

# The Darwin Initiative



## FAQs & Common Issues



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



# Eligibility



- Word counts will be strictly enforced
- Supporting docs including:
  - Letters of support
  - Last 2 years signed/audited accounts
  - Budget table (matches request and certification in application)
  - Past experience and awards (if new to DI as a lead) including contacts for references
  - CVs for key personnel

# Darwin objectives



- Which convention & why
  - CITES is only relevant for specific trade projects (reduce overzealous ticking!) and not just because you are working on a CITES listed species
  - Can you demonstrate communication with the Convention focal point – perhaps by letter?

# Finances



- Does the budget add up and is the same figure on the application form?
- Large % matched finance unsecured – risky
- It is good to see a significant % of funds going directly to host country partners/costs
- % of funds on M&E (up to 5%)
- Capital costs <10%
- ‘Other’ explain
- ‘Consultancy costs’ explain
- Make sure you only include audit costs for the lead organisation and only in the last FY

# Project team expertise



- Include CVs or ToRs of team members critical to delivery
- Ensure skills presented match the work proposed
- Tailor CVs to ensure skills are clear – e.g. avoid long lists of publications
- Relate CVs presented to budget table i.e. roles or names
- Avoid submitting teams with too many ‘TBC’ posts

# Monitoring and evaluation



- Weak theory of change – solutions don't match problems outlined
- Failure to provide outcome indicators for both biodiversity and poverty (if DFID)
- Does not demonstrate how you will measure what has changed i.e. not SMART
- Measure progress throughout not just the final few months
- Untested assumptions that are critical
- Setting a target when there is no baseline
- Not clear *who* will undertake M&E or *when*

# Other common issues



- Partnerships – new partnerships vs old and time taken to establish working relationships
- Avoid ‘boiler plate’ letters of support
- Don’t underestimate how long it may take at project start up to finalise agreements, visas, staff recruitment etc.
- Attribution vs contribution and measuring change
- Research projects with unclear communication strategies i.e. who is the audience, how will they use the results, when will they be engaged etc.

# Other issues cont.



- Don't assume the reviewer can read your mind – decisions are made on the evidence you provide in your application so be clear how you will address the Convention, or what species you will be working with
- Equity – have you considered it?
- If the project is part of a larger programme explain the distinctiveness of Darwin
- Respond to feedback – cover letter or within text
- Make use of graphics or web links if you have more to say and cannot reduce your word count any further
- Open access – how will outputs be published so others can access?



# Questions?

