



# Learning Note Poverty and the Darwin Initiative

## Key Messages

- All Darwin projects must contribute to building capacity in biodiversity conservation
- All DFID funded Darwin projects must also demonstrate how they contribute to poverty alleviation (c. 90% of projects)
- Most projects are able to demonstrate a relationship between biodiversity and poverty for the context in which they plan to work
- Many applicants are struggling to demonstrate how they will capture these positive changes to this relationship (such that there are improvements both in capacity for biodiversity conservation and in reduced poverty)
- Without defining the how, projects are less able to measure and evidence their work

One of the most common misconceptions of applicants to the Darwin Initiative is that poverty is solely focused on money. This learning note has been developed to help applicants better understand poverty alleviation and how to address this in their Darwin application.

The Darwin Initiative supports developing countries to conserve biodiversity and reduce poverty. The Darwin Initiative (funded by DEFRA, DFID and FCO), provides grants for projects working in developing countries and UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

Projects support:

- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
- the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)

[darwininitiative.org.uk](http://darwininitiative.org.uk)



# Introduction - Darwin and Poverty

Since its launch in 1992, all projects funded by the Darwin Initiative have had to show how they are contributing to **building capacity in biodiversity conservation**.

In 2011, the Department for International Development (DFID) became a co-funder of the Darwin Initiative and introduced a second, dual objective for DFID-funded Darwin projects to **contribute to poverty alleviation**. About 90% of all Darwin projects are now funded by DFID and must therefore meet this objective.

Since then many applicants to the Darwin Initiative have struggled to describe (and demonstrate) how their projects contribute to poverty alleviation.

Most projects are able to demonstrate a relationship between biodiversity and poverty for the context in which they plan to work. Many projects struggle to define how their project will affect positive changes such that there are improvements both in capacity for biodiversity conservation and in reduced poverty.

Without defining the how, projects are less able to measure and evidence their work.

## Poverty is not solely focused on money

One of the most common misconceptions of applicants to the Darwin Initiative is that poverty is all about money. This learning note has been developed to help applicants better understand what the Darwin Initiative means when it talks about poverty.

## Poverty and Development

Through DFID, the UK Government aims to “promote sustainable development and eliminate world poverty” and it recognises that inclusive economic development is key to eradicating poverty.

Support is provided to people:

- directly e.g. support for child vaccination programme
- through research e.g. support for vaccination research
- indirectly e.g. through institutional support for health policy and planning in a country

There are many different ways of defining a project’s contribution to poverty and sustainable development. Here we set out the common descriptions of poverty.





# Applying to the Darwin Initiative and addressing poverty

Applicants to the Darwin Initiative are required to identify how their biodiversity conservation project will contribute to poverty alleviation. They are additionally asked to measure this contribution through indicators in their logframe. This is true for both direct benefits from practical implementation projects or indirect benefits for research orientated projects.

## Common mistakes from Darwin Applicants

We conducted a review of the logframes of all applications submitted to Stage 1 of the Main Projects fund in 2013. There were 186 (eligible) applications submitted for consideration for DFID funding. The results show that:

- 20% of applications did not identify that there would be any poverty benefits as a result of their project in their logframe
- 50% of applicants did not specify how they would measure the identified poverty benefits e.g. applicants may have surmised that there will be greater food security as a result of the project but failed to identify how they would measure this change in food security
- of those that did identify poverty benefits, the vast majority expected there to be an income benefit but few considered wider, more immediate poverty benefits

*“if there are no identified poverty benefits ...it cannot be funded by DFID”*

Remember – if there are no identified poverty benefits from the project, it cannot be funded by DFID.

In addition, if you show no intention to try to capture these benefits (through indicators in your logframe) you will also be unlikely to obtain funding from DFID.

## How to best address poverty to meet requirements

Applicants who identified clearly:

- what the benefits would be
- who would feel these benefits
- when they would feel these benefits
- how they would measure these benefits

were far more likely to achieve funding from the Darwin Initiative.

Additionally, those projects that employed development specialists on their team were more successful at receiving funding from the Darwin Initiative.



# The Millennium Development Goals

Photo: SL

Through DFID, the UK Government is committed to taking action to achieve the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs) by 2015. The MDGs were agreed in 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit. These were universal targets agreed by members of the UN that, if achieved, would serve to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for many of the world's inhabitants.

Work is underway to agree new development goals for the period post-2015. These will be known as the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

## Extreme poverty

The first MDG addresses extreme poverty. There are three targets for this goal. The first target is a monetary one, aimed at lifting people out of extreme poverty.

Extreme poverty is described by the World Bank as people who are living on less than \$1.25 per day. Although progress has been made in recent years, in 2010 1.22 billion people still lived on less than \$1.25 a day, compared with 1.91 billion in 1990 and 1.94 billion in 1981.

The other two MDG 1 targets are non-monetary and relate to achieving productive and inclusive employment and reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger.

*The MDGs are:*

*MDG 1: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*

*MDG 2: achieve universal primary education*

*MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women*

*MDG 4: reduce child mortality*

*MDG 5: improve maternal health*

*MDG 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*

*MDG 7: ensure environmental sustainability*

*MDG 8: develop a global partnership for development*



# Ways to contribute to poverty alleviation

## Non-monetary poverty measures

Many of the applications to the Darwin Initiative try to describe their contribution to poverty alleviation through monetary changes. This is only one target of one MDG and there are many other ways in which poverty is measured and understood.

Understanding what causes poverty and what an intervention can do to influence those causes will often show that the contribution a Darwin Initiative project can make is non-monetary. Such a contribution could cover issues such as health and nutrition, literacy, gender equality, inclusion in decision-making and planning.

## Direct and indirect support

The UK government provides some help directly to poor people, whilst other support goes into creating the right environment for people, their state institutions and the private sector, to help themselves. This may mean that the contribution the Darwin Initiative project makes may not be a direct one (such as a project creating eco-tourism jobs) but an indirect one (such as a project improving the integration of national biodiversity planning into tourism planning to create incentives for growth in the eco-tourism industry).







# What causes poverty?

What makes people poor can often be a complex situation. Understanding the drivers of poverty is the focus of many research projects. One thing is clear though - it is rarely a simple cause and effect relationship.

In the type of situations Darwin Initiative projects work, there can be common themes to causes of poverty. Often these causes are intrinsically linked to the losses of biodiversity.

This list is not exhaustive but is an example of some

of the challenges facing the world's poor, particularly with regards to biodiversity.

In this note we present case studies of Darwin projects that are seeking to address causes of poverty that will in turn support the conservation of biodiversity. While some of these projects will have direct monetary benefits, all these projects will also result in other benefits to reduce poverty including improved democracy, improved gender equality, improved food security and improved governance.

## Common themes:

- Lack of access to resources including food, water, energy, land
- Lack of infrastructure such as transport which hampers access to markets, hospitals, schools, ports, airports etc
- Lack of access to clean water and sanitation
- Lack of access to services including education, healthcare, finance etc
- Loss of ecosystem services causing instability such as water security, food security
- Climate change impacts causing instability
- Poor governance including low representation of the poor's views in management of resources, democracy, gender equality



# Poverty benefits that could be considered by Darwin applicants

## Identifying poverty benefits

As a science orientated fund we expect applicants to draw upon existing evidence when designing their projects. Applicants should look systematically at the relationship between poverty and biodiversity when they conceptualise and design their projects. For example, project design should consider:

- what is causing the change in biodiversity status?
- how does it relate to poverty or efforts of people and/or states to alleviate poverty?
- what interventions may be implemented that will create incentives to change these causal factors?

Where exploitation of biodiversity is a means of survival, there will be inevitable trade-offs between arresting the exploitation and those surviving on it. There are likely to be positive co-benefits however; related for example to a more sustainable and equitable use of the biodiversity and its downstream services. In both cases it is essential that applicants are capable of identifying what the benefits (and trade-offs) of their work might be, and be able to indicate how they will measure their contribution to poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation.

We are keen to encourage applicants to identify innovative ways in which they might test and apply new approaches to biodiversity conservation and

poverty alleviation. This may serve to address the evidence gaps as discussed in Barret *et al* (2011).

## Commonly identified poverty benefits

Here is a list of from Roe *et al* (2014) of commonly identified poverty benefits for biodiversity conservation projects:

- assets
- cultural enhancement
- education
- employment
- empowerment
- energy security
- food security
- health
- income
- safewater
- shelter
- vulnerability



# Measuring your contribution to poverty alleviation

How to measure a projects contribution to poverty alleviation will depend entirely on the situation being targeted. However there are simple rules to follow that will apply in every situation.

## 1) What is the current situation

For any piece of work it is essential to understand what the current situation is - a baseline.

To better understand your projects contribution it might be useful to understand how things change outside your target area i.e. is it possible to establish a counterfactual?

## 2) What is the expected change

Have you developed a target for the expected change

by the end of your funding period? For example, management committees for natural resources will have 20% more female members by year 3.

## 3) How will you measure this change?

Commonly used phrases such as 'stronger', 'better', 'more representative' are often meaningless. Could you use an indicator (qualitative or quantitative) to identify the expected amount of change? You could even use a proxy indicator. For example, measuring bacterial load of freshwater sources as a proxy indicator of health.

Here we have given example measures used by Darwin projects funded from Round 20.

Reference	Project	Poverty benefit identified	How will they measure this?
20-010	Linking community resilience and sustainable coastal protection in the Philippines	Assets, vulnerability	Number of households in village and savings lending associations (VSLAs) increases from 100 at project start to 320 by year 3, with an average of £20 each in savings
20-016	Alternative sustainable livelihood sources for forest edge hunting communities	Assets, food security, income	Livestock for 250 households receiving periodic veterinary care to increase productivity and minimise the risk of zoonotic diseases; The proportion of beneficiaries livestock receiving veterinary care increased from 5% to 75% by year 3.
20-017	Community-based conservation for livelihood development in Lake Ossa Manatee Reserve	Well-being, health, food security, income, assets	Achieve an average of at least 20% improvement in locally-defined wellbeing scores and material style of life indices for 400 fishing households surrounding Lake Ossa by year 3 (baselines set in year 1 through household baseline surveys).
20-021	Enhancement of wellbeing and conservation in Cape Verde's biodiversity hotspots	Empowerment, assets, income	By year 3, community business opportunity piloted with at least 50 primarily female-headed households with an increase in income of 50% - from the baseline of 15,000 CVE per month to 22,500 CVE in these households.





# Darwin Initiative projects and how they approach poverty



# Integrating Batwa cultural values into national parks management in Uganda

The Albertine Rift is one of the world's most biodiverse regions. It contains more vertebrate and endemic vertebrate species than any comparable region on mainland Africa including the iconic mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*). Its forests provide critical ecosystem services, especially water, to tens of thousands of farmers and fishermen.

In 1991, the Government of Uganda gazetted four national parks to protect biodiversity which was under threat. Sadly, these protected areas severely restricted local people's access to the forests which caused conflict and weakened support for them. Batwa were especially disadvantaged as the forest was the basis of their livelihoods and of practices that defined their ethnic identity.

Batwa, are amongst the poorest, most disempowered communities in Uganda. Though the Ugandan government agreed access to some resources for some communities, Batwa rights to enjoy their forest-based culture were greatly curtailed. This has led to conflict between Batwa and the Ugandan authorities which was causing difficulties for both parties. Batwa value their forests deeply and support forest

conservation however, due to the way the parks were established, they did not support them and therefore did not engage with their management.

A Darwin project was funded in 2012 that aimed to engage Batwa as allies of the park. This project sought to ensure Batwa secured access to vital resources for their health and well-being and were engaged in developing approaches for long-term stewardship of Albertine Rift forests.

Although still ongoing, the project is having some success. Relations between the park authorities and Batwa have improved through increased contact, dialogue and engagement of the Batwa people in management activities. In addition Batwa have improved access to cultural sites and resources.

This is an example of how poverty benefits are not necessarily income related. In this case, inclusiveness of local people in governance is generating poverty benefits and biodiversity benefits.

You can read more about this project [here](#).

*“Sadly, these protected areas severely restricted local people's access to the forests”*





# A participatory conservation programme for the Comoro Islands

The Union of the Comoros is a small island developing state in the Western Indian Ocean. Between 1990 and 2000 the country suffered from the fourth highest rate of deforestation in the world. The rapid deforestation is putting at risk the many endemic species dependent on forest habitat, with 24 terrestrial taxa named in the Red Data Books (including the flagship endangered Livingstone's fruit bat) and many more non-assessed forest endemics at risk.

Deforestation is also causing acute problems for the human population through large-scale erosion, water loss and subsequent silting of the reefs: in the last 50 years the number of permanent rivers on one island, Anjouan, has decreased from around 35 to under 10.

Deforestation in Comoros is driven by poverty, population pressure, unsustainable agricultural methods and a lack of governance.

In 2009, the Darwin Initiative funded a project, led by the Bristol, Clifton and West of England Zoological Society, that aimed to protect the endemic terrestrial biodiversity and its forest habitat whilst at the same time improving the livelihoods of the human

population.

Given the weak governance situation in the Comoros, conservation of the remaining forest and its biodiversity could be successful only if communities are empowered to take control of their own natural resource management. With the severity of additional pressures resulting in deforestation - notably the depressed economic situation, population increase and cash crop plantation - conservation could only be tackled through a landscape approach

The project supported 1,700 farmers to improve soil fertility and increase their yields from market gardening and staple crops, reaching over 6,500 direct beneficiaries. They also developed five village

natural resource management committees to implement collective projects which has resulted in improved access to water for 8000 beneficiaries.

On the biodiversity side, Anjouan's forests (and a further two islands) were mapped using

satellite imagery and species distribution models were produced for key indicator taxa for the three islands.

The results are being integrated into the government-led protected area planning process in partnership with the UNDP.

You can read more about this project [here](#).

*"Deforestation is also causing acute problems for the human population"*



## Equitable access to pasture use for beekeepers in Kyrgyz Republic

Kyrgyz people are traditionally nomadic, with livestock the dominant sector within agriculture. State owned pastures occupy over 50% of agricultural land.

The new Pasture Law (2009) decentralised the management of all pastures to local governments and Pasture Users' Unions. This law also changed arrangements for lease to use rights to allow better access for users to pastures, and to ensure sustainable use of these lands. However, this new framework accommodates only livestock grazers, while other rangeland users, including beekeepers, are excluded.

Numbers of beekeepers have decreased from 12,000 in the late 1980s, to around 1,000 now. This is due to beekeepers' difficulties in gaining access to rangelands, which has resulted in acute conflicts with shepherds and bribery to local authorities. Beekeeping has many benefits ranging from the products of honey and beeswax, pollination services for crops and employment in rural areas. It also can have benefits for biodiversity through, for example, adding value to protected areas which support bee colonies.

Because beekeeping has an outdated and thus

ineffective legal status, beekeepers are increasingly marginalised as they are denied access to pastures by herders, and have no legal framework for recourse. Beekeepers in Kyrgyz Republic face the constraints common to beekeepers worldwide, yet they have no educational support providing current research knowledge and skills. Therefore some of the

*“Beekeepers are increasingly marginalised as they are denied access to pastures”*

remaining beekeepers are not succeeding, as they lack awareness of good management practices (e.g. concerning disease control).

In 2012, the Darwin Initiative funded a project led by Bees

for Development to tackle these issues to improve access to pasture for beekeepers, and to improve practice within beekeeping. Although ongoing, the project is starting to show signs of impact upon people's lives – ensuring that they have the tools, desire and necessary legal framework to achieve a sustainable, ecologically diverse livelihood whilst also boosting the biodiversity potential of the region.

You can read more about this project [here](#)





# Ecosystem conservation for climate change adaptation in East Africa

The other case studies have focused on practical field orientated projects that have been designed to derive direct benefits to people by the end of Darwin Initiative funding. However, the Darwin Initiative also supports projects that have a policy/enabling environment focus, that contributes to better knowledge of how to tackle the dual objectives of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. One example is this project, led by Birdlife International.

Climate change poses serious threats to biodiversity. This in turn will impact people, especially the poorest, who often depend directly on nature's goods and services.

Ecosystem conservation has a vital role to play in adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change. Intact, well-connected natural ecosystems show greater resilience and biodiversity conservation potential in the face of change, and ensure the continued provision of services that people depend on. Adaptation approaches that recognize the role of ecosystems are often cost-effective, scalable, benefit the environment and society, and are more accessible to rural or poor communities than alternative measures.

There is an urgent need to strengthen climate change adaptation policies in the East Africa region, with two immediate opportunities for effectively integrating ecosystem based adaptation (EbA):

1. the CBD National Biodiversity Strategies and

Action Plans (NBSAPs) review process as agreed by CBD's 10th Conference of Parties

2. the National Adaptation Programmes (NAPs) and National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) as agreed within the Adaptation Framework (AF), adopted by UNFCCC's 17th Conference of Parties

At a national level there is considerable potential for NBSAPs and NAPAs/NAPs to inform and mutually support one another, and this is also essential for the plans' success – but these linkages need to be actively promoted and made effective.

By developing guidance and sharing best practice, raising awareness, training and building capacity for EbA, this project is seeking to influence the development of new strategies and policies for meeting biodiversity objectives internationally, nationally, and locally in four countries in East Africa, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

By advocating for whole ecosystems, ecosystem functions and services in all climate change adaptation planning, processes and decision-making the project also aims to help prevent 'mal-adaptation' that is likely to destroy biodiversity and undermine important ecosystem services essential for life for the regions poor.

You can read more about this project [here](#).





# Summary & Recommendations

## Summary

The purpose of this learning note is to help Darwin applicants understand what is meant by poverty. From the perspective of the Darwin Initiative, contributing to poverty alleviation is about more than just raising income levels of poor people living in developing countries.

It also seeks to encourage applicants to better address poverty in their applications.

We wish to encourage applicants to the Darwin Initiative to consider the wider causes of poverty where they are working. While some Darwin projects are capable of showing a monetary benefit to targeted communities in the 3 years they are funded, there are other, non-monetary benefits in that time that are perhaps not being captured.

## *Recommendations*

- *ensure your application determines what the poverty benefits will result of this project if applying for DFID funds*
- *ensure your logframe is capable of capturing your contribution to poverty alleviation using SMART indicators*
- *include on your team (or at least consult with during application writing) a development expert*
- *consider wider poverty benefits than just income which can be hard to show a significant change in only 3 years*





## Useful References

Barrett, C.B., Travis, A.J. & Dasgupta, P., 2011. On biodiversity conservation and poverty traps. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 108(34), pp.13907–12.

Roe, D. et al., 2013. A systematic map protocol: which components or attributes of biodiversity affect which dimensions of poverty? Environmental Evidence, 2(1), p.8.

Roe, D. et al., 2014. Which components or attributes of biodiversity influence which dimensions of poverty? Environmental Evidence, 3(1), p.3.

The Darwin Initiative aims to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources around the world including the UK's Overseas Territories. The Darwin Initiative projects work with local partners to help countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to fulfil their commitments under the CBD, the Nagoya Protocol, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and CITES. The Initiative is funded by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and from 2011, the Department for International Development. It is administered by the UK Government's Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has committed over £105million to over 903 projects in 158 countries.

This learning note was produced by LTS International [www.ltsi.co.uk](http://www.ltsi.co.uk)

For more information on the Darwin Initiative see <http://darwininitiative.org.uk>

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