



Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators 2.2 Guidance

July 2026

This document represents the latest version of the Standard Indicator Guidance and Menu, incorporating updates and refinements since Version 2.1.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
BCFs	Biodiversity Challenge Funds
DI	Darwin Initiative
DPLUS	Darwin Plus
ICF	International Climate Fund
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoV	Means of Verification
OECD	Other Effective Conservation Measure
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
SI	Standard Indicator
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

A glossary of key MEL terms can be found in Annex A.

Watch our BCFs Standard Indicator Guidance Video which can be found on the [MEL Resources page](#) for a brief explanation of what the Standard Indicators are and what is needed to report to them.

Project Indicators and Standard Indicators

Project Indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) – see our BCFs MEL Guidance, available on our website, for more details <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning/>. Project Indicators enable rigorous project-level MEL, with each project team being required to select their own highly specific and relevant Project Indicators.

Standard Indicators are more general. In sacrificing some of the specificity and relevance of Project Indicators, Standard Indicators allow us to aggregate the results of a diverse array of projects. This enables a better understanding fund-level contributions to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, and to facilitate a collective contribution to the global evidence base.

The Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators are closely linked to the Outcome and Outputs in Darwin Initiative's own fund-level Theory of Change and logframe. Some of the indicators will be used across the BCFs i.e. you will also find them in the IWT Challenge Fund Standard Indicators and the Darwin Plus Standard Indicators.

The diagram below provides an outline of an idealised process of indicator selection, and shows that your selection of Standard Indicators should be done as the final step in this process.

1. Using the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Guidance available on our website, first develop your Impact statement (where relevant), Outcome, Outputs and Activities in your project logframe.
2. Next, develop your project indicators ensuring they are SMART (see the *MEL Guidance* and *How to develop SMART Indicators guidance* on our fund Websites). We recommend consulting the [BCFs Indicator Library](#) and other sources for inspiration.
3. Finally, we recommend that you select Standard Indicators using this guidance note and menu.

While we have presented these steps sequentially here, it can be helpful to revisit your logframe following your selection of Project Indicators and Standard Indicators, to ensure that you have alignment between the indicators and your Outputs and Outcome.



1. How to select Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators

The Darwin Initiative menu of Standard Indicators is **designed to help you to select appropriate indicators according to the nature of your project**. The menu also provides guidance on which methodology, units and disaggregation measures to use to **help you plan your monitoring and evaluation** more effectively.

Browse the menu below: The menu is grouped by topic, which are determined according to the fund-level objectives for the Darwin Initiative.

Group A: Capability and Capacity

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices

Group D: Sustainable Livelihoods, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience

Select at least three Standard Indicators: Darwin Initiative projects are required to report against a minimum of three Standard Indicators. If you can report against more than three Standard Indicators, this is strongly encouraged. Try to select indicators from as many groups as is feasible for your project and its context. We understand that certain types of projects, including those funded under the Capability & Capacity Scheme, may find it impracticable to meet this requirement. If this is the case please include an explanatory note in the relevant section of your Application and Reporting Documents (see the FAQs in Section 0 for more detail). Where relevant and proportionate, projects are encouraged to report against indicators that feed into global frameworks or the fund's impact/outcome indicators, to strengthen global and fund-level reporting.

From Round 32, applicants to Darwin Initiative Main and Extra are required to include at least one biodiversity and one poverty indicator.

Ensure that you put in place appropriate plans to monitor these indicators: Develop a MEL Plan to ensure that you are monitoring your Standard Indicators alongside your Project Indicators (see the MEL Guidance on our website for detailed guidance). In many cases you can use the same Means of Verification (MoV) for both.

2. How to report on Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators

Reporting process: You will report your progress against all standard indicators in your Annual Reports and Final Report. The report templates will include tables for you to report your progress on indicators (see Table 1 below for an example).

Table 1. Example reporting table showing disaggregated reporting of results and planned figures

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2	People	Male, non-IPLC	20			20	60
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2	People	Female, non-IPLC	30			30	60
DI-B01	Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	1.3	Number of plans	New	1			1	2
DI-B01	Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	1.3	Number of plans	Improved	1			1	3

Timeframe: All indicators under Darwin Initiative should be reported in line with the standard reporting timeframe of UK financial years (1 April – 31 March).

Indicator number: Where Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators are used, you must always reference the indicator number e.g. **[DI-A01]**. Please note that we have a few umbrella-type indicators which serve to aggregate a number of sub-indicators (see DI-D01 and DI-D04 for examples). For these indicators, we ask that you try to report against the individual sub-indicators (e.g. DI-D01a or DI-D01b), as well as provide an aggregate figure. In doing so, be careful to avoid double-counting.

Example: In Table 2 below the project team has reported that 30 people have improved food security as a result of the project. Additionally, the same 30 people also have enhanced access to water. For the aggregate number of people with enhanced wellbeing, we only sum the number of people reported in the sub-indicators when the people included are different. If you are reporting gains across multiple areas of wellbeing for the same people, then the aggregate figure is not the sum and therefore does not include double-counting. However, if the people with improved food security are different to the people with enhanced access to water, then you can add them together to calculate the aggregate figure.

Table 2. Reporting against sub-indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-D04	Number of people with enhanced wellbeing	2.1	People	Female, non-IPLC	30			30	60
DI-D04a	Number of people with improved food security	2.1	People	Female, non-IPLC	20			20	60
DI-D04b	Number of people with enhanced access to water	2.1	People	, non-IPLC	30			30	60

Disaggregate your reporting: Each of the indicators has compulsory disaggregation suggested in the tables below. You must disaggregate your reporting against these (for example, sex and IPLC status for many indicators and country, if your project is working in more than one country). In your Project Indicators you may include more resolution in how you disaggregate your targets and reporting (for example, you may be interested to demonstrate the participation of people with disabilities or youth through age disaggregation) but this is not required when reporting against Standard Indicators. Further guidance on disaggregation for specific indicators can be found in the [methodologies on our MEL page](#).

Sex / Gender: Previously, our standard reporting required grantees to disaggregate beneficiary data by gender. To improve consistency and align with global reporting standards, we will be changing this requirement to sex (male and female) for all compulsory indicators. This shift focuses on biological sex rather than gender identity, ensuring comparability across projects while respecting diverse contexts. Where feasible and culturally appropriate, grantees may still collect additional information on gender identity or other intersectional factors, but this will be optional. Please ensure that data collection is based on self-reporting, handled sensitively, and explained clearly to participants to maintain privacy and trust.

Annualised results: Reporting against quantitative results should be in annual increments (i.e. Separate results reported for Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, etc.). See example in Table 3.

Table 3. Example of how to report results in successive years

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed	3.5	People	Male, non-IPLC	20	20		40	60

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
	structured and relevant training in sustainable livelihood skills								
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training in sustainable livelihood skills	3.5	People	Female, non-IPLC	20	20		40	60

No double-counting: We ask that you pay close attention to the wording of the indicators. For example, for indicators that measure the number of people who have received training, do not include the same person more than once, even in cases where they have received multiple trainings on different topics. During instances where you are reporting improved capability and capacity, you may report on both the number of individuals as well as the number of organisations that have benefited. This is not considered double-counting.

Aggregation of logframe indicators into Standard Indicators: When you complete the annual report, where multiple indicators in your logframe contribute to the same standard indicator (SI), aggregate them under a single entry, listing all the outputs / outcomes that are included in the aggregated total, ensuring that no beneficiary, organisation, land area, or training instance is counted twice. This ensures consistency and accuracy in tracking progress across your project. See Table 4Table 4.

Table 4: Example annual report

SI Number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 1.4, 2.6	People	Male, non-IPLC	20	10		30	60
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.2, 1.4, 2.6	People	Female, non-IPLC	30	5		35	60

Percentages vs numbers: When reporting results, please provide absolute numbers rather than percentages. This approach allows for clearer measurement and comparison of actual achievements against targets.

Indicators feeding into Global KPIs: When reporting to Standard Indicators that feed into either the Defra International or International Climate Fund (ICF) KPIs please ensure to review the [methodologies on our MEL page](#) to check that the process for collecting the data meets their requirements.

3. The Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator Menu

Group A: Capability and Capacity

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator	Units	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training ¹ .	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ² status (IPLC, other)	ICF KPI 2
DI-A02	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed secondments or placements ³ .	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ⁴ status (IPLC, other)	ICF KPI 2
DI-A03	Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity.	Number of organisations	Country; Organisation Type (public, private, other)	
DI-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ⁵ status (IPLC, other)	ICF KPI 2
DI-A05	Number of trainers trained under the project reporting to have delivered further training.	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ⁶ status (IPLC, other)	ICF KPI 2

¹ Where possible also show alongside the indicator the number of total training-weeks aggregated across all people trained. A training week is defined as one that involves at least 30 hours of tuition/ training per week. Below 30 hours, training weeks should be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

² Per IPBES (2020) <https://www.ipbes.net/glossary-tag/indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities>

The term “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” and its acronym “IPLC” are widely used by international organizations and conventions to refer to individuals and groups who self-identify as indigenous or as members of distinct local communities. We adopt this terminology with particular emphasis on those who “maintain an inter-generational historical connection to place and nature through livelihoods, cultural identity, languages, worldviews, institutions, and ecological knowledge”.

³ Minimum of 1 month placement/secondment per person. Please show career level and total placement months aggregated for all people.

⁴ See footnote 2 for definition

⁵ See footnote 2 for definition

⁶ See footnote 2 for definition

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator	Units	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-B01	Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed ⁷ .	Number of plans	Country; Type (new, improved)	
DI-B02	Number of new or improved species management plans available and endorsed*.	Number of plans	Country; Type (new, improved)	
DI-B03	Number of new or improved community management plans available and endorsed*.	Number of plans	Country; Type (new, improved)	
DI-B04	Number of new or improved sustainable livelihoods/ poverty reduction management plans available and endorsed*.	Number of plans	Country; Type (new, improved)	
DI-B05	Number of people with increased participation in governance.	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ⁸ status (IPLC, other); Governance structure (New; Existing)	
DI-B06	Number of people with strengthened land tenure rights.	Number of people,	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ⁹ status (IPLC, other)	Defra International KPI 8
DI-B07	Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended ¹⁰ .	Number of instruments	Country; Type (enacted, amended)	Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome

⁷ * Endorsed by a third party to demonstrate an independent assessment has been made, and the plan is considered viable and ready for implementation. Implementation or Outcome can be reported under Group D Indicators.

⁸ See footnote 2 for definition

⁹ See footnote 2 for definition

¹⁰ With direct attribution to project's evidence or activities.

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator	Units	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-C01	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products ¹¹ published and endorsed ¹² .	Number	Country, Language	
DI-C02	Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published ¹³ .	Number	Country; Taxa (Flora/Fauna/Fungi)	
DI-C03	New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.	Number, Area	Country, Biome ¹⁴	
DI-C04	New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.	Number	Country	
DI-C05	Number of contributions (incl. data, insights, and case studies) to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.	Number	Country; Information type (data, insights, case studies, other)	
DI-C06	Reach and engagement generated by project-funded social media content.	Number	Platform, country, content type (Reach, impressions, engagement rate, link clicks)	
DI-C07	Number of webinar attendees ¹⁵ .	Number	Country; Sex (male, female)	
DI-C08	Number of Media related activities.	Number of activities	Country; Media type (Internet, Print, Radio,	

¹¹ Technical/programmatic guides, for example: working with marginalised communities, gender best practices, developing enterprises, programme management etc. Can include written and verbal best practices guides, webinars, briefings.

¹² Endorsed by a third party to demonstrate an independent assessment has been made, and the plan is considered viable and ready for implementation.

¹³ Avoid double counting.

¹⁴ Use the list of Biomes in the IUCN Ecosystem Typology (<https://global-ecosystems.org/>): Tropical-subtropical forests; Temperate-boreal forests & woodlands; Shrublands & shrubby woodlands; Savannas and grasslands; Deserts and semi-deserts; Polar-alpine; Intensive land-use systems; Subterranean lithic systems; Subterranean freshwaters; Anthropogenic subterranean freshwaters; Subterranean tidal systems; Palustrine wetlands; Rivers and streams; Lakes; Artificial fresh waters; Semi-confined transitional waters; Marine shelves; Pelagic ocean waters; Deep sea floors; Anthropogenic marine systems; Shoreline systems; Supralittoral coastal systems; Anthropogenic shorelines; Brackish tidal systems

¹⁵ Please see our website for more focused guidance on how to communicate the findings of your project

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator	Units	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
			Television, Podcast, Other)	
DI-C09	Number of records added to accessible databases.	Number of records	Country	
DI-C10	Number of decision-makers attending briefing events.	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ¹⁶ status (IPLC, other)	

¹⁶ See footnote 2 for definition

Group D: Sustainable Livelihoods, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator		Unit	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-D01	Area of land or sea under ecological management ¹⁷ .		Number of hectares ¹⁸	Aggregates the three indicators below	Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome
	a	Area under Sustainable Management Practices	Number of hectares	Country; Biome ¹⁹ ; Management type ²⁰	ICF KPI 17
	b	Area improved through restoration			Defra International KPI 1a
	c	Area newly designated as protected areas or other effective conservation measures (OECMs)			Defra International KPI 1b
DI-D02	Ecosystem Loss Avoided		Number of hectares	Country; Biome ²¹	Darwin Initiative Fund-level Impact, ICF KPI 8

¹⁷ You could draw inspiration from [ICF KPI 17 Methodology Note](#) “Hectares of land that have received sustainable land management practices”.

¹⁸ You can provide a % change figure as well, but we ask that this be accompanied by the absolute numbers in hectares, noting baseline values for clarity.

¹⁹ Use the list of Biomes in the IUCN Ecosystem Typology <https://global-ecosystems.org/> (This list of biomes is also in the footnotes on page 10 of this Guidance)

²⁰ Vegetation Management; Soil management; Water Management; Animal Management; Forest Management; Fisheries Management; Aquaculture; Coastal Management; Marine management; Freshwater Resources; Watershed/Freshwater management; Water Extraction; Restoration; Other

²¹ Use the list of Biomes in the IUCN Ecosystem Typology <https://global-ecosystems.org/> (This list of biomes is also in the footnotes on page 10 of this Guidance)

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator		Unit	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-D03	Number of people with enhanced livelihoods		Number of people	Aggregates the two indicators below	Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome ICF KPI 1
	a	Number of people with Sustainable Livelihoods created or protected	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ²² status (IPLC ²³ , other); Sector (Energy supply; Industrial processes; Business; Public; Residential; Transport; Agriculture; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Waste Management; Forestry; Land/sea Use or change; Water; Other)	Defra International KPI 7 Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome
	b	Number of people with improved income			Defra International KPI 9 Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome

²² See footnote 2 for definition

²³ See footnote 2 for definition

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator		Unit	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-D04	Number of people with enhanced wellbeing		Number of people	Aggregates the seven indicators below	ICF KPI 1 Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome
	a	Number of people with improved food security	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ²⁴ status (IPLC ²⁵ , other)	Defra International KPI 10
	b	Number of people with enhanced access to water			Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome
	c	Number of people with improved health			
	d	Number of people with improved education			
	e	Number of people with improved security			
	f	Number of people with improved social relations			
	g	Number of people with improved freedom of choice and action			
DI-D05	Number of people whose climate and disaster-resilience has been improved.		Number of people	Aggregates the two indicators below	Darwin Initiative Fund-level Outcome
	a	Number of people supported to better adapt to the effects of climate change	Number of people	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ²⁶ status (IPLC ²⁷ , other)	ICF KPI 1
	b	Number of people with improved resilience			ICF KPI 4

²⁴ See footnote 2 for definition

²⁵ See footnote 2 for definition

²⁶ See footnote 2 for definition

²⁷ See footnote 2 for definition

Ref. no.	Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator	Unit	Compulsory Disaggregation	Global Framework or Fund Impact/ Outcome
DI-D06	Value of Ecosystem Services Generated or Protected	£	Country; Sex (male, female); IPLC ²⁸ status (IPLC ²⁹ , other); Ecosystem Service (Cultural; Provisioning; Regulation and Maintenance) Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) received (PES received; PES not received)	
DI-D07	Number of threatened species with improving conservation status	Number of taxa	Country; Kingdom (Animal, Plant, Fungi)	
DI-D08	Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided	Tonnes of CO ₂	Avoided or reduced	ICF KPI 6

²⁸ See footnote 2 for definition

²⁹ See footnote 2 for definition

4. Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I use Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators?

Our indicators have been designed to help you effectively monitor and report on the progress of your projects. They are aligned with globally recognised standards, and provide guidance on the most appropriate units and disaggregation measures to use. The data generated will feed into our fund-level collation of data, as well as to the global evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction interventions.

I cannot find three Standard Indicators that are relevant or feasible in my project – what should I do?

There are some projects teams who may not be able to find three relevant Standard Indicators to report against. If this is the case, please include a note to alert us in your Application Form, or in your Annual Report or Final Report, in the section where you are required to specify which Standard Indicators have selected/report progress against them.

As a Round 32 Main/Extra applicant/grantee, I need to select at least one key poverty reduction and one key biodiversity Standard Indicator. Which ones are they?

The following indicators are strongly recommended as they align with Defra priorities and global frameworks. You should provide an expected target for at least one key **biodiversity** and one key **poverty** focused indicator which will be achieved by the end of your project.

It should be clear from your uploaded Theory of Change how these results map to your project's activities, Outputs and overall Outcome.

Biodiversity-focused indicators

- DI-B07: Number of policies with biodiversity provisions enacted or amended
- DI-D01: Area of land or sea under ecological management
 - including sub-indicators for sustainable practices, restoration, and new designations
- DI-D02: Ecosystem loss and degradation avoided
- DI-D07: Number of threatened species with improving conservation status

Poverty-focused indicators

- DI-D03: Number of people with enhanced livelihoods
 - Including sub-indicators for sustainable livelihoods created or protected, and number of people with improved income
- DI-D04: Number of people with enhanced wellbeing
 - Including sub-indicators for number of people with improved food security, access to water, health, education, security, social relations and freedom of choice and action
- DI-D05: Number of people whose climate and disaster resilience has improved
 - Including sub-indicator - Number of people supported to better adapt to the effects of climate change

I was reporting against and/or had adjusted my logframe to incorporate Standard Indicators that have now been removed from the menu – should I continue reporting against them?

If it is clear that these indicators help you to monitor the progress of your project, then we suggest that you continue to report against them as Project Indicators in your logframe. However, you do not need to include the reference (e.g. DI-A10) within your logframe. You should instead ensure you are reporting to at least three of the latest

Standard Indicators and report on them in the dedicated section of the AR and FR where we ask you to report against them.

The reference for a Standard Indictors I was using has changed in this new version of the guidance – which reference should I use?

The references in this version of the document are the latest version and should now be used. There is a table in the [BCFs Indicator Library](#) which helps cross reference between the old and new Standard Indicator references.

Can I edit the Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators to be more tailored to my project context?

We previously did encourage project teams to do this, but no longer. We now require you to have two separate classes of indicator: Project Indicators and Standard Indicators. While the wording for these two indicator classes may be aligned, Standard Indicators should be worded exactly how they are in this guidance. Project Indicators, however, should be developed and worded specifically for your project.

Can I use my own disaggregation measure(s) if there is not an appropriate one listed in the Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator?

Not for the Standard Indicators, which have clearly defined compulsory disaggregation as defined in this document. However, we do encourage you to use disaggregation in specific, meaningful ways when reporting against the Project Indicators in your logframe.

I plan to use the same indicator and same data across two different BCF projects. How do I report without double counting?

Consider whether the change expected is attributable to the activities of both projects, and if so, whether an argument can be made for either project playing a more significant role. If the indicator is applicable to both projects, be clear on the proportion of the result that is attributable to each project in your reporting. One way of determining this proportionality is by using the relative amount of funding allocated to either project.

I have chosen an indicator where the preferred methodology is not yet described in the indicator menu. How should I proceed?

For some of our indicators, the preferred methodology is still under development. When finalised, we will publish in the latest guidance document updates. Please proceed with your chosen methodology in the meantime, and share details of the methodology in your report (e.g. in means of verification).

My project was developed before the Standard Indicators were introduced. Do I have to change my indicators?

For those projects that were funded prior to the introduction of Standard Indicators in 2023, there is no need to report against them, unless it is easy to do so anyway. For those projects funded in 2023 or later (i.e. Rounds 29 and 30, and for applications to future funding rounds), we require you to report against a minimum of three Standard Indicators. See the table below for a breakdown of the requirements by Round.

Round	Need to report against Standard Indicators?
28 and earlier	Encouraged to
29 and later	Required to

If you have any questions not covered in this section, please do not hesitate to contact the BCFs team at BCF-Darwin@niras.com.

Annex A: Glossary of key terms

This glossary explains commonly used Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) terms as applied within the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs), including the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. The definitions are intended to be practical and proportionate, and to support consistent understanding among applicants and grantees.

Activities	The actions carried out by the project to effect the desired change and lead to outputs, outcomes and impact in the results chain.
Adaptive management	The practice of using monitoring, evaluation and learning findings to make informed adjustments to project design or implementation. Adaptive management recognises uncertainty and treats learning as an integral part of effective delivery.
Assumptions	The situations, events, conditions or decisions which are necessary for the success of the project, but are largely outside of the project's control.
Attribution	Assigning a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific activity or intervention.
Baseline	A description or measurement of the situation at the start of a project, against which change can be assessed over time. Baselines may be quantitative or qualitative and should be established early enough to support meaningful monitoring and evaluation.
Biodiversity	"Biological diversity" is the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs)	Biodiversity Challenge Funds. The collective name for Defra's Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus.
Capability & Capacity	Capability refers to the types of ability (skills and knowledge) required for a task; Capacity refers to the amount of ability at a point in time to deliver a task.
Country	Normally refers (unless otherwise stated) to any country on the eligible country list, and not countries such as the UK.
Defra	The Biodiversity Challenge Funds is a programme of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), UK Government.
Disaggregation	The breakdown of data into sub-groups, for example by sex, age, disability or Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) status. Disaggregation helps projects understand who is benefiting, who may be excluded, and whether results differ across groups.
Evaluation	The periodic assessment and analysis of the relevance, effectiveness and results of a project. Evaluation goes beyond tracking progress to examine what has changed, why changes have occurred, and what can be learned. Evaluation can be internal or external, light-touch or more in depth, and may take place at different stages of a project, for example mid-term or at project completion.
Evidence	Information that supports a claim. Ranges in format and in quality. Includes documented and undocumented experiences, data, studies, policies and practices. Particularly valued when it is reliable and valid.

Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Gender Equality is about addressing inequalities and transforming the distribution of opportunities, choices and resources available to girls, women and non-binary individuals so that they have equal power to shape their lives and participate in the process thereby increasing equality between people of all genders. Disability Inclusion refers to the process of identifying, removing, and preventing barriers that limit the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. It aims to enhance their access to opportunities, resources, services, and decision-making, enabling them to influence the social, economic, political, and cultural factors that affect their lives. It ensures that the rights, perspectives, needs, and contributions of persons with disabilities are recognised, respected, and meaningfully reflected in policies, programmes, and practices. Social Inclusion refers to the process of improving the terms of individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of people disadvantaged and historically excluded from decision making and spheres of influence on the basis of their identity to take part in society.
Indicators	An indicator is the quantitative or qualitative measure to track change and the achievement of a project output or outcome.
Inputs	Inputs are what you put in to a project (e.g. time, money, resources) to gain your expected outputs (e.g. increased knowledge, skill, awareness) and achieve your outcome (e.g. behaviour change and improved livelihoods).
Impact	The Impact is your project's long-term objective, and is often a contribution to a wider advance in the field, for example, in conservation and poverty reduction. Note that the Impact will not be achieved solely by the project and will often be achieved outside of the timeframe of the project.
Lead Organisation	The organisation who will administer the grant and coordinate the delivery of the project, accepting the Terms and Conditions of the Grant on behalf of the project.
Learning	The process of reflecting on evidence generated through monitoring and evaluation, and using it to inform decision-making, adaptation and future practice. Learning involves documenting insights, sharing them with relevant audiences, and applying them to improve project design, implementation or policy influence.
Livelihood	A livelihood comprises people, their capabilities and their means of living including food, income and assets. Assets may be tangible (e.g. resources and stores), or intangible (e.g. claims and assets). A livelihood is considered environmentally sustainable when it maintains or enhances the local and global assets on which the livelihood depends, and has net beneficial benefits on other livelihoods. A livelihood is socially sustainable where it can cope and recover from stress and shocks, and provide for future generations ³⁰ .
Logframe	Logical frameworks, commonly known as logframes, are a monitoring tool to measure progress against the Results Chain (Activities -> Outputs -> Outcome -> Impact), comparing planned and actual results using indicators, baselines, and targets.
Monitoring	The routine and systematic collection of data on project activities, outputs and progress against indicators. Monitoring helps project teams track whether implementation is on course, identify issues early, and provide timely information

³⁰ Chambers, R., Conway, G. and Brighton Institute of Development Studies, 1992. Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century (Vol. 296). Brighton: Institute of development studies.

	for project management and reporting. Within BCFs, monitoring is most closely associated with regular reporting against the logframe and Standard Indicators.
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)	A system of processes and tools used by project teams during design and delivery to improve project management, to enable learning, to demonstrate accountability, and to inform future conservation and development strategies.
NIRAS	Biodiversity Challenge Funds Administrator, and first point of contact for projects and applicants.
Outcome	The Outcome is a project's main objective. It is the change you expect to achieve as a result of and within the timeframe of this project. There can only be one Outcome for a project. It should identify what will change, and who will benefit. There should be a clear link between the Outcome and the Impact.
Outputs	Outputs are the specific, tangible results from the completion of more than one activity. Their delivery is totally attributable to your project; they would not happen without your project. Outputs will provide the conditions necessary to achieve your intended Outcome. Most projects will have three or four Outputs in order to achieve the intended Outcome.
Poverty	A pronounced deprivation in a person or group of people's wellbeing. Poverty can arise due to a person's lack of income, land, assets, resources or capabilities required to fulfil their basic needs and achieve their potential in society. Poverty also encompasses deficiencies in healthcare, security, education or the conditions in social relations required to foster cooperation and the collective advancement of sustainable livelihoods.
Results Chain	A tool to show the linear process of what a project is doing and why, through describing or visualising the steps in which inputs and activities lead to the desired change (i.e. through outputs, outcomes and impact).
Scaling	Expanding and sustaining approaches to achieve greater impact.
Stakeholder	A person, organisation or group of people who have an interest or concern in the project and its impact. They are consulted, engaged and/or participate in project activities. They can also be partners, but if not, they would not have a budget management, or a formal governance role, within the project.
Standard Indicator	A Standard Indicator is an indicator that can be used across multiple projects to allow us to aggregate our results across the Biodiversity Challenge Funds. The BCFs Standard Indicators are tightly linked to our fund-level Theories of Change and logframes and will allow us to track the achievements of the funds as a whole.
Theory of Change	A comprehensive tool to describe how a project will lead to a desired change by outlining the problem, the drivers, and the assumptions underlying the project activities and their expected outputs. Its explicit about the causal pathways, links between activities, outputs, outcome, and impact. Includes an analysis of barriers and enablers as well as indicators of success.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is a concept used to understand and measure the key components necessary for people to live the kind of life that they have reason to value. Wellbeing is determined by what people have and what they do, with these being a function of the capabilities afforded to individuals by their environment, their social conditions, as well as differences in relational perspectives ³¹ . The

³¹ Sen, A. 1989. Development as Capability Expansion, *Journal of Development Planning* 19: 41–58; Nussbaum, M. 2011. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (Harvard University Press).

advancement of people’s wellbeing is a means of reducing poverty. Wellbeing can be conceptualised as having several distinct domains and components (i.e. in a Framework³²).
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Annex B: Major Updates to previous versions of the Standard Indicator Guidance Menu

In 2023, the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs³³) initiated a pilot phase in the roll-out of Standard Indicators. These were intended to facilitate aggregated reporting across the portfolio of funds. During the first year of the pilot phase, applicants and grantees have provided us with much appreciated feedback on their experience of using the Standard Indicators. We have used this feedback to develop a second version of the Standard Indicator Menu.

Major updates between Version 1.0 and Version 2.0

- Version 1.0 of the Standard Indicators included 60 Standard Indicators. For Version 2.0, the number of Standard Indicators were reduced substantially, from 60 indicators down to 29.
- Only the previous ‘core’ Standard Indicators were retained, with some exceptions, allowing for the ‘core’ designation to be removed from Version 2.0.
- All discontinued Standard Indicators have been preserved in the [BCFs Indicator Library](#). This Library includes the current range of Standard Indicators, the indicators previously included in Version 1.0 (with some exceptions), as well as an extended array of indicators that can be adapted to be used by applicants and grantees as specific project indicators.

In September 2024, we published Version 2.1, with the following minor update:

- All references to the word *indigenous* have now been replaced with *Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLC)*. We define IPLCs in line with IPBES (2020)³⁴: The term “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” and its acronym “IPLC” are widely used by international organizations and conventions to refer to individuals and groups who self-identify as indigenous or as members of distinct local communities. We adopt this terminology with particular emphasis on those who “maintain an inter-generational historical connection to place and nature through livelihoods, cultural identity, languages, worldviews, institutions, and ecological knowledge”.

In May 2026, we published Version 2.2, with the following update:

- Sex / Gender:** Previously, our standard reporting required grantees to disaggregate beneficiary data by gender. To improve consistency and align with global reporting standards, we will be changing this requirement to sex (male and female) for all compulsory indicators. This shift focuses on biological sex rather than gender identity, ensuring comparability across projects while respecting diverse contexts. Where feasible and culturally appropriate, grantees may still collect additional information on gender identity or other intersectional factors, but this will be optional. Please ensure that data collection is based on self-reporting, handled sensitively, and explained clearly to participants to maintain privacy and trust.
- ICF and Defra International KPIs are now included in the menu.

³² Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being. Chapter 3 in Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment, Island Press, Washington DC. See also Rekacewicz, P. Bournay, E. 2007. Linkages between ecosystem services and human well-being (Online). Available: <https://www.grida.no/resources/6075>

³³ The Biodiversity Challenge Funds is the collective name for Defra’s Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus.

³⁴ See <https://www.ipbes.net/glossary-tag/indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities>

3. Change of DI-C06 from *“Analytics for funded project-specific social media posts”* to *“Reach and engagement generated by project-funded social media content”* with updated disaggregation.
4. Addition of Standard Indicator *DI-D08: Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided*.
5. A list of acronyms at the start and a glossary of key terms is included in Annex A