



Pre-Application Webinar

Darwin Initiative - Round 30 Capability & Capacity



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS

Agenda



- Welcome & Introductions
- Introduction to Darwin Initiative
- Capability & Capacity Scheme Introduction
- Objectives and Requirements
- Case Studies
- Overview of application process
- Questions



Poll

Welcome & Introductions



UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

- Ben Yexley – Darwin Initiative Lead - Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs)

NIRAS – Fund Administrators

- Billy Curryer – BCFs Fund Manager
- Eilidh Young – Darwin Initiative Fund day-to-day contact
- Victoria Pinion – BCFs Programme Manager
- Andy East – BCFs Communications and Workshops Lead

Darwin Initiative



The **Darwin Initiative** is a **competitive grant scheme**. It is managed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and is one of the **Biodiversity Challenge Funds** (Darwin Initiative, IWT Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus).

The intended impact of Darwin Initiative is that the rates of biodiversity loss and degradation are slowed, halted or reversed, with associated reductions in multidimensional poverty.

The fund is supported through Official Development Assistance (ODA) commonly known as overseas aid.

Darwin Initiative Schemes



There are currently 4 funding schemes under the Darwin Initiative:

- Extra
- Main
- Innovation
- **Capability and Capacity (C&C)**

Applications currently open for Extra, Innovation and C&C under Round 30.

Each scheme has different eligible durations and grant funding amounts, and also supports different types of projects – **it is important your proposed project fits the type of project your scheme supports.**

This webinar focuses on Capability & Capacity projects only. Information on the other schemes can be found in the Guidance for Applicants available at:

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/apply/>

Capability & Capacity Scheme



Overall aim of Capability & Capacity scheme is **developing the capability and capacity of identified local and national organisations** (civil society, research institutes and public bodies) to **efficiently deliver effective and successful biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction projects.**

Activities can include:

- Structured training
- Fellowships
- Work placements
- Mentoring
- Organisational development
- Network-building

Where justified, activities can include **limited practical application of new skills and knowledge** to embed them, but the grant must **retain overall focus on capability and capacity building.**

Types of Projects Supported



Projects should:

- work in **eligible countries** as outlined in the guidance
- deliver outputs that will achieve **both biodiversity conservation and multidimensional poverty reduction**
- enhance the **capability and capacity** of national and local partners/ and stakeholders, to help ensure a project's long-term legacy – this is an objective for *all* Darwin Initiative projects but a particular focus for C&C projects
- strengthen, promote and use **evidence** to inform and scale the action
- implement a **novel** or **significantly improved approach**
- consider **scalability** of approaches that have the potential to deliver greater impact

Project Objectives



The application guidance outlines all key requirements including:

- Gender equality and social inclusion
- Value for money
- Ethics
- Safeguarding
- Human rights
- Open access
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Risk Framework

DARCC012 - Capacity for Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) for Sustainable Development in Ghana

- Lead: WCMC; Partner(s): Ghana Statistical Service.
- Aim: to build capacity for producing, championing and using natural capital accounts to better integrate biodiversity into Ghana's sectoral policy-making and development planning.

Why this project scored well at application stage:

- Project builds on past successful support to develop capacity in Uganda.
- Responds to a request for support from the Government of Ghana.
- Well-described links to a wider World Bank project.
- Identifies and works towards the CBD and National Biodiversity Strategy.
- The pathway to change clearly demonstrates how the project will lead to biodiversity/poverty benefits.

C&C Case Studies II



DARCC017 - Strengthening a leading NGO for conservation and development in Senegal

- Lead: RSPB; Partner(s): Nature-Communautés-Développement (NCD)
- Aim: to consolidate and strengthen NCD's organisational capacity, technical skills and network of influence to directly impact on biodiversity conservation in Senegal

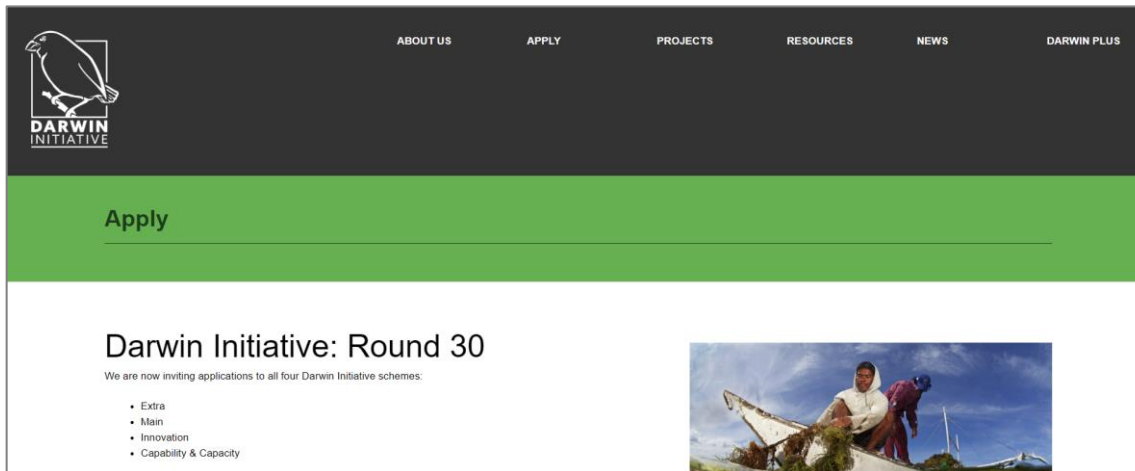
Why this project scored well at application stage:

- Project will be implemented in an important biodiversity area, and will address a clear capacity gap.
- Concept has been designed using rigorous prior work and track record.
- Project team has good expertise and background knowledge.
- The approach seems highly collaborative.
- Intended outcomes are well defined and realistic.

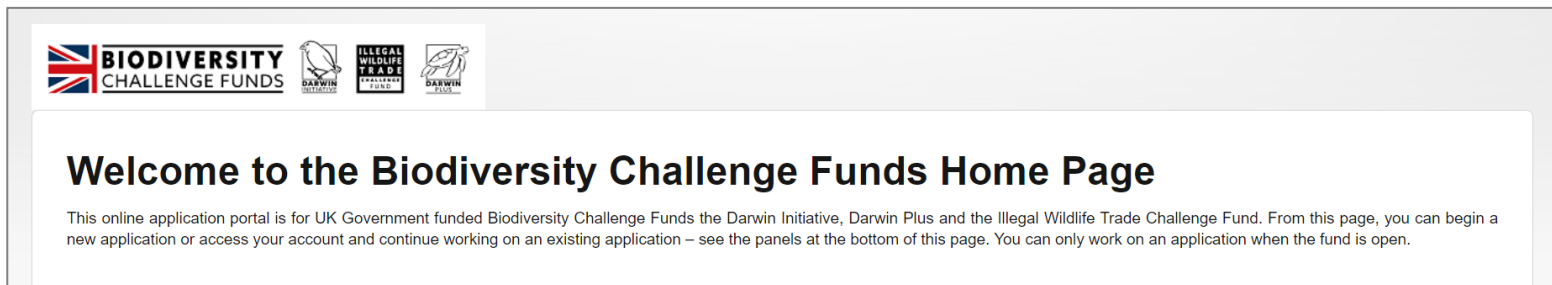
How to Apply



Application guidance and application form templates can be found here: <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/apply/>



Applications **must be submitted** via the online application portal Flexi-Grant: <https://itsi.flexigrant.com/>



Application Process



Read the Round 30 guidance documents:

- Guidance for applicants
- Finance guidance
- Flexi-Grant Guidance
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance
- Standard Indicator Guidance
- Risk Management Guidance
- Terms & Conditions
- Privacy Notice

Application Process



- Word application form for drafting purposes only
- Register on Flexi-Grant and confirm you have access ahead of the deadline
- Applications must be submitted by the Lead Applicant on Flexi-Grant
- **Deadline for applications:** 22:59 GMT (23:59 BST) Monday 23rd October 2023
- If you have questions, the guidance has most of the answers. But if you can't find the answer you are looking for or are having any problems, please **contact us:**
 - BCF-Darwin@niras.com for general queries
 - BCF-Flexigrant@niras.com for Flexi-Grant specific questions

Key Application Requirements



- A complete application form, which answers the questions asked, submitted via Flexi-Grant - **required**
- Capability & Capacity has a Single Stage application process.
- Projects must be:
 - Between 1-2 years
 - Between £50,000 - £200,000
- Supporting material in format and within the page limit guidelines set
- Word counts and page limits are strictly enforced by eligibility checks
- Past experience and awards (if new as a lead) including contacts for references (all in application – no uploads)
- Ensure you **check websites for any updates to templates etc before submission**

Key Application Requirements



Supporting docs including (see Guidance for full list):

Cover Letter	Required for all – 2 pages in PDF format
Logframe	No logframe required but Indicators of Success (simplified logframe) included in app form
Budget Table	Required on our template. N.B. different templates for <£100k & >£100k (matches request and certification in application)
Workplan	Required on our template
CVs	Required for key personnel: <i>partners and project teams</i> – in one PDF document
Letters of Support	Required - <i>including applicant organisation</i> – in one PDF document (partners, government, stakeholders...)
Account Copies	Require last 2 sets of signed/audited accounts <i>in English & currency clear</i>
Safeguarding Policy	Required - Lead Partner's Safeguarding and associated policies
Additional Material	Optional – up to 5 pages only, could include a map, list of references or Theory of Change. If you submit more than 5 pages your application will be rejected as ineligible.

Finances - Budget

- PL normally expected 10% or more on project: if less please clarify
- 'Consultancy costs' and 'Other' – provide adequate detail
- Capital costs normally <10% otherwise clearly justify in text
- Allow for exchange rates to fluctuation – but no 'contingency'



Finances – Audit Costs



- Make sure you only request audit costs for the Lead Partner: check T&Cs for requirements and totals you can claim
- Projects under £100,000 – provide a statement of grant usage, up to £2,000 in last FY of project
- Projects between £100,000 and £599,999 - up to £3,000 in last FY of project
- Always include audit costs, even if funded from other sources.



Matched Funding – in Flexi-Grant



Example from the application form

Q8. Budget summary

Year:	2024/25	2025/26	Total request
Amount:	* £0.00	* £0.00	£0.00

*Q9. Do you have proposed matched funding arrangements?

Yes
 No

Please ensure you clearly outline your matched funding arrangement in the budget.

Q10. 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?

You have entered 0 words (100 words max)

- Ensure dates are eligible for this round
- Budget figures should match spreadsheet and certification
- For matched funding, the % should be of the **total** project cost (not compared to the Darwin request) i.e. if the Darwin % of total project cost is 70% then matched funding is 30%
- Large % matched funding unsecured is risky - we ask you to outline how you will manage if this is not secured

Finances – General



- It is good to see a significant % of funds going directly to host country partners/costs – but no specified amount
- Consider budget spread across FYs
- T&S - include testing/quarantine costs if needed, but assumed less likely now. You cannot increase the budget later.
- % of funds on M&E (between 5% and 10%)
- Refer to Finance Guidance



Attention to Risk - Financial



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

- Fraud
- Bribery
- Misappropriation of funds e.g. ineligible allowances, arithmetical errors, lack of reconciliation of funds
- Exchange rate fluctuations. You cannot increase the budget later
- Recruitment delays leading to shift in timescales and funds being approved for the wrong financial year
- Ongoing effects of Covid e.g. travel, partner income etc

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

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

Poll

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 or pen portraits



Project Team – in Flexi-Grant



Example from the application form

Q30. 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?
* <input type="text"/>	Project Leader	* <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* <input type="text"/>	* <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you require more fields?

Yes

No

- Make sure that staff names here match the names and roles in the budget
- This is for project staff key for delivery – no need to list **all** staff (up to 12 slots). If more than 12 needed, provide a full table with CV pdf
- For anyone named here:
 - Max. 1 page CV must be provided
 - If funded, permission needed to change

Project Partners



- Partners vs stakeholders – partners have explicit project governance role
- Clear evidence of buy-in from partners is needed through provision of Letters of Support
- Important that listed partners actually reflect true partnerships – are they critical to project delivery and involved in project management/decision making? (vs stakeholders who may well be involved but not actually delivering activities)
- Evidence of support from the eligible country government is particularly critical

Letters of Support



Avoid 'template' letters of support. Strong letters of support are expected to include the following elements:

- The extent to which partners have been involved in the development of the proposal
- An outline of how the proposed work aligns with organisational priorities **and** the priorities of the country
- Information on the capacity of partners to support the project
- Specify actual level of support e.g. any matched funding your organisation is proposing, either financially or in kind
- English or translation required (doesn't need to be certified)

Risk Framework



Q19. 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, 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 Register Template](#)

Definitions:

Fiduciary (financial): funds not used for intended purposes or not accounted for (fraud, corruption, mishandling or misappropriated).

Safeguarding: 'doing harm' incl. sexual exploitation abuse and harassment, safety and welfare, or unintended harm to beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff.

Delivery Chain: the overall risk associated with your delivery model.

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
* Fiduciary (financial) <input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (2 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)
* Safeguarding <input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (2 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)
* Delivery Chain <input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (2 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)
* Risk 4 <input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (2 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (50 words max)	<input type="text"/> You have entered 0 words (1 words max)

Risk management

- 6 key risks need to be included in the app form table
- 3 mandatory risk categories – fiduciary, safeguarding and delivery chain
- 3 other risks

Additional Materials



* Q14. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended capability and capacity 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 these will take place.
- how you will manage the work (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).
- what practical elements will be included to embed new capabilities.

You have entered 0 words (750 words max)

Methodology should be clear and link to logframe

Additional links/maps/ToC (for example) can be included as **one PDF** – but be reasonable! **5-page limit**

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

The Assessment Process



- Eligibility checks of all applications received
- Assessment by Darwin Expert Committee:
 - **Technical Merit** (0-6 points)
 - **Capability & Capacity** (0-6 points)

The assessment criteria are in the Guidance Document – read these!

- Supplementary assessment on high scoring applications focused on M&E and anticipated poverty reduction impact – this helps inform your feedback
- Meeting where applications are discussed and recommended – Defra makes final decisions based on these recommendations
- Results letters prepared and issued. Not all applications receive feedback – particularly low scoring applications may not receive feedback. We seek to provide feedback to as many applicants as possible

Top Tips



Don't leave it to the last minute!

- Ensure you **read the guidance** thoroughly
- Write clearly and concisely
- Answer the questions – once you've responded read back again!
- **Do not exceed word counts** and pay attention to basic eligibility requirements like **budget limits** and **eligible dates**
- Have someone else read your application – does it make sense to them?
- Remember the reviewers are people too – don't overly rely on acronyms, ensure they are explained at first use
- Assume no local or prior knowledge

Top Tips



- Consider how your **budget spread** is between relevant Financial Years – i.e. ensure you have budget in all years for the dates proposed
- Submit all the supporting material in format and within the page limit guidelines set and not submit things which haven't been requested as your application will be **rejected as ineligible**
- Ensure your project is **clearly aligned to the objectives of the scheme submit by the deadline** – only the lead applicant can submit so make sure they are available!
- Only submit your best application! If you are considering submitting multiple applications, we highly recommend that you only submit the strongest ones from your organisation
- Ensure you read the guidance thoroughly, but don't be shy to reach out if you have questions:
 - BCF-Darwin@niras.com for general queries
 - BCF-Flexigrant@niras.com for Flexi-Grant specific questions



Questions

Follow for Updates



Make sure to follow our BCF socials:



[@Biodiversity Challenge Funds](https://www.linkedin.com/company/biodiversity-challenge-funds)



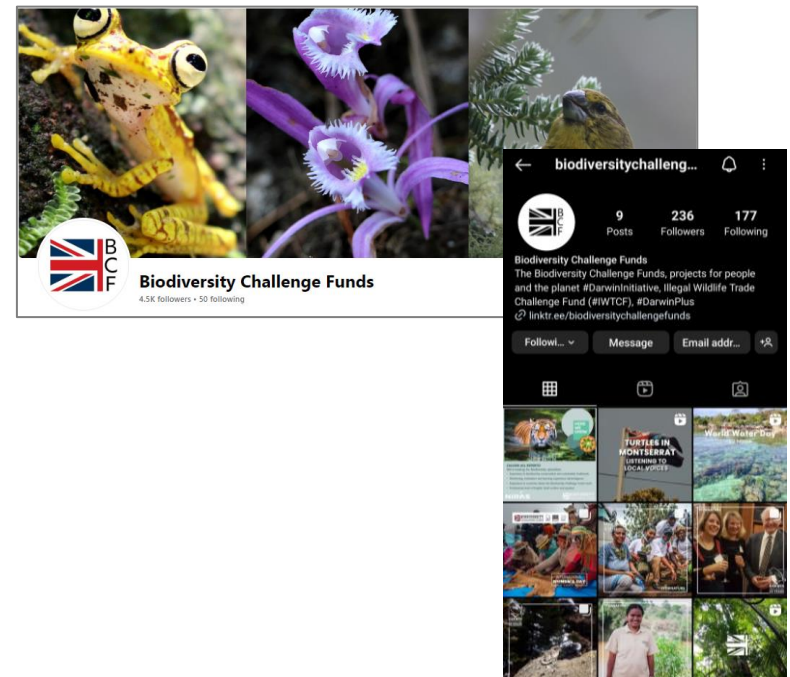
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Thank you and good luck!



Deadline: 22:59 GMT (23:59 BST) Monday 23rd October 2023

All applications should be submitted via the [Flexi-Grant](#) portal.

If you have any questions, please contact us on the below:

- Darwin Initiative: BCF-Darwin@niras.com
- For Flexi-Grant specific queries: BCF-Flexigrant@niras.com