



Darwin Initiative & Darwin Plus

New Projects Webinar

Finance, Administrative and Technical Reporting



Objectives



- To provide an introduction to the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs)
- To 'meet' the key BCF people and understand their roles
- To outline the administration and reporting requirements under the BCFs





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Housekeeping - Q&A



Q&A

Welcome to Q&A

Questions you ask the host and panelists will show up here

Will this session be recorded?

Who can see your questions?

Q&A Chat Raise Hand Settings

Q&A

All questions (1) My questions (1)

Most Recent

AE andy east (You) 11:15 AM

Will this session be recorded?

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Q&A

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Will this session be recorded?

1

Most Recent ✓

Most Upvotes

Q&A

All questions (1) My questions (1)

Most Upvotes

AE andy east (You) 11:15 AM

Will this session be recorded?

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Welcome & Congratulations!



Darwin Initiative Round 30

Darwin Initiative Main

- 205 applications received at Stage 1
- 68 applications invited to Stage 2
- 16 new main projects funded (5 more still TBC)

Darwin Initiative Extra – 96 applications, 3 funded

Darwin Initiative Innovation – 83 applications, 7 funded

Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity – 178 applications, 25 funded

Welcome & Congratulations!



Darwin Plus Round 12

Darwin Plus Main

- 30 applications received at Stage 1
- 22 applications invited to Stage 2
- 14 new main projects funded (TBC)

Darwin Plus Fellowships – 10 applications, 4 funded

Darwin Plus Strategic – 1 application, 1 funded

Darwin Plus Local Round 2 – 22 applications, 16 funded

Darwin Plus Local Round 3 – 45 applications, 34 funded

BCFs Family



Expert Groups – DEC, IWTAG, DPAG

Fund
administration

NIRAS

Fund Secretariat



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Projects



ILLEGAL
WILDLIFE
TRADE
CHALLENGE
FUND



 **BIODIVERSITY**
CHALLENGE FUNDS

BCFs Secretariat



Doug Gibbs – Head of Biodiversity Challenge Funds

Ben Yexley – Darwin Initiative Lead – Biodiversity Challenge Funds

Serene Hargreaves – IWT Challenge Fund Lead – Biodiversity Challenge Funds

Jordan Newman and **Jasmine Parkinson** – Darwin Plus and Biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories

Role of Secretariat



- Overall management and strategy of the Biodiversity Challenge Funds: Darwin Initiative, IWT Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus
- Ministerial advice (Parliamentary Questions, correspondence, briefings)
- Management of NIRAS Contract
- Support to the Expert Groups - DEC, DPAG, IWTAG
- Publicity and events – involving Ministers
- Engagement with overseas Posts



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Offer Paperwork



- Timing – may be longer if your caveat is still under consideration
- Package of materials including an Offer Letter, Grant Acceptance Form (GAF) and Supplier Form
- Return the GAF and Supplier Form to BCF-Finance@niras.com



Terms & Conditions



- Are standard wording across Defra grants so only clearly justified changes will be reflected - on website here
- Confirms how the funds can be used e.g. no UK party political use
- Outlines the rights retained by Defra should grantees not follow requirements e.g. reclaiming of funds, eligibility of future applications, and are reviewed/updated annually
- Requirements re branding/communicating about your project
- Safeguarding



Financial Reporting Requirements



Current process

- Quarterly advance claims, with Q4 claim based on actuals and in arrears
- Advanced Actuals for selected projects
- Defra retain the right to spot check
- An audit at closure of project (annually for Extra projects)

Total Grant	Spot Audits	Grant Statement provided by		
		Self-declaration	Independent Examiner	Auditor
Less than £50,000	Yes	Per claim, Project End	No	No
£50,000 to £99,999	Yes	Per claim	Project End	No
£100,000 to £599,999	Yes	Per claim	No	Project End
More than £600,000	Yes	Per claim	Annually	Project End



Claims Conditions



- Quarter 1 (Q1) Advance Claim
Grant Acceptance Form
Deadline: 30th April
- Quarter 2 Advance Claim
Annual Report and Q4 Actual
claim (from Y2)
Deadline: 31st July
- Quarter 3 Advance Claim
Annual Audit for Extra projects
(from Y2).
Deadline: 31st October
- Quarter 4 Actual Claim
(dependent on actual
expenditure)
Annual Report (from Y2)
Deadline: 31st May from 2025
- Final Claim (Retention is made
from the Final claim pending a
satisfactory Final Report)
Final Report, Final Report Review
and Grant statement
**Deadline: < 3 months of
project end date**

Conditions for Payment



Claim	Deadline	Financial Evidence	Technical Evidence
FY Q1 1 st April – 30 th June Advance Claim	15 th March - 30 th April	Year 1: Grant Acceptance Form From Year 2: Annual Grant Acceptance Form Advance Claim	n/a
FY Q2 1 st July – 30 th September Advance Claim	15 th June – 31 st July	Year 1: n/a From Year 2: Verified Q4 Actual Claim (from previous FY) even if no outstanding funds to claim	From Year 2: Annual Report Due by 30 th April
FY Q3 1 st October – 31 st December Advance Claim	15 th September – 31 st October	From Year 2: Extra Projects – annual audit	From Year 2, prior year Annual Report Accepted
FY Q4 1 st January – 31 st March Actual Claim	31 st May in 2024; 15 May from 2025	Confirmation of Actual spend across the FY even if no outstanding funds to claim	Annual Report due by 30 th April
Final Actual Claim, less retention	<3 months of project end	Verified Final Actual Claim	Final Report Received
Retention	<6 months of project end	Verified Audit Statement where required	Final Report Accepted

Claims Process



- Electronic claims with a clear signature, which should match the signatory panel provided in your Grant Acceptance Form.
- NIRAS checks claim, project forecasting and that related reporting has been received
- Eligible claims are sent for second approval
- Approved claims then sent for payment
- You will be informed when to expect payment to your account



Change Requests







- Projects looking to make significant changes (both technical and financial) should submit a Change Request
- This includes:
 - Re-budgets – carry-forwards/no cost extensions language
 - Virements – movement of money between budget lines
 - Changes to logical framework (logframe)
 - Staff changes (senior technical staff) including CV
 - Timing changes (e.g. extensions)



Change Request Form



- Requests should be clearly justified – ensure you answer the questions in the form!
- Deadline for rebudgeting strict
- Previous requests noted
- Significant financial changes and implications
- January – March financial requests only under exceptional circumstances (e.g. natural disaster, military coup) and clearly justified.

   					
Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus) CHANGE REQUEST FORM					
<small>INTERNAL USE ONLY – NOT TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT</small>					
CR reference		Date received		Date PL informed	
Date sent to Defra		Recipient in Defra		Date response from Defra	
<u>Application for Approval to Change a Biodiversity Challenge Funds Project</u>					
<i>Before completing this Change Request, please read the Guidance at the end of this document</i>					
Please indicate the type of Change Request: Financial* <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>					
<small>*any change which requires movement of funds between financial years</small>					
Project Ref and Title					
Request from (name and organisation)					
Email address					
Please confirm you have read the Change Request guidance document and understand that there is no guarantee a request will be granted. <input type="checkbox"/>					
<small>All Change Requests must be submitted as soon as possible; any delays to submission must be clearly justified.</small>					
<small>Financial Change Requests must not be submitted later than the end of Q3 (31st December).</small>					
<small>However, non-Financial or Other Change Requests can be submitted at any time.</small>					
<small>All Change Requests must receive approval before being applied, do not assume approval will be forthcoming.</small>					
<small>Please keep your Change Request brief and clear, providing enough context for us to understand the request and its justification, but avoiding technical jargon and acronyms.</small>					
<small>Please contact NIRAS if there are any questions.</small>					

Any
questions?



Reporting & Accountability



- There are a number of requirements to ensure the high standard of projects is maintained
- These can be divided into:
 - Project technical reporting
 - Project financial reporting
- Broadly consistent process between schemes



Expectation of Projects



- High **quality** and **scientific**
- **Collaborative**
- **Assist** countries to meet their objectives under the various biodiversity and environmental conventions



Technical Reporting



- Projects required to report twice per year for the duration of their grant:
 - Half Year reports
 - Annual reports
 - Final reports
- Project reports are posted on the website (minus contact details & financial details)
- Information note available



Darwin Plus Fellowships



Fellowships are required to submit:

- Interim report
- Final report

Interim reports are submitted 1 month after the halfway point

And final reports within 1 month of the end date.



Half Year Reports



- Provide a brief update on project progress
- Opportunity to discuss queries/issues (also available all year round)
- Submitted by **31st October** annually
- Respond to feedback from Experts and issues raised in Annual Reports



Annual Reports



- To detail progress against planned activities, Outputs & Outcome
- Good use of indicators & evidence (means of verification) reduces reporting burden
- Respond to feedback where previously indicated
- Due **30th April** annually
- All have an independent review



Final Reports



- Provide information on the *overall* success of the project against its proposed outcome, outputs and activities
- Good use of indicators and evidence (means of verification) reduces reporting burden
- Also chance to respond to feedback
- Also reviewed independently





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Reducing the Reporting Burden



- Report against original application unless changes have been made to logframe
- Significant changes to logframe/design need to be approved
- More tips can be found in the information note [here](#).



Indicators



- Indicators are what will be measured to show progress and outcome
- Should be SMART:



Reporting Evidence

– Do's!



- Report clearly and concisely
- Make sure you are reporting against the latest (and approved) version of your logframe
- Report against Standard Indicators as much as possible
- Involve project partners where possible
- We encourage projects to report on what has changed and to provide evidence of these changes
- Ensure that you check the correct BCF website prior to submitting your report to ensure that you **are using the latest version of the template** – reporting templates are updated annually
- Ensure evidence submitted is clearly labelled and sign-posted

Reporting Evidence – Do's!



- **Provide evidence to demonstrate where claims come from**, for example:

"We are making good progress towards our goal, as demonstrated by data provided in table x"

"Focus groups with local residents about we believe this to be true because [insert quote as evidence]"

- **Move beyond reporting on Outputs** - include evidence on what has changed

"The workshop provided X community members with knowledge about sustainable pest management. Evidence from a follow-up survey indicated that chemical pesticide use has declined by 50%, which is expected to have positive impacts in local biodiversity (FAO, 2013). Crop yields for previously affected crops have increased by between 10-30%; thus demonstrating a contribution to poverty alleviation."

Reporting Evidence – Don'ts!



- Write general statements without evidence, for example:
 - “we are making good progress”*
 - “we believe this is true”*
 - “we think that this progress is adequate”*
- Only list activity Outputs e.g. no. of workshops, plans, maps.
- Forget about higher level outcomes and impacts – what has changed and how in terms of biodiversity conservation or poverty reduction?



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Safeguarding



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



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Safeguarding



- Health, Safety and Security
- Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)



Commitment to PSEAH



Current

- [IASC 6 Principles](#)
- Relevant [CHS standards on PSEAH](#)



Upcoming

- [CAPSEAH](#)



Common Approach to Protection from
Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

How This Is Assessed



- Applications
- Reporting
- Change Request



What We Want To See



- Policies and procedures – Safeguarding, Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing
- Demonstration of commitment – senior leader buy in
- Strong Complaints and Feedback Response Mechanism – stakeholders are aware of how to give feedback and raise concerns
- Community sensitisation - communities understand the CFRM and their rights
- Prevention through risk identification and mitigation
- Incident log and improvements based on feedback



Reporting Cases



- What must be reported:
 - Allegation of SEAH where a community member has been harmed by project or partner staff
 - SEAH alleged against any senior staff within a project organisation
- Oda.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk
- Reporting form
- Advice and guidance

Further Support



- [Safeguarding Support Hub](#) –Safeguarding Essentials Pack
- [CAPSEAH](#) principles, minimum recommended actions, guidance
- [Training: Kaya's Safeguarding Essentials](#)
- [Training: Safeguarding in the International Aid Sector](#)
- NIRAS Safeguarding Manager





Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI)



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What Is GESI?



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is comprised of two key terms:

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.
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 disadvantage and historically excluded from decision making and spheres of influence on the basis of their identity to take part in society.

The Importance of GESI



Evidence demonstrates that individuals access resources differently depending on their gender and social background.

- Biodiversity practices and engagement with natural resources
- Knowledge or use of resources
- Inequalities in management and control of resources

An understanding of gender and social characteristics further identifies the ways in which those affected by exclusion and discrimination are unable to access the same economic opportunities.

Considerations of GESI are therefore crucial to developing stronger and more impactful projects!

GESI Sensitive



A **GESI Sensitive approach** is understood to demonstrate programming will “do no harm”, not exacerbate inequality and ensure meaningful and context appropriate engagement and participation of those involved in the project.



Project Requirements



Applicants and projects should consider integrating GESI and their GESI approach both within the design and implementation stages.

All successful projects must be able to demonstrate they:

- Understand the GESI context in which the project is working within.
- Ensure inclusive and meaningful participation of all those engaging with the project.
- Will not contribute to or create any further inequalities.



Any
questions?

Logos



Maintaining a high profile for BCF helps maintain Government funding:

- Projects should use the fund specific logo as well as the UK Development logo if possible

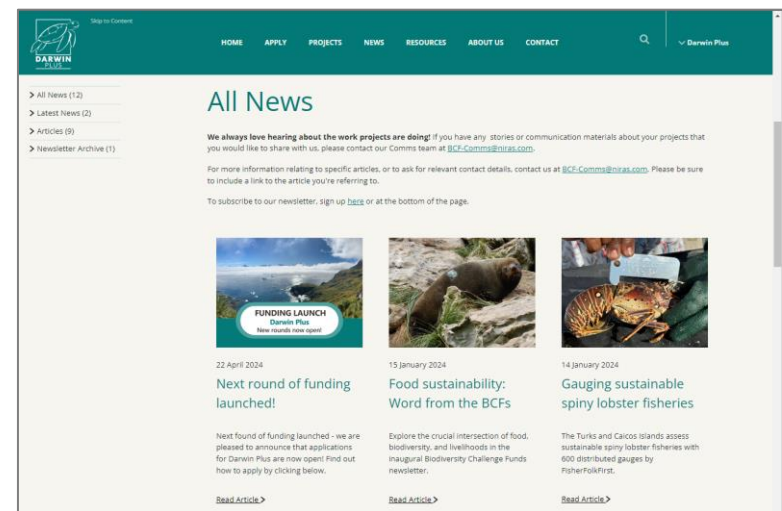
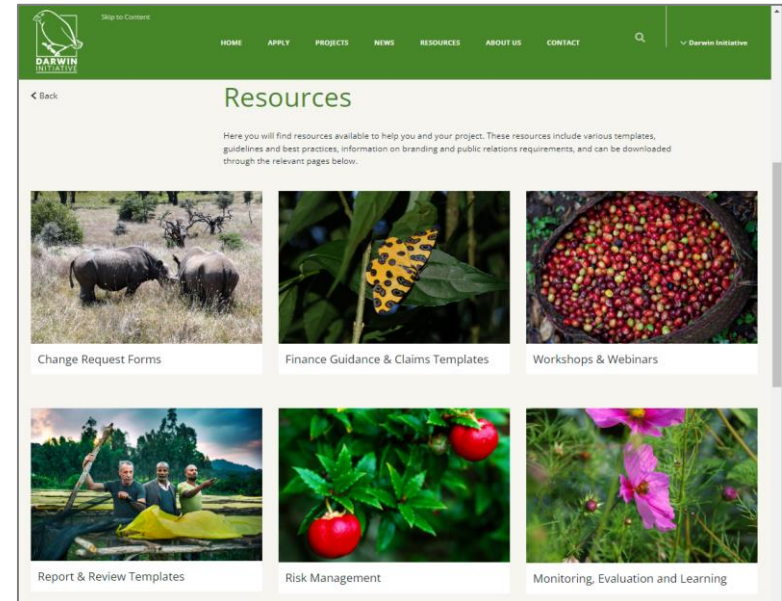


- Guidance and fund logos can be found on the "Project Publicity" page under 'Resources' on both the [Darwin Initiative](#) and [Darwin Plus](#) websites
- Contact BCF-Comms@niras.com for a copy of the UK Development logo

Websites



- Darwin Initiative Website:
<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/>
- Darwin Plus Website:
<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>
- First stop for all technical and admin **resources** for **BCF projects** – including claim forms, reporting forms, and change request template
- Platform for our various **publications** – including articles, information notes, and workshop proceedings



Newsletter



- New newsletter launch in March
- We are aiming to send quarterly newsletter
- Each newsletter is themed around a particular topic
- We request 1-page A4 articles or less
- Provide high-res images to grab attention
- Distributed widely via e-mail, social media and internally in Defra
- We want to share your stories!
- Contact us via BCF-Comms@niras.com

BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE FUNDS

We are so excited to share this first-ever Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCF) newsletter with you!

We have recently launched a brand new [Biodiversity Challenge Funds \(BCF\) newsletter](#) with easy access to the updates for all three of our funds: Darwin Initiative, BCF Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus - which have also had a complete makeover. All articles submitted by our projects and any other exciting announcements we have to share can now be found in the News section on each fund's website. This specific newsletter highlights articles we received from Darwin Initiative projects.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paving the way to food sustainability

In a world where the choices we make about what we consume resonate far beyond our plates, this newsletter issue explores the critical intersection of food, biodiversity, and livelihoods, recognising that a sustainable food system hinges on the safeguarding of ecosystems and the livelihoods around them.

Through ground-breaking research and community-driven efforts, projects from across our three funds strike a balance between agricultural or aquacultural needs and ecological integrity. From promoting native tree species in cocoa agroforestry in Cote d'Ivoire, to online monitoring of jaguar trafficking in Bolivia, to assessing and improving the sustainability of laying flocks of turkeys in the Turks and Caicos Islands, we invite you to share in the triumphs, challenges, and insights of our projects.

The following articles were shared by **Darwin Initiative** projects:

- Tech preserves marine food sources**
Can up-Age technology act as an aquatic dispenser to help promote tiger dolphins in India and Pakistan, ensuring livelihoods and fostering sustainable fishing practices. [Read more.](#)
- Fighting food insecurity: Climate-adaptive farming**
Innovative climate-based solutions are being utilised to empower local communities in Madagascar and tackle food insecurity challenges while preserving vital habitats. [Read more.](#)
- Growing the potential of planting baskets**
Discover how a botanical garden in Senegal, providing seedling planting baskets for food security, inspired an agroforestry project for habitat restoration and climate resilience. [Read more.](#)

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The following articles were shared by **Darwin Plus** projects:

- Gauging Sustainable Turks and Caicos Fisheries**
Local small-scale fisher outreach, education and collaboration are playing a pivotal role in shaping sustainable practices and the conservation efforts for vital marine resources. [Read more.](#)
- Using corals to protect coastal infrastructure**
In Senegal, a coral restoration research programme has been initiated, embracing coral as a natural breakwater to protect against storm waves, while also restoring the species. [Read more.](#)
- Wasp guardians for food production**
Discover the hidden potential of the ecologically vital Chalcid wasps: a natural solution for pest management, these parasitoids are under the spotlight in Cyprus. [Read more.](#)

Social Media



Please follow, share and tag our BCFs socials!



[@Biodiversity Challenge Funds](#)



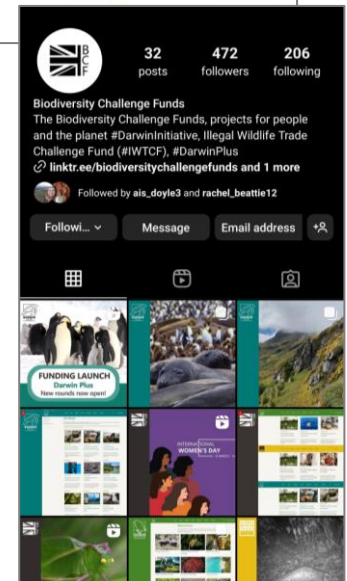
[@UKBCFs](#)



[@Biodiversity Challenge Funds](#)



[@biodiversitychallengefunds](#)



Engagement Opportunities



- Newsletter articles
- Case studies
- Workshops/webinars
- Project spotlights on social media
- Conferences

Engage, keep in touch and reach out!



Any
questions?