q16. Capability and Capacity

How will the project support the strengthening of capability and capacity of identified local and national partners, and stakeholders during its lifetime at organisational or individual levels? Please provide details of what form this will take, who will benefit (noting GESI considerations), and the post-project value to the country.

Under Output 1 we will build the capacity of a local response team to respond to vulture incidents (e.g. poisonings), train stakeholders (Park staff, local government, buffer zone committees, veterinarians, pharmacy shops, cow shelter management committees), and increase understanding of vulture conservation amongst local communities (schools, community groups, and farmers).

Under Output 2 we will build the capacity of Lead Farmers and small holder farmers (at least half of whom will be women) in animal husbandry, use of veterinary drugs and regenerative farming; capacitate two cooperatives for improved access to and income from the dairy market; and ensure members of cooperatives are trained in operation and maintenance of their solar-powered technologies.

Under Output 3 we will capacitate the local management committees of two cow shelters to market the bag digester outputs (both gas and slurry) and other income generating measures to improve sustainability. We will also train cow shelter caretakers to operate the bag digesters.

Under Output 4 we will train veterinary practitioners to avoid using vulture toxic drugs, and engage with policy makers.

The project will engage and/or build capacity of 27 local and 8 national level organisations and institutions. Of the total 35 organisations, 12 are Government and the remaining are community-based organisations including media at national and local levels.

Q17. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social characteristics. Please include reference to the GESI context in which your project seeks to work. Explain your understanding of how individuals may be disadvantaged or excluded from equal participation within the context of your project, and how you seek to address this. You should consider how your project will proactively contribute to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and how you will ensure meaningful participation for all those engaged.

The project recognises the potential exclusion and unequal participation of individuals based on their gender, social characteristics, and intersecting identities. To ensure equitable outcomes, the project will take proactive measures and meaningful engagement strategies.

It will foster inclusive participation by actively involving women, marginalised communities, and underrepresented groups in decision-making, training, and community activities. Safe and supportive spaces will be created to value their perspectives.

A gender perspective will be integrated into activities wherever possible, ensuring that at least 50% of Lead Farmers and small holder farmers are women, and prioritising dairy cooperatives with a strong track record of involving and benefitting women and marginalised communities. Capacity building, livelihood enhancement, and awareness activities will offer enhanced opportunities for women.

In the project areas, women and some ethnic groups (such as Tharu, Magar and Dalits) are marginalised in the local community groups and committees. To enhance their involvement and engage them in decision making processes, we will ensure a greater and more explicit focus on GESI, and will build in ongoing processes of change to achieve GESI.

We will build the capacity of these marginalised groups, economically improving their situation through improved dairy livestock farming and business skills. We will advocate to increase their representation in various groups and committees, and we will encourage others in these communities to influence change in the formation of such groups, as well as in decision making processes. The changes will be institutionalised by reviewing the committees' by-laws.

Overall, the project aims to create an inclusive environment where individuals of all genders and social characteristics have greater inclusion in vulture conservation and livelihoods. By proactively addressing gender equality and social inclusion, the project contributes to a more just and equitable society.

Q18. Change expected

Detail the expected changes and benefits to both biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty reduction, and links between them, that this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who exactly 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).

When talking about how people will benefit, please remember to give details of who will benefit, differences in benefits by gender or other layers of diversity within stakeholders, and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be

the largest unit used.

The following changes are expected:

a) Short-term:

- Shuklaphanta Vulture Safe Zone declared with an increasing vulture population.
- Improved reliability and quality of safe feeding sites for vultures.
- Enhanced monitoring and research to gather data on vulture populations including movements and causes of mortality.
- Improved livelihoods and income generation for cattle/livestock owners including strengthened local dairy cooperatives and improved dairy market system.
- Enhanced capacity of local community-based organisations, leading to increased empowerment, improved decision-making and greater involvement in vulture conservation efforts.
- Improved sustainability of five cow shelters, with substantial and regular income generated by new initiatives and increased provision of safe vulture food .
- Reduced incidence of problems associated with feral cattle – crop raiding, road accidents and intrusion into protected areas.

b) Long-term:

- Vulture Safe Zone maintaining its status as a model for vulture conservation.
- Self-sustaining vulture population that can contribute to ecosystem functioning, including scavenging and disease control.
- Conservation practices integrated into local governance mechanisms and policies, ensuring the long-term protection and management of vulture habitats.
- Project approach adopted by other communities and scaled up in order to reduce impact of feral cattle on communities and protected areas with sustainable management of cow shelters contributing to vulture recovery more widely.
- Improved social and economic conditions for cattle/livestock owners, contributing to poverty alleviation and reduced inequality.
- Increased awareness of the ecological importance of vultures and their role in sustainable ecosystems, fostering a conservation-oriented mind-set within local communities.

Q19. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change.

The project is centred on repairing the relationship between humans, cattle and vultures. For millennia cows have had significant economic and religious importance in South Asia whilst vultures consumed the millions of resulting carcasses. The vulture collapse broke this cycle with knock on impacts to society. By addressing the issues facing vultures and communities, with the common theme of cattle management, we aim to demonstrate a project design that could become a more widespread solution for a number of shared issues facing communities and vultures.

Vultures can recover with the removal of threats and the provision of safe food. Cow shelters can be key to the provision of safe food if encouraged to use certain practices. Small scale farmers can also generate safe food for vultures so long as the viability of such community ventures is improved through improving husbandry as well as the dairy farmers' access to and income derived from the market.

Equally cow shelters are important in managing the large numbers of feral cattle which cause many issues. The sustainability and efficiency of shelters can be improved by developing income streams.

Q20. Sustainable benefits and scaling potential

Q20a. How will the project reach a point where benefits can be sustained post-funding? How will the required knowledge and skills remain available to sustain the benefits? How will you ensure your data and evidence will be accessible to others?

At project end, a Vulture Safe Zone will be declared following the approach pioneered successfully in Nepal. This will give further evidence to continue to replicate this approach to vulture conservation in Nepal and elsewhere in South Asia.

At project end, local dairy farmers will be generating increased income from rearing livestock and selling dairy products. Knowledge and skills will remain available among the pool of Lead Farmers and small holder farmers in the community.

At project end, two cow shelters should be operating sustainably by selling biogas and fertiliser, charging fees to visitors and for cow admission, funds from project-supported dairy cooperatives, and regular funds from the Local Governments. Three more will have improved income from some of these measures. These cow shelters will serve as role models for others in the project area and across Nepal.

Partners will create and disseminate business case briefs based on project learnings.

Q20b. If your approach works, what potential is there for scaling the approach further? Refer to Scalable Approaches (Landscape, Replication, System Change, Capacitation) in the guidance. What might prevent scaling, and how could this be addressed?

The project's impact on vulture conservation can be scaled by continued collaboration with government bodies and local communities, integrating successful strategies into larger conservation frameworks, extending benefits across landscapes, and having the potential to create new Vulture Safe Zones across the country.

Across Nepal, there are many buffer zone communities facing similar challenges at the intersection of biodiversity conservation and livelihoods. There is also great interest in sustainable renewable energy solutions. If successful, the project has great potential for geographical expansion or the scale up of individual components, such as market systems development for small scale dairy farmers, bag biogas digesters, cow shelter management which are financially sustainable and providing safe food for vultures.

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

 [DIR31S1_1524 Additional info](#)

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Section 7 - Risk Management

Q21. Risk Management

Please outline the 7 key risks to achievement of your Project Outcome and how these risks will be managed and mitigated, referring to the Risk Guidance. This should include at least one Fiduciary, two Safeguarding, and one Delivery Chain Risk.

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation Header	Residual Risk
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Fiduciary (financial): funds not used for intended purposes or not accounted for (fraud, corruption, mishandling or misappropriated). Delivery partners use funds for purposes outside of project scope	Major	Unlikely	Major	Project Lead to provide partners with financial templates / summary of budget in contracts, with payments made on receipt of paperwork aligned with project budget. Support provided by RSPB (Project Lead) as to what is in scope of expenditure, and partner finance officer to ensure expenditure is appropriate.	Moderate
Safeguarding: risk of sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (SEAH), or unintended harm to beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff. Field staff, particularly females, subject to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment while conducting activities.	Major	Unlikely	Major	Project Lead and delivery partners trained in safeguarding and ensure Lead Partner Safeguarding policies fully adhered to. Local risk assessments kept up to date for field work. Safe working and reporting procedures made clear to staff through regular training. Any allegations of SEAH reported immediately.	Moderate
Safeguarding: risks to health, safety and security (HSS) of beneficiaries, the public. Implementing partners, and staff. Physical harm to staff due to hazards of working in (and travel to and from) remote locations in a harsh environment, including rugged terrain, proximity to water bodies, high temperatures, insect bites and stings (potentially disease-carrying), dangers from wild animals and plants.	Moderate	Possible	Major	Project Lead and delivery partners trained in health and safety and ensure Lead Partner Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies fully adhered to. Local risk assessments kept up to date for staff. Safe working procedures made clear to staff through regular training.	Moderate

Delivery Chain: the overall risk associated with your delivery model Relationship and collaboration between in-country partners breaks down	Major	Rare	Moderate	BCN and RW work closely together, and with RSPB, to deliver projects. Regular (online) meetings between the three partners will encourage continued close collaboration. Partners can raise any concerns with the Project Lead, who will provide support to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and agreed.	Moderate
Risk 5 Severe natural disaster (e.g. earthquake, or climate-induced floods or droughts) occurs during project implementation	Major	Possible	Major	Field outdoor activities are structured to take place outside of the monsoon time. In case of severe natural disaster, Nepal team will adhere to the country crisis management plan to ensure safety of staff and beneficiaries. Activities will be replanned following the assessment.	Moderate
Risk 6 Communities are reluctant to take up new technologies and practices	Major	Unlikely	Major	Programme is consulted with key local stakeholders. Combination of approaches to awareness raising and influencing behaviours – including learning visits, training, demonstrating best practice and its impact, working with community leaders and institutions.	Moderate
Risk 7 Livelihoods activities supported through the project may not be sustained post project and into the future .	Major	Unlikely	Major	We will work on the whole dairy market system including core actors (such as dairy farmers), supporting services (such as microfinance institutions), value chain actors (such as traders and input providers), and enabling actors, such as governments. RW's entire team has been trained on a market systems approach.	Moderate

Q22. Project sensitivities

Please indicate whether there are sensitivities associated with this project that need to be considered if details are published (detailed species location data that would increase threats, political sensitivities, prosecutions for illegal activities, security of staff etc.).

☒ Yes

Please provide brief details.

There are sensitivities associated with publishing certain details of this project. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Balancing transparency with the protection of vultures and respecting the privacy and security concerns of local communities is crucial when considering the publication of project details and will be carefully planned for.

Section 8 - Workplan

Q23. Workplan

Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities.

 [DIR31S1_1524 Workplan](#)

 28/11/2024

 16:10:51

 pdf 285.8 KB

Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q24. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe how the performance of the project will be monitored and evaluated, making reference to who is responsible for the project's M&E.

Darwin Initiative projects are expected to be adaptive and you should detail how the monitoring and evaluation will feed into the delivery of the project including its management. M&E is expected to be built into the project and not an 'add' on. It is as important to measure for negative impacts as it is for positive impact. Additionally, please indicate an approximate budget and level of effort (person days) to be spent on M&E.

Monitoring and Evaluation will be the responsibility of all partners but will be led by the RSPB via the Project Lead with overall accountability provided by the RSPB International Director as Project Executive. Project monitoring and administration is enabled by the RSPB's project management software, CORA.

Upon project start-up we will convene a launch meeting with partners which will include a review of project outputs, activities, and indicators, with roles and responsibilities agreed for each partner and a responsible individual assigned for monitoring each of the logframe indicators.

RSPB will maintain a SharePoint site to hold project materials ensuring accessibility to all partners. This will include a M&E plan which will capture the outcomes of the project launch meeting and will be reviewed at least biannually led by the Project Lead in collaboration with project partners during online MS Teams meetings. The SharePoint system has already proved effective during development of this project.

A project steering group will be formed and a regular meeting schedule agreed to inform project delivery. Coordinated by the Project Lead this will include at least one representative from RW and BCN as well as any specific workstream leads, or stakeholders as appropriate. Meetings will monitor progress against project activities and project indicators, and provide the opportunity to review and manage project risks. We will

consider GESI issues including sustainability of our interventions in all reviews and evaluations.

At least annually a project coordination and update meeting will be convened in Nepal or remotely which will involve all project staff and senior management from both RW and BCN as well as RSPB Project Executive to review project progress and plan for future implementation.

Partners will provide biannual progress reports including provision of deliverables and Means of Verification as well as financial reports to monitor project spend effectively. RSPB will establish both financial and technical reporting templates for partners to facilitate this and align with the grant reporting schedule.

There will be crossover between partners to support project monitoring however broadly speaking BCN will be responsible for monitoring biodiversity indicators within the project, leading on Outputs 1 and 4, and RW will be responsible for monitoring progress of Outputs 2 and 3. Partners will be supported by an RSPB Senior Conservation Scientist to inform biodiversity survey design/monitoring.

The majority of the Project Lead's time will be allocated to M&E with additional support provided by partner staff. Not including match funding, a total of approximately 475 days will be spent on M&E and a baseline survey, mid-term review and end line evaluation will be conducted. This is approximately 6% of the BCF project budget or ██████████ Additional M&E is provided via match funding with an additional 100 project days or ██████████ plus one RSPB in country visit per year in support of annual project meeting. The total budget for M&E is 9%.

Total project budget for M&E (£)	██████████
(this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	
Total project budget for M&E (%)	██████████
(this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	
Number of days planned for M&E	575

Section 10 - Logical Framework & Standard Indicators

Q25a. Logical Framework (logframe)

Darwin Initiative projects will be required to monitor and report against their progress towards their Outputs and Outcome. This section sets out the expected Outputs and Outcome of your project, how you will measure progress against these and how we can verify this.

 [DIR31S1_1524 Logframe](#)

 28/11/2024

 16:13:24

 pdf 96.1 KB

Impact:

Recovery of vultures, enhanced household livelihoods and reduced impacts of feral cattle in and around Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal

Outcome:

The project design is piloted and tested for scalability, integrating vulture conservation with sustainable vulture-friendly livelihoods for communities reliant on dairy cattle, and sustainable management solutions for local cow shelters.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

Criteria for Shuklaphanta National Park Vulture Safe Zone declaration achieved following monitoring movements, survival, and causes of mortality of vulture populations in and around Shuklaphanta, with threats identified and minimised.

Output 2:

Livelihoods of livestock owners, especially dairy farmers, enhanced through improved husbandry and security, improved post-production practices, adoption of regenerative farming approaches, and increased access to the markets via cooperatives.

Output 3:

Cow shelters around Shuklaphanta National Park with enhanced vulture friendly practices and improved financial sustainability and viability, alleviating issues caused by unwanted cattle.

Output 4:

Engagement and advocacy with Government of Nepal to support the establishment of Nepal's second Vulture Safe Zone around Shuklaphanta National Park and associated actions relating to vulture conservation.

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Activities

Each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.

- 1.1 Tagging of 20 wild vultures with solar powered tags to collect data on movements and survival.
- 1.2 Monitoring (remote) of tagged vultures and ground truthing (in field) of vulture locations.
- 1.3 Establish a rapid response team to address and mitigate immediate vulture incidents promptly.
- 1.4 Rescue and rehabilitate injured vultures where required.
- 1.5 Post-mortem of any dead vultures to define the cause of death.
- 1.6 Conduct vulture nest surveys to understand breeding productivity.
- 1.7 Conduct pharmacy NSAID surveys to evaluate the level of threat in the environment.
- 1.8 Organise and deliver awareness workshops with local government, National Park, communities, and key stakeholders regarding vulture conservation.
- 1.9 Train local partners and key stakeholders in VSZ management.
- 1.10 Support to establish Vulture Rescue Centre.

- 2.1 Support to establish Livestock Lead farmers. Farmers demonstrating improved health and husbandry - Capacity building of other livestock farmers, including demonstrations by Lead Farmers.

- 2.2 Support to establish/strengthen two dairy cooperatives - feasibility studies and installation of milk chillers, buy electric tuk-tuks to collect milk from collection points, establish/improve milk collection centre.
- 2.3 Create improved and inclusive market for dairy produce - organise interactions between market actors, build business skills of farmers and coops.
- 2.4 Support farmers with improved security of livestock shelters to reduce predation risk.
- 2.5 Undertake dog sterilisation campaigns to help reduce population of feral dogs.
- 2.6 Capacity building training to livestock farmers on monitoring use of veterinary drugs, stop using poisoning and vulture conservation.
- 3.1 Carry out workshops for provisioning of safe food (not use vulture toxic NSAIDS) to vultures.
- 3.2 Provide electric transport loader to carry carcass to carcass dump/ feeding area.
- 3.3 Support secure infrastructures nearby cow shelters for safe carcass disposal with vulture feeding area including building 2 hides so that visitors can view vulture feeding.
- 3.4 Build capacity of cow shelter management committee to establish fee charging mechanism to the visitors who come for viewing vulture feeding.
- 3.5 Support cow shelters to install 2 bag digester systems (Sistema 200 for 165 cows).
- 3.6 Capacity building of cow shelter management committee/ managers on management and value addition to slurry including marketing.
- 3.7 Facilitate agreement between dairy cooperatives and cow shelters so that part of the cooperatives' profit goes to the cow shelters management.
- 3.8 Facilitate agreement between Local Governments and cow shelters so that cow shelters get regular financial and regulatory support from the Local Governments.
- 3.9 Support cow shelter with kits and tools to convert slurry to bio fertiliser.
- 3.10 Capacity building of operator/caretaker on slurry management and conversion to bio fertiliser.
- 3.11 O&M training to caretakers to operate installed bag digester system.
- 3.12 Technical audit of the installed bag digester system.
- 4.1 Organise meeting of the Nepal Vulture Recovery Committee (NVRC) to contribute to coordinated efforts in line with Vulture Action Plan and decision-making for vulture conservation.
- 4.2 Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders involved in Vulture Safe Zones, ensuring effective management and conservation practices within these designated areas.
- 4.3 Collaborate with relevant national authorities and stakeholders to enforce regulations and ban the use of all vulture-toxic NSAIDs and promote the safe NSAIDs in veterinary practices.
- 4.4 Develop posters and pamphlets with general awareness message on vulture conservation.
- 4.5 Capacity building training to veterinary practitioners on stopping vulture toxic drugs.

Q25b. Standard Indicators

Standard Indicator Ref & Wording	Project Output or Outcome this links to	Target number by project end	Provide disaggregated targets here
DI-D03: Number of people with enhanced livelihoods	Outcome	5,054	2527 women
DI-A03: Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity	Outcome	35	25 local and 8 national organisations

DI-D07: Number of threatened species with improving conservation status	Output 1	2	No Response
DI-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities 6+ months after training	Output 2	582	291 women
DI-C10: Number of decision-makers attending briefing events	Output 4	15	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response

If you cannot identify three Standard Indicators you can report against, please justify this here.

No Response

Section 11 - Budget and Funding

Q26. Budget

Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application and ensure the Summary page is fully completed. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet.

 [DIR31S1 1524 Budget](#)

 29/11/2024

 11:35:50

 xlsx 69.2 KB

Q27. Alignment with other funding and activities

This question aims to help us understand how familiar you are with other work in the geographic/thematic area, and how this proposed project will build on or align with this to avoid any risks of duplicating or conflicting activities.

Q27a. Is this new work or does it build on existing/past activities (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)?

- ☒ Development of existing/past activities

Please provide details:

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has been playing a crucial role in supporting BCN's vulture conservation program, primarily focusing on scientific research aspects such as satellite-tagging of vultures and monitoring, NSAID veterinary surveys, nest colony monitoring, and awareness initiatives. This project, however, goes beyond by incorporating livelihood components and addressing emerging threats to ensure a more comprehensive approach to vulture conservation.

RW is currently implementing CONNECT project in the buffer zone of Shuklaphanta National Park. The goal of this project is to increase the biodiversity and climate resilience of the National Park and sustainably improve buffer zone community livelihoods. There are two municipalities and some communities where both CONNECT and this project will be active. Although the activities planned under this project and CONNECT are different, we will organise exchange meetings between the team members of two projects so that some of the relevant messages from both projects can be disseminated to wider audience. This practice will contribute to achieving the objectives of both projects and the dissemination to a wider audience will further contribute to vulture conservation.

Q27b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for work in the geographic/thematic area to the proposed project that may duplicate or cut across this proposed project?

- ☒ No

Q28. Value for Money

Please demonstrate why your project is good value for money in terms of impact and cost-effectiveness of each pound spend (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity). Why is it the best feasible project for the amount of money to be spent?

Technology and infrastructure costs are based on the experience in testing, evaluating, and improving the efficiency of procurement and delivery of clean energy technologies including conservation infrastructure and resources. Due to market expansion, the price of solar technology continues to improve, with an increasing number of qualified vendors now available in the market. To purchase quality systems at the right price, technical providers will be selected through a competitive bidding process, overseen by RW's Technical Lead.

Between the partners, we bring the skills, experience and networks with government and local communities to hit the ground running, with a single field office being established to ensure efficient working. The budget is also based on leveraging additional funding from a range of stakeholders, including local government, farmers and cooperatives.

Conscious of the budget challenges involved when working collaboratively, where each organisation brings staffing and overhead requirements, we have ensured staff efficiencies with senior staff contributing realistic and proportional percentages of their time, and all full-time staff based at the field office. In line with government regulations within Nepal, a considerable portion of the field-level activities will be delivered through our local partners.

We have also been mindful to ensure a high proportion of funding is in-country costs with only a small percentage going to the UK for ultimate oversight and responsibility.

Q29. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin Initiative 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.

The investment in renewable energy technology is essential to achieving the project's long-term impact and sustainable results. This includes solar-powered milk chillers and electric vehicles for collection/delivery to capacitate dairy cooperatives, and bag digester biogas equipment for the production of gas and organic fertiliser to boost the viability of cow shelters. A vehicle is required for the collection of carcasses at the cow shelter (and to aid infection control in the community). These capital items represent a strategic allocation of resources toward the achievement of project results. Moreover, investment in renewable energy options in particular will catalyse innovation, attract additional funding, and position our project sites as leaders in renewable energy adoption, in addition to conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Following the guidelines of Social Welfare Council, the assets procured under this project will be donated to local organisations or used by project partners for successive phase for the project.

Section 12 - Safeguarding and Ethics

Q30. Safeguarding

All projects funded under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds must ensure proactive action is taken to promote the welfare and protect all individuals involved in the project (staff, implementing partners, the public and beneficiaries) from harm. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have specific procedures and policies in operation.

Please outline how your project will ensure:

- (a) beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff are made aware of your safeguarding commitment and how they can confidentially raise a concern,**
- (b) safeguarding issues are investigated, recorded and what disciplinary procedures are in place when allegations and complaints are upheld,**
- (c) you will ensure project partners also meet these standards and policies.**

Indicate which minimum standard protocol your project follows and how you meet those minimum standards, i.e. CAPSEAH, CHS, IASC MOS-PSEA. If your approach is currently limited or in the early stages of development, please clearly set out your plans to address this.

All RSPB workforce and representatives and any organisation or individual working in partnership with the RSPB (whether formal or informal) is expected to follow the RSPB Safeguarding Policy.

The policy is publicly available on the RSPB website and all RSPB staff are familiarised with it during induction process and through compulsory training. The policy and its associated training detail how to confidentially raise a concern.

RSPB work with all partners to ensure they have effective safeguarding measures in place. Sub-contracts include our standard Safeguarding Annex, which requires partners to implement and/or develop safeguarding policies and procedures, and outlines their obligation to report, record and mitigate any incidents.

All RSPB workforce and other representatives/project partners are obliged to report any safeguarding concerns following the required RSPB procedure.

Safeguarding concerns are reported to the Safeguarding Team and recorded on the RSPB Incident Reporting System (PRIME). The Safeguarding Team determines the appropriate course of action, if necessary, in consultation with the relevant statutory agency i.e. Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Team and/or Local

Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Police.

When needed, concerns are handled as a misconduct issue using RSPB complaints/disciplinary procedures or by the appropriate statutory agency. If concerns remain, a disciplinary investigation is launched and a hearing held by RSPB, involving LADO, or investigated by LA/Police and supported by RSPB.

Defra recommend you appoint a safeguarding focal point to ensure the project's PSEAH work is taken forward. This can be a separate member of staff or a current member of staff who spends a proportionate amount of time for safeguarding and PSEAH activities. Please name this individual here - this person should also be included in your overall staff list at Q33 and in your budget.

[REDACTED]

Q31. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting the key principles of good ethical practice, as outlined in the guidance.

The project adheres to the legal/ethical requirements of all organisations involved in the project and meets the legal and ethical obligations of the UK and Nepal.

The project has been co-developed with in-country partners at all stages, with partners leading the project's on-the-ground delivery. A critical component of this project is engaging with local communities. Delivery by local staff sensitive to their country's culture is crucial for the success of this project as they can effectively champion the wellbeing and safety of anyone directly or indirectly impacted by the project.

The health and safety of all project staff is a priority and will be informed by the relevant employing partner's health and safety guidelines. The RSPB will ensure compliance by following its own policies and will assume responsibility of monitoring and upholding them across all partner activities.

All data and knowledge arising from the project (not subject to GDPR/equivalent restrictions) will be shared freely between all partners through workshops/working groups and publicly through project reports. Credibility of research and findings is protected by the experience of project partners, and the expertise of relevant local stakeholders.

Section 13 - British Embassy or High Commission Engagement

Q32. British embassy or high commission engagement

It is important for UK Government representatives to understand if UK funding might be spent in the project country/ies.

Please indicate if you have contacted the relevant British embassy or high commission to discuss the project and attach details of any advice you have received from them. Please note that some embassies or high commissions may not be able to respond to you but your project will not be penalised for a lack of response.

☒ Yes

Please attach evidence of request or advice if received.

Section 14 - Project Staff

Q33. Project staff

Please identify the core staff (identified in the budget), their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Mary Davies	Project Leader	20	Checked
John Mallord	Scientist	20	Checked
Tim Lee	Senior Programme Manager (RW)	8	Checked
Thakur Thapa	Country Director (RW)	10	Checked

Do you require more fields?

☒ Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Sanjib Lal	Technical Lead (RW)	5	Checked
Aarju Karki	Project Manager - Livelihoods (RW)	100	Checked
TBD	Project Coordinator – Conservation and Livelihoods	100	Checked
Ishana Thapa	Chief Executive Officer (BCN)	10	Checked
Ankit Bilash Joshi	Project Manager - Conservation (BCN)	50	Checked
Deelip Chand Thakuri	Project Officer (BCN)	100	Checked
Hiru Lal Dhangaura	Project Assistant (BCN)	100	Checked
TBD	Veterinary Officer (BCN)	100	Checked

Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the project staff listed above as a combined PDF.

📎 [DIR31S1_1524 CVs](#)

📅 29/11/2024

🕒 11:29:18

📄 pdf 327.24 KB

Have you attached all project staff CVs?

☒ Yes

Section 15 - Project Partners

Q34. Project Partners

Please list all the Project Partners (including the Lead Organisation who will administer the grant and coordinate delivery of the project), clearly setting out their roles and responsibilities in the project including the extent of their engagement so far.

This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included. The order of the letters must be the same as the order they are presented in below.

Lead Organisation name:	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK
Website address:	http://www.rspb.org.uk/
Why is this organisation the Lead Organisation, and what value to they bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	South Asia's vultures are a priority for the RSPB and a programme of work with which we have been involved in India, Nepal and Bangladesh for over 20 years. The RSPB has been fundamental to coordinating and providing scientific expertise to the development of this, working with our BirdLife partners. Working closely with partners, the RSPB will assume responsibility for delivery and overall financial management. The project will be led by Mary Davies with more than 10 years experience coordinating projects at the RSPB, including the last 5 with vulture projects in South Asia. Senior Conservation Scientist, Dr John Mallord, who has worked on the Asian vulture crisis for the last 6 years, will provide scientific support to the project. The RSPB has been involved in helping to formulate this project, working closely with BCN and RW on the needs of local communities and species in Shuklaphanta. Moreover the RSPB has strong project management capacity and extensive experience of working on Darwin funded projects.
International/In-country Partner:	☒ International
Allocated budget (proportion or value):	
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from the Lead Organisation?	☒ Yes
---	--------------------------------------

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

☒ Yes

1. Partner Name:	Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN)
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Website address:	http://www.birdlifeneal.org/
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What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	BCN has been leading the vulture conservation project, bringing to the initiative a wealth of experience, expertise, and a proven track record in safeguarding Asia's vultures. BCN played a pivotal role in addressing the grave threat posed by the use of diclofenac in the 1980s, a drug toxic to vultures scavenging livestock carcasses. BCN's impactful advocacy efforts led to the 2006 ban on diclofenac sales in Nepal. The organisation's multifaceted program includes the establishment of the world's first 'Vulture Safe Zone' (VSZ) and community-managed Vulture Safe Feeding Sites, such as the pioneering Jatayu Restaurant. BCN's role spans scientific expertise, project management, and successful government collaboration, reflected in its ability to enact policy changes, satellite tagging and release, monitor movements, survival and cause of death of GPS-tagged vultures and activities to evaluate the safety of Nepal's VSZ, as well as other awareness and advocacy work. With a commitment to community engagement and capacity-building, BCN's comprehensive approach ensures the integration of biodiversity concerns into local practices, contributing to the project's success in both conservation and sustainable livelihoods.
---	--

International/In-country Partner:	☒ In-country
--	---

Allocated budget:	
--------------------------	-------------

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes
---	--------------------------------------

Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes
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2. Partner Name:	Renewable World
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Website address:	http://www.renewable-world.org/
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What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	In Nepal, RW has been at the forefront of renewable energy-based conservation and livelihood programs that empower women and marginalized groups. RW has built considerable experience of working in the buffer zones of National Parks (Shuklaphanta, Banke and Bardiya). RW has piloted bag bio digesters in Nepal. RW will provide the project with a deep understanding of local context and the specific issues of buffer-zone initiatives, strong general project management capacity, specific technical support for renewable energy equipment/installations, and practical experience of supporting livelihoods and market system development.
International/In-country Partner:	☒ International
Allocated budget:	
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes

3. Partner Name:	No Response
Website address:	No Response
What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	No Response
International/In-country Partner:	☐ International ☐ In-country
Allocated budget:	No Response
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)	☐ Yes ☐ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Partner Name:	No Response
Website address:	No Response

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	<i>No Response</i>
International/In-country Partner:	☐ International ☐ In-country
Allocated budget:	<i>No Response</i>
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☐ Yes ☐ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Partner Name:	<i>No Response</i>
Website address:	<i>No Response</i>
What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	<i>No Response</i>
International/In-country Partner:	☐ International ☐ In-country
Allocated budget:	<i>No Response</i>
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☐ Yes ☐ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Partner Name:	<i>No Response</i>
Website address:	<i>No Response</i>
What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	<i>No Response</i>
International/In-country Partner:	☐ International ☐ In-country
Allocated budget:	<i>No Response</i>
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you require more space to enter details regarding Partners involved in the project, please use the text field below.

No Response

Please provide a combined PDF of all letters of support.

 [Nepal Darwin Letters of Support Nov 24](#)

 29/11/2024

 11:44:44

 pdf 1.29 MB

Section 16 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Q35. Lead Organisation Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund) funding before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

☒ Yes

If yes, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
DPSTR001	Sarah Havery	Enabling effective biosecurity in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories
DPLUS207	Joe Jeffcoate	Empowering and preparing Cayman's Sister Islands to tackle invasive mammals
DPLUS196	Charlie Butt	Habitat Restoration of Great & Little Tobago National Parks (BVI)
DARCC017	Wenceslas Gatarabirwa	Strengthening a leading NGO for conservation and development in Senegal
28-022	Jake Zarins	Restoring the 'water tower' cloud forest of Kenya's Taita Hills
IWT078	Richard Dixon	Combatting IWT in the Gola Sierra Leone-Liberia Transboundary Landscape

Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts?

☒ Yes

Section 17 - Certification

Certification

If this section is incomplete the entire application will be rejected.
Please note if you do not upload the relevant materials below your application may be made ineligible.
On behalf of the

Trustees

of
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

I apply for a grant of
£599,457.00

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 CVs for key project personnel, cover letter, letters of support, a budget, logframe, Safeguarding and associated policies, and project workplan.
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (covering three years) are also enclosed.

Checked

Name	Mary Davies
Position in the organisation	Senior Species Recovery Officer
Signature (please upload e-signature)	MDsignature 29/11/2024 12:21:06 jpg 10.17 KB
Date	29 November 2024

Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

RSPB Audited Accounts 2021-22 29/11/2024 12:31:29 pdf 697.12 KB	RSPB Audited Accounts 2023-24 28/11/2024 16:24:43 pdf 565.5 KB
RSPB Audited Accounts 2022-23 28/11/2024 16:24:43 pdf 738.44 KB	

Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct as a PDF. Optionally you can also upload your Health, Safety and/or Security policy or Security Plan here.

 [RSPB Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy & Code of Conduct](#)
 28/11/2024
 16:24:58
 pdf 1.04 MB

Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including the "Darwin Initiative Guidance", "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance", "Standard Indicator Guidance", "Risk Guidance", and "Finance Guidance".	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for this fund.	Checked
I have provided actual start and end dates for the project.	Checked
I have provided the budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that our budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.	Checked
The application been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
I have attached the below documents to my application: • a cover letter from the Lead Organisation	Checked
• a completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided and using "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance" and "Standard Indicator Guidance".	Checked
• a budget (which meets the requirements above) using the template provided.	Checked
• a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts (covering three years) for the Lead Organisation, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
• a completed workplan as a PDF using the template provided.	Checked
• a copy of the Lead Organisation's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct (Question 30).	Checked
• a copy of the Lead Organisation's Health, Safety and/or Security policy or Security Plan (Question 30)	Unchecked
• 1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff identified at Question 33, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not, combined into a single PDF.	Checked

• a letter of support from the Lead Organisation and partner(s) identified at Question 34, or an explanation of why not, as a single PDF.	Checked
I have been in contact with the FCDO in the project country/ies and have included any evidence of this. If not, I have provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
The additional supporting evidence is in line with the requested evidence, amounts to a maximum of 5 sides of A4, and is combined as a single PDF.	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 checked the Darwin Initiative website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Initiative website.	Checked

We would like to keep in touch!

Please check this box if you would be happy for the lead applicant (Flexi-Grant Account Holder) and project leader (if different) to be added to our mailing list. Through our mailing list we share updates on upcoming and current application rounds under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share our regular newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

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 the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead organisation, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Project Title: Vultures, Cows and People – Strengthening an Ancient Relationship

Project Summary	SMART Indicators (including disaggregated targets)	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Recovery of vultures, enhanced household livelihoods and reduced impacts of feral cattle in and around Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal			
Outcome: The project design is piloted and tested for scalability, integrating vulture conservation with sustainable vulture-friendly livelihoods for communities reliant on dairy cattle, and sustainable management solutions for local cow shelters.	0.1 Declaration of Nepal's second Vulture Safe Zone by the end of the project. 0.2 80% of 1439 households (6317 people) report enhanced livelihoods attributable to project interventions by the end of the project. 0.3 Two cow shelters are developed as role models for other cow shelters in terms of financial sustainability, with vulture friendly best practices adopted and issues related to feral cattle reduced by the end of the project. 0.4 27 local and 8 national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity by end of project. 0.5 Vulture count in the project area increased by 10% by the	0.1 Vulture Safe Zone criteria assessment report, and declaration statement by concerned Government agencies. 0.2 Household survey including livelihood assessment tool. 0.3 Cow shelter records 0.4 Project reports including details from organisations/groups. 0.5 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with local and national organisations 0.5 Vulture count survey report	Our Theory of Change proves to be correct, so that achievement of the Outputs described below does indeed yield the expected long-term benefits both for vulture conservation, improved management of feral cattle and improved livelihood of the communities. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Relevant authorities continue to cooperate in terms of creating Vulture Safe Zone as the project location. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Natural calamities occurring do not significantly disrupt the project activities and can be managed by appropriate planning. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Governments determine appropriate pricing for dairy products, and feeds for cows/buffaloes are readily

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	end of the project (baseline from year 1).		available at reasonable price. <i>Medium level of confidence.</i> Vulture counts can be proven statistically despite fluctuations and error. <i>High level of confidence.</i>
Outputs: 1. Criteria for Shuklaphanta National Park Vulture Safe Zone declaration achieved following monitoring movements, survival, and causes of mortality of vulture populations in and around Shuklaphanta, with threats identified and minimised.	1.1 Annual survival rates of tagged vultures recorded as over $\geq 90\%$, with no confirmed cases of NSAID mortality by the end of the project. 1.2 Vulture nests monitored annually, with mapping and data recorded, indicating breeding success maintained between 65-75% based on nationwide data by the end of the project. 1.3 Annual undercover pharmacy surveys within the provisional VSZ indicating absence in availability of toxic NSAIDs at the end of the project. 1.4 Two threatened vulture species with improving conservation status.	1.1 Monitoring report from GPS tag data and field verification. 1.2 Nest survey data report. 1.3 Pharmacy surveys report. 1.4 Survey reports and Nepal Vulture Conservation Action Plan review 2027.	Environment remains favourable within the Vulture Safe Zone to support vulture population growth. <i>Medium level of confidence</i> Political unrest does not create a situation in which staff are restricted to move freely for continued comprehensive coverage of nesting sites with mapping and data collection. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Emergence of new toxic drugs can be prevented by advocacy work. <i>Medium level of confidence.</i> Cooperation from pharmacies continues, and there is effective enforcement of regulation. <i>High level of confidence.</i>
2. Livelihoods of livestock owners, especially dairy farmers, enhanced through improved	2.1 500 farmers (at least 50% are women) trained in dairy cattle improved health and	2.1 Survey of households	Dairy cooperatives open to change and expansion, including using renewable energy

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husbandry and security, improved post-production practices, adoption of regenerative farming approaches, and increased access to the markets via cooperatives.	husbandry and business skills report minimum of 10% increase in income compared to baseline survey in year 1 at project end. 2.2 500 households reached by vulture-friendly veterinary services by end of project. 2.3 Two sustainable livelihood enterprises (dairy cooperatives with 700 member households, minimum one-third of the cooperative board members represented by women) established that are functioning at project end. 2.4 50 households with improved security of livestock shelters for prevention of human/wildlife conflict by project end.	2.2 Survey of dairy farmers and veterinary service records. 2.3 Cooperative records and accounts (for the working of the coop) and livelihoods assessment tool. 2.4 Predator-proof corral checklist	technologies. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Cooperatives and dairy farmers receive ongoing support beyond project duration from Local Governments. <i>High level of confidence.</i>
3. Cow shelters around Shuklaphanta National Park with enhanced vulture friendly practices and improved financial sustainability and viability, alleviating issues caused by unwanted cattle.	3.1 Vulture-friendly infrastructure improvements achieved at five cow shelters (containment of cattle, fencing and rotation of carcass dumps etc.). 3.2 Biogas digester installed in two cow shelters functioning by project end. 3.3 15% increase of number of cows being admitted to cow	3.1 Infrastructure checklist 3.2 Testing and commissioning report, and Bag digester functioning assessment report 3.3 Cow shelter records 3.4 Financial records from cow shelters	Cow shelters are open to innovation and can adapt to new practices, including through the use of renewable energy technologies. <i>Medium level of confidence.</i> Market demand continues for biogas and fertiliser effective management. <i>High level of confidence.</i>

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	shelters by project end from year 1 baseline. 3.4 Five cow shelters generate income to sustainably manage by project end (<i>by e.g. selling biogas and fertiliser, charging fees to visitors, service fees paid for the admitted cows, financial contribution by dairy cooperatives, and regular funds received from the Local Governments</i>).		Community members are willing to admit and pay for their cows to go to cow shelters. <i>High level of confidence.</i> Local Governments continue to provide financial and regulatory support to cow shelters. <i>High level of confidence.</i>
4. Engagement and advocacy with Government of Nepal to support the establishment of Nepal's second Vulture Safe Zone around Shuklaphanta National Park and associated actions relating to vulture conservation.	4.1 Government imposes veterinary bans on vulture toxic NSAIDs by project end. 4.2 Six national and six local government institutions/departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of Vulture Safe Zone declaration and related biodiversity and associated poverty issues. 4.3 Representatives from 15 decision-making institutions attend briefing events.	4.1 Progress reports and government bans documented. 4.2 Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder survey. 4.3 Meeting reports	Continued supportive government engagement, policy making and effective enforcement. <i>High level of confidence.</i>

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Activities

- 1.1 Tagging of 20 wild vultures with solar powered tags to collect data on movements and survival.
 - 1.2 Monitoring (remote) of tagged vultures and ground truthing (in field) of vulture locations.
 - 1.3 Establish a rapid response team to address and mitigate immediate vulture incidents promptly.
 - 1.4 Rescue and rehabilitate injured vultures where required.
 - 1.5 Postmortem of any dead vultures to define the cause of death.
 - 1.6 Conduct vulture nest surveys to understand breeding productivity.
 - 1.7 Conduct pharmacy NSAID surveys to evaluate the level of threat in the environment.
 - 1.8 Organise and deliver awareness workshops with local government, National Park, communities, and key stakeholders regarding vulture conservation.
 - 1.9 Train local partners and key stakeholders in VSZ management.
 - 1.10 Support to establish Vulture Rescue Centre.
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- 2.1 Support to establish Livestock Lead farmers. Farmers demonstrating improved health and husbandry - Capacity building of other livestock farmers, including demonstrations by Lead Farmers.
 - 2.2 Support to establish/strengthen two dairy cooperatives - feasibility studies and installation of milk chillers, buy electric tuk-tuks to collect milk from collection points, establish/improve milk collection centre.
 - 2.3 Create improved and inclusive market for dairy produce - organise interactions between market actors, build business skills of farmers and coops.
 - 2.4 Support farmers with improved security of livestock shelters to reduce predation risk.
 - 2.5 Undertake dog sterilisation campaigns to help reduce population of feral dogs.
 - 2.6 Capacity building training to livestock farmers on monitoring use of veterinary drugs, stop using poisoning and vulture conservation.
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- 3.1 Carry out workshops for provisioning of safe food (not use vulture toxic NSAIDS) to vultures.
 - 3.2 Provide electric transport loader to carry carcass to carcass dump/ feeding area.
 - 3.3 Support secure infrastructures nearby cow shelters for safe carcass disposal with vulture feeding area including building 2 hides so that visitors can view vulture feeding.
 - 3.4 Build capacity of cow shelter management committee to establish fee charging mechanism to the visitors who come for viewing vulture feeding.
 - 3.5 Support cow shelters to install 2 bag digester systems (Sistema 200 for 165 cows).
 - 3.6 Capacity building of cow shelter management committee/ managers on management and value addition to slurry including marketing.
 - 3.7 Facilitate agreement between dairy cooperatives and cow shelters so that part of the cooperatives' profit goes to the cow shelters management.
 - 3.8 Facilitate agreement between Local Governments and cow shelters so that cow shelters get regular financial and regulatory support from the Local Governments.

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3.9 Support cow shelter with kits and tools to convert slurry to bio fertiliser.

3.10 Capacity building of operator/caretaker on slurry management and conversion to bio fertiliser.

3.11 O&M training to caretakers to operate installed bag digester system.

3.12 Technical audit of the installed bag digester system.

4.1 Organise meeting of the Nepal Vulture Recovery Committee (NVRC) to contribute to coordinated efforts in line with Vulture Action Plan and decision-making for vulture conservation.

4.2 Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders involved in Vulture Safe Zones, ensuring effective management and conservation practices within these designated areas.

4.3 Collaborate with relevant national authorities and stakeholders to enforce regulations and ban the use of all vulture-toxic NSAIDs and promote the safe NSAIDs in veterinary practices.

4.4 Develop posters and pamphlets with general awareness message on vulture conservation.

4.5 Capacity building training to veterinary practitioners on stopping vulture toxic drugs.