Applicant: **Desbureaux, Sebastien**
Organisation: **University of Oxford**
Funding Sought: **£0.00**

DIR29IN\1066

Testing experimental development economic programmes to protect Virunga's biodiversity

Farming is the lead cause of natural habitat and biodiversity loss in Africa. As the structure of Africa's economies is rapidly changing, there is an opportunity to move farmers out of the agricultural sector to different jobs that are less land-intensive. These jobs could decrease pressure on natural habitats, protect biodiversity, and alleviate poverty. Our project brings together conservation professionals and development economists to test how job access can support farmers living around Virunga National Park.

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PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

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Type	Charity/ trusts
Name	Virunga Foundation
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Section 2 - Project Summary, Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Q3. Title

Testing experimental development economic programmes to protect Virunga's biodiversity

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

⦿ No

Please attach a cover letter.

Please include a response to any previous feedback in your cover letter.

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Q5. Key Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Please 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

Savannas and grasslands

Biome 3

No Response

Conservation Action 1

Livelihood, economic & other incentives (incl. conservation payments)

Conservation Action 2

Land/water protection (area/resource/habitat)

Conservation Action 3

External Capacity Building

Threat 1

Agriculture & aquaculture (incl. plantations)

Threat 2

No Response

Threat 3

No Response

Q6. Summary of project

Please provide a brief summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking. Please note that if you are successful, this wording may be used by Defra in communications e.g. as a short description of the project on the website.

Please write this summary for a non-technical audience.

Farming is the lead cause of natural habitat and biodiversity loss in Africa. As the structure of Africa's economies is rapidly changing, there is an opportunity to move farmers out of the agricultural sector to different jobs that are less land-intensive. These jobs could decrease pressure on natural habitats, protect biodiversity, and alleviate poverty. Our project brings together conservation professionals and development economists to test how job access can support farmers living around Virunga National Park.

Section 3 - Dates & Budget Summary

Q7. Project Country(ies)

Which eligible country(ies) will your project be working in? Where there are more than 4 countries that your project will be working in, please add more boxes using the selection option below.

Country 1	Congo (DRC)	**Country 2**	*No Response*

Country 3	*No Response*	**Country 4**	*No Response*

Do you require more fields?

⦿ No

Q8. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 1 year, 8 months):
01 April 2023	31 December 2024	20 months

Q9. Budget Summary

Darwin Funding Request	2023/24	2024/25	Total request
(Apr - Mar) £	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Q10. Proportion of Darwin Initiative budget expected to be expended in eligible countries: % [redacted]

Q11a. Do you have proposed matched funding arrangements?

⦿ Yes

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

To support implementation, matched funding will be provided by the Virunga Foundation as part of a 5-year USAID grant (title: Virunga Electricity Distribution Grid). With this funding, Virunga will support all costs related to the labelled cash transfer (1200 beneficiaries (including 600 interns) x [redacted] usd), and the stipends for interns (600 beneficiaries x [redacted] usd x 3 months).

This will be completed by two grants Stefan Dercon received to finance the pilot of the programme and the launch of the programme at scale (hiring extra implementation capacity within Virunga for implementation + baseline survey). These grants were awarded by the Wellspring Philanthropic Foundation and the John Fell Fund.

Sebastien Desbureaux will finance his work and publication fees through an endowment he received from the Agence Nationale de la Recherche as part of his junior professor position.

Q11b. Total confirmed & unconfirmed matched funding (£) [redacted]

Q11c. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how you will fund the project if you don't manage to secure this?

All matched funding is already confirmed.

Section 4 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q12. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the evidence of the problem your project is trying to address in terms of biodiversity and its relationship with poverty. What is the need, challenge or opportunity?

For example, what are the drivers of loss of biodiversity that the project will attempt to address? Why are they relevant, for whom? How did you identify these problems? Please cite the evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem (references can be listed in a separate attached PDF document).

Our project starts from the following observations:
1- Farmland extension, driven by subsistence farming in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a leading cause of habitat and biodiversity loss [1]
2- A majority of young farmers in SSA aspire to have a professional career outside farming, in sectors with a smaller land footprint (e.g. services or manufacturing) than agriculture [2]
3- The number of jobs outside agriculture ['off-farm jobs'] in SSA is rising but are not directly available to farmers living around national parks (source: own SME survey in Virunga, 2021)

Therefore, our project aims at testing innovative approaches at the nexus between economic development and biodiversity conservation to make these new jobs available to farmers living around key biodiversity areas, reduce the demand for lands in these landscapes, and promote an interdependent local economy that is amenable to biodiversity conservation.

We implement this approach in the Virunga National Park (VNP)'s landscape in DRC (5m inhabitants). VNP is the oldest and among the most biodiverse protected areas in SSA. Farming is the primary livelihood of a majority of neighbouring communities, with figures going up to 94% in many villages according to a large census our team organized in 2021. Over 10% of VNP is illegally encroached by farming. Farming is an activity by default, rather than by choice for many community members: over 90% of the farmers in our census are unsatisfied with their current job situation and see themselves having a non-agricultural job in the coming years.

Since 2015, our partner Virunga Foundation (a charity registered in the UK) has invested over $100M to favour the development of non-agricultural business around the park, particularly by producing and selling green, reliable, and affordable electricity. Over 1600 microenterprises are now connected to VNP's grid, offering around 10,000 jobs to neighbouring communities. However, only a minority of these jobs benefit people who are most impacted by the conservation of the park. Based on previous work in development economics, we know that farmers face important barriers to access these jobs: they have limited previous job experience, no ties with entrepreneurs, need to migrate (which is costly) and have a limited knowledge of existing opportunities.

Our objective is to test an intervention that make job markets more inclusive and improves access to 'off-farm' jobs for farmers most negatively affected by conservation. We conducted a large-scale pilot of two job market interventions in late 2021 – early 2022 with 360 participants living around VNP, to assess demand and feasibility. The first consists of a subsidized three-month internship for young farmers in a microenterprise, drawing inspiration from [3]. The second consists of a cash transfer distribution designed for interested farmers to search for a job by themselves in urban centres, drawing inspiration from [4].

The impact of improving access to off-farm jobs on biodiversity conservation is mostly unknown, with possible indirect effects. As a result, we propose to run a controlled experiment, using state-of-the-art impact evaluation methodologies (Randomized Control Trial or RCT).

Q13. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q13a. 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)
☑ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)

☑ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
☑ Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Q13b. National and International Policy Alignment

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

National Parks are the backbone of biodiversity conservation efforts in the DRC.

Under the DRC's 2014 Law on Nature, rangers have the mandate to protect the species and ecosystems of National Parks. Illegal farming is a major source of habitat destruction in the park and promoting jobs is seen as a direct mechanism to decrease illegal land demand, hence allowing parks' rangers to enforce the law without negatively impacting riparian communities. VNP is managed under the government's conservation agency, the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). It is a UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Danger. Encroachment of the park is a key reason explaining why Virunga Congolese is in the "In Danger" list. National Parks are also a key part of the DR Congo NBSAP (submitted 2016) and REDD strategy. Lake Edward, in the central sector of VNP is a Ramsar site.

Promoting jobs is also expected to contribute to SDG 1 ("No poverty"), 8 ("Decent work and economic growth"), 10 ("Reduced inequalities" by targeting low-income households, including women, of a low income country), 12 ("Responsible consumption and production"), 13 ("Climate action" by decreasing CO2 emissions and preventing forest destruction), 15 ("Life on land" by protecting biodiversity), 17 ("Partnerships for the Goals" by strengthening an alliance of actors).

Section 5 - Method, Innovation, Capability & Capacity

Q14. 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 the main activities will be and where will these take place.**
- **How you will manage the work (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).**

Please make sure you read the guidance documents, before answering this question.

We organize our project in five phases.

First, we will finalize the evaluation of the 2021 pilot-RCT organized with 360 participants. Quantitative results will be presented to key stakeholders to start a dialogue with them on how to improve the design. This will be done through focus groups, workshops and further qualitative interviews. Lessons learnt will allow to refine the design of the intervention at scale.

In the second phase, we will implement the two job market programmes at a larger scale involving with 1800 farmers willing to have a job outside farming, and 1200 microenterprises. In our RCT, we target consenting 18- to 32-year-old farmers who live in villages bordering VNP (within five kilometres). This sample size is justified by two elements: 1) it will allow the evaluation to be statistically powered to detect a meaningful effect (a 32% increase in non-agricultural employment status, from a very low baseline mean of 20.5% and standard deviation of 0.404); and 2) it is the budget constraint that VNP currently faces to fund the two interventions.

The two interventions will be refinements of the ones implemented for the pilot: a subsidized internship programme in a

microenterprise and a labelled cash-transfer to fund a return bus ticket to nearby cities (approximately $20). The programme will be publicly advertised on local radio in eligible areas and interested people will be invited to bring their application to a local VNP office. An agent will assess their eligibility, i.e., their age and distance between their residence and VNP, and conduct a baseline survey which will cover their past professional experience, knowledge and perception about VNP and biodiversity. Eligible people will then be randomly assigned to one of the three treatment groups (two interventions + control group). Assignment will be stratified notably by gender to ensure equality in job access between women and men.

Third, we will organize two post intervention surveys three and six months after the start of the programme. This phase will be supervised by the research team supported by a local data collection firm (Marakuja) to guarantee the independence between implementation and evaluation. The surveys will measure the job status of respondents, their current demand for lands (including inside VNP), and their perception about conservation. The data will allow to measure if we can promote job access to populations living around the park, and if having a job actually decreases the pressure they exerted on natural habitats.

Fourth, VNP's teams will monitor wildlife and habitat by a combination of foot patrols, camera-traps, aerial patrols (small planes and drones) and remote sensing. This will give us information about the ecological impact of reducing farming in the park.

The final phase will aim at orienting programme design beyond this experiment. Results will be relevant for VNP and other parks in SSA facing similar threats. Results will be shared through awareness activities (publications, podcasts, conferences etc). We will also take this opportunity to demonstrate the value-added for conservation practitioners to experiment with new socio-economic approaches.

Q15. Innovation

Please specifically outline how your approach or project is innovative.

Is it the application of a proven approach in a distinctly different geography/issue/stakeholder (novel to the area), or in a different sector (novel to the sector), or an unproven approach in any sector (novel to the world)?

We believe our project is highly innovative in two main aspects:

First, it mobilizes the economic expertise to enrich our understanding of biodiversity conservation issues. Socio-economic factors e.g. poverty are the main drivers of biodiversity loss and require economic solutions, e.g. access to jobs. Yet, conservation scientists and practitioners are mainly trained in the natural sciences. Given that the interlinkages between job creation and environmental protection remains a largely under-studied topic, our project with an inter-disciplinary team will provide new insights in both economics and conservation science.

Second, there is a growing awareness in the field of conservation that there is a necessity to rely on high-quality evidence for decision making (eg: the SCB impact evaluation working group). Notably, only a handful of RCTs exist in conservation, including one Darwin-funded project in the Comoros led by Bangor University, but one focused on a drastically different approach explored here (conservation agreements). Development economists have developed deep expertise in designing and implementing RCTs in collaboration with practitioners. This is the case of most team members: Stefan's jobs project in Ethiopia (1000 participants); Ashley's RCT with vulnerable entrepreneurs (IDPs in Colombia; refugees in Ethiopia, 1600 participants in each RCT); Stefan's cash transfer project in Kenya (8000 participants); Sebastien and Natsuno's ongoing RCT on clean cooking in Virunga (1500 participants). With conservation experts from VNP collaborating with economists, this project will be a unique opportunity to transfer methodological learning between economics and conservation in both directions, and adapt protocols to the needs of conservation.

Q16. Capability and Capacity

How will you support the strengthening of capability and capacity in the project countries at organisational or individual levels? Please provide details of what form this will take, who will benefit, and the post-project value to the

country.

Two research members have either worked with VNP (Sébastien Desbureaux) or are currently working for VNP (Gracieux Mutaka). Sébastien managed the M&E team at Virunga for two years before going back to academia, with the particular mission to train M&E staffs (including Gracieux) in data collection and basic analysis. Through this project, the aim is to further support VNP staff on state-of-the-art impact evaluation. Through another grant already secured, Gracieux will be able to spend around six weeks with Sébastien in CEE-M to work on statistical analysis with specific software (R, Stata). It will give Gracieux the opportunity to further support his colleagues within VNP on similar tasks requiring more technical skills.
The three international researchers will visit VNP as part of this project for a minimum of three to six weeks. Part of these visits will be dedicated to capacity-building activities around impact evaluation methodologies for VNP staff.

As part of his Junior Professor position, Sébastien is developing a one-week training for young researcher working on impact evaluation (master and doctoral levels). If we were to be able to implement our project, Sébastien will reach out to Universities in Goma (the provincial capital of Nord Kivu where VNP is located) to propose to organize such training for interested conservation and economic students. Such programmes exist in other cities of DRC (ex: Bukavu, in collaboration with the University of Antwerp) and a large demand exist among students for such trainings.

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

References
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pdf 188.93 KB

Section 6 - Gender, Awareness, Change Expected & Exit Strategy

Q17. Gender equality

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender. Explain your understanding of gender equality within the context your project, and how is it reflected in your plans. Please summarise how your project will contribute to reducing gender inequality. Applicants should, at a minimum, ensure proposals will not increase inequality and are encouraged to design interventions that proactively contribute to increased gender equality.

Congolese women experience lower development outcomes then men, driven by a limited access to schooling and higher monetary poverty (see Gender Development Index for the DRC). Of the 3291 adult farmers recorded in the pilot census within VNP in 2021, 58% are women, highlighting the importance of farm activities for women in North Kivu. Meanwhile, women represent a minority of employees within microenterprises (about 15% and less than 2% of SME owners).

Our pilot confirmed an interest for job support programmes among rural women. The take-up of the programme (percentage of selected participants who effectively start the programme) for women and men was almost similar. Many women finished the internship programme, convincing business owners that women can have a job in their SME. However, compared to men, a higher proportion of women did not finish the programme.
In the two main interventions that our project will implement (internship programme and cash transfer), our project will promote an equal opportunity to women and men to (1) participate and (2) succeed. For participation, we will stratify our randomisation process by gender into the two programmes and ensure a 50-50 gender split. This was done for the pilot and proven to be successful. Second, implementation staff will be asked to provide greater support to female participants to make sure they can help them finish the programme (including, specific phone support available when they need it).

Furthermore, we will ensure that our evaluation will be sufficiently powered to disaggregate analyses by gender. Thus, this project will be an opportunity to explore the barriers to off-farm jobs for women (discrimination, gender-biased selection of sectors etc.) and test whether providing firms with workers from atypical demographic groups (i.e., women, rural workers) leads to changes in employer perception of those workers or demographic changes in employment composition.

Q18. Awareness and understanding

How will you raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity-poverty issues in your stakeholders, including who your stakeholders are, what approaches/formats/products will you use, how you will ensure open and free access to all data, and how will you know that the messages are understood?

Two research members have either worked with VNP (SD) or are currently working for VNP (GM). VNP is also the primary implementer of the interventions in the trial and the research team across all partners will work to strengthen the required infrastructure. VNP will be an active contributor to the co-generation of knowledge.

We will engage with the senior management at VNP who will be the ultimate decision makers about whether to scale further the programme. We have already presented the initial research design and pilot results to them. During the pilot, we also sent regular email updates and wrote up short policy briefs explaining the pilot. The Director provided feedback on the park's priorities, which in turn shaped our choice of target sample. We intend to sustain these communications.

Professor Dercon has been an ongoing economic development advisor to VNP since 2017. In December 2022, Dercon and A. Pople will be spending three weeks in VNP, the second trip of this nature for Dercon, where he will have conversations with VNP's Director about the future socio-economic strategy. His global reach in policy circles is growing rapidly. As he is not seen as having strong vested interests in environmental lobbies, his voice around this project is well regarded.

The design of the interventions will be refined thanks to the expertise of community representatives through our initial workshop. Intermediary results will be discussed with them along the project and final results will be shared with community members and the Congolese authorities through VNP's network and awareness documents.

A detailed stakeholder mapping is in progress, building on those already in place at VNP, to further identify target groups in the national and international community, government, international organisations, bilateral donors but also economic organisations paying less attention to biodiversity loss.

Q19. Change expected

Detail the expected changes to both biodiversity and 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) and the potential to scale the approach.

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

During the life of the project, 1200 consenting and eligible farmers, of which 600 are women, will benefit from the job support programme and consequently increase their chances to find an off-farm job aligned with their professional expectations. We measure an increase in employment status for women and men, which translates into a lower participation in farming activities. This new employment status will improve their household revenue, decrease the needs for farming activities and lower the demand for lands in and around VNP. Moreover, it will improve their perception of VNP and its mission to protect wildlife.

The research team will gain in-depth knowledge of the impact of transformation of economic structure on conservation outcomes. They will also publish and advocate the results for academics and practitioners to help their work improve in other locations in the world. In DRC, this knowledge will help VNP improve their intervention approaches, and create synergies between economic development and conservation. The state-of-the-art impact evaluation will be used as evidence for the scaling of the programme in the future, including further fundraising.

The close collaboration between the research and the VNP teams will build the VNP team's capacity to conduct impact evaluation.

After the project completion, both female and male beneficiaries will equally continue to benefit from the new employment status and improved household income, which will contribute to their lower participation in farming and better perceptions on VNP and its conservation efforts. This will enable VNP to run its conservation projects more

effectively and eventually, wildlife population in VNP will thrive.

The research team will have a possibility to secure additional funding to continue to conduct programme evaluation beyond the life of this project. VNP will take more evidence-based approaches to improve employment in North Kivu and reach its ambitious objective to create 100,000 off-farming jobs by 2040. This will be a key step to reduce illegal encroachments in the park (long term objective = 0%), a key condition to down-list VNP from the "In-danger" list of UNESCO.

With reinforced technical knowledge on programme evaluation, the VNP team will build the capacity to apply it in other areas of their work. This will enable them to design and run evidence-based projects, which will help VNP use their resources efficiently and save time to reach optimal outcomes.

Finally, the Darwin grant will contribute to the development of interdisciplinary knowledge between economics and conservation science, which will promote similar studies and projects covering these two areas.

Q20. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change, including how your outcome can be scaled. 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, longer term, your expected Impact.

This should directly relate to your overall project's Theory of Change which must be uploaded alongside your application. See the separate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance **for further information on your Theory of Change.**

We develop an innovative development-oriented approach for conservation that create synergies between biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation through job-market programmes (outcome). The first output aims at learning the most from the activities we piloted at small scale in 2021, in order to improve the implementation of the RCT at scale (output 2). Output 3 will monitor if the change in the economic context translates into better ecological indicators inside the park.

A central objective of our project is to draw lessons from this experiment. Output 4 will quantify the impact on people and nature and output 5 will synthetize the results for policy makers and academics. The project relies on a few key assumptions. In particular, it hypothesizes that enough farmers are interested in the proposed activities (highly likely from the pilot), that the beneficiaries will take-up the programme (confirmed by the pilot), that participating can translate into an increase in long term employment (not tested at the pilot stage), that an increase in off-farm employment decreases the demand for farmlands (not tested yet); and that wildlife can thrive again on previously farmed lands (likely in the savannah landscape that can be restored quite fast, longer in forested ecosystems).

Q21. Exit strategy

How will the project reach a sustainable point and continue to deliver benefits post-funding?

Will the innovation be mainstreamed into "business as usual" to continue to deliver the benefits? How will the required capability and capacity remain available to sustain the benefits? How will your approach, if proven, be scaled? Are there any barriers to scaling and if so, how will these be addressed?

By the end of the proposed project, VNP will have supported 1200 eligible farmers who aspire to work outside agriculture to find a livelihood more aligned with their own aspirations, and better to protect the park. Funding is already secured to finance the intervention as part of this project. Pending results, VNP will fundraise to scale-up the approach or refine it to find a strategy beneficial to both people and wildlife. The Darwin main fund or Darwin extra could be two possibilities to scale-up such approaches – complementing VNP's current donors.

By 2025 (the 100th anniversary of VNP), VNP aims at being financially autonomous: particularly through the generation and distribution of green electricity around the park, and high-value exports produced around the park (coffee and chocolate are already being exported to the EU, UK and US since 2021). All the revenues generated by these activities are reinvested into the conservation on VNP, and could therefore will be used to finance such job-support programmes to the benefits of local communities and wildlife. By 2040, VNP aims at creating 100,000 jobs outside subsistence farming – a figure corresponding to the number of people directly impacted by the conservation of the park. Currently, VNP estimates that 10,000 jobs have been created through electricity provision and the support to high value crops. This estimate was validated by an independent economic consulting firm (Cambridge Econometrics) in 2019. They also validated the possibility of attaining the objective of 100,000 jobs. Support is now critical to ensure that these jobs do benefit people living around VNP.

Finally, this Darwin Innovation grant will allow us to strengthen the collaboration between economists and VNP. This will serve as a high-quality proof of concept to secure additional research grants for further collaborations after the end of this project.

Section 7 - Risk Management

Q22. Risk Management

Please outline the 6 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, one Safeguarding Risk, and one Delivery Chain Risk.**

Projects should also draft their initial risk register, using the Risk Assessment template**, and be prepared to submit this when requested if they are recommended for funding. Do not attach this to your application.**

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
Fiduciary (financial) The DRC is ranked 169 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. A risk of fraud exists. Virunga Foundation has received a prize for their fiscal compliance by the Congolese authorities.	Moderate	Rare	Minor	All money will be spent by Oxford and VNP. Oxford and Virunga have specific finance teams, internal control departments and are audited. A specific finance officer will be hired. Most payments to beneficiaries will be made through mobile money (Airtel money) to minimize the risk of fraud compared to cash.	Minor
Safeguarding Out of 1800 participants, 1200 will receive support (including 600 women), with possible important consequences for their income. No children or vulnerable adults are included in the study sample.	Low	Unlikely	Minor	All project members will comply with the University of Oxford's standards and policies on safeguarding.	Minor

Delivery Chain Not enough farmers are interested by the programme. Enterprises don't want to welcome interns in their enterprises, particularly women.	Major	Unlikely	Major	We piloted the programme to measure the demand and feasibility of the programme. A majority of the farmers and microenterprises were interested in the programme, and actually showed up when requested. Applicants will be screened to assess their willingness to participate (including through a written application)	Moderate
Risk 4 Security condition in Nord Kivu deteriorates. International team members cannot travel to DRC anymore. Some parts of Nord Kivu are no longer accessible by national staff members.	Moderate	Likely	Major	Virunga Foundation has operated in Nord-Kivu since 2005. It has been able to keep continuity in its operations even during difficult periods (ex: M23 in 2012-13). Project members will follow Virunga safety guidelines. The years spent by Sebastien in Virunga provides capacity. Programme can be implemented without internationals.	Moderate
Risk 5 Strong gender disparities exist in access to jobs in the DRC. Fewer women than men work in microenterprises or own their businesses. SME owners could refuse to welcome women as interns in their microeenterprises. Head of households could refuse to send a female household member to a microenterprise.	Moderate	Likely	Major	We will provide the same chance to women and men to be enrolled in the programme, hence correcting baseline opportunities. We will provide extra support to female participants to give them the same chance to finish the programme. We will refuse any gender discrimination from microenterprise owners.	Minor
Risk 6 Sanitary context: in addition to covid-19, eastern DRC is a hotpost for zoonotic disease, including ebola. The country experienced a large ebola epidemic in 2019-20. Business continued to operate but movements between area were more limited.	Moderate	Rare	Minor	We will monitor any situation in partnership with Virunga's welfare department. Specific instruction will be given to participants in case of any upsurge of covid or ebola (including supporting access to vaccination)	Minor

Section 8 - Implementation Timetable

Q23. Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities

Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the Word template as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project and upload this below as a PDF.

Implementation Timetable Template

Please add/remove columns to reflect the length of your project. For each activity (add/remove rows as appropriate) indicate the number of months it will last, and fill/shade only the quarters in which an activity will be carried out.

BCF-Implementation-Timetable-Template-2022-23-FINAL
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pdf 534.13 KB

Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q24. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe how the progress 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).

The production of high-quality and policy relevant evidence is a central objective of our project. Our project utilises a randomised control trial methodology over a period of 18 months to evaluate the effect of two interventions relative to a control group which experiences no intervention. The RCT will provide empirical evidence in support of theoretical predictions that we have developed. Stefan Dercon, Sébastien Desbureaux, Gracieux Mutaka and Ashley Pople take the ultimate responsibility for this part of the work.

Primary outcome measures: On the people front, our primary outcomes of interest are (1) take up and completion of the internship programme; (2) non-agricultural job status post-intervention; and (3) demand for land (land use). We will also collect data on perceptions towards conservation among other measures. All these outcomes will be gender-disaggregated. The change in the demand for land from surveys will be backed-up by remote sensing and aerial assessment of encroachments within the park. On the ground, it will be complemented with wildlife observations from rangers (foot patrols) and camera traps mainly. This is summarized in indicators 0.1 to 0.5 in the logframe.

Sample size and power calculations: We draw on our pilot baseline survey to compute our expected statistical power. With 600 households per treatment arm, we are powered to measure a 32% increase in non-agricultural employment status, from a very low baseline mean of 20.5% and standard deviation of 0.404. "Formal" job status at baseline is even lower, with 5.26% of the sample having a formal non-agricultural job at baseline in the pilot, and a standard deviation of 0.2236.

Empirical strategy: This trial has been registered as a randomised control trial with the American Economic Association, and a pre-analysis plan has been submitted that outlines the following methodological steps which we will use to analyse the data. The trial registration number is AEARCTR-0009480.

We will use three specifications to estimate intent-to-treat effects on our primary outcomes. We first estimate the effect of offering a fixed-term urban job on our primary outcomes, compared to the control group who received nothing (specification 1). We then estimate the effect of offering a labelled cash transfer, compared to the control group (specification 2). Finally, to measure the relative effectiveness of the fixed-term job offer, we estimate the difference between the urban job programme and the labelled cash transfer (specification 3). We will also report ANCOVA results, where we control for the primary outcomes measured at baseline. We will use false discovery rate corrections to account for multiple hypothesis testing.
Programme implementation data will be additionally collected to monitor the correct implementation of the activities during the project life (indicators 1.1 to 5.3). Progress will be assessed in quarterly meetings with all project members. The synthesis of this meeting will be shared with VNP's management and two meetings will be organized with VNP's top

management and other stakeholders to share the results, one after the midline survey and a second one after the endline survey (indicator 5.4).

Total project budget for M&E (this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	[redacted]
Percentage of total project budget set aside for M&E	[redacted]
Number of days planned for M&E	250

Section 10 - Logical Framework

Q25. 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 expect to measure progress against these and how we can verify this.

Logframe Template

Please complete your full logframe in the separate Word template and upload as a PDF using the file upload below - please do not edit the logframe template structure (other than adding additional Outputs if needed) as this may make your application ineligible. On the application form, you will be asked to copy the Impact, Outcome and Output statements and activities - these should be the same as in your uploaded logframe.

Please upload your logframe and Theory of Change as a combined PDF document.

- logframe_v2
- 29/10/2022
- 16:14:14
- pdf 245.09 KB

Impact:

The biodiversity of Virunga National Park is protected and people living in the area are thriving.

Outcome:

An evidence-based innovative strategy decreases threats on natural habitats, protects biodiversity, and decreases poverty in Virunga National Park. Results are scalable to other contexts.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

The results of the pilot studies conducted in 2021 inform the design of the next phase of the RCT

Output 2:

Implementation of a RCT promoting access to off-farm jobs to decrease the loss of natural habitat in VNP

Output 3:

Monitoring of VNP's habitats and wildlife in the area of intervention

Output 4:

Quantitative impact evaluation of the RCT on people and nature

Output 5:

Results are summarised and shared with different audiences

Do you require more Output fields?

It is advised to have less than 6 Outputs since this level of detail can be provided at the activity level.

⦿ No

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.

1.1 Organization of a 1-day workshop with key stakeholders of the pilot (sample of beneficiaries, representatives of the civil society, sample of entrepreneurs, staffs involved in the pilot)
1.2 Results of the workshop are shared and discussed with VNP senior management
1.3 Results are synthetized in a brief document

2.1 The programme is advertised through local radio stations.
2.2 All applications are screened
2.3 1800 eligible applications are randomly selected (by respecting gender equality) ; and randomly assigned to three groups: beneficiaries of the internship programme, beneficiaries of a labelled cash transfer, and control group
2.4 1200 microenterprises are selected by phone among Virunga Energies clients, and randomly assigned to two treatment arms: those who will have an intern, control group.
2.5 The 600 interns (300 females) start the programme for a period of three months. They receive a monthly visit by a field staff.
2.6 2.6 The 600 beneficiaries of the labelled cash transfer (300 females) receive the first half to cover upfront costs. If they come to a given office, they receive the second half to cover their return journey.

3.1 Aerial census are conducted by Virunga staffs in the project areas to monitor encroachments
3.1 Satellite images are analyzed by Virunga staffs in the project areas to monitor encroachments (Planet Basemap data and Sentinel 1)

4.1 A baseline survey is organized when eligible people apply to the programme, prior to randomization
4.2 A midline survey s organized with the 1800 participants three months after the start of the job-programme (corresponding for the intern to the final week of the internship).
4.3 A endline survey s organized with the 1800 participants six months after the start of the job-programme.

5.1 Data are analyzed
5.2 Results are summarized in a working paper and submitted to a peer-review journal.
5.3 Results are summarized in policy briefs.
5.4 Results are shared with VNP staffs and key stakeholders during two meetings after the midline and after the endline.

Section 11 - Budget and Funding

Q26. Budget

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

Note that there are different templates for projects requesting under £100,000 and over £100,000. Please refer to the

Finance Guidance for more information.

- Budget template for projects under £100k
- Budget template for projects over £100k

Please ensure you include any co-financing figures in the Budget spreadsheet to clarify the full budget required to deliver this project.

NB: Please state all costs by financial year (1 April to 31 March) and in GBP. The Darwin Initiative cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

Please note the next section is about the financial aspects of your project, rather than technical elements.

BCF-Budget-over- 100k-MASTER-Apr22final
07/11/2022
13:35:37
xlsx 95.04 KB

Q27. Funding

Q27a. Is this a new initiative or does it build on existing work (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)? Please give details.

⦿ Development of existing work

Please give details.

This project builds on a large pilot study we organized in 2021 and early 2022 (n=360). This pilot was financed by two grants from the Wellspring Philanthropic Foundation and the John Fell Fund. It was inspired by recent advances in development economics which demonstrate the effectiveness of internship-style programmes and labelled cash transfers to promote access to jobs. This includes some work by Professor Stefan Dercon in Ethiopia (funded by Aspen ANDE group, the International Growth Center, the UK Department for International Development, the Templeton Foundation, and a Vanguard Charitable Trust). The idea of linking this work with the urgent need to protect habitat in the Virunga National Park region has been discussed for some time with the VNP director and research team.

Q27b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for similar work to the proposed project?

⦿ No

Q28. Capital items

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

N/A

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).

Our project has a high value for money for several reasons:

First, similar job-market interventions could be of high interest for other areas in sub-Saharan Africa. By providing

high-quality evidence, we will be able to provide information on the potential of supporting job creation to protect habitats and wildlife beyond Virunga. The team will be transparent regarding the success and failures of the outcomes. A call for more robust impact evaluation exists in conservation science to promote a culture of experimentation, and being informed by trial and errors. Our project will directly contribute to that endeavour, bringing value for money for other projects.

Second, our programme will compare a light-touch vs a more intensive intervention (labelled cash transfer vs subsidized internship). Our design will compare the cost-effectiveness of these interventions and provide information for a decision maker (VNP in this instance) if it needs to subsidize access to jobs heavily, or if a light-touch intervention may be sufficient.

Third, our programme promotes equity. While conservation and poverty alleviation can be antagonistic, we develop a model that promotes synergies between protecting wildlife and fighting poverty.

Fourth, our project brings academic international expertise. While all core project members will devote an important share of their time to the project, only 5% of Stefan Dercon's and 30% of Gracieux Mutaka's time will be billed on the project project. Ashley Pople, Sebastien Desbureaux and Natsuno Shinagawa will not bill their time on this project (salaries already secured).

Section 12 - Outputs, Open Access, Ethics & Safeguarding

Q30. Safeguarding

Projects funded through the Darwin Initiative must fully protect vulnerable people all of the time, wherever they work. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place.

Please confirm the Lead Partner has the following policies in place and that these can be available on request:

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

Please outline how you will implement your safeguarding policies in practice and ensure that all partners apply the same standards as the Lead Partner. If any partner of the responses are "no", please indicate how it is being addressed.

Oxford University have strict policies that apply to the conduct of their staff – see links to policies below. We are adapting a code of conduct to be applied to all team members involved in the project, including enumerators. We will ensure that these are fully understood and operationalized, especially when training enumerators and conducting checks through supervision visits. Information disseminated during the informed consent stage with study participants will provide a clear

protocol for how complaints about behaviour and project concerns can be reported.

Safeguarding: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/safeguarding-at-risk-adults-and-children

Harassment and bullying: https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice

Whistleblowing: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/public-interest-disclosure-whistle-blowing-code-of-practice

Q31. Ethics

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

Our project will meet all legal and ethical obligations from the UK, the DRC and France. This includes informed consent of participants at the beginning of the project and before each round of survey, storage of data on secured servers, an access to non-pseudonymized data to only two project members (Gracieux Mutaka and Sebastien Desbureaux), deleting identifiable information once the experiment is over, open-access to pseudonymized data.
The project is co-constructed and co-led by Congolese and international practitioners and researchers, allowing it to incorporate the value of local knowledge and respect at each stage.

The research team will comply with the Oxford Code of Conduct for Researchers. The project requires human subjects approval. Ethics approval already obtained from the Economics Ethics Committee from the University of Oxford (reference number: ECONCIA21-22-14). A copy of this document is available at award stage if required.

Section 13 - FCDO Notifications

Q32. FCDO notifications

Please state if you think that there are sensitivities that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will need to be aware of should they want to publicise the project's success in the Darwin Initiative in any country.

No

Please indicate whether you have contacted FCDO Embassy or High Commission to discuss the project and attach details of any advice you have received from them. If you have not, please say why not.

⦿ No

Why not?

FCDO is already aware of Stefan Dercon's involvment with Virunga because of Stefan's own past involvement within FCDO (chief economist), and his meeting with FCDO-Goma in 2020. Stefan Dercon and Ashley Pople will spend two weeks in Goma from December 4th and have a specific meeting at this moment.

Section 14 - Project Staff

Q33. Project staff

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

Please provide 1-page CVs or job description, further information on who is considered core staff can be found in the Finance Guidance

Name (First name, surname)	Role	% time on project	1 Page CV or job description attached?
Stefan, Dercon	**Project Leader**	5	Checked
Ashley, Pople	Design and analysis of the RCT	25	Checked
Sebastien, Desbureaux	Design and analysis of the RCT, liason between research and practice	50	Checked
Gracieux, Mutaka	Design and implementation of the RCT	50	Checked

Do you require more fields?

⦿ Yes

Name (First name, surname)	Role	% time on project	1 Page CV or job description attached?
Natsuno, Shinagawa	Supervision of implementation (RCT and ecological monitoring), liason with VNP senior management	10	Checked
Jean de Dieu, Wathaut	Ecological monitoring (wildlife, habitat)	10	Checked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked
No Response	*No Response*	0	Unchecked

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

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

CVs_compiled
29/10/2022
14:40:53
pdf 2.44 MB

Have you attached all project staff CVs?

⦿ Yes

Section 15 - Project Partners

Q34. Project Partners

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

This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included.

The partners listed here should correspond to the Delivery Chain Risk Map (within the Risk Register template) which you will be asked to submit if your project is recommended for funding.

Lead Partner name:	University of Oxford
Website address:	https://www.ox.ac.uk/ and https://www.csae.ox.ac.uk
Why is this organisation the Lead Partner, and what value to they bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	The University of Oxford, through the Centre for the Study of African Economies, provides in-depth expertise in job creation policies and firm growth in Africa, and randomized control trial methodology. Our team is comprised of senior and junior economists with strong experience in designing and implementing labour market interventions and generating evidence on conservation efforts. Professor Stefan Dercon is a world expert with decades of experience on poverty and the creation of quality jobs. Since 2017, he has chaired the independent evaluation committee of VNP and facilitated research projects within the park. Dr Ashley Pople has led several RCTs offering skills training and job matching services to vulnerable populations in Colombia, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. Stefan and Ashley have extensive experience working with policymakers with the view to scale up research, including in fragile and conflict areas. For instance, both are currently leading a large-scale RCT on shock-responsive cash transfers in response to extreme drought in collaboration with the government of Niger. Ashley has also set up impact evaluations on humanitarian interventions in South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and DRC in collaboration with the United Nations. Professor Stefan Dercon will oversee the overall direction of the research project. He will also take the lead in developing the theoretical model. Dr Ashley Pople will be primarily responsible for the design of the RCT and survey instruments. Oxford is also a leading centre for conservation science. The proposed Darwin project will allow Stefan and Ashley to strengthen connections between the Department of Economics, the Blatvnik School of Government and the Department of Biology. With the University of Oxford as the lead partner, we also guarantee smooth coordination of the different project partners and the efficient and accountable use of funding and ethical implementation, in partnership with Virunga Foundation, Marakuja (for data collection) and Montpellier.
International/In-country Partner	⦿ International
Allocated budget (proportion or value):	0
Represented on the Project Board	⦿ Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from the organisation?	⦿ Yes

Do you have partners involved in the project?

⦿ Yes

1. Partner Name:	Virunga Foundation
Website address:	www.virunga.org
What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	The Virunga Foundation (VF) and the Congolese Government signed a public-private partnership for the conservation and sustainable development of Virunga National Park (2015-2040). VF's HQ and staff is located in Nord Kivu. VF is registered as a charity in the UK. VF will oversee the implementation of the two job programmes. Two staff will be primarily involved: Gracieux Mutaka, the M&E officer in charge of Socio-Economic programmes, and Natsuno Shinagawa, head of M&E. Both have been involved in the project since its start in November 2020. With the support of Natsuno, Gracieux supervised the team of enumerators for census, baseline and endline surveys (approximately 12 enumerators for each round of survey), supervised the implementation of the programme (including the supervision of four case managers). The team will work closely with Jean de Dieu Wathaut who is in charge of wildlife monitoring for VNP, and an expert in GIS. He coordinates the work of over 10 rangers who do foot and aerial patrols. Jean de Dieu is also responsible for the remote sensing evaluation of encroachments within the park. Regular meetings will happen with VNP's Director (Emmanuel de Merode), the head of Electricity (Ephrem Balole) and of operations (Eole Surry).
International/In-country Partner	⦿ In-country
Allocated budget:	0
Represented on the Project Board	⦿ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	⦿ Yes

2. Partner Name:	Centre for Environmental Economics - Montpellier
Website address:	www.cee-m.fr

What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	The Centre for Environmental Economics –Montpellier (CEE-M) is a research group specialized in environmental economics and behavioural economics. It is affiliated with the CNRS, INRAE, Institut Agro and the University of Montpellier. CEE-M will be involved through Dr. Sébastien Desbureaux (Junior Professor). Prior to joining CEE-M, Sebastien was the head of Monitoring and Evaluation for Virunga Foundation (2019-21). He lived in North Kivu for this time and was reporting directly to the Park's director. Together with Stefan Dercon, Ashley Pople and Gracieux Mutaka, they designed and piloted the proposed activities. Having experience of both conservation practice and research, Sebastien will be the primary project member in charge of linking implementation and research activities. Sébastien is also leading another RCT in Virunga on green cooking and conservation (on-going). He has published in both economic (Ecological Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management…), and conservation journals (Nature Sustainability, Conservation Biology, Biological Conservation etc).
International/In-country Partner	⦿ International
Allocated budget:	0
Represented on the Project Board	⦿ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	⦿ Yes

3. Partner Name:	N/A
Website address:	*No Response*
What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	*No Response*
International/In-country Partner	○ International ○ In-country
Allocated budget:	0
Represented on the Project Board	○ Yes ○ No

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

4. Partner Name:	*No Response*
Website address:	*No Response*
What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	*No Response*
International/In-country Partner	◯ International ◯ In-country
Allocated budget:	0
Represented on the Project Board	◯ Yes ◯ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	◯ Yes ◯ No

5. Partner Name:	*No Response*
Website address:	*No Response*
What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	*No Response*
International/In-country Partner	◯ International ◯ In-country
Allocated budget:	0

Represented on the Project Board	○ Yes ○ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	○ Yes ○ No

6. Partner Name:	*No Response*
Website address:	*No Response*
What value does this Partner bring to the project? **(including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**	*No Response*
International/In-country Partner	○ International ○ In-country
Allocated budget:	0
Represented on the Project Board	○ 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.

N/A

Please provide a combined PDF of all letters of support.

Combined_letters_support
07/11/2022
12:58:31
pdf 1.09 MB

Section 16 - Lead Partner Track Record

Q35. Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded 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

Please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
26-016	David Macdonald	Lion Carbon: creating biodiversity value and sustainable management through REDD+
23-019	Dr EJ Milner-Gulland	Achieving No Net Loss for communities and biodiversity in Uganda
23-018	David Macdonald	Alleviating rural poverty through conflict mitigation and improved crop yields
20-012	David Macdonald	Improving anti-poaching patrol evaluation and design in African rainforests
No Response	*No Response*	*No Response*
No Response	*No Response*	*No Response*

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

If yes, please upload these on the certification page. Note that this is not required from Government Agencies.

⦿ Yes

Section 17 - Certification

Q36. Certification

On behalf of the

Trustees

of

the University of Oxford

I apply for a grant of

[redacted]

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, a cover letter, letters of support, a budget logframe, theory of change, Safeguarding Policy and project implementation timetable.**
- **Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (or other financial evidence - see Financial Guidance) are also enclosed.**

Checked

Name	Paul Fox
Position in the organisation	Research Funding Specialist, Research Services
Signature (please upload e-signature)	Signature PRF 07/11/2022 10:28:25 pdf 213.44 KB
Date	04 November 2022

Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

Oxford University, Financial Statement 2019-20_0
29/10/2022
11:49:26
pdf 4.61 MB

Oxford University, Financial Statements 2020-21
29/10/2022
11:47:33
pdf 3.71 MB

Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF

Oxford-safeguarding
29/10/2022
11:49:51
pdf 423.75 KB

Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

I have read the Guidance, including the "Guidance Notes for Applicants**",** "Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning 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 my project.	Checked
I have provided my 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 has been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked

I have attached the below documents to my application: • my completed **logframe** as a PDF using the template provided	Checked
• my 1 page **Theory of Change** as a PDF which includes the key elements listed in the guidance	Checked
• my **budget** (which meets the requirements above)	Checked
• my completed **implementation timetable** as a PDF using the template provided	Checked
• **1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff** identified at Question 32, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
• a **letter of support** from the Lead Partner and partner(s) identified at Question 33, or an explanation of why not.	Checked
• a **cover letter from the Lead Partner,** outlining how any feedback received at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant.	Checked
• a copy of the **Lead Partner's safeguarding policy**, which covers the criteria listed in Question 29.	Checked
• a signed **copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts** for the Lead Partner, or provided an explanation if not.	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 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
I have checked the Darwin 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 Darwin Initiative and our sister grant scheme, the IWT Challenge Fund. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share our quarterly project newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Unchecked

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 partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Guidance – please delete before submitting

Provide a **Project Implementation Timetable** that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the following table as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project. Quarters are based on UK FYs (**1 April – 31 March** - Q1 therefore starts April 2023).

Please add/remove columns to reflect the length of your project. For each activity (add/remove rows as appropriate) indicate the number of months it will last, and shade only the quarters in which an activity will be carried out. The activity numbers should correspond to the activities in your logical framework (logframe). The workplan can span multiple pages if necessary.

This template covers multiple Biodiversity Challenge Funds schemes, so ensure you check the eligible dates/project length for the scheme you are applying to and feel free to delete later years if not applicable for your project.

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1	*The results of the pilot conducted in 2021 inform the design of the next phase of the RCT*									
1.1	Organization of a 1-day workshop with key stakeholders of the pilot (sample of beneficiaries, representatives of the civil society, sample of entrepreneurs, staffs involved in the pilot)	1								
1.2	Results of the workshop are shared and discussed with VNP senior management	1								
1.3	Results are synthetized in a brief document	3								
Output 2	*Implementation of a RCT promoting access to off-farm jobs to decrease the loss of natural habitat in VNP*									
2.1	The programme is advertised through local radio stations	1								
2.2	All applications are screened	1								
2.3	1800 eligible applications are randomly selected (by respecting gender equality) ; and randomly assigned to three groups: beneficiaries of the internship programme, beneficiaries of a labelled cash transfer, and control group	1								
2.4	1200 microenterprises are selected by phone among Virunga Energies clients, and randomly assigned to two treatment arms: those who will have an intern, control group.	5								
2.5	The 600 interns (300 females) start the programme for a period of three months. They receive a monthly visit by a field staff.	5								

Project Title: Testing experimental development economic programmes to protect Virunga's biodiversity

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.6	The 600 beneficiaries of the labelled cash transfer (300 females) receive the first half to cover upfront costs. If they come to a given office, they receive the second half to cover their return journey.	5								
Output 3	*Monitoring of VNP's habitats and wildlife in the area of intervention*									
3.1	Aerial census are conducted by Virunga staffs in the project areas to monitor encroachments	10								
3.2	Satellite images are analyzed by Virunga staffs in the project areas to monitor encroachments (Planet Basemap data and Sentinel 1)	10								
3.3	Foot patrols and camera traps allow to estimate species presence and abundance	20								
Output 4	*Quantitative impact evaluation of the RCT on people and nature*									
4.1	A baseline survey is organized when eligible people apply to the programme, prior to randomization	1								
4.2	A midline survey is organized with the 1800 participants three months after the start of the job-programme (corresponding for the intern to the final week of the internship).	2								
4.3	A endline survey is organized with the 1800 participants six months after the start of the job-programme.	2								
Output 5	Results are summarised and share for different audiences									
5.1	Data are analyzed	12								
5.2	Results are summarized in a working paper and submitted to a peer-review journal.	6								
5.3	Results are summarized in policy briefs.	3								
5.4	Results are shared with VNP staffs and key stakeholders during two meetings after the midline and after the endline.	2								

Project Title: Testing experimental development economic programmes to protect Virunga's biodiversity

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: The biodiversity of Virunga National Park is protected and people are thriving			
Outcome: An evidence-based innovative strategy decreases threats on natural habitats, protects biodiversity and decreases poverty in Virunga National Park. Results are scalable to other contexts	0.1 Beneficiaries of the job-market intervention saw their non-agricultural employment status improving three and six months after the start of the programme (salaried job and casual employment outside farming, disaggregation by gender. Baseline will be measured during the pre-intervention survey. Effect measured through an Intent-to-Treat estimator) 0.2 Poverty decrease among programs' participants three and six months after the start of the programme (multidimensional poverty including: reported non-agricultural incomes, food consumption) 0.3 Participation in the interventions decrease the demand for farmlands inside and outside the park (area farmed by beneficiaries, area farmed by the family of the beneficiary, area of farmlands owned by the beneficiary. Baseline will be	0.1 to 0.3 Post-interventions surveys 0.4 Patrol and camera trap data 0.5 Record of publication and policy briefs	0.1 Participation in the programme will facilitate access to non-farming employment 0.2 Access to non-farming employment will contribute to poverty reduction 0.3 An increase in non-farming employment will decrease demand for farmlands inside and around VNP 0.4 Decreased demand for farmlands inside and around VNP will have a positive impact on the number of habitats

	measured during the pre-intervention survey. Effect measured through an Intent-to-Treat estimator) 0.4 Increase in wildlife observation in targeted areas of VNP one year after the end of the programme (diversity of species and abundance) 0.5 Lessons learnt are of interest for different audience, as measured by academic citations, attendance at specific events, audience of podcast and blogs (measured one and three years after the end of the programme)		
Outputs: **1**. The results of the pilot conducted in 2021 inform the design of the next phase of the RCT	1.1 Workshop with stakeholders (1 meeting with representatives of the civil society, entrepreneurs, parks' staff and project team) 1.2 Discussion with VNP top management (1 meeting)	1.1 Attendance record 1.2 Attendance record	1. Beneficiaries and stakeholders of the pilot are available to engage in the discussion with the team
2. Implementation of a RCT promoting access to off-farm jobs to decrease the loss of natural habitat in VNP	2.1 Eligible population are informed of a job-access programme (number of radio advertisments, number of posters in eligible villages) 2.2 600 (300 women) consented eligible participants benefit from a subsidized internship programme	2.1 Register of applications submitted to participate to the programme 2.2 to 2.4 Programme registry	2. Enough people are interested in participating to an experimental job programme.

	2.3 600 (300 women) consented eligible participants benefit from a job-labelled cash transfer 2.4 600 (300 women) consented eligible participants are kept as controls		
3. Monitoring of VNP's habitats and wildlife in the area of intervention	3.1 # Aerial census conducted around the areas targeted by the programme 3, 6 and 12 months after the start of the job programme 3.2 # Satellite image analysis in the areas targeted by the programme 3, 6 and 12 months after the start of the job programme	3.1 and 3.2. VNP's M&E team	3.1 Aerial census is conducted accordingly to the plan, despite numerous logistical constrains and insecurity 3.2 Clouds-free satellite images are available
4. Quantitative impact evaluation of the RCT on people and nature	4.1 1800 baseline surveys are organized (a few weeks before the start of the intervention) 4.2 1800 midline surveys are organized (2.5 months after the start of the programme = in the last two weeks of the internship programme) 4.3 1800 endline surveys are organized (6 months after the start of the programme = 3 months after the end of the internship)	4.1 to 4.3 Raw data and survey instruments	4. Potential participants are willing to participate to a research-informed programme

5. Results are summarised and share for different audiences	5.1 A working paper summarizing preliminary results is shared in open-access within 9 months of the end of the job programme 5.2 A paper is submitted for peer-reviewed publication within 12 months of the end of the job programme 5.3 Policy briefs in different formats summarizing results within 12 months of the end of the job programme 5.4 Two meetings with VNP and stakeholders are organized to share the results.	5.1 Working paper 5.2 Peer-reviewed publication 5.3 Policy brief	

Activities

1.1 Organization of a 1-day workshop with key stakeholders of the pilot (sample of beneficiaries, representatives of the civil society, sample of entrepreneurs, staffs involved in the pilot)
1.2 Results of the workshop are shared and discussed with VNP senior management
1.3 Results are synthetized in a brief document

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2.1The programme is advertised through local radio stations.

2.2 All applications are screened

2.3 1800 eligible applications are randomly selected (by respecting gender equality) ; and randomly assigned to three groups: beneficiaries of the internship programme, beneficiaries of a labelled cash transfer, and control group
2.4 1200 microenterprises are selected by phone among Virunga Energies clients, and randomly assigned to two treatment arms: those who will have an intern, control group.
2.5 The 600 interns (300 females) start the programme for a period of three months. They receive a monthly visit by a field staff.
2.6 The 600 beneficiaries of the labelled cash transfer (300 females) receive the first half to cover upfront costs. If they come to a given office, they receive the second half to cover their return journey.

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