The Darwin Initiative

FAQs & Common Issues:
the 'easy wins'

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Funded by
UK Government

Administrative Eligibility

- Word counts are strictly enforced in Flexi-Grant
- Supporting docs including:
  - **Cover letter** outlining how you have responded to feedback from St1
  - **Letters of support** *including applicant organisation* – in one pdf document (partners, govt, stakeholders…)
  - Last *2* sets of **signed/audited accounts** *in English and currency clear*
  - **Budget table** (matches request and certification in application)
  - Past experience and awards (if new to IWT as a lead) including contacts for **references**
  - **CVs** for key personnel: *partners and project teams* – in one pdf document

Meeting Darwin objectives

- Outlined in full in guidance
- Which convention & why
  - Be specific about which objectives you will be contributing towards
  - CITES is *only* relevant for specific trade projects 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

- Do the figures on the application and spreadsheet match?

- Large % matched funding unsecured – risky

- It is good to see a significant % of funds going directly to host country partners/costs – but no specified amount

- PL normally at least 10% of their time, if not clearly explain why

- % of funds on M&E (between 5% and 10%)

- Capital costs normally <10% otherwise clearly justify in text

- 'Consultancy costs' and 'Other' – provide adequate detail

- Make sure you only include audit costs for the lead organisation and only in the last FY – up to £2,000

- Refer to Finance for Darwin&IWT document

- Allow for exchange rates to fluctuation – but no 'contingency'

Attention to Risk - Financial

Ensure you fully consider the risks and threats to your project including

- – Fraud
- – Bribery
- – Misappropriate of funds e.g. ineligible allowances, arithmetical errors, lack of reconciliation of funds
- – Exchange rate fluctuations
- – Recruitment delays leading to shift in timescales and funds being approved for the wrong financial year

These are different to the Assumptions in the logframe which may also include

- – Staff retention and reliance on key people
- – Natural disasters e.g. weather, disease, physical
- – Change of government/partner personnel

Project team expertise

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

Monitoring and evaluation

Common problems that could be avoided

- Setting a target when there is no baseline

"with the exception of one outcome level income indicator, the logframe is devoid of targets. With no indication of project scope or targets, it is not possible to assess sustainability of the proposal"

- Including *untested* assumptions that are critical

"It would be good to have an assurance that producers are willing to work with the project, rather than this appearing as an Assumption"

- Not being clear *who* will undertake M&E or *when*

Monitoring and evaluation

Common problems that could be avoided

- Failure to provide outcome indicators for *both* biodiversity *and* poverty

- Measure progress *throughout,* not just the final few months

"Outputs 1-4 don't have any interim milestones (i.e. start and end line only) and so tracking progress will be difficult"

- Does not demonstrate how you will *measure* what has changed i.e. not SMART

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Avoiding common issues on Flexi-Grant

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Flexi-Grant FAQs

I have completed by application, but I can't see the "submit" button.

If you are not the lead applicant, you will not be able to submit the application. Ensure the lead applicant has access near the submission deadline so that they can submit the application. Remove co-applicants if they haven't marked inputs as complete so that you can submit.

I am not the lead applicant but would like to be – how do I do this?

The person who started the application or who is currently the lead applicant needs to make you the lead applicant – only the current lead applicant and LTS administrators have the power to change the lead applicant.

I use Flexi-Grant for other grant schemes and they require another stage of sign off – do you have this stage?

No, we have not configured an additional sign off stage for our application forms. We do ask that applicants complete the certification page but we leave it up to you to manage any other necessary sign-off stages internally.

For all of the above, if you continue to have problems, please get in touch.

Matched-Funding

Q5. Project dates

Start date:

[dd/mm/yyyy] 📅 *

End date:

[dd/mm/yyyy] 📅 *

Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):

[   ] *

Q6. Budget summary

Year:	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total request
Amount:	[ ] *	[ ]	[ ]	£0.00

Q6a. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

◉ Yes

○ No   *

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

[   ]

Q6b. Proposed (confirmed and unconfirmed) matched funding as % of total project cost (total cost is the Darwin request plus other funding required to run the project).   [   ] *

Ensure dates are eligible for funding under this round

Budget figures here should match full budget spreadsheet

For matched funding, the % should be of the **total** project cost (not compared to the Darwin request)
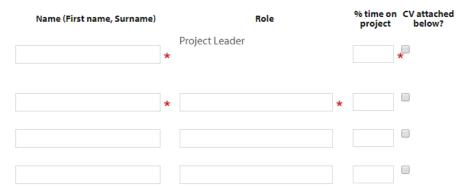
Q10. Key project personnel

Please identify the core staff on this project, their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Please provide 1 page CVs for these staff, or a 1 page job description or Terms of Reference for roles yet to be filled. Please include more rows where necessary. These should match the names and roles in the budget spreadsheet.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	CV attached below?
_____ *	Project Leader	____ *	☐
_____ *	_____ *	____	☐
_____	_____	____	☐
_____	_____	____	☐

Do you require more fields?

○ Yes

◉ No

Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the Project staff listed above. Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

Choose your file(s)	or drag and drop files here to upload
File name	Date uploaded	Action

Make sure that the staff names here match the names in the budget

This is for project staff key for delivery – no need to list **all** staff

For anyone named here:

- 1 page CV must be provided

- If funded, permission needed to change

Q12. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q12a. Your project must support the objectives of one or more of the agreements listed below.

Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported and describe which objectives your project will address and how.

N.B: projects supporting more than one will not achieve a higher score.
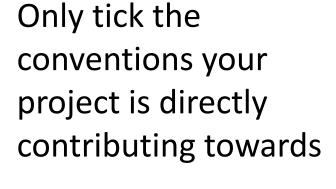
- ☐ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ☐ Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)
- ☐ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- ☐ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- ☐ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- ☐ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)
- ☐ Convention on Climate Change (CCC)
- ☐ Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Q12b. Biodiversity Conventions

Please detail how your project will contribute to the objectives of the agreement(s) your project is targeting. You should refer to Articles or Programmes of work here.

N.B: No additional significance will be ascribed for projects that report contributions to more than one agreement.

*

You have entered 0 words (500 words max)

Only tick the conventions your project is directly contributing towards

Don't just list relevant agreements – sign-post **how** your project is contributing towards these
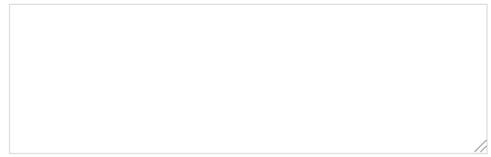
Additional materials

Q13. Methodology

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

- How you have analysed historical and existing initiatives and are building on or taking work already done into account in project design. Please cite evidence where appropriate.
- The rationale for carrying out this work and a justification of your proposed methodology.
- How you will undertake the work (materials and methods).
- How you will manage the work (roles and responsibilities, project management tools, etc.).

Please make sure you read the Guidance Notes before answering this question.

(This may be a repeat from Stage 1, but you may update or refine as necessary)

You have entered 0 words (500 words max)

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

Choose your file(s)	or drag and drop files here to upload	
File name	Date uploaded	Action

Methodology should be clear and link to logframe

Additional links/maps/ToC (for example) can be included as **one pdf** – but be reasonable!

They must not be used as a means of providing additional information or avoiding word limits!

Gender and sustainability

Q15. Gender

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender. Explain how your project will collect gender disaggregated data and what impact your project will have in promoting gender equality.

*

You have entered 0 words (300 words max)

Q19. Exit Strategy

State whether or not the project will reach a stable and sustainable end point. If the project is not discrete, but is part of a progressive approach, give details of the exit strategy and show how relevant activities will be continued to secure the benefits from the project. Where individuals receive advanced training, for example, what will happen should that individual leave?

*

You have entered 0 words (200 words max)

More on **gender** later – but make this specific to your project, not your organisation!

Sustainability is important. Short term exit strategy could include additional funding, but also consider longer term sustainability if so.

Other common issues

- Partnerships take time – new partnerships vs old and time taken to establish working relationships
- Avoid 'template' 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
  - "high level of matched funding means attribution of achievements to DI funding will be challenging"
- Consider how project results will be taken up (policy and research projects common offenders!). Communication strategies should be clear and consider who the audience is, how they will use the results, when they will be engaged etc.

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Your questions!