



Department
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Department
for International
Development



DPLUS021

Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund Project Application Form

Submit by Monday 23 September 2013

Please read the Guidance Notes before completing this form

Information to be extracted to the database and made public is highlighted in blue

Basic Data

1. Project Title (max 10 words)	Ascension Island Marine Sustainability (AIMS) – A Fisheries and Marine Biodiversity Project
2. UK OT(s) involved	Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands
3. Start Date:	01/04/2014
4. End Date:	31/03/2016
5. Duration of project (no longer than 24 months)	24 months

Summary of Costs	2014/15	2015/16	Total
6. Budget requested from Darwin	£154,665.00	£106,422.00	£261,087.00
7. Total value of Co-funding	£100,400.00	£92,190.00	£192,590.00
8. Total Project Budget (all funders)	£255,065.00	£198,612.00	£453,677.00
9. Names of Co-funders	Ascension Island Government (AIG), South Atlantic Environment Research Institute (SAERI), Shallow Marine Survey Group (SMSG), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), British Antarctic Survey (BAS)		

10. Lead applicant organisation (responsible for delivering outputs, reporting and managing funds)	Ascension Island Government Conservation Department (AIGCD)
11. Project Leader name	Dr Nicola Weber / Dr Sam Weber
12. Email address	
13. Postal address	Conservation Office, Georgetown, Ascension Island, South Atlantic, ASCN 1ZZ
14. Contact details: Phone/Fax/Skype	

15. Type of organisation of Lead applicant. Place an x in the relevant box.								
OT GOVT	X	UK GOVT	UK NGO	Local NGO	International NGO	Commercial Company	Other (e.g. Academic)	

16. Principals in project. Please identify and provide a one page CV for each of these named individuals. You may copy and paste this table if you need to provide details of more personnel or more than one main, or other, project partner.

Details	Project Leader	Project Leader	Project Partner 1
Surname	Weber	Weber	Brickle
Forename(s)	Nicola	Sam	Paul
Post held	Conservation Manager	Research Fellow	Director
Institution (if different to above)	Ascension Island Government (AIG)	Ascension Island Government (AIG)	South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI)
Department	Conservation Department	Conservation Department	
Telephone/Skype			
Email			

Details	Project Partner 2	Project Partner 3	Project Partner 4
Surname	Brewin	Barnes	Hall
Forename(s)	Paul	David	Jonathan
Post held	Director/Marine Ecologist	Marine Ecologist	Partner Development Officer (UK OTs)
Institution (if different to above)	Shallow Marine Surveys Group (SMSG)	British Antarctic Survey (BAS)	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Department			
Telephone/Skype			
Email			

17. Has your organisation been awarded a Darwin Initiative award before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)? If so, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
19-026	Drs Annette Broderick & Brendan Godley	Implementing a Darwin Initiative Biodiversity Action Plan for Ascension Island

18. If your answer to Q17 was No, provide details of 3 contracts previously held by your institution that demonstrate your credibility as an implementing organisation. These contracts should have been held in the last 5 years and be of a similar size to the grant requested in this application. (If your answer to Q17 was Yes, you may delete these boxes, but please leave Q18)

Contract 1 Title	
Contract Value	
Contract Duration	
Role of institution in project	
Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the contract.	
Client reference contact details (Name, e-mail, address, phone number).	

Contract 2 Title	
Contract Value	
Contract Duration	
Role of institution in project	
Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the contract.	
Client reference contact details (Name, e-mail, address, phone number)	

Contract 3 Title	
Contract Value	
Contract Duration	
Role of institution in project	
Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the contract.	
Client reference contact details (Name, e-mail, address, phone number).	

Project Details

19. Project Outcome Statement: Describe what the project aims to achieve and what will change as a result. (50 words max)

By drawing on existing expertise from within the South Atlantic UKOTs, this project aims to substantially increase Ascension Island's marine biodiversity knowledge and fisheries science capacity, informing the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan for marine taxa, and providing the science base needed for sustainably managed inshore and offshore fisheries.

20. Background: (What is the current situation and the problem that the project will address? How will it address this problem? What key OT Government priorities and themes will it address? (200 words max)

Ascension Island harbours globally important marine biodiversity, potentially representing a unique assemblage of western and eastern Atlantic flora and fauna. The Island also supports a commercially valuable pelagic tuna fishery, and an inshore recreational fishery. Currently, however, a paucity of baseline scientific data from the marine environment and a lack of capacity in marine and fisheries science within AIG are major barriers to the effective management and conservation of the Island's marine resources. Data on the abundance, distribution and biology of endemic and commercially exploited species is particularly lacking. Addressing these issues has been identified as a strategic priority for AIG through a Darwin Initiative-funded project to develop a National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) for Ascension Island (19-026). A recent Darwin Challenge Award to SMSG/SAERI (EIDCF012) generated some much need baseline data, but was limited in time and scope. By drawing on existing expertise in marine and fisheries science from within the South Atlantic UKOTs (SAERI, BAS, SMSG), as well as the wider NGO community (RSPB), this project will help to fill remaining knowledge gaps and build capacity and facilities at Ascension Island that will enable the sustainable management of marine resources beyond the lifespan of the project.

21. Methodology: Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended outcomes and impact. Provide information on how you will undertake the work (materials and methods) and how you will manage the work (roles and responsibilities, project management tools etc). Give details of any innovative techniques or methods. (500 words max)

The project will consist of three complementary work programmes:

- 1) **Inshore (<30m) and offshore (>30m) marine biodiversity and habitat mapping.** This element will build on preliminary work conducted by SMSG/SAERI during a recent Darwin Challenge Award (EIDCF012) by filling temporal, spatial and bathymetric data gaps. Specifically, it will: undertake fine scale habitat classification and mapping; establish a network of monitoring sites across habitat types to examine spatial and temporal changes in community structure, and assess the status and trends of endemic species; conduct deeper water biodiversity surveys; deploy settlement plates to monitor recruitment and invasive species; develop Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs) for selected marine species within the NBAP framework; integrate data into a GIS platform as a basis for future marine spatial planning.
- 2) **Inshore fisheries biology and management strategies.** This component aims to build fisheries science capacity within the Territory by: setting up a marine fisheries laboratory with otolith saw, microtome, microscopes etc.; developing a strategy for conducting fisheries biology on a selection of commercial inshore species, including age, growth, reproductive biology etc.; training AIGCD staff in fisheries biology techniques; using underwater visual censuses to monitor abundances of commercial species at selected sites; working with the local community to build engagement in fisheries management and develop a reporting system that will collect catch and effort data from the line fishery, small vessel fishery and the charter boat fishery; developing a strategy for managing inshore line and vessel fisheries, including licensing and legislation if appropriate; deploying PAT tags on tuna and marlin to study their migration and behaviour. The latter will also contribute to an understanding of the spatial and temporal distribution of fisheries resources in work programme 3.

- 3) **Reviewing offshore fisheries resources and by catch.** This element deals with data collection and assimilation from ICAAT and other sources; it will review temporal and spatial changes in abundance of species in the offshore fishery utilizing historic catch and effort data from ICAAT in conjunction with environmental data; it will conduct geospatial analyses to examine inter- and intra-annual distribution of species' abundance; examine the potential for predictive models based on environmental proxies; conduct a by-catch risk assessment utilising existing data from tracked seabirds and turtles, ground-truthed by the deployment of a seagoing observer.

The project will be delivered through a suite of standard and novel techniques such as otolith processing technology for measuring age and growth of fish, satellite linked archival tags, side scan sonar and drop down cameras, SCUBA, GIS and state of the art geospatial analyses. The project will be delivered by a postdoctoral Fisheries Scientist/Marine Ecologist, two Marine Technicians and a Fisheries Observer employed through AIG Conservation Department, the latter with RSPB financial support. Project partners in the Falkland Islands (SAERI and SMSG) and the UK (BAS and RSPB) will train project staff and lend considerable expertise in taxonomy, marine ecology, GIS, fisheries ecology, and by catch risk assessment and research.

22. How does this project:

- a) Deliver against the priority issues identified in the assessment criteria
- b) Demonstrate technical excellence in its delivery
- c) Demonstrate a clear pathway to impact in the OT(s)
(500 words max)

a) Priority issues:

- *Contribution to multilateral environmental agreements.* AIG has ratified the CBD and this project will contribute directly to Aichi Targets 4 (Sustainable Consumption of Natural Resources), 6 (Sustainable Fisheries), 10 (Vulnerable Ecosystems), 11 (Marine & Coastal Protected Areas), 17 (Development of a NBAP) and 19 (Biodiversity Knowledge Improved). It will also contribute towards commitments under the CMS for Appendix I species (marine turtles).
- *Contributions to national commitments.* The project will help AIG to meet commitments under the Ascension Island Environment Charter, in particular commitments 2 (Protection of key habitats and species through management structures), 3 (Integration of environmental considerations into economic planning / sustainable patterns of consumption) and 7 (Review range and availability of data for natural resources and biodiversity).
- *Long-term strategic objectives and mainstreaming.* The principle objectives of the project, to increase marine biodiversity knowledge and inform fisheries policy and marine spatial planning, are well aligned with the long-term objectives of AIG for the sustainable management of its marine environment (see letter of support from HH the Administrator), and will provide the toolkit needed for future environmental mainstreaming.

b) Technical excellence:

- *Environmental decision making.* The project will provide the evidence base needed for marine spatial planning (e.g. designation of marine protected areas) and the development and implementation of a sustainable fisheries policy and legislation. Inshore and offshore fisheries elements will provide the basis for economic valuation of Ascension Island's marine resources, enabling the development of more sustainable and equitable licensing regimes.
- *Project planning and value for money.* The project budget, targets and work plan are based on prior experience and actual costs incurred during a recent Darwin Challenge Award and are

therefore realistic and cost effective. The significant matched funding contributed by project partners ensures excellent value for money against total costs.

- *Monitoring and evaluation.* See Section 30.

c) Impact:

- *Local ownership.* The project is being driven from within the South Atlantic UKOTs as a partnership between AIG and the Falkland Islands based SAERI and SMSG, with expert input from RSPB and BAS. There is considerable local support, from the most senior levels of government to members of the local fishing community (see letters of support from HH The Administrator and Ascension Island Fishing Charters)
- *Institutional capacity.* The partnership assembled for this project brings together institutions and individuals with a proven track record in delivering high quality marine, fisheries and conservation science (see Section 24).
- *Anticipated outcomes.* The project will deliver a baseline for assessing natural or anthropogenic changes in the marine environment, and the science base needed for effective fisheries management. Fisheries are a major source of income and important recreational activity on Ascension Island, so sustainable decision-making will contribute significantly towards local economic development and wellbeing.
- *Sustainability.* The project will establish Ascension Island's first dedicated marine and fisheries unit and laboratory, and leave a significant legacy in terms of facilities, data management systems and local capacity that will enable the outcomes to be sustained long after the funding window is over (see Section 29).

23. Who are the **stakeholders** for this project and how have they been consulted (include local or host government support/engagement where relevant)? Briefly describe what support they will provide and how the project will engage with them. (250 words max)

The stakeholders are AIG, the Ascension Island community, and those that are involved in the exploitation and conservation of the Island's marine resources, both locally and internationally. The main stakeholders were informed of the project via a concept note highlighting the issues and the solutions that the project will provide.

A Project Officer and two Marine Technicians employed through AIG will co-ordinate and deliver the project. SAERI and SMSG will lend their considerable experience in marine and fisheries science to train, mentor and support project staff throughout.

BAS will offer expertise in the areas of benthic species' taxonomy, benthic ecology and biodiversity analyses (see supporting letter).

The RSPB will provide expertise and capacity in at-sea scientific observation with respect to incidental mortality and by-catch mitigation in the offshore fishery. This will include the provision of an experienced fisheries observer to train project staff and contributions to the salary of a local observer (see supporting letter).

The Project Staff will work closely with the local fishing community throughout. Members of this community have already expressed an interest in participating in the tagging of pelagic species, and in the development of an anonymous, community-based catch reporting scheme (see supporting letter from Ascension Island Fishing Charters). As a gesture of good faith, AIG will also improve existing fish cleaning facilities at the Island's pier.

Stakeholders will be kept informed via a project website and online project management system which will contain milestones and targets, along with current project documents and analyses.

24. Institutional Capacity: Describe the implementing organisation's capacity (and that of partner organisations where relevant) to deliver the project.
(500 words max)

Ascension Island Government

The Conservation Department was established by AIG in 2001 to help fulfil its commitments under the Environment Charter and multilateral environmental agreements. It has since established itself as the authority on Ascension Island's biodiversity, with core programmes in terrestrial ecology and seabird and marine turtle research and conservation. In the past 3 years the Conservation Department has been involved with externally-funded projects on green turtles, land crabs, endemic plants and national park access with a combined budget of more than £560,000. It is currently undertaking a major strategic planning exercise with the development of a National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), funded by the Darwin Initiative. AIG project leads Drs Nicola and Sam Weber are postdoctoral ecologists who have lived and worked on Ascension Island for over 3 years. They, along with other members of the conservation team, bring the considerable local knowledge necessary to implement this project on the ground.

South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI)

SAERI is a Falkland Islands initiative. It aspires to be a world renowned, well branded environmental research institute. SAERI has the infrastructure and capacity to conduct environmental research throughout the South Atlantic from the equator to the ice in the Antarctic. SAERI's director is an established marine scientist with many years' experience managing and co-ordinating multi institutional research projects.

Shallow Marine Surveys Group (SMSG)

SMSG has a successful track record of gaining competitive research funding domestically, and from overseas in the fields of subtidal marine ecology, biodiversity and conservation, and fisheries science. SMSG is headed by a core group of experienced biologists and divers who carry out scientific collections and identifications and marine ecological research that contributes to local and regional conservation policy initiatives. The scope of the work includes the splash zone, inter-tidal and subtidal of Falkland Islands' shores, and recently South Georgia, Ascension Island, St Helena, and Tristan da Cunha.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

The RSPB has extensive experience of sustainable fisheries research, management and policy, implementing the BirdLife Global Seabird Programme, which includes 'Albatross Task Force' observers working with fishermen in 8 countries around the South Atlantic, and inputting into policy processes at ICCAT and other RFMOs. The RSPB is also a partner on the existing Ascension Island Biodiversity Action Plan Darwin project, provides annual financial and technical support to the AIG Conservation Department, and has extensive experience of working more widely in the South Atlantic Overseas Territories.

British Antarctic Survey (BAS) , NERC

For many decades BAS has been a key institute in South Atlantic scientific research and has a strong track record of winning grant research funding from a wide variety of sources and using that to advise governments and NGOs as well as publishing in peer reviewed international journals of high repute. The marine ecology group in particular have forged strong links with the other partners (in this bid) to undertake joint biodiversity work at sea.

25. Expected Outputs

Output (<i>what will be achieved e.g. capacity building, action plan produced, alien species controlled</i>)	Indicators of success (<i>how we will know if its been achieved e.g. number of people trained/ trees planted</i>)	Status before project/baseline data (<i>what is the situation before the project starts?</i>)	Source of information (<i>where will you obtain the information to demonstrate if the indicator has been achieved?</i>)
<p>1. Establishment of a Fisheries and Marine Science Unit on Ascension Island</p>	<p>Project Officer appointed to lead the project.</p> <p>2 x Marine Technicians appointed.</p> <p>Existing laboratory facilities are enhanced and outfitted with the necessary equipment for fisheries research.</p> <p>Project Staff (x3) are trained in marine survey techniques and the use of fisheries equipment.</p>	<p>AIG currently have no staff dedicated to marine and fisheries research and management.</p> <p>Although some general-purpose laboratory facilities are available, there is not currently a dedicated marine / fisheries laboratory on Ascension Island.</p>	<p>AIG employment records.</p> <p>A fit-for-purpose marine and fisheries laboratory is operating.</p>
<p>2. Existing marine biodiversity and fisheries data are consolidated.</p>	<p>Collation of extant marine biodiversity and fisheries data and the creation of a metadata catalogue.</p> <p>Creation of databases to house marine biodiversity and fisheries-related data collected previously, during this project and in the future.</p>	<p>Currently data are held in multiple databases in different locations e.g. inshore survey data with SMSG, offshore fishery data with ICAAT, other data with independent researchers and in published papers and grey literature.</p>	<p>The metadata catalogue will be circulated to stakeholders and made available on project and partner websites.</p> <p>Definitive databases will be created and hosted on AIG's system and within SAERI's IMS and GIS centre.</p>
<p>3. Gaps in inshore & offshore marine biodiversity baselines are addressed.</p>	<p>At least 12 inshore monitoring sites are established and surveyed on a monthly basis using underwater visual census and the collection of still and video imagery.</p> <p>At least 12 settlement plates are installed and photographed monthly to monitor the recruitment of sessile marine invertebrates.</p> <p>Samples identified and/or sent to taxonomic specialists, resulting in the completion of species inventories for marine</p>	<p>Sampling in sublittoral and littoral areas around Ascension Island was conducted by SMSG in two periods (2012 & 2013) and by a handful of other researchers previously. However, considerable gaps remain spatially, temporally and bathymetrically.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports and papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals, circulated to stakeholders and made available on project and partner websites.</p>

Output (<i>what will be achieved e.g. capacity building, action plan produced, alien species controlled</i>)	Indicators of success (<i>how we will know if its been achieved e.g. number of people trained/ trees planted</i>)	Status before project/baseline data (<i>what is the situation before the project starts?</i>)	Source of information (<i>where will you obtain the information to demonstrate if the indicator has been achieved?</i>)
	<p>fishes, invertebrates and plants.</p> <p>Offshore vessel provides data from side scan sonar, epibenthic sleds and drop down cameras.</p> <p>Library created for geo-referenced video and still image data that will be collected and analysed.</p>		
<p>4. Marine habitats are classified and mapped.</p>	<p>A fine scale habitat classification system for intertidal, sublittoral and offshore areas is developed and rigorously tested.</p> <p>Habitats will be classified for all areas sampled quantitatively and be incorporated into GIS for mapping</p>	<p>A coarse scale classification system has been developed by SMSG as part of their Darwin Challenge Award.</p>	<p>Reports circulated to stakeholders and available on project and partner websites. GIS mapping of marine habitats</p>
<p>5. Understanding of the age, growth and reproductive biology of the main inshore commercial fish species is significantly advanced.</p>	<p>Project staff (x3) and interested stakeholders are trained in collecting otoliths, gonad samples and biometric data.</p> <p>At least 1600 otoliths and 400 gonad samples will be processed.</p> <p>Growth curves, annual reproductive cycles and age-at-maturity of at least 4 commercially-exploited inshore fish species are established.</p>	<p>Some preliminary work has been conducted by SMSG to assess the feasibility of ageing Ascension Island fish species from otoliths. Gonad samples were collected to assess maturity and sex (ongoing).</p>	<p>Quarterly reports and papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals, circulated to stakeholders and made available on project and partner websites.</p>
<p>6. A strategy for the on-going monitoring and management of Ascension's inshore line and vessel fisheries is developed and implemented.</p>	<p>A review exercise is carried out coupled with stakeholder and partner consultation through public meetings.</p> <p>A licensing scheme and a scheme for reporting of catch and effort in the inshore fisheries are implemented.</p>	<p>A review of management and licencing was conducted in 2007 but did not address assessment methodologies.</p>	<p>Reports circulated to stakeholders and available on project and partner websites.</p> <p>AIG inshore fisheries licensing register.</p>

Output (<i>what will be achieved e.g. capacity building, action plan produced, alien species controlled</i>)	Indicators of success (<i>how we will know if its been achieved e.g. number of people trained/ trees planted</i>)	Status before project/baseline data (<i>what is the situation before the project starts?</i>)	Source of information (<i>where will you obtain the information to demonstrate if the indicator has been achieved?</i>)
<p>7. Understanding of resource dynamics in the offshore fishery is significantly advanced.</p>	<p>Geospatial analyses of existing ICAAT data are carried out to improve understanding of spatial and temporal variability in the abundance of commercial species.</p> <p>Predictive models (with environmental data e.g. sea surface temperature measurements) are developed to explain patterns of distribution and abundance.</p> <p>At least 400 mechanical tags and 20 PAT tags are deployed on (chemically marked oxytetracycline [20mg/kg] for growth validation) pelagic fish (e.g. tuna and marlin) in the line/sport fishery to improve understanding of a) the spatial and temporal distribution of fisheries resources, and b) the behaviours of these fishes, in particular seasonal migrations.</p>	<p>Analyses of this nature have not previously been conducted for Ascension Island.</p> <p>No work of this kind has previously been conducted in or around Ascension Island's waters.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports and papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals, circulated to stakeholders and made available on project and partner websites.</p>
<p>8. Initial by-catch risk assessments for seabirds, turtles and sharks in the commercial fishing fleet are completed and on-going observer capacity established.</p>	<p>AIG employ an at-sea observer.</p> <p>AIG observer receives on-the-job training from experienced visiting observer (employed by RSPB).</p> <p>Geospatial analyses of seabird and turtle tracking data in conjunction with VMS and catch, effort and location data derived from ICAAT are conducted to examine potential overlaps.</p> <p>By-catch risk</p>	<p>Levels of seabird, turtle or shark by-catch in the Ascension Island commercial long-lining fishery are unknown and there is currently no capacity for achieving any observer coverage.</p>	<p>AIG employment records.</p> <p>Visiting observer trip report.</p> <p>Reports/ papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals, circulated to stakeholders and made available on project and partner websites.</p>

Output (<i>what will be achieved e.g. capacity building, action plan produced, alien species controlled</i>)	Indicators of success (<i>how we will know if its been achieved e.g. number of people trained/ trees planted</i>)	Status before project/baseline data (<i>what is the situation before the project starts?</i>)	Source of information (<i>where will you obtain the information to demonstrate if the indicator has been achieved?</i>)
	assessments ground-truthed by the at-sea observer monitoring over 250,000 hooks.		
9. Project team completes tasks and prepares long-term exit strategy	<p>At least 3 SAPs and 2 HAPs for marine biodiversity are developed within the NBAP framework.</p> <p>All data are integrated into a GIS platform as a basis for future marine spatial planning.</p> <p>Final Project report submitted and a policy paper on inshore fisheries produced for AIG.</p>	Despite the known rich levels of marine biodiversity and known areas of high conservation value, there is no strategy for marine biodiversity or marine fisheries in Ascension Island	Reports circulated to stakeholders and available on project and partner websites.

26. Expected Outcomes: How will each of the outputs contribute to the overall outcome of the project? (100 words max)

Each output is critical to the effective achievement of the project (Output 9). Output 1 will establish the local capacity needed to carry out the project and Outputs 2 through to 4 will provide the data necessary to fill spatial, temporal and bathymetric gaps in biodiversity data. Outputs 5 through 8 will provide knowledge on marine fisheries around Ascension Island contributing to a well-managed fishery. All of the outputs will be essential for creating a GIS platform in readiness for the “bioregionalisation” exercise as a basis for future marine spatial planning as part of the BAP.

27. Main Activities

Output 1	Establishment of a Fisheries and Marine Science Unit on Ascension Island
1.1	Appointment of Project Officer
1.2	Appointment of Marine Technicians
1.3	Creation of a marine science and fisheries laboratory
1.4	Training of project staff in marine survey techniques and the use of fisheries equipment
Output 2	Existing marine biodiversity and fisheries data are consolidated
2.1	Review of existing data relating to Ascension’s marine biodiversity and fisheries
2.2	Creation of a metadatabase catalogue
2.3	Creation of databases to house marine biodiversity and fisheries-related data
Output 3	Gaps in inshore & offshore marine biodiversity baselines are addressed
3.1	Monthly surveys of inshore monitoring sites

3.2	Installation and monthly monitoring settlement panels
3.3	Complete species inventories for marine fishes, invertebrates and plants
3.4	Collection of offshore biodiversity data by offshore vessel
3.5	Analyses of video and still image data
3.6	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper(s)
Output 4	Marine habitats are classified and mapped
4.1	Development and testing of a fine scale habitat classification system for intertidal, sublittoral and offshore areas (using data from Output 3)
4.2	Creation of a marine habitat map for Ascension Island
4.3	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper
Output 5	Understanding of the age, growth and reproductive biology of the main inshore commercial fish species is significantly advanced
5.1	Training of Project Staff and interested stakeholders in collecting otoliths, gonad samples and biometric data
5.2	At least 1600 otoliths sectioned, processed, validated and read
5.3	At least 400 gonads, fixed stained and sectioned. Condition and gonad indices analysed
5.4	Establishment of growth curves, annual reproductive cycles and age-at-maturity for at least 3 commercially-exploited inshore fish species.
Output 6	Development and implementation of a strategy for the on-going monitoring and management of Ascension's inshore line and vessel fisheries
6.1	Review exercise of past and present practices
6.2	Consultation with partners and stakeholders e.g. local fishermen and members of the community through a series of public meetings
6.3	Implementation of a licensing scheme and a scheme for reporting of catch and effort in the inshore fisheries
6.4	Circulation of report to stakeholders and partners
Output 7	Understanding of resource dynamics in the offshore fishery is significantly advanced
7.1	Geospatial analyses of existing ICAAT data are carried out
7.2	Development of predictive models to attempt to explain patterns of distribution and abundance
7.3	Deployment of at least 400 mechanical tags and 20 PAT tags are on pelagic fish (e.g. tuna and marlin) in the line/sport fishery
Output 8	Initial by-catch risk assessments for seabirds, turtles and sharks in the commercial fishing fleet are completed and on-going observer capacity established
8.1	AIG employ an at-sea observer, to be funded in the long-term by the sale of licences
8.2	AIG observer receives on-the-job training from experienced visiting observer (employed by RSPB)
8.3	Geospatial analyses of seabird and turtle tracking data in conjunction with VMS and catch, effort and location data derived from ICAAT conducted to examine potential overlaps

8.4	By-catch risk assessments ground-truthed by the at-sea observer monitoring over 250,000 hooks
8.5	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper(s)
Output 9	Project team completes tasks and prepares long-term exit strategy
9.1	Development of at least 3 SAPs and 2 HAPs for marine biodiversity within the NBAP framework
9.2	Integrated of data into a GIS platform as a basis for future marine spatial planning
9.3	Submission of final project report and production of a policy paper on inshore fisheries for AIG

28. Risks			
Description of the risk	Likelihood the event will happen (H/M/L)	Impact of the event on the project (H/M/L)	Steps the project will take to reduce or manage the risk
The wrong Project Officer appointed or a suitably qualified person not found	L	H	Sufficient time will be given for recruitment coupled with a detailed job and person specifications. References will be taken up.
Co-partners/stakeholders fail to provide assistance	L	H	Partners involved in the project have all collaborated previously, and in some cases have long-standing working relationships. Should this risk occur then alternative collaborators will be sought.
Co-funding not available	L	H	All co-partners have agreed to their commitments and this will be formalised through memoranda of understanding. Contingency planning would include seeking funds elsewhere or the implementation of project activities on a smaller scale.
A suitable vessel for conducting offshore surveys not found	L	H	Early contingency planning and the procurement of another vessel's services would mitigate this. A number of alternative vessels operate on the island and may be available subject to early negotiation.
The commercial fishing licensing system is not changed to require observer coverage and pick-up/ drop-off visits to Ascension Island	M	M	AIG has a programme of work underway to update the commercial fishing licensing legislation, with the new licensing requirements intended to be in place before the project commences in April 2014. Should delays be encountered, observer elements can be postponed until Year 2 of the project (2015/16).

29. Sustainability: How will the project ensure benefits are sustained after the project has come to a close? If the project requires ongoing maintenance or monitoring, who will do this? (200 words max)

This project reflects the long-term vision of AIG for the conservation and management of its marine biodiversity, and is supported at the highest levels within Government (see letter of support from HH The Administrator of Ascension Island), as well as by members of the local fishing community (see letter of support from Ascension Island Fishing Charters). This, combined with the significant legacy that will be left by the project in terms of facilities, datasets and local capacity, mean that lasting impact is assured. The project will leave a fully-equipped marine/fisheries laboratory, diving and marine research capabilities, environmental datasets and data management systems, and a broad support network within the South Atlantic UKOTs that will enable AIG to plan for and manage the development of its marine environment long after the project is over. In addition, priorities for further work and on-going monitoring requirements identified during the project will be developed into Species Action Plans and Habitat Action Plans within the NBAP framework, providing a roadmap for future marine management and conservation.

30. Monitoring & Evaluation: How will the project be monitored and who will be responsible? Will there be any independent assessment of progress and impact? When will this take place, and by whom? (250 words max)

The project will be implemented as a partnership between AIG and SAERI, along with other project partners. A Memorandum of Understanding between the organisations and partners will articulate the obligations of all parties in delivering this project. The programme will be managed by a steering committee with cross-partner membership that will assess progress against project milestones and targets on a quarterly basis. The steering committee will be kept informed of progress through quarterly reports submitted by the Project Officer, and via an online project management system that gives all partners access to relevant documents, timelines and targets. The Project Officer will also present a quarterly budget for approval to the steering committee, and submit quarterly financial reports against those budgets. This is essential not only to provide updates to stakeholders but also to satisfy the requirements of AIG and partner financial support. Six-monthly and annual reports will be submitted to the Darwin Initiative by the Project Officer in accordance with reporting requirements.

The project completion report is after the project is over and is linked to the final payment.

31. Financial controls: Please demonstrate your capacity to manage the level of funds you are requesting. (Who is responsible for managing the funds? What experience do they have? What arrangements are in place for auditing expenditure?)

Grant payments will be administered through Ascension Island Government's bank account, with project expenditures tracked by the AIG Finance Department. AIG has a fully dedicated financial accounting and management team, headed by a UK qualified Chartered accountant. The Government currently manages capital and reserves of £20 million. The Finance and Conservation Departments have jointly managed many biodiversity conservation projects large and small over the last 10 years, including those funded by RSPB, OTEP, JNCC and the Darwin Initiative. Although operational control of the budget will rest with the Project Officer, monthly management accounts will be prepared to allow project disbursements to be monitored by the Finance Team and reported in quarterly financial statements tracking budget utilisation for the steering committee. AIG's accounts are also subject to an annual, independent financial audit by Wilkins Kennedy LLP, based in London.

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

NB: Please state all costs by financial year (1 April to 31 March) and in GBP. **Budgets submitted in other currencies will not be accepted.** Use current prices – and include anticipated inflation, as appropriate, up to 3% per annum. The Darwin Initiative cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

33. Value for Money

Please explain how you worked out your budget and how you will provide value for money through managing a cost effective and efficient project. You should also discuss any significant assumptions you have made when working out your budget.

(200 words max)

The budget was worked out on the basis of actual costs incurred in the previous Darwin Challenge Award project. Both our operating budget and our timetable of fieldwork are based on prior experience and therefore are efficient and cost effective. There is also extensive matched funding (42% of total budget) which highlights the excellent value for money and reveals the universal demand for the project. Stakeholders will be making major contributions free of charge in terms of expertise, sampling gear and time. Contributions in kind also include ship time, local vessel hire, on-Island accommodation for visiting partners, the provision of a RIB to the cost of £20,000 for inshore research, and the basic elements of the fisheries/marine laboratory on the Island for the project.

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 (Q1 starting April 2014)

Activity	No of Months	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1 Establishment of a Fisheries and Marine Science Unit on Ascension Island													
1.1 Appointment of Project Officer	2	■											
1.2 Appointment of Marine Technicians	2	■											
1.3 Creation of a marine and fisheries laboratory	3	■											
1.4 Training of Project Staff in marine survey techniques and the use of fisheries equipment	4	■	■										
Output 2 Existing marine biodiversity and fisheries data are consolidated													
2.1 Review of existing data relating to Ascension's marine biodiversity and fisheries	3	■	■										
2.2 Creation of a metadata catalogue	2			■									
2.3 Creation of databases to house marine biodiversity and fisheries related data	3			■									
Output 3 Gaps in inshore and offshore marine biodiversity baselines are addressed													
3.1 Monthly surveys of inshore monitoring sites	12	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
3.2 Installation and monthly photographing of settlement panels	12	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
3.3 Complete species inventories for marine fishes, invertebrates and plants	3							■					
3.4 Collection of offshore biodiversity data by offshore vessel	2			■				■					
3.5 Analyses of video and still image data	4	■	■	■	■			■	■				

Activity	No of Months	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.6	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper(s)	0.25											
Output 4	Marine habitats are classified and mapped												
4.1	Development and testing of a fine scale habitat classification system for intertidal, sublittoral and offshore areas	6											
4.2	Creation of a marine habitat map for Ascension Island	2											
4.3	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper	0.25											
Output 5	Understanding of the age, growth and reproductive biology of the main inshore commercial fish species is significantly advanced												
5.1	Training of project staff and interested stakeholders in collecting otoliths, gonad samples and biometric data	4											
5.2	At least 1600 otoliths sectioned, processed, validated and read	3											
5.3	At least 400 gonads, fixed stained and sectioned. Condition and gonad indices analysed	3											
5.4	Establishment of growth curves, annual reproductive cycles and age at maturity for at least 3 commercially exploited fish species	1											
Output 6	Development and implementation of a strategy for the on-going monitoring and management of Ascension's inshore line and vessel fisheries												
6.1	Review exercise of past and present practices	3											
6.2	Consultation with partners and stakeholders e.g. local fishermen and members of the community through a series of public meetings	2											
6.3	Implementation of a licensing scheme and a scheme for reporting of catch and effort in the inshore fisheries	2											

Activity	No of Months	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6.4	Circulation of report to stakeholders and partners	1											
Output 7	Understanding of resource dynamics in the offshore fishery is significantly advanced												
7.1	Geospatial analyses of existing ICAAT data are carried out	1.5											
7.2	Development of predictive models to attempt to explain patterns of distribution and abundance	1.5											
7.3	Deployment of at least 400 mechanical tags and 20 PAT tags are on pelagic fish (e.g. tuna and marlin) in the line/sport fishery	1.5											
Output 8	Initial by-catch risk assessments for seabirds, turtles and sharks in the commercial fishing fleet are completed and on-going observer capacity established												
8.1	AIG employ an at-sea observer, to be funded in the long-term by the sale of licences	1											
8.2	AIG observer receives on-the-job training from experienced visiting observer (employed by RSPB)	2											
8.3	Geospatial analyses of seabird and turtle tracking data in conjunction with VMS and catch, effort and location data derived from ICAAT conducted to examine potential overlaps	2											
8.4	By-catch risk assessments ground-truthed by the at-sea observer monitoring over 250,000 hooks	6											
8.5	Circulation of report to stakeholders and development into a peer-reviewed paper(s)	3											
Output 9	Project team completes tasks and prepares long-term exit strategy												
9.1	Development of at least 3 SAPs and 2 HAPs for marine biodiversity within the NBAP framework	3											

Activity	No of Months	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9.2 Integrated of data into a GIS platform as a basis for future marine spatial planning	2												
9.3 Submission of final project report and production of a policy paper on inshore fisheries for AIG	3												

CERTIFICATION

On behalf of the company of Ascension Island Government

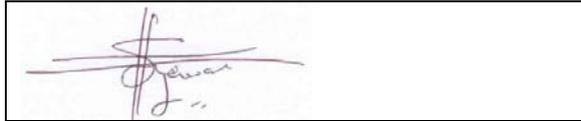
I apply for a grant of £261,087 in respect of **all expenditure** to be incurred during the lifetime of this project based on the activities and dates specified in the above application.

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 lead institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)*

I enclose CVs for project principals and letters of support. Our most recent audited/independently verified accounts and annual report are also enclosed/can be found at (delete as appropriate):

Name (block capitals)	HAMISH STEWART
Position in the organisation	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND CEO OF ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT

Signed



Date:

23/09/2013

Application Checklist for submission

	Check
Have you read the Guidance Notes ?	X
Have you checked the Darwin Plus website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates?	X
Have you provided actual start and end dates for your project?	X
Have you provided your budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP?	X
Have you checked that your budget is complete , correctly adds up and that you have included the correct final total on the top page of the application?	X
Has your application been signed by a suitably authorised individual? (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable in the email)	X
Have you included a 1 page CV for all the principals?	X
Have you included a letter of support from the <u>main</u> partner(s) organisations?	X
Have you included a copy of the last 2 years' annual report and accounts for the lead organisation? An electronic link to a website is acceptable.	X

Once you have answered the questions above, please submit the application, not later than midnight GMT at the end of Monday 23 September 2013 to Darwin-Applications@ltsi.co.uk using the first few words of the project title **as the subject of your email**. If you are e-mailing supporting documentation separately please include in the subject line an indication of the number of e-mails you are sending (e.g. whether the e-mail is 1 of 2, 2 of 3 etc). You are not required to send a hard copy.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998: Applicants for grant funding must agree to any disclosure or exchange of information supplied on the application form (including the content of a declaration or undertaking) which the Department considers necessary for the administration, evaluation, monitoring and publicising of Darwin Plus. Application form data will also be held by contractors dealing with Darwin Plus monitoring and evaluation. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that personal data can be supplied to the Department for the uses described in this paragraph. A completed application form will be taken as an agreement by the applicant and the grant/award recipient also to the following:- putting certain details (i.e. name, contact details and location of project work) on the Darwin Initiative and Defra/FCO/DFID websites (details relating to financial awards will not be put on the websites if requested in writing by the grant/award recipient); using personal data for the Darwin Initiative postal circulation list; and sending data to Governor's Offices outside the UK, including posts outside the European Economic Area. Confidential information relating to the project or its results and any personal data may be released on request, including under the Environmental Information Regulations, the code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.