

Applicant: **Sparrow, Peppy**
Organisation: **BirdLife International**
Funding Sought: **£4,978,335.00**

DIR31EX\1252

BirdLife International Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

BirdLife's Forest Impact Accelerator will incubate 23 Sustainable Finance Initiatives (SFIs), with 13 reaching full functionality. SFIs will enable implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) to conserve biodiversity and enable multi-dimensional poverty reduction in 1,000,000 hectares of forest landscapes, comprising Key Biodiversity Areas. The Accelerator will scale up its proven model of technical support, seed funding and peer-to-peer learning. Innovative new features and larger-scale investor and funder match-making will strengthen the impact-driven approach, with a focus on scaling successful SFIs post-project.

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BirdLife International Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

Section 1 - Contact Details

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GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	BirdLife International
Phone (Work)	
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Website (Work)	
Address	

Section 2 - Title, Ecosystems, Approaches & Summary

Q3. Project title

BirdLife International Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

Please upload a cover letter as a PDF document.

 [BirdLife International Cover Letter Darwin Extra Round 31](#)

 16/09/2024

 16:11:08

 pdf 192.66 KB

Q4a. Is this a resubmission of a previously unsuccessful application?

☒ Yes

Please provide a response to any feedback you received below.

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.

BirdLife International (BLI) benefited from this proposal being assessed under Round 30 of Darwin Extra in 2023. One of six applications shortlisted for interview in January 2024, feedback from the Expert Committee was valuable and has been integral to strengthening certain project components.

- the proposal identifies and addresses a key bottleneck by developing a pipeline of suitable projects for impact investing by the private sector to make conservation projects more sustainable;
- the logframe, Theory of Change and narrative were well developed and articulated;
- there is evidence of strong partnerships with long standing relationships and good letters of support;
- the proposal is ambitious in its outcomes, scaling and sustainability potential'.

BLI is encouraged by feedback to resubmit the proposal, maintaining the same ambition of outcomes and scaling to deliver against Darwin Extra criteria. The project logic expressed in the ToC and logframe submitted in Round 30 is retained.

Feedback from reviewers highlighting areas for improvement or clarification was welcomed.

- a significant proportion of the budget is allocated to private sector consultants to provide capacity development and training, rather than this expertise being built into the project's core team;

Building in-house technical capacity is desirable and could enhance the sustainability of outcomes and the Accelerator itself. Nevertheless, considering the diverse range of SFIs and partners, use of external expertise for

provision of bespoke technical assistance continues to represent best value for money. BLI has long-standing working relationships with private sector consultants Terranomics and EarthShot. Their continued involvement can efficiently provide a diversity of specific expertise not feasible to create in-house within project budget or timescales. Private sector value adds include

advisory on niche markets, and sectors involving rapidly developing technologies and highly technical skills. CSOs are increasingly interested in designing SFIs for the voluntary carbon market, so private sector inputs will be instrumental to achieving intended outcomes. We propose a new f/t role on the core project team: Sustainable Finance Lead – Forests to provide support and expertise on conservation finance and funder engagement. Responsibilities will include support to Accelerator partners to make SFIs investable, including financial modelling, design and pitching, advising on potential funding/financing opportunities, and facilitating investments where appropriate. This will reduce budget allocation to Terranomics and improve the in-house technical offering of the Accelerator. Additionally, the p/t Forests Impact Analysis Officer proposed previously, is increased to f/t, further reducing reliance on external consultancies. This role will lead design and management of the Forest Impact Dashboard - critical for impact monitoring and increasing the marketability and investability of the SFIs, and the Accelerator as a whole. Investment in in-house capacity creates efficiencies and ensures this key component can be designed and adapted to meet specific needs of the SFIs and Accelerator over the long-term. Furthermore, Year 5 budget to EarthShot is now allocated to matched funding. This is an unsecured matched arrangement, but we are confident of a pipeline of existing and prospective donors to the Accelerator, as well as potential returns from carbon projects developed during the next four years, will raise this amount by 01/04/29.

- more evidence is needed to demonstrate that the proposed finance model is sustainable - at the moment the mechanism is more like a small grants programme than a Sustainable Finance Initiative and the revolving fund is not expected to be financially sustainable until the long term;

BLI designed the Accelerator as a mechanism to enable national CSOs to launch and operationalize SFIs that can attract private sector funding and create long-term impact for nature and people. CSOs in many ODA-eligible countries face significant gaps in technical, financial and organisational capacity. Reviewers recognised the proposal as addressing this key bottleneck. The Accelerator empowers civil society through structured support, of which grants are only one component. Through focused capacity development, and creating new SFIs as pathways for private sector investment in conservation, outcomes generated by public grants are maximised and sustained. A Revolving Fund was proposed in Round 30 for financial sustainability of the Accelerator itself (distinct from the sustainability of SFIs created). On reflection to feedback, we recognise that the viability of a Revolving Fund was overstated. We have identified more effective ways to boost sustainability (Dashboard) and removed the Revolving Fund component. We will offer five Returnable Grants to SFIs in later pipeline stages, whereby partners take on repayable grants in a low-risk environment, building capacity for future finance management. The goal of this activity is not to make the Accelerator itself financially sustainable. Rather, it will strengthen capacity of recipient CSOs, and establish a track record of repayable finance and reducing commercial risk.

- more evidence could be provided to show there would be a sustainable pipeline of impact investors. Private sector funding can be as uncertain as development assistance funding.

Private sector currently contributes only 18% of NbS finance, but this is expected to grow rapidly due to pressure from governments and consumers, and corporate recognition of climate risks and dependencies on nature.

(UNEP 2023) A recent review of NbS investors by Finance Earth (2023) revealed 86 active funds and financial instruments representing a total combined value of \$12 billion committed capital for NbS investment.

Investments in forests accounts for roughly 30% of this, and sustainable agriculture another 30%. Over half of the investment has been made into commodities-related business. The remaining investment has been in carbon credits and other ecosystem service delivery mechanisms. While impact-focused investment into SFIs like those developed through the Accelerator remains a tiny segment of the global economy, interest is growing and increasing finance is flowing into such initiatives from both niche and mainstream investors. (PwC 2023). In Annex A, we highlight working groups and recent reports that have influenced our approach to creating SFIs that can meet emerging market needs for commercial NbS SFIs. BirdLife is engaged with finance institutions, including major banks and specialist investment firms, interested in our NbS SFIs. As evidence, we provide letters of support from private sector companies, who are current or potential investors.

Q4b. Previous application number if known.

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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

Tropical-subtropical forests

Biome 2

Temperate-boreal forests & woodlands

Biome 3

Shrublands & shrubby woodlands

Conservation Action 1

Land / Water Management

Conservation Action 2

Livelihood, Economic & Moral Incentives

Conservation Action 3

Institutional Development

Threat 1

Agriculture & aquaculture (incl. plantations)

Threat 2

Energy production & mining (incl. renewables)

Threat 3

Biological resource use (hunting, gathering, logging, fishing)

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.

BirdLife’s Forest Impact Accelerator will incubate 23 Sustainable Finance Initiatives (SFIs), with 13 reaching full functionality. SFIs will enable implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) to conserve biodiversity and enable multi-dimensional poverty reduction in 1,000,000 hectares of forest landscapes, comprising Key Biodiversity Areas. The Accelerator will scale up its proven model of technical support, seed funding and peer-to-peer learning. Innovative new features and larger-scale investor and funder match-making will strengthen the impact-driven approach, with a focus on scaling successful SFIs post-project.

Section 3 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q7. Country(ies)

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

Country 1	Bolivia	Country 2	Zambia
Country 3	Philippines	Country 4	Nepal

Do you require more fields?

☒ Yes

Country 5	Uganda	Country 6	Sao Tome and Principe
Country 7	Indonesia	Country 8	Kenya

Q8. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
01 April 2025	31 March 2030	5 years

Q9. Budget summary

Darwin Initiative Funding Request	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total request
(1 Apr - 31 Mar) £	£989,621.00	£1,059,045.00	£991,811.00	£1,005,033.00	£932,825.00	£ 4,978,335.00

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?

BLI has a strong commitment of [redacted] from the Hempel Foundation, subject to award from Darwin. Waterloo Foundation and King Charles III Charitable Fund also provide [redacted] and [redacted] co-funding respectively in Y1. Unconfirmed match funds of [redacted] for Earthshot budget in Y5 is anticipated to be raised from existing or

prospective private donors and supplemented by returns from active Accelerator carbon projects. In unlikely event matched funds are not secured by end of Y3 (2 years in advance of need), BLI would request to reprofile budget to ensure continuous supports to carbon projects (e.g., reallocate BLI staff salary contributions).

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

☒ No

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 Accelerator focuses on halting and reversing tropical deforestation, degradation and biodiversity loss in landscapes comprising KBAs, across the world. Agriculture is a major cause of deforestation, with current agricultural and conservation models often failing to meet the economic needs of local people, who lack the technical support, incentives and finance needed to develop more sustainable approaches and protect forests, whilst deforestation undermines the ecosystem services on which communities depend. Forest-dependent and forest-frontier communities are among the world's poorest (FAO, 2022) and have limited opportunities to diversify livelihoods. The global triple challenge of biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty has driven recognition that advancing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) that support conservation of forest ecosystems alongside sustainable and equitable development is critical (Baldwin-Cantello et al. 2023). Significant new funding and finance is being committed for NbS development (estimated at USD 154 billion per year in 2022, UNEP, 2022). This provides clear opportunities for national organisations and local communities seeking to advance NbS, to build on their local landscape knowledge, and context-specific approaches to conservation, in ways that deliver improved local benefits. Yet a disconnect remains between global ambitions and the ability of communities and national organisations to access and participate in these opportunities. While these groups are best placed to deliver NbS, they often lack the knowledge, skills and capacity to access funds or develop SFIs to enable NbS implementation. Initiatives are often at an early stage or smaller-scale of development, than is viable for investors, with NbS projects not meeting investor requirements (WWF & Terranomics, 2022; WWF & South Pole, 2022). Many funded NbS projects also don't sufficiently include and benefit local communities and marginalised groups, with investors and their finance products often distanced from local knowledge and values (FAO, 2022; UNEP, 2022; SEI 2022). Further, long-term impact and success of SFIs, needs to be tracked and evidenced to guide future development.

The BLI Accelerator seeks to bridge this gap, with a proven model developed over five years, to incubate locally-led SFIs, such as forest-positive agriculture enterprises, ARR/REDD+ carbon projects and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanisms. By supporting capacity building, participatory approaches and seed funding at the local level, it accelerates sustainable forest finance solutions made by, and for, local people, and scales them by connecting projects to investors and funders. The Accelerator differs from others the the market by engaging with independent national NGOs that have been working in priority landscapes for decades and have strong and committed partnerships with communities, alongside local knowledge on how to prevent and reverse biodiversity loss and tackle multidimensional poverty. The Accelerator has a particular focus on the early-stage of SFI development, including pre-feasibility, baseline assessments and capacity strengthening, which is currently a significant gap in the market for enabling NbS scale-up and ensuring that this growing global opportunity is accessible to the organisations, people and landscapes where the greatest impact can be made in halting

biodiversity loss, enabling multi-dimensional poverty reduction and contributing to achieving the global climate goals.

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)
- ☒ Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)
- ☒ 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.

The CBD Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), including the Nagoya Protocol, the UNFCCC, and the SDGs are the most relevant international conventions and policy frameworks to the proposed project.

The Accelerator will contribute to the CBD's objectives by establishing SFIs that contribute to achievement of GBF targets 10 (Sustainable use of areas under forestry and agriculture), 11 (Protect nature's contribution to people) and 19 (Increase levels of financial resource from all sources in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner). At the national level, the Accelerator will provide a structure for civil society's inclusion and participation in implementing aspects of NbSAPs that relate to reducing deforestation, sustainable land use and leveraging finance for nature.

The Accelerator's contribution to reducing deforestation will contribute directly to net-zero ambitions expressed in the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement and will assist national governments to deliver NDCs through inclusion of locally led solutions. Utilising the REDD+ framework developed under the UNFCCC will be pursued by some Accelerator SFIs. These SFIs will realise the economic potential of carbon stocks to benefit local economies, reduce poverty, incentivise ecosystem based adaptation, and shift to forest friendly agricultural practices to increase resilience to climate related shocks.

The project will actively contribute to several SDGs, most notably:

1 (No poverty) through producing economic benefits for local communities and boosting national economies through integration of conservation into the wider economy

13 (Climate action) by developing NbS for climate change mitigation through conservation and restoration of carbon rich forest ecosystems, and increasing climate resilience through protection of forest ecosystem services

15 (Life on Land) by protecting the rich and globally significant biodiversity that forest ecosystems are home to
and

17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through convening local level actors with international and national investors and decision makers to implement nature-based solutions and deliver against international policy frameworks and their associated national level targets and commitments

Pilot and early phases of the Accelerator have proved that with the right technical and capability and capacity building inputs, local communities, CSO and national NGOs can be viable actors in forwarding NbS that conserve forests whilst boosting local economies. Darwin Extra funds supporting the proposed project will assist increased integration of Accelerator outputs into NbSAPs, assisting signatory countries to action their commitments following the adoption of the CBD GBF in December 2022. The current policy environment and renewed sense of urgency and ambition globally considering the threats posed by climate change and biodiversity loss, provide a critical and timely opportunity for Darwin Extra to support scale up of the Accelerator and its impact beyond the project cycle lifetime.

Section 6 - Evidence for Scaling

Q15. Evidence for Scaling

Darwin Initiative Extra projects should utilise and build on evidence from past Biodiversity Challenge Funds grants to demonstrate why the approach will deliver. Please provide evidence on how your proposed project will do this, including specific reference to the relevant past projects.

Accelerator Plus project utilises evidence and learning from extensive BLI leadership of BCF grants for forest conservation and/or market-based approaches. Relevant grants include: DAR31014; DAR27005; DAR23016; DAR23010; DAR22018; DAR20024; DAR13006. Delivery of BCF projects in forest landscapes globally has assisted identification of common barriers to CSO designing and operationalizing SFIs.

The Accelerator was launched in 2019 to overcome these barriers. To date it has supported 14 SFIs, enabling NbS across 1,400,000 hectares of KBAs and benefiting 42,600 local people. Previous experience shows SFI development typically takes three to five years, covering scoping, piloting, commercial scale-up and securing investment. The model is proven by three SFIs now graduating, through either structuring finance or leveraging significant additional funding (██████████ from 14 SFIs).

BCF grants contributing directly to development of SFI in Cambodia and Paraguay (DAR27005 and DAR23026) were featured as best practice case study examples in NIRAS's evaluation of livelihoods programming across the BCF programme (NIRAS, 2024). BLI was commended for the 'top three highest scoring projects in the entire sample, characterised by strong private sector partnerships, robust analysis of market constraints and corresponding intervention targeting, and careful attention to evidence of commercial performance both in the intervention rationale and subsequent reporting'

Section 7 - Method, Change Expected, GESI & Exit Strategy

Q16. 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 will you **manage the work** (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

BLI's Accelerator is based on the model of 'seed accelerators' in the business start-up sector and applied to conservation. The Accelerator model has been successfully developed over five years and is continually refined based on experience and feedback.

Building on this, the Accelerator Coordination Team (ACT), including BLI staff and representatives from donors and consultants, will manage annual competitive calls for proposals, open to BirdLife Partners in the NbS pipeline, to apply for a support package, from options offered by the Accelerator. Over two months, BLI staff will provide mentoring support to Partners to develop ideas.

Applicants will identify two focal staff to lead the Landscape Team (LT) for their project. The project will be required to demonstrate inclusive and participatory approaches for engaging local people in the design, management and implementation of SFIs, with clear theory of change (ToC), demonstrating projected contributions to forest conservation and measurable benefits to local people.

Applicants will submit a technical proposal, budget, and needs assessment to determine capability and capacity gaps. The ACT will review and select ten highest scoring applications, evaluating the potential of SFIs to contribute to biodiversity and poverty outcomes, their viability, potential to scale and quality of approach and design. Structured agreements will be established with successful partners, outlining support, terms of seed-grants and donor requirements. Based on experience, the Accelerator has the following categories:

Sustainable Enterprise – Agriculture, tourism, other businesses creating forest-positive incentives for local communities

Carbon – REDD+ and ARR carbon credit projects, led by local organisations with clear biodiversity and community benefits, certified to best practice standards

Natural Capital – PES, non-carbon credits or offsets (e.g., biodiversity), locally-led by local organisations with clear community benefits

Fund Structures – Trust funds, Government policy and tax incentives and similar, that channel funds to forest conservation while benefiting local communities.

Based on categories of SFIs and capacity needs of the cohort, over the following ten months BLI will implement a programme of tailored support, including bespoke elements for specific LTs and broader cohort learning. The resources, business templates, case studies and tools produced by the Accelerator will be made available to the cohort through 'Hatch', BLI's online communications platform. Support will enable partners to design, test, develop, structure and launch SFIs through four pillars:

Technical Assistance (TA): delivered through direct mentoring and support from BLI staff, consultants and external partners, tailored to specific requirements of each LT. BLI staff and consultants support LTs at every stage of development from design to implementation. Support focuses on; a strong ToC, design that is realistic, viable and delivers required outcomes, alignment with best-practice international standards, understanding of market dynamics, risks and opportunities, facilitated engagement with investors and support in structuring and securing larger-scale funding and finance. TA will be provided by BLI staff and specialist consultancies.

Terranomics: consultancy scaling up private investment in nature conservation. They provide technical training to Partners, including development and strengthening of business models, market research, financial modelling, matchmaking with and support during investor engagement.

Earthshot Labs: climate technology company and carbon project developer. They support project implementers to undertake scoping, feasibility and implementation of high-quality carbon projects that deliver for biodiversity and local people.

Seed grants: Seed grants will be provided to support LTs in developing SFIs over ten months, ranging from £30,000- £70,000 with more mature SFIs benefiting from larger amounts. Seed grants can be deployed flexibly to cover scoping, feasibility, business case and strategy development, piloting implementation and scale up of SFIs

that demonstrate success in defined outcomes. Funds may be used to cover staff time, specialist consultancies, travel and site visits, stakeholder meetings, legal and financial advice, communications materials and training, amongst other activities. Five returnable grants will be made to select projects in later pipeline stages, to grow partner capacity for finance management.

Collaborative learning: Collaborative learning will take place through a structured programme of quarterly webinars on shared themes, online peer-to-peer exchanges on specific topics with a regional or category focus every other month, and one annual in-person workshop. Programme design will stem from key needs identified by the LTs developing the SFIs. Previous webinars and workshops have focused on; ToC and project design, feasibility assessments, monitoring and evaluation, mapping governance structures, sustainable financing mechanisms, troubleshooting for SFI development, and pitching for future investment. The Accelerator has also facilitated external expert sessions on communications skills and developing funding proposals. Collaborative learning enables partners to share experiences and identify opportunities for replication. For Darwin Extra, the Accelerator will support LTs to undertake exchange visits to other projects.

Strategic communications: BLI staff and consultants will support LTs to identify, engage and matchmake SFIs to investors and strategic funders, alongside support in structuring partnerships and governance arrangements to enable finance and funding to flow. BLI presence at relevant international conventions and amongst international funders, will promote SFIs and impact to enable a broader global reach and networking for further scale up and investment. The online Forest Impact Dashboard (see Q.25) will undertake data capture, analysis and enable public promotion of the impact achieved. The Accelerator website, blog posts and live showcase events provide a platform for teams to pitch SFIs to investors and build support from strategic decision-makers.

The project will track progress of each SFI through the following stages of development: Scoping and feasibility – Understanding the potential and viability of the idea. Business plan and strategy – Developing the design, plan, team and structure to implement the idea in practice. Pilot- Implementing at a small-scale. Commercial scale-up – Establishing structures to secure larger-scale funding or financing. Graduation – when self-sustaining or when securing sufficient external funds or finance. At the beginning of the cohort, each SFI is mapped to its current stage, with the aim to progress each SFI by at least one stage over ten months. Progress is monitored throughout the year in addition to full mid-year and end-year reporting. Teams that have made progress but not yet graduated are able to apply the following year to advance their SFIs.

Q17. 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 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.

This project is designed to build capability and capacity of multiple local and national partners as a core outcome.

When national BirdLife Partners are accepted into the Accelerator, Partner capability and capacity are assessed, along with the pipeline stage of the proposed SFI. The Accelerator will use this information to build a tailored programme of capability and capacity strengthening for each partner, comprising elements from the four pillars of: Technical Assistance, Seed Grants, Collaborative Learning and Strategic Communications. These pillars are delivered by the ACT, including BLI staff and specialised consultants.

Technical Assistance provides LTs with the technical capacity and support to undertake feasibility and market assessments, develop business models, and undertake financial modelling and market assessments, alongside building their capability to undertake this work independently in the future. For each SFI, capability of the local stakeholders to co-design and engage with the SFIs is also critical to SFI success. TA will be provided to Partners to enable them to undertake capability-building activities with the local community and stakeholders to underpin

an inclusive approach to SFI design, management and implementation.

Seed Grants will enhance the capacity of LTs to undertake scoping, feasibility assessments, secure additional support from specialist consultants and advisors, develop business plans, undertake stakeholder engagement, pilot and implement SFIs and develop strategic communications materials for promotion.

Collaborative Learning provides LTs with greater knowledge and understanding of key approaches, structures, challenges and solutions to developing SFIs.

Strategic Communications will strengthen LTs capability to develop impactful and engaging communications and promotions of their SFIs, and to undertake investor and strategic donor networking and engagement.

With Darwin funding, the Accelerator will enhance the capability and capacity for LTs on monitoring impact. It is essential that SFIs are able to effectively track and measure impact in a way that is transparent and accessible. This is also essential to provide credibility and risk assurance for funders and investors. Using in-house expertise, LTs would be supported to develop M&E systems for the SFIs, particularly focused on ESG indicators. This is linked to the Forest Impact Dashboard (see Q.25).

With each SFI stage comes new requirements for knowledge, skills and tools. The Accelerator structure allows each team to access the support it needs, appropriate to the stage and type of SFI it is working on.

In the Accelerator development to date, 1 of 14 SFIs was found to be unfeasible after early scoping. However, the partner cited the Accelerator to be extremely useful in advancing their capabilities and knowledge on sustainable and inclusive landscape protection activities, which they have then been able to apply to assessing other opportunities.

Through the Accelerator, both capability and capacity for SFI development and implementation among the Partners and local stakeholders is maintained in the long-term through the ongoing operations of the SFI. This differs from other capacity building efforts that provide training and have no way to ensure new skills or ways of working are applied going forward.

Q18. 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.

BLI seeks to establish gender sensitive programming principles and build GEDSI best practices throughout all projects, including promoting equitable access to project benefits. In some instances, Accelerator supported SFIs have a specific gender equity focus, e.g., BirdLife São Tomé and Príncipe led a project around sustainable butterfly farming creating jobs and additional income for women.

Selection requirements include that Partners must have a Social Safeguards Policy or commit to developing one over the course of the year with support from BLI. The Waterloo Foundation is currently funding work with select Accelerator partners to review and strengthen project and organisational safeguards. This is a key data gathering exercise to strengthen safeguarding and GEDSI more broadly across future Accelerator cohorts.

To ensure social safeguards are integrated into the SFI methodology, the proposal template prompts applicants to describe proposed approaches to safeguarding and GEDSI. Partners will also report on integration of these measures and their success. Cohort induction includes training for all Partners on social and environmental

safeguards. Building on BLI's "Framework for Socio-Cultural Impacts and Safeguards Assessment," the Accelerator will ensure best practices in SFI design regarding transparency, participation and equity. ACT reviews of business and financial models and benefit-sharing agreements generated through the project, will emphasise financial inclusion and equity for local stakeholders. Project data will be gender disaggregated, and track representation of marginalised groups.

BLI prioritise building capability and capacity of a diverse cohort, encouraging participation of mid-level staff directly engaged in landscape and community work, who are usually more diverse in terms of gender and socio-economic backgrounds compared to senior management. Over 50% of participants in Accelerator cohorts to date have been women, and BLI aim to continue this in the proposed project. These conservation professionals come from a range socio-economic backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.

Q19. Change expected

Detail the expected changes and benefits to both biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty reduction, and links between them, 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).

SFIs will be selected due to their potential to contribute to biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty outcomes, as well as the viability of the outcomes being achieved. Biodiversity and poverty-reduction benefits are inherent to the project because SFI success depends on both biodiversity and poverty-reduction outcomes.

Biodiversity:

By project end (short-term impact), 23 SFIs will have been designed and developed by national organisations and local communities to support the conservation, protection and restoration of 1,000,000 hectares of priority forest habitats. This will include enabling new formal forest protection such as community forests, enhancing the effectiveness and equitable governance of existing protected areas, developing forest or sustainable land-use management plans and agreements, natural regeneration, assisted reforestation and active reforestation. Deforestation rates will have been reduced by 25% over the project term in the SFI landscapes, benefiting hundreds of globally threatened species (the Accelerator's 2022 cohort of nine SFIs were home to at least 445 threatened species). Previous Accelerator projects have evidenced positive results of SFIs for biodiversity, for example, Guyra Paraguay have reported that their sustainable yerba mate agroforestry system maintains bird species richness of forest compared to forest edge and croplands (Cabral et al. 2020).

In the long-term, the 13 SFIs supported to full functionality under the Darwin Extra project will continue to expand in scale enabled through the SFIs, delivering both sustained and additional biodiversity benefits across these landscapes. Additional funding will be secured to graduate the remaining 10 SFIs in development. In addition, the learning and experience from the Darwin Extra project will build the capability of the Accelerator to deliver BirdLife's full NbS pipeline across 43 landscapes, comprising 8.74 million hectares of KBAs. This would enable the protection and restoration of critically important forest habitats, supporting >2,500 threatened and endemic species.

Poverty reduction:

By project end (short-term impact), 23 SFIs will have been designed and developed by national organisations and local communities to generate incentives and economic benefits for >200,000 local people (minimum 30% women). The Accelerator will enable LTs to design, develop and implement SFIs in a participatory and inclusive way, to accelerate sustainable financing solutions that are made by and for local people. It will engage national organisations that have been working with local people for decades, to build on local knowledge on how to tackle multi-dimensional poverty and ensure that structuring of the SFI financing, partnership governance and agreements, provide inclusive and equitable benefits to local people.

SFIs will deliver the following incentives and benefits to >200,000 local people. Firstly, through enabling local people to participate in the design, management and implementation of SFIs, including through equitable

representation in the decision-making and governance structures. Secondly, through a focus on the development of SFIs that deliver increased income at the household level, including through employment opportunities, for example as eco-guards or in tree nurseries, or through strengthened livelihoods, for example improved agricultural productivity and market price, or new livelihood opportunities, for example in developing agro-forestry or eco-tourism businesses. Finally, through a broader contribution at the community or landscape level, through supporting and enabling the development of critical infrastructure including health and education facilities, particularly a focus for forest carbon projects.

Previous Accelerator projects have evidenced positive results of SFIs increasing household income. For example, Guyra Paraguay reported a 30-50% price premium received by farmers involved in sustainable yerba mate, compared to conventionally produced yerba mate. Biodiversity and poverty-reduction benefits achieved under the SFIs will be monitored through the Forest Impact Dashboard.

In the long-term, the 13 SFIs supported to full functionality under the Darwin Extra project will continue to expand in scale delivering both sustained and additional poverty-alleviation benefits across these landscapes. Strategic communications support will seek to engage and structure additional large-scale funding and financing to enable the remaining 10 SFIs to graduate.

In addition, the learning and experience from the Darwin Extra project will build the capability of the Accelerator to deliver BirdLife's full NbS pipeline over the long term across 43 landscapes, comprising 8.74 million hectares of KBAs. This would reduce multi-dimensional poverty and provide improved diverse benefits to households and communities, within these landscapes, including approximately, 1,500,000 people.

In addition, the Dashboard will be used as the Accelerator's public interface, to drive broader support and understanding within the NbS finance sector, of the types of solutions and structures needed to support wide-scale implementation of NbS by national organisations and local communities.

Q20. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change. This should be an overview of the overall project logic and outline why and how you expect your Outputs to contribute towards your overall Outcome and, in the longer term, your expected Impact.

The Accelerator addresses one of the underlying drivers of forest and biodiversity loss. Traditional agricultural and conservation models are not providing viable, sustainable incentives and benefits to local people to enable forest conservation. National organisations and local people are best placed to develop and implement solutions but lack knowledge and capacity to access large-scale funds and financing opportunities targeting these solutions.

To tackle this, the Accelerator will provide a tailored package of capacity building to BirdLife Partners, working with local people, to design, manage and implement SFIs to enable NbS in priority KBAs, comprising Technical Assistance, Seed Grants, Collaborative Learning and Strategic Communications, underpinned by the Forest Impact Dashboard providing data and evidence to inform design and implementation.

This support will lead to BLI Partners having increased knowledge, capacity and confidence in designing, developing and establishing SFIs that can deliver biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty outcomes, as well as engaging high-level decision-makers and funders to support scale-up of SFIs. It will ensure that national organisations have the tools and data needed to develop high-quality SFIs and NbS and that data evidences the results and progress towards achieving outcomes. Critically, it will mean national organisations and local communities can design, plan, pilot and scale SFIs, so that they are actively being implemented, structured and scaled in KBAs.

This will result in forest conservation in these KBAs having diversified and more sustainable sources of funding

and financing, with local people receiving direct income and diverse benefits from forest conservation. At the landscape level, conservation action will be more effective and sustainable long-term, with local people securing clearer benefits, enabled to actively develop sustainable livelihoods and deliver forest conservation.

This will enable national organisations and local communities to protect and restore 1,000,000ha of KBAs, through development of more sustainable local economies, benefiting >200,000 people.

Q21. Sustainable benefits and scaling potential

Q21a. 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?

The Accelerator builds the knowledge and capacity of national organisations to establish SFIs with local communities that generate resources for long-term implementation of NbS and benefits to local people. The Accelerator will focus on enabling self-sustaining SFIs long-term, whilst building scaling potential through increased partner capacity and matchmaking to large-scale financing opportunities. Returnable grants offered to select projects will enhance sustainability, preparing partners for management of repayable finance, and bringing small returns to the Accelerator to support future costs.

The resources, business templates, case studies and tools generated by the Accelerator, will be available through BirdLife's online communications platform - Hatch - and accessible to the BirdLife network. BLI will update and manage Hatch as a core function and ensure that resources are available and promoted to the network long-term. The Dashboard is key to better articulate impact of individual SFIs and instrumental in securing large-scale funding and finance.

Q21b. 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?

BirdLife has a significant NbS pipeline, comprising 8.74 million hectares of KBAs with high potential for scaling.

SFIs will be designed, planned, piloted and supported to scale to the landscape, through strategic stakeholder engagement, and structuring for large-scale financing.

SFIs will have potential for replication in other landscapes by BLI Partners, enabled through Collaborative Learning, and development and promotion of case studies through Hatch.

The Accelerator seeks systems change to the green finance sector, by demonstrating the needs and evidencing the solutions on the Dashboard, to enable national and local organisations to deliver NbS at scale.

BLI Partners will have increased knowledge and capacity in designing, developing, scaling and replicating SFIs, at a national level.

BLI is introducing Returnable Grants to some SFI, to explore potential for SFI to bring returns that can support long term seed capital and assist the Accelerator to scale.

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

Section 8 - Risk Management

Q22. 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	Residual Risk
Fiduciary (financial): funds not used for intended purposes or not accounted for (fraud, corruption, mishandling or misappropriated). Incident of fraud or corruption by BLI or Partner staff involves loss or misappropriation of project funds.	Severe	Possible	Major	Any incident of fraud, corruption or other misuse of project funds would be reported immediately to the donor, as well as authorities (e.g., police, charity commission) as appropriate. BLI Anti-Bribery and Corruption, Anti-Financial Crime, Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing policies. Proper and secure financial accounting systems, processes. Grants Officer role.	Moderate

Safeguarding: risk of sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (SEAH), or unintended harm to beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff. Incident of sexual exploitation or abuse (including sexual harassment and assault) involving BLI staff, BLI Partner staff or communities working with SFI, results in harm to beneficiaries, other BLI staff, the public or implementing partners, as well as severe reputational damage to BLI and Darwin.	Severe	Possible	Major	BLI safeguarding and associated policies in place.	Moderate
				Accelerator application process requires Partners to have a safeguarding policy and reporting procedure in place.	
				Specific Partners training dedicated to PSEAH and outlining whistleblowing and reporting procedures to all project stakeholders.	
				Safeguarding focal points named. Reporting process outlined for SEAH. Zero tolerance statement.	
Safeguarding: risks to health, safety and security (HSS) of beneficiaries, the public. Implementing partners, and staff. Staff and Partners travelling to exchange visits or workshops are placed at security or health and safety risks whilst in a different country (e.g., medical, disaster, terrorism, kidnapping, theft/physical assault, road traffic accidents)	Severe	Possible	Major	BLI Health and Safety policy and Travel Policy	Moderate
				Travel requests made to line manager and legal department includes risk assessment and check for 'fit to travel' status	
				FCDO Travel advice consulted for risk assessment and up to date information	
				BLI corporate travel insurance for staff Vaccine and medical advice pre-travel	
Delivery Chain: the overall risk associated with your delivery model. Conflicts of opinion of what is the best course of action for project progress between BirdLife Partner, BirdLife staff and/or third party consultancy staff causes delays and damage to relationships.	Moderate	Possible	Major	Conflicts of opinion will be flagged by the third-party consultancy to BirdLife to lead risk assessment of project delay.	Moderate
				Attempts will be made to reach consensus or pivot technical support to an alternative plan.	
				Consistent failing to integrate technical partner advice will result in Partner agreements being ended.	

Risk 5 Lack of interest from investors and donors in SFI developed for financial sustainability of the Accelerator means that projects created under the Accelerator Plus project fail to generate expected sustainable income or biodiversity and climate impacts.	Severe	Possible	Major	Project strategy includes dedicated time to marketing SFI and creating linkages with investors and donors. Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard will enhance credibility of CSO led SFI to investors. Dedicated budget to policy outreach at international Conventions and events create routes to future investment. Currently high interest in finance for nature.	Moderate
Risk 6 Insufficient attention to GEDSI in Sustainable Financial Initiatives means that benefits are not equitably distributed	Severe	Unlikely	Major	The project includes specific measures to promote GEDSI to ensure benefits are equitably distributed. Selection requirements demand that partners must have a social safeguards policy or commit to developing one. Training on social and environmental safeguards, building on BirdLife's framework for socio-cultural impacts and safeguards assessment. Gender disaggregated data.	Moderate
Risk 7 Economic instability in partner countries, or unrealistic assumptions made at project planning stage result in original budget allocations being insufficient. Impact is reduced services provided by the Accelerator, resulting in poor delivery of objectives and weakened SFI performance.	Severe	Rare	Major	During project planning phase, each element of the project will be estimated accurately. BLI will monitor project expenditure and progress closely by creating a project plan that aligns budget with deliverables. BLI will schedule monthly check-ins to review the budget during implementation.	Moderate

Q23. 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.).

☒ No

Please upload your Risk Register, with Delivery Chain Risk Map, here.

 [BirdLife International Risk Register Darwin Extra Round 31](#)
 16/09/2024
 15:41:01
 xlsx 114.74 KB

Section 9 - Workplan

Q24. Workplan

Provide a project workplan that shows the key milestones in project activities.

 [BirdLife International Workplan - Darwin Extra Round 31 2024](#)
 13/09/2024
 15:06:05
 docx 52.35 KB

Section 10 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q25. 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 (see Finance Guidance).

Darwin Initiative Extra Projects are required to commission an Independent Final Evaluation to report by the time that the project completes. The cost of this should be included in the project budget, and within the total project cost for M&E.

BLI is responsible for M&E but all core project stakeholders contribute. Two BLI staff (Impact Learning Manager and Impact Analysis Officer) have roles dedicated to M&E and will be instrumental in managing the M&E Framework for Accelerator Plus, however significant responsibilities for gathering, analysing and reporting data will also be held by the BLI Project Manager and Grant Officer. These two roles will be responsible for coordinating all data and inputs from Partners/SFI for regular project reporting to Darwin, alongside the Finance Business Partner for financial reporting. An Independent Evaluation at project end will assess the effectiveness of the Accelerator Plus project in achieving its intended impact against baselines defined at project inception. BLI Partner landscape teams, as well as technical partners (e.g., Terranomics and EarthShot) will contribute data and feedback from project activities and results of SFI progressed through the pipeline. The Accelerator structure fosters a culture of reflection and adaptive management, with iterative annual cycles of assessment and review for Accelerator cohorts, enabling bespoke adaptive management of each SFI that the Accelerator supports. Online biannual exchange sessions also facilitate reflection, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and feedback. The Accelerator Coordination Team (ACT) is pivotal in assessing SFI proposals and reviewing annual reports to advise any necessary adaptive adjustments to the project plan or budget. Data will be collected on operational effectiveness of the Accelerator, SFI pipeline progress and SFI effectiveness and impact through: capability and capacity needs assessments at beginning and end of each Accelerator cohort; annual feedback surveys and partner reports; workshop and site visits in Y1, Y3 and Y5; financial reporting and grant management systems; SFI proposals; KPIs identified for each SFI measured biannually; technical assistance quarterly meetings.

Outcome level change targeted by the Accelerator – to enable forest conservation action across one million hectares of KBA, and reach at least 200,000 people with economic benefits, is expected to prompt long-term Impact in addressing threats of biodiversity loss and climate change and progressing sustainable economic development, as SFI's sustain and develop further beyond the project's lifetime. To achieve this change, project activities contribute to four outputs targeting change in Capacity, Solutions, Leverage, and Impact. The project M&E framework targets and measures progress of SFI through the Accelerator pipeline, and the increased capacity of Partners, but also specifically targets strengthening use of project data to demonstrate impact externally and to leverage future investment and scaling of project approaches. Instrumental to this is development of the Forest Impact Dashboard, to enable effective data management for SFI to support knowledge transfer amongst key stakeholders and strengthen credibility of locally-led SFI in the green investment, 'finance for nature' markets. The Dashboard will be a central hub for data relating to SFIs and the forest landscapes and communities they target. It will integrate existing BLI global and local data sets, and new data generated by landscape teams and SFIs. It will collate information through an online, user-friendly platform about the values and conservation status of forest landscapes, as well as core ESG indicators.

Independent Final Evaluation in GBP	
Independent Final Evaluation (%)	0
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	

Section 11 - Logical Framework & Standard Indicators

Q26a. 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.

 [BirdLife International Theory of Change and Logical Framework Darwin Extra Round 31](#)

 16/09/2024

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 pdf 206.87 KB

Impact:

New diversified funds and incentives for local conservation action, create more sustainable economies and reduce deforestation and biodiversity loss across 8,470,000 hectares of Key Biodiversity Areas, benefiting 1,500,000 local people.

Outcome:

Over 23 SFIs are in development, with 13 established, providing sustainable, diverse resources for forest conservation, across 1,000,000 hectares of KBAs, generating incentives and economic benefits for >200,000 local people.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

Output 1. Capacity: >46 Accelerator participants (50% women) have increased knowledge, capacity and the confidence required to design, develop and deliver an SFI in their landscape.

Output 2:

Output 2. Solutions: Landscape teams explore and test >23 SFIs over 5 years, resulting in >13 SFIs designed, developed and established. Each is underpinned by a strong theory of change for impact, demonstrated feasibility, viable financial models and business plans with >13 SFIs establishing partnership and financial structures that are enabling investment and large-scale funding.

Output 3:

Output 3. Leverage: At least 23 SFIs secure new strategic partnerships, leverage funds and finance totalling >£8,000,000, and inspire replication, through strategic communications, network development and investor engagement.

Output 4:

Output 4. Impact: The Accelerator's global impact is defined through a set of standardised SMART indicators, with progress measured using high-quality field and remote sensed data analysis, and results promoted publicly through establishment of an online Forest Impact Dashboard and data management system.

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

☒ 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.

Output 1 – Capacity: >46 Participants (50% women) have increased knowledge, capacity and the confidence required to develop and deliver of an SFI in their landscape.

1.1. Proposals solicited, supported, accepted, reviewed and selected by the Accelerator Coordination Team on an annual basis. (All participants, each cohort)

1.2. Technical Assistance lead from BLI staff or engaged consultancies matched to each SFI/landscape team (see Outputs 3 & 4).

1.3. Accelerator induction process is completed: completion of baseline questionnaire, and introduction webinars and learning sessions on BirdLife and donor expectations, sustainable finance overview, safeguarding, and proactive gender and socio-economic inclusion. (All participants, each cohort)

1.4. Accelerator team delivers >3 seminars or training sessions per cohort (>15 in total) on topics of use to all participants. (All participants, each cohort)

1.5. Virtual peer-to-peer learning and exchange meetings with cohort every other month (>30 in total).

1.6. One-to-one support sessions delivered by TA leads with each landscape teams (>4 per team per cohort, >200 in total). (All participants, each cohort)

- 1.7. Tools and best practice guidance produced by BirdLife, as well as curated externally produced materials, made available to cohort through BLI's internal learning platform, Hatch. (>3 packages made available each year)
- 1.8. In years 2 and 4, an in-person workshop is delivered; sessions include peer-to-peer collaboration, sustainable finance and SFI creation, legal and regulatory requirements of SFIs, social inclusion, impact measures and M&E. (All participants of the relevant cohort)
- 1.9. In years 1, 3 and 5, a site visit is held in one of the landscapes focusing on a particular theme or SFI type. (A subset of the relevant cohort, selected based on theme)

Output 2 – Solutions: The Accelerator Landscape teams designs, develops and establishes at least 23 SFIs, that are underpinned by a strong theory of change for impact, demonstrated feasibility, viable financial models and business plans with at least 13 SFIs establishing partnership and financial structures that are enabling investment and large-scale funding.

- 2.1 Proposed SFIs individually mapped to Accelerator Pipeline Stage and specific time-bound goals set for capacity, outputs or milestones.
- 2.2 Proposed SFI workplans refined and a seed grant agreement signed with each participant team (BirdLife Partner).
- 2.3 A technical assistance plan for the cohort period agreed by each Landscape team, the technical assistance provider, and the Accelerator lead.
- 2.4 Tailored technical assistance delivered according to the plans; this may include one-to-one meetings with TA partner, advisory services, delivery pieces of analytical work, co-oversight of a process or external consultant, or other bespoke support.
- 2.5 Prefeasibility carbon assessments conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) for each carbon SFI at in Pipeline Stage 1 (Initial idea).
- 2.6 Prefeasibility assessment is carried out with support from external service provider (Terranomics) for each Enterprise project in Pipeline Stage 1.
- 2.7 Feasibility carbon assessments conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) for each carbon SFI at in Pipeline Stage 2 (Business Case).
- 2.8 Further support conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) beyond feasibility as required (e.g. development of PDD, registering project on carbon registry database etc.)
- 2.9 External service provider (Earthshot) works alongside carbon SFIs to facilitate a high-quality carbon project design process, based on field and remote-sensed data and inclusive multi-stakeholder workshops, to undertake a theory of change approach to design, focussed on outcomes.
- 2.10 Business plan, market analysis and financial modelling is developed for each project in Pipeline Stage 2 (Terranomics)
- 2.11 Support provided to Landscape teams in setting up pilot projects in Pipeline Stage 3 (Pilot or Trial) by Accelerator team and external support provider (Terranomics)
- 2.12 Support provided to Landscape teams in reaching investment readiness, in establishing partnership and management structures to enable financing, and securing investment finance in Pipeline Stage 4 (Commercial Scale-Up) by Accelerator team and external support provider (Terranomics)
- 2.13 BirdLife staff and external experts ensure best practice for ESG and financial viability through periodic review and regular consultation between Accelerator team and technical support providers.

Output 3 – Leverage: At least 23 SFIs secure new strategic partnerships, leverage funds and finance totalling >£8,000,000, and inspire replication, through strategic communications, network development and investor engagement.

- 3.1 The Accelerator website is designed, developed and launched, and updated at least once per cohort. (1 website, updated >4 times)
- 3.2 Stories on Accelerator teams, landscapes and initiatives are published in the BL website and magazine at least once per cohort. (>4 stories)
- 3.3 External showcases are organised in conjunction with the Accelerator Workshops in years 2 and 4; invitations extended to decision makers, funders and impact finance, media and journalists, peer organisations and technical partners. Showcases are live streamed, and recordings are published on the Accelerator website. (All

- participants of the relevant cohort, plus graduated SFIs)
- 3.4 In years 1, 3 and 5, a virtual showcase is organized to highlight one or more specific SFIs in development for a target audience, see above. (A subset of the relevant cohort)
- 3.5 Case studies on advanced SFIs are produced, shared with decision makers, funders and investors and made available through BirdLife’s internal and external communications platforms. (>15 case studies)
- 3.6 A subset of the tools and best practice guidance produced and curated are made publicly available on the Accelerator website.
- 3.7 BirdLife provides fundraising support to participants by directly fundraising on behalf of Accelerator SFIs, by providing ad hoc quality assurance and review of participants’ proposals as requested.
- 3.8 BirdLife proactively engages with and creates linkages between SFIs and specialist investor platforms focused on forests, carbon and NBS.
- 3.9 Partnerships sought, established or strengthened with funders, conservation finance thinktanks, other accelerators, etc. in order to create opportunities for broader promotion and dissemination, exchange, learning, and co-funding. (E.g. Landscape Finance Lab, Plan Vivo, Conservation Finance Alliance Incubator, CPIC Nature+ Accelerator, Partnerships For Forests (P4F))
- 3.10 An Accelerator Lessons Learned webinar is delivered for a public audience in years 3 and 5; invitations extended to peer organizations, technical partners and funders.
- 3.11 BLI deploys >5 repayable grants to build capacity of SFIs to take on commercial finance and increase the attractiveness of SFIs to investors.

Output

- Output 4. Impact: The Accelerator’s global impact is defined through a set of standardised SMART indicators, with progress measured using high-quality field and remote sensed data analysis, and results promoted publicly through establishment of an online Forest Impact Dashboard.
- 4.1 An external consultancy is selected and contracted to support the creation of the Forest Impact Dashboard and BirdLife team provides training and technical support to SFIs on geospatial data management. (1 technical consultancy contracted)
 - 4.2 The Accelerator Coordination Team defines standardised SMART global indicators and works with the Forest Impact Analysis Officer and external consultancy to define data collection and analysis methods.
 - 4.3 The Forest Impact Dashboard is established using data provided by the cohorts/SFIs and integrated with globally available data sets; the Dashboard acts as a hub for landscape data and impact metrics for the SFIs. (1 Dashboard, >23 SFIs)
 - 4.4 Technical support and training delivered as needed by BirdLife to enable Landscape teams to collect and manage impact data (see Dashboard in Output 2).
 - 4.5 As SFI enters each progressive Pipeline Stage, increasingly detailed ESG impact measures and data are contributed to the Forest Impact Dashboard as part of the long-term impact monitoring strategy of the SFI. (>23 SFIs enter some data, >13 SFIs contributing detailed ESG data by Y5).
 - 4.6 A forest and carbon stock summary is created annually using data from the Dashboard to show potential and actual impact towards reducing deforestation and carbon emissions.
 - 4.7 An interactive interface of the Forest Impact Dashboard is embedded into the Accelerator website as a communications platform for promoting the Accelerator and SFIs.

Q26b. Standard Indicators

Standard Indicator Ref & Wording	Project Output or Outcome this links to	Target number by project end	Provide disaggregated targets here
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e.g. DI-A01: Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	e.g. Output indicator 3.4 / Output 3	e.g. 60	e.g. 30 non-indigenous women; 30 non-indigenous men
DI-A01: Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	Output 1 Indicator 1.1	43	50% women, 50% men
DI-A03: Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity	Output 2 Indicator 2.1 and 2.2	23	No Response
DI-D01a: Area under Sustainable Management Practices	Outcome Indicator 0.1	1,000,000 hectares under Sustainable Management Practices	No Response
DI-B05: Number of people with increased participation in governance	Outcome Indicator 0.5	>200,000 local people participating in resource governance via SFIs and related mechanisms.	minimum 30% women
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 12 - Budget and Funding

Q27. 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.

Q28. Alignment with other funding and activities

We expect projects to clearly demonstrate that they are additional and complementary to other activities and funding in the same geographic/thematic area or region.

Are you aware of any other organisations/projects carrying out or planning activities, or applying for funding for similar work in this geography or sector?

☒ Yes

Please give details explaining similarities and differences, and explaining how your work will be additional, avoiding duplicating and conflicting activities and what attempts have been/will be made to co-operate with and share lessons learnt for mutual benefit.

Prior to launch of the Accelerator in 2019, there were several initiatives that focused on landscape-scale conservation finance, such as the Landscape Finance Lab and Partnerships for Forests (P4F). Since, 2019, other accelerators and incubators have been launched in the conservation space including the Conservation Finance Alliance Incubator and the WWF/HSBC NbS Accelerator. While these are all generally focused on nature, climate and creating sustainable finance solutions, they are differentiated by their range of focal areas and criteria. P4F has been primarily focused on sustainable forest-based products, seeking markets in the UK, whereas our Accelerator has a range of project types.

Additionally, many finance-oriented accelerators require more advanced project stage before funding is available, meaning scoping and early-stage projects are excluded. Many require much larger scale, making their services out of reach for many national NGOs. The Accelerator targets the very early stages of pipeline development, but with a coherent, long-term approach as BLI has held the relationships with its Partners for a long time. It builds on BLI's strong, long-term connections to local NGOs and communities, that have been working in priority landscapes for decades and have more knowledge on how to prevent and reverse biodiversity loss and tackle multidimensional poverty reduction than many NbS project developers that other Accelerators target. The Accelerator also has a strong focus on building the capacity of long-standing conservation organisations to implement NbS.

Going forward, the Accelerator will explore partnership with several existing and emerging initiatives to scale further the impact of the Darwin Extra project. We will promote knowledge exchange with the FCDO IFSLU2 programme (including any reiteration of P4F) when this is implemented. Plan Vivo consulted BLI in development of their Community Project Accelerator, and hope to explore linkages (e.g., fast track of suitable BLI Accelerator projects through PV Accelerator).

Q29. 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?

Economy: Large budget allocations are dedicated to securing essential expertise (BLI staff and consultants) and delivering sub-grants to Partners. Drivers for pricing are cost of labour, inflation and market norms. Terranomics was selected by a competitive procurement process. Earthshot provides pre-feasibility project scoping free-of-charge for projects exploring carbon finance. All staff rates are equivalent or slightly lower than benchmark of labour rates of staff working on similar projects in the same countries but remain competitive to recruit where required. The 10% overhead claimed on this project is justifiable and proportionate to staff costs claimed

annually through the project term (i.e., equivalent to 40% of staff costs). Appropriate expertise and time are secured by direct costing of staff in Lead Partner costs, including new roles for Round 31 that reduce allocations to private sector consultants. Competitive CfP used to select Partners will have Value for Money as a key selection criterion. SFI that are unfeasible or cannot move forward will be discontinued.

Efficiency: Funds will be input to an existing process proven to drive impact and have a multiplier effect on funds invested. Project cost per beneficiary is [REDACTED] using outcome level target of 'benefits to 200,000 people' to underpin this calculation. Return on investment increases further when considering 46 Partner staff who will benefit through capacity and capability strengthening. The project will leverage an additional £1,334,545 matched funding, with 93% already secured from three private foundations. Alternating by year full cohort in-person workshops with thematic site visits with a cohort subset will drive efficiency, maintaining sufficient opportunities for dynamic knowledge exchange and intensive collaboration whilst reducing financial and environmental costs. Thematic site visits offer new routes for knowledge exchange and monitoring while avoiding full workshop costs. A core team of expert conservation professionals with significant experience of leading large global and regionally focused projects is proposed. Darwin will assist scale up of in-house capacity for sustainable finance advisory. Regular progress meetings amongst the team, quarterly whole team meetings, monthly check-ins with consultants, and biannual Partner reporting, will support iterative evaluation of project efficiency.

Effectiveness: The Accelerator model has a strong track record in progressing a portfolio of SFIs. This includes SFIs which are being delivered in challenging environments, where BLI Partners utilise their long-standing presence in communities to navigate issues such as poverty, poaching and drug-trafficking. Accelerator SFIs have been very attractive to donors/investors leveraging [REDACTED] to date (through 14 SFIs). The self-sustaining model makes SFIs a highly effective way to drive and scale biodiversity and economic benefits beyond the project term.

Equity: BLI recognises that in forest landscapes in LMIC, vulnerable populations such as women, girls and Indigenous communities are often marginalised in terms of economic opportunities and land rights and prioritises these groups in activities. As described in Q18, the Accelerator takes measures to ensure that SFIs contribute towards improving the safeguarding and GEDSI practices of Partners and to help ensure that SFI design includes specific elements which target vulnerable populations and contribute towards equal benefit sharing.

Q30. 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 only capital items are three laptops purchased for three roles new to BirdLife International and recruited for this project. Laptop plus accessories are costed at [REDACTED] per person. These will be purchased in Year 1, and are expected to depreciate in value (i.e. to [REDACTED] over the five year project term. These laptops will be retained by BirdLife International following the project and used for other staff, or remain with those roles if their positions are secured beyond the lifetime of the project.

We do not foresee the sub grants to Accelerator participants including capital items other than occasionally low-cost items such as IT, technical equipment or communications materials. BLI procurement processes are in place to offer best practice guidance to Partners for purchase and disposal of assets over [REDACTED] and these purchases will be communicated to the donor as required. Any proposed adjustments to the project budget throughout the duration of the project including unforeseen need for capital items, will be communicated in a timely manner to Darwin Extra through reporting channels or ad hoc in cases where approvals are needed outside of reporting times.

Section 13 - Safeguarding and Ethics

Q31. 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.

BLI has Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Anti-bullying and harassment policies and Code of Conduct which all support PSEAH and risk mitigation. Safeguarding policy includes a statement of commitment to safeguarding, stating BLI does not tolerate abuse or exploitation and that such incidents are considered gross misconduct. Mandatory training on these policies is included in staff induction.

BLI has an identified reporting process for SEAH concerns or incidents, including named Safeguarding Lead and other responsible persons in BLI, and maintains a Safeguarding register to confidentially record reported incidents. BLI's Serious Incident Reporting policy provides process for reporting other incidents that impact safety.

BLI Safeguarding Policy reflects many core principles of CAPSEAH minimum standards and IASC- MOS PSEA, though is not fully aligned. BLI aims to make continual improvements to Safeguarding and has taken forward steps in 2024, including establishing a Safeguarding Working Group, increased leadership buy-in, and working with a Global Safeguarding Consultant to develop a refreshed policy, practice recommendations and bespoke training package to complement other PSEAH training available (e.g., FFI PSEAH training on the Conservation Capacity Platform co-hosted by FFI, BLI and others). The updated policy will include a statement of commitment to relevant standards and presented to BLI Global Council in December 2024. BLI updated the NIRAS Safeguarding Manager on our action on safeguarding in advance of application.

At project level, PSEAH will be strengthened by named Safeguarding Focal Point(s), Safeguarding training for all project partners, regularly updated risk register, dedicated budget for safeguarding, grant agreements committing downstream partners/ consultants to relevant BLI policies, clear complaints mechanism and reporting lines informed to participants and accessible and culturally appropriate community level complaints mechanisms at SFIs. In 2024/25 Waterloo Foundation funded BLI for targeted exploratory work with select Accelerator partners on safeguards, this learning will also benefit safeguarding in the Darwin project.

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 Q34 and in your budget.

[REDACTED]

Q32. Ethics

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

BirdLife Partners must demonstrate how they and the proposed project meet all legal and ethical obligations in their countries as part of the due diligence process undertaken to onboard BirdLife Partners to the Accelerator. Project selection requires that Partners have a Social Safeguards Policy and Accelerator induction includes training on social and environmental safeguards (see Q18). The Accelerator Coordination Team (ACT) reviews

benefit-sharing agreements generated through the project and will ensure financial inclusion and equity for local stakeholders based on the BirdLife Framework. Partners will be required to assess risks in projects in association with health and safety.

BirdLife has a Safeguarding policy, Whistleblowing policy and Code of Conduct (Q31), and other policies to ensure good ethical practice, including an anti-bribery and corruption policy, bullying and harassment policy, serious incident policy, risk management policy, and diversity, equity and inclusion policy. All BirdLife staff take GDPR training each year. BirdLife’s Data Protection, Data Breach and Scientific and Research Data Management policies set out BirdLife’s principles and requirements for how personal and scientific data must be handled by staff. The data platform developed under this project would be fully compliant with these policies.

Section 14 - British Embassy or High Commission Engagement

Q33. 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.

No

If no, why not?

Due to the operational model of the Accelerator, it is not possible to engage UK diplomatic offices at national level at proposal stage. However, as Partners are accepted into the Accelerator cohorts, we will require them to be in contact and consult with the relevant UK Embassy or High Commission.

Section 15 - Project Staff

Q34. 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?
Bryna Griffin	Project Leader	20	Checked
Project Manager (position vacant/ to be recruited)	Project Leader (new project manager will be recruited) with Senior Forest Programme Advisor Bryna Griffin as named Project Leader in the interim.	100	Checked
Richard Grimmett	Director of Conservation	5	Checked
Alice Ward Francis	Senior Forest Programme Manager	10	Checked

Do you require more fields?

Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Position vacant/ to be recruited	Regional Forest Programme Coordinator - Americas	25	Checked
Lahiru Wijedasa	Regional Forest Programme Coordinator- Asia	25	Checked
George Ilebu	Regional Forest Programme Coordinator - Africa	25	Checked
New role/ to be recruited for project	Sustainable Finance Lead- Forests	95	Checked
New role/ to be recruited for project	Forest Impact Analysis Officer	95	Checked
No Response	No Response	No Response	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	No Response	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	No Response	Unchecked

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

 [BirdLife International CVsJDs Darwin Extra Round 31](#)
 16/09/2024
 15:15:21
 pdf 737.81 KB

Have you attached all project staff CVs?

☒ Yes

Section 16 - Project Partners

Q35. 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.

Lead Organisation name: BirdLife International (BLI)
Website address: <https://www.birdlife.org/>

Why is this organisation the Lead Organisation, and what value to they bring to the project?

(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

BLI is a Secretariat organisation with 123 national Partners who are national conservation NGOs, making it the largest conservation partnership in the world. BLI's Forests Programme seeks to support over 17 million ha of forest landscapes which are critical for biodiversity and local economies. As the Lead Partner, BLI will implement the Forest Impact Accelerator, including administering the grants and coordinating technical support to Partners. The team at BirdLife brings together expertise across forestry, sustainable finance and Nature Based Solutions, alongside long-standing relationships with competent third-party consultancies – creating a well rounded skillset ensuring that BirdLife Partners receive very high standard support with project development, scale up and investor engagement. Overall, BirdLife International places huge importance on sustainable finance for conservation within all its programmes and will use this opportunity with Darwin to further explore how the Accelerator can be financed beyond donor funding, including through different financial mechanisms such as revolving funds. BirdLife International brings extensive experience of managing large-scale grants from public and other funders, and will be responsible for all financial management pertaining to the grant. Allocated budget to BirdLife shown excludes amount to Terranomics and Earthshot, these are shown separately next to each technical partner below.

International/In-country Partner

☒ International

Allocated budget (proportion or value):



Represented 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:

Terranomics Ltd.

Website address:

<https://www.terrانomics.org/>

(Max 200 words)

Terranomics specialises in scaling up private sector investment and action in nature-based solutions and conservation. Work falls under three main areas: 1) supporting organisations leverage finance for NbS and conservation; 2) advancing and incubate NbS; and 3) developing policies, strategies, and plans for an enabling NbS investment environment.

What value does this Partner bring to the project?

(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

Terranomics has been a partner of the Birdlife Accelerator since 2020, providing direct mentoring support and technical assistance to Local Partners. Local Partners have consistently expressed the large value Terranomics' support adds, especially supporting the development of business models, financial modelling, understanding carbon development and FPIC processes, and supporting stakeholder engagement. Through work with large public and private NbS funders (for example the FMO Mobilising Finance for Forests Fund), Terranomics has direct insight into the main barriers and opportunities which funders and commercial investors perceive on Forest and Sustainable Land Use (FSLU) investments and can provide match-making services to local partners by introducing them to funders. On the Accelerator, Terranomics will be responsible for providing direct mentoring and TA support to local partners, facilitating investor and stakeholder engagement, and support knowledge sharing and learning through organising training and workshops on NbS finance topics as relevant for local partners.

International/In-country Partner	☒ International
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Allocated budget:	
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Represented on the Project Board (or other management structure)	☒ No
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Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes
--	--------------------------------------

2. Partner Name:	Earthshot Labs
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Website address:	https://www.earthshot.eco/
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What value does this Partner bring to the project?

(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

The Earthshot Labs team brings extensive expertise in project assessment, planning, management, Indigenous relations, and policy guidance for project-level and national-level ARR and REDD+ programs. Their core skills encompass technical support for REDD+ and reforestation, carbon inventories, pre-carbon modelling, restoration planning, baseline assessments, and ecosystem service quantification. Proficiency extends to carbon standards such as VCS/CCB, Gold Standard, and Plan Vivo. The team further collaborates with local project partners, conducting carbon workshops to empower local landowners and Indigenous communities with the knowledge they need to fairly participate in these projects. Earthshot Labs, in conjunction with its technology platform LandOS, will provide tech-enabled assistance to the BirdLife Forest Accelerator Program. LandOS will be used to rapidly assess the carbon feasibility of projects. Within minutes of uploading a polygon, the platform can provide an initial science-based analysis of the carbon potential of a given area. This support will enable BirdLife to gain an on-the-ground perspective, identifying projects with the highest deforestation threat and significant reforestation potential. Through an integrated project proponent survey, partners input data that is subsequently scored and evaluated. This process equips the accelerator fund with insights into implementation capacity, financial feasibility, and potential project risks.

International/In-country Partner ☒ International

Allocated budget:



Represented on the Project Board (or other management structure)

☒ No

Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?

☒ Yes

3. Partner Name:

BirdLife International Partners

Website address:

n/a

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	BirdLife Partners (independently constituted national CSO) will apply to the Accelerator during project implementation, and so cannot be named at proposal stage. These country partners will all be eligible according to Darwin Extra criteria, and the Lead Partner will update the Darwin Initiative on Selection of each Accelerator cohort. BirdLife Partners currently engaged in BirdLife International Forest Programme, and that may apply to the Accelerator Plus project include: Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal. Indonesia, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, Sao Tome and Principe, Paraguay, Colombia, Argentina, El Salvador, Peru, Ecuador, Cambodia, Philippines, Fiji, Liberia, Nigeria, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zambia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru. HMIC countries listed here will only be included through support by matched funding from the Hempel Foundation. Darwin Funds will support prioritisation of LDC and low-middle income countries.
International/In-country Partner	☒ In-country
Allocated budget:	
Represented on the Project Board (or other management structure)	☒ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ No
If no, please provide details	BLI can't provide Letters of Support for BirdLife Partners, as these will be selected during Project Implementation (see above). However, we are happy to obtain Letters of Support for the Darwin Initiative if required, as Partners are selected for the Accelerator cohorts.

4. Partner Name:	No Response
Website address:	No Response
What value does this Partner bring to the project?	No Response
(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	No Response
International/In-country Partner	☐ International ☐ In-country
Allocated budget:	No Response
Represented 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>
Represented 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>
Represented 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.

Section 17 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Q36. 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
30 DARCC057	Megan Eldred	Scaling up capacity to mainstream wetland conservation in Southern Africa,
30 31-014	Steeves Buckland	Community engagement for conservation of Mount Bero Classified Forest, Guinea
IWTEV010	Fadzai Matzvimbo	Behaviour change approaches to address belief-based use of vultures
29 30-012	Alex Ngari	A Community Approach to Waterbird Resource Management, Chia Lagoon, Malawi
28 29-005	Steve Cranwell	Safeguarding Rennell Island livelihoods and biodiversity from invasive species
28-29-009	Susan Waugh	Empowering Cabo Verde communities towards responsible practices in artisanal fisheries

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

☒ Yes

Section 18 - 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

I apply for a grant of

£4,978,335.00

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, risk register (inclusive of delivery chain risk map), logframe, theory of change Safeguarding and associated policies, and project workplan (uploaded at appropriate points in the application).
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (covering three years) are also enclosed.

Checked

Name	Martin Harper
Position in the organisation	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Signature (please upload e-signature)	 BirdLife International Certification CEO Signature  16/09/2024  15:36:39  pdf 46.96 KB
Date	16 September 2024

Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

 BirdLife International Annual Accounts year ended 31 Dec 2020  16/09/2024  15:28:08  pdf 1.9 MB	 BirdLife International Annual Accounts year ended 31 December 2021  16/09/2024  15:27:56  pdf 1.52 MB
 BirdLife International Annual Accounts year ended 31 Dec 2022  16/09/2024  15:27:42  pdf 1.67 MB	

Please upload the Lead Organisation'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.

 [Staff code of conduct ISSUE 1 21 February 2023 \(1\)](#)
 12/09/2024
 18:38:41
 pdf 241.98 KB

 [BirdLife International Health and Safety Policy](#)
 12/09/2024
 18:38:23
 pdf 129.42 KB

 [Whistleblowing Policy ISSUE 3 6 January 2023 \(1\)](#)
 12/09/2024
 18:38:14
 pdf 180.42 KB

 [Safeguarding policy ISSUE 2 21 Feb 2023](#)
 12/09/2024
 18:38:08
 pdf 260.22 KB

Section 19 - 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 a budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that the 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 risk register, including delivery chain risk map, as an Excel file using the template provided	Checked
a completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided and using "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance" and "Standard Indicator Guidance".	Checked
a 1 page Theory of Change as a PDF which includes the key elements listed in the 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 31).	Checked

• a copy of the Lead Organisation's Health, Safety and/or Security policy or Security Plan (Question 31)	Checked
• 1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff identified at Question 34, 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 35, 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 Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: (Max 30 words) New diversified funds and incentives for local conservation action, create more sustainable economies and reduce deforestation and biodiversity loss across 8,470,000 hectares of Key Biodiversity Areas, benefiting 1,500,000 local people.			
Outcome: (Max 30 words) Over 23 SFIs are in development, with 13 established, providing sustainable, diverse resources for forest conservation, across 1,000,000 hectares of KBAs, generating incentives and economic benefits for >200,000 local people.	0.1 >1,000,000 hectares of forest under sustainable management practices. [DI-D01] 0.2 Reduction of deforestation-based carbon emissions by 25% from baseline in target area of operational SFIs. 0.3 >10m GBP equivalent in ecosystem services generated or protected as a result of project support. [DI-D06] 0.4 Deforestation (as major driver of biodiversity loss) is reduced by 25% from baseline in target area of operational SFIs. [DI-D02] 0.5 >200,000 local people (minimum 30% women) participating in resource governance via SFIs and related mechanisms. [DI-B05]	0.1 Landscape definition maps/shapefiles, uploaded to Dashboard, assessed against KBA/IBA data (Note: The SFIs developed will target some or all of each landscape. The boundaries of the landscapes and target areas within it are defined by the participating organisations, based on guidance from the Accelerator.) 0.2 Carbon stock estimates drawn from Dashboard & detailed carbon stock analysis from REDD+/ARR projects where applicable. Unless otherwise specified, baseline default to the date of operationalization of the SFI. 0.3 Value of ES drawn from PES and carbon assessments for applicable projects; assessments will be conducted as part of the SFI development process. We will not have estimates for all SFIs.	A primary driver of biodiversity loss in the target landscapes is deforestation. Deforestation is, in part, the result of an undervaluing of the forest ecosystem and its services, leading to a lack of financial resources and incentives for conserving forests. Therefore, creating greater value for protecting standing forests will lead to a reduction in deforestation. Local benefits, financial or other, that are derived from SFIs will be greater than the pressure to clear forests. However, no single SFI is likely to fully offset the value of forest clearance for all people across a landscape (i.e. deforestation is unlikely to be eliminated completely) and must be part of a suite of conservation actions, behavior change, incentives and enforcement.

		0.4 Forest loss/change data drawn from Dashboard & detailed deforestation analysis from REDD+ projects where applicable. (Note: The primary driver of biodiversity loss addressed by Accelerator is forest loss. Therefore, the Indicator which all projects should be able to measure in the medium to long-term is a decrease in deforestation rate or increase in restoration rate.) 0.5 Data on local population involved and/or benefiting from the SFIs, collected and provided by BirdLife Partners. (e.g., through partner reports/ SFI progress reports/ case studies/ SFI employee/participant records)	Other, concurrent conservation efforts are also in place in and around target landscapes where the SFI developed covers only part of the conservation cost or target area. Local benefits, financial or other, benefit both women and men and do not reinforce existing gender or other social inequalities in SFI operational areas. Up-to-date remote sensing data and carbon stock data in each landscape is updated regularly and available to BirdLife. Sources include Global Forest Watch, WCMC-UNEP, Planet, and others. Political and other conditions remain stable in each of the countries/landscapes such that in-situ conservation action and monitoring can take place.
Outputs: Output 1. Capacity: >46 Accelerator participants (50% women) have increased knowledge, capacity and the confidence required to design, develop and deliver an SFI in their landscape.	1.1 >46 people (50% women) participate in the Accelerator over the 5-year project period, representing >23 SFIs. [DI-A01] 1.2 >46 people (50% women) reporting that they are applying new capabilities by the end of the Accelerator project. [DI-A04] 1.3 >10 best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed. [DI-C01]	1.1 Attendance records for all trainings, workshops, events and technical assistance meetings. Data disaggregated by: gender, role in organization. 1.2 A Capacity Evaluation Questionnaire is conducted at start and end of each cohort (as well as workshops and site visits), including questions about capacity needs and skills applied. Data disaggregated by:	Each cohort is made up of 10 SFIs with 2 team members participating for each (20 people per cohort). As SFIs take 3-5 years to complete, many of the same individuals will participate in several consecutive cohorts as the SFIs are developed. Participants continue to be willing and able to attend trainings and other

Project Title: BirdLife Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

		gender, role in organization, number of years participating in Accelerator. 1.3 Tools and guides available on internal and external online platforms. Data disaggregated by: product type.	Accelerator events, remotely or in person, as required as part of each cohort. Accelerator participants are expected to be those in the organization most closely linked to the strategy and oversight of the landscape initiative and the development of the SFI. We will not dictate to the Partners that they must include staff of a particular gender. However, based on experience to date we are confident that, in total over 5 years, roughly 50% will be women. Participants have a baseline level of information about the landscape, context and SFI opportunities, which enables them to correctly identify their own capacity and other needs. Technical assistance providers have, and can impart, skills and capacities appropriately matched to the projects. The progress of individual SFIs through the stages of development is also considered evidence of application of new skills and knowledge by the lead team of that SFI.
Output 2. Solutions: Landscape teams explore and test >23 SFIs over 5 years, resulting in >13 SFIs	2.1. 10 SFIs in scoping or development, mapped against Accelerator Pipeline Stage each year. [D1-A03]	2.1. Annual Accelerator portfolio report. Data disaggregated by: Accelerator Pipeline Stage, SFI type	Note: Many Darwin indicators use "Sustainable livelihood enterprises", which we broadly define for this project to encompass any income generated for

Project Title: BirdLife Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

designed, developed and established. Each is underpinned by a strong theory of change for impact, demonstrated feasibility, viable financial models and business plans with > 13 SFIs establishing partnership and financial structures that are enabling investment and large-scale funding.	2.2. > 13 SFIs fully established (i.e. graduated) and self-sustaining and/or profitable at project end. [D1-A03] 2.3. Annual turnover of established SFIs in the project's final year. 2.4. Income derived by local communities from new/enhanced SFIs. [D-D103] 2.5. Long-term ESG impact monitoring systems in place for all graduating SFIs	2.2. Annual Accelerator portfolio report. Data disaggregated by: SFI type 2.3. Financial reports from established/graduated SFIs. Data disaggregated by: SFI type 2.4. SFI legal structuring documents including benefit sharing and distribution arrangements, and financial accounting records from established SFIs. Data disaggregated by: SFI type 2.5. Legal structuring agreements and relevant certification records (e.g. CCB certification for carbon projects)	local households from conservation or restoration actions, excluding direct payments from grant funding. This may include Enterprise SFIs (e.g. small businesses, cooperatives) or benefit sharing from C/PES SFIs, etc. As the Accelerator is a competitive process open to the best ideas from the Partners, it is not possible to predetermine the exact ratio of C/PES to Enterprise SFIs that will be proposed, accepted and graduated. The status of external enabling conditions (eg. policy, tenure, legal status of stakeholders) are in place and understood adequately prior to Accelerator inclusion or through feasibility assessment phase. Market demand for carbon and other ecosystems services related products and services continues or increases over the project period. Investors in carbon markets and other ecosystems services payments retain appetite and confidence in the market. SFIs envisioned and assessed are shown to be viable and subsequently developed. Unviable SFIs not pursued.
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Project Title: BirdLife Forest Impact Accelerator Plus

			Seed grants provided are sufficient to cover the essential costs of feasibility and SFI development, or additional funds are available. All types of SFIs develop in a generally linear manner, and progress through the Accelerator Pipeline Stages as envisioned. When an SFI has reached investment readiness, or secured sufficient external funding for final development stages, there will be no need for further Accelerator involvement (i.e. graduating). BirdLife maintains access to the financial and other impact reports of graduated SFIs, including both those that operate as part of the BirdLife Partner and those that are independently operating legal entities.
Output 3. Leverage: At least 23 SFIs secure new strategic partnerships, leverage funds and finance totalling >£8,000,000, and inspire replication, through strategic communications, network development and investor engagement.	3.1. >5 external showcase events held, with a total of >500 attendees during the project period. [DI-C07] 3.2. >5 media hits/coverage on the Accelerator and participating projects (e.g. internet, radio, TV). [DI-C08] 3.3. 5 case studies contributed to national Multilateral	3.1. Event invitation and attendance records, and webinar (e.g. Zoom) analytics. Data disaggregated by: attendees' organization type. 3.2. Pages of content generated on Accelerator/BirdLife website, and records of media coverage. Data disaggregated by: internal vs external media	Showcase target audience is made up of decision makers (e.g. donors, investors, carbon brokers, government officials) who are interested to learn about new opportunities at the scale and stage of the Accelerator SFIs. The development of SFIs in the landscape is likely to increase the interest, buy-in and commitment of donors to contribute

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	Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence. [DI-C05] 3.4. >£3,000,000 GBP grant funding or other non-repayable funding leveraged for SFIs or related conservation action in the landscape. 3.5. >£5,000,000 GBP investment finance leveraged for SFIs.	3.3. Case studies provided to government and other decision-makers upon request and at policy events, and available online. Data disaggregated by: product type, recipient type. 3.4. Questionnaire conducted at start and end of each cohort includes questions about funds available and leveraged. Data disaggregated by: funds directly to SFI vs BirdLife Partner vs BirdLife. 3.5. Questionnaire conducted at start and end of each cohort includes questions about finance leveraged. Data disaggregated by: funds directly to SFI vs BirdLife Partner vs BirdLife.	to conservation action in the landscape, both to directly advance SFI development and to advance broader conservation goals. Some projects will seek investment finance for SFIs, while others will seek non-repayable funding to establish a self-sustaining financial mechanism. Therefore, not all projects will seek or secure both types of funding.
Output 4. Impact: The Accelerator's global impact is defined through a set of standardised SMART indicators, with progress measured using high-quality field and remote sensed data analysis, and results promoted publicly through establishment of an online Forest Impact Dashboard and data management system.	4.1 >23 SFIs in target landscapes (Key Biodiversity Areas) included in Forest Impact Dashboard 4.2 Deforestation and carbon impact summary created each year (>5 summaries) 4.3 ESG metrics determined and integrated into Dashboard for each SFI prior to graduating (>23 SFIs enter some data, >13 SFIs contributing detailed ESG data by Y5).	4.1 Dashboard data records 4.2 Dashboard data records 4.3 Dashboard data records	Target landscape boundaries can be defined by landscape teams. Up-to-date remote sensing data and carbon stock data in each landscape is updated regularly and available to BirdLife. Sources include Global Forest Watch, WCMC-UNEP, Planet, and others. The landscape teams are able to define and monitor increasingly comprehensive and sophisticated KPIs and ESG metrics for their SFIs as they progress through the Pipeline Stages from ideation to development and finally

			operationalization to show potential and actual impact.
Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1. Each activity should start on a new line and be no more than approximately 25 words.) Output 1 – Capacity: >46 Participants (50% women) have increased knowledge, capacity and the confidence required to develop and deliver of an SFI in their landscape. 1.1. Proposals solicited, supported, accepted, reviewed and selected by the Accelerator Coordination Team on an annual basis. (All participants, each cohort) 1.2. Technical Assistance lead from BLI staff or engaged consultancies matched to each SFI/landscape team (see Outputs 3 & 4). 1.3. Accelerator induction process is completed: completion of baseline questionnaire, and introduction webinars and learning sessions on BirdLife and donor expectations, sustainable finance overview, safeguarding, and proactive gender and socio-economic inclusion. (All participants, each cohort) 1.4. Accelerator team delivers >3 seminars or training sessions per cohort (>15 in total) on topics of use to all participants. (All participants, each cohort) 1.5. Virtual peer-to-peer learning and exchange meetings with cohort every other month (> 30 in total). 1.6. One-to-one support sessions delivered by TA leads with each landscape teams (>4 per team per cohort, >200 in total). (All participants, each cohort) 1.7. Tools and best practice guidance produced by BirdLife, as well as curated externally produced materials, made available to cohort through BLI's internal learning platform, Hatch. (>3 packages made available each year) 1.8. In years 2 and 4, an in-person workshop is delivered; sessions include peer-to-peer collaboration, sustainable finance and SFI creation, legal and regulatory requirements of SFIs, social inclusion, impact measures and M&E. (All participants of the relevant cohort) 1.9. In years 1, 3 and 5, a site visit is held in one of the landscapes focusing on a particular theme or SFI type. (A subset of the relevant cohort, selected based on theme) Output 2 – Solutions: The Accelerator Landscape teams designs, develops and establishes at least 23 SFIs, that are underpinned by a strong theory of change for impact, demonstrated feasibility, viable financial models and business plans with at least 13 SFIs establishing partnership and financial structures that are enabling investment and large-scale funding. 2.1 Proposed SFIs individually mapped to Accelerator Pipeline Stage and specific time-bound goals set for capacity, outputs or milestones. 2.2 Proposed SFI workplans refined and a seed grant agreement signed with each participant team (BirdLife Partner).			

- 2.3 A technical assistance plan for the cohort period agreed by each Landscape team, the technical assistance provider, and the Accelerator lead.
- 2.4 Tailored technical assistance delivered according to the plans; this may include one-to-one meetings with TA partner, advisory services, delivery pieces of analytical work, co-oversight of a process or external consultant, or other bespoke support.
- 2.5 Prefeasibility carbon assessments conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) for each carbon SFI at in Pipeline Stage 1 (Initial idea).
- 2.6 Prefeasibility assessment is carried out with support from Accelerator team and external service provider (Terranomics) for each Enterprise project in Pipeline Stage 1.
- 2.7 Feasibility carbon assessments conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) for each carbon SFI at in Pipeline Stage 2 (Business Case).
- 2.8 Further support conducted by external service provider (Earthshot) beyond feasibility as required (e.g. development of PDD, registering project on carbon registry database etc.)
- 2.9 External service provider (Earthshot) works alongside carbon SFIs to facilitate a high-quality carbon project design process, based on field and remote-sensed data and inclusive multi-stakeholder workshops, to undertake a theory of change approach to design, focussed on outcomes.
- 2.10 Business plan, market analysis and financial modelling is developed for each project in Pipeline Stage 2 (Accelerator team and Terranomics)
- 2.11 Support provided to Landscape teams in setting up pilot projects in Pipeline Stage 3 (Pilot or Trial) by Accelerator team and external support provider (Terranomics)
- 2.12 Support provided to Landscape teams in reaching investment readiness, in establishing partnership and management structures to enable financing, and securing investment finance in Pipeline Stage 4 (Commercial Scale-Up) by Accelerator team and external support provider (Terranomics)
- 2.13 BirdLife staff and external experts ensure best practice for ESG and financial viability through periodic review and regular consultation between Accelerator team and technical support providers.

Output 3 – Leverage: At least 23 SFIs secure new strategic partnerships, leverage funds and finance totalling >£8,000,000, and inspire replication, through strategic communications, network development and investor engagement.

- 3.1 The Accelerator website is designed, developed and launched, and updated at least once per cohort. (1 website, updated >4 times)
- 3.2 Stories on Accelerator teams, landscapes and initiatives are published in the BL website and magazine at least once per cohort. (>4 stories)
- 3.3 External showcases are organised in conjunction with the Accelerator Workshops in years 2 and 4; invitations extended to decision makers, funders and impact finance, media and journalists, peer organisations and technical partners. Showcases are live streamed, and recordings are published on the Accelerator website. (All participants of the relevant cohort, plus graduated SFIs)

3.4 In years 1, 3 and 5, a virtual showcase is organized to highlight one or more specific SFIs in development for a target audience, see above. (A subset of the relevant cohort)

3.5 Case studies on advanced SFIs are produced, shared with decision makers, funders and investors and made available through BirdLife's internal and external communications platforms. (> 15 case studies)

3.6 A subset of the tools and best practice guidance produced and curated are made publicly available on the Accelerator website.

3.7 BirdLife provides fundraising support to participants by directly fundraising on behalf of Accelerator SFIs, by providing ad hoc quality assurance and review of participants' proposals as requested.

3.8 BirdLife proactively engages with and creates linkages between SFIs and specialist investor platforms focused on forests, carbon and NBS.

3.9 Partnerships sought, established or strengthened with funders, conservation finance thinktanks, other accelerators, etc. in order to create opportunities for broader promotion and dissemination, exchange, learning, and co-funding. (E.g. Landscape Finance Lab, Plan Vivo, Conservation Finance Alliance Incubator, CPIC Nature+ Accelerator, Partnerships For Forests (P4F))

3.10 An Accelerator Lessons Learned webinar is delivered for a public audience in years 3 and 5; invitations extended to peer organizations, technical partners and funders.

3.11 BLI deploys >5 repayable grants to build capacity of SFIs to take on commercial finance and increase the attractiveness of SFIs to investors.

Output 4 – Impact: The Accelerator's global impact is defined through a set of standardised SMART indicators, with progress measured using high-quality field and remote sensed data analysis, and results promoted publicly through establishment of an online Forest Impact Dashboard.

4.1 An external consultancy is selected and contracted to support the creation of the Forest Impact Dashboard and BirdLife team provides training and technical support to SFIs on geospatial data management. (1 technical consultancy contracted)

4.2 The Accelerator team with Forest Impact & Insights Manager define standardised SMART global indicators and data collection and analysis methods.

4.3 The Forest Impact Dashboard is established using data provided by the cohorts/SFIs and integrated with globally available data sets; the Dashboard acts as a hub for landscape data and impact metrics for the SFIs. (1 Dashboard, >23 SFIs)

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- 4.4 Technical support and training delivered as needed by BirdLife to enable Landscape teams to collect and manage impact data (see Dashboard in Output 2).
- 4.5 As SFI enters each progressive Pipeline Stage, increasingly detailed ESG impact measures and data are contributed to the Forest Impact Dashboard as part of the long-term impact monitoring strategy of the SFI. (>23 SFIs enter some data, >13 SFIs contributing detailed ESG data by Y5).
- 4.6 A forest and carbon stock summary is created annually using data from the Dashboard to show potential and actual impact towards reducing deforestation and carbon emissions.
- 4.7 An interactive interface of the Forest Impact Dashboard is embedded into the Accelerator website as a communications platform for promoting the Accelerator and SFIs.