Darwin Initiative

Stage 2 Workshop

7th, 11th and 12th January 2022

Webinar and Virtual Workshop Proceedings

In January 2022 a number of events were held for applicants to Darwin Initiative Round 28 who had been invited to Stage 2.

On 7th January a webinar session for Stage 2 Darwin Initiative applicants was held via Zoom. The webinar focused on frequently asked questions and common issues encountered by applicants and provided the opportunity for applicants to ask any last-minute questions related to their applications. The virtual workshops on 11th January focused on M&E, the effective use of project design tools, and the importance of good evidence and appropriate indicators. On 12th January a presentation given by Howard Nelson, a member of the Darwin Expert Committee, provided insight for Stage 2 applicants on what makes a good application and allowed applicants to gain a better understanding of the key considerations of the Darwin Expert Committee when reviewing applications.

This note covers the frequently asked questions as well as those specific to different areas of the application process and includes answers to these.

The presentations from the day plus the exercise handout can be accessed via the Darwin Initiative website: here.

The "Guidance for applicants" and "Finance guidance" documents should be your first reference point if you have queries when developing your application. These can be accessed via Flexi-Grant and also on the Darwin Initiative website.

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Webinar Agenda – FAQ and common issues

Agenda Item
Welcome from Defra
Administrative eligibility
Meeting Objectives
Finance
Project team expertise and letters of support
Other FAQs
Avoiding common issues in Flexi-Grant
Questions
Gender & safeguarding
Questions
Importance of Communication
Final Questions & Close

Overview of Frequently Asked Questions and Common Issues Webinar

A total of 75 people registered, and 58 people were able to attend. See Annex 1 for details on the spread of people attending the webinar.

The objectives of the session were to:

- Respond to a number of frequently asked questions related to eligibility, finance, Flexi-Grant, gender, safeguarding and communications.
- Provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions of the Darwin Initiative, administrators and Defra.

The webinar was open to Darwin Initiative Stage 2 applicants.

Webinar Q&A

Finance

Q. Is there a certain percentage of matched funding that you look for in applications?

A. No, we recognise that each project is quite different and therefore don't specify an exact amount a project much achieve. However, matched funding is highly desirable and if you don't have matched funding you should provide an explanation.

Q. Are we allowed to increase the budget by a certain percentage in Stage 2 after attending this FAQ webinar? If so, what is the percentage?

A. Applicants can change anything within their application between Stage 1 and Stage 2. However, if there are significant changes please clarify why you have had to make these changes in your cover letter. There is no specific percentage for changes to budget, but these changes must be clearly explained.

Q. Under the current and uncertain pandemic conditions, can audits be signed using electronic signatures?

A. Yes, if your organisation is happy to work with electronic signatures, we are happy to accept them.

Q. Does the 5-10% costs for Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) refer to the Darwin budget or the total budget?

A. The 5-10% cost for M&E costs refers to the total project cost.

Q. Are letters of support required from those providing matched funding?

A. We are looking for a letter of support from the lead partner to show the organisation is aware the application is being submitted as well as letters of supports from partners. At this stage we do not ask for evidence of matched funding in this formal way. However, if a project partner is providing matched funding i.e., in-kind support or government salaries it can be really helpful for this to be included within their letters of support.

Q. Please can you explain how you would like to see the percentage of funds being spent between the in-country lead partner and other in-country partners.

A. The main reason we want to see in-country spend is to evidence the money in being spent locally in eligible countries. We would also expect a balance of funding across partners so all can deliver what they are expected to deliver for a successful project, and this might vary between projects.

Q. You mentioned that you like to see a large portion of the funds go to in-country partners, does that mean it is ok for a higher portion of the budget to go to the partner compared to the lead applicant?

A. Yes, this is acceptable. Previous Darwin projects have been predominantly carried out by in-country partners with the lead partner overseeing activities, but this will be dependent on the project.

Q. When applying a maximum 10% to capital costs, does it refer to the whole budget or only applying to Darwin money?

A. This particular 10% refers to the Darwin money. On the summary page of the budget form, there is a section that shows how much of Darwin costs are capital costs, this is where you need to check it does not exceed 10%. It is acceptable for capital costs to exceed 10% of the entire budget if matched funding is used. As noted in the finance guidance, the 10% limit on capital spend as Darwin budget should not be exceeded "except in specific cases where higher capital expenditure is essential and is clearly justified/explained in the application".

Q. We have to calculate administrative costs for the Headquarters. How much percent would be allowed?

A. The finance guidance details how much you can request on overhead costs. We would recommend if you have processes in place, to use those existing processes but make sure to look at the guidance to ensure you do not exceed the limits we have laid out.

Q. If the lead partner is based in Nepal and the UK institution is a project partner, is it possible to send the UK partners money directly from the Darwin Initiative?

A. Currently all funds go directly to the lead partner. We would therefore recommend considering the transfer of costs to UK institutions within the budget.

Q. Can a private sector consultancy (offering technical support in-country) be a project partner, or would they be best suited to be written in as a consultant? If so, is there a limit on the amount of funds which can be used for a consultant?

A. There are no specific limits to amount of funds that can be used for consultancy, it is about ensuring the project has access to the best expertise to deliver the project. The involvement of the consultancy will be project depend but if they have a significant output then they should be clearly included as project staff. If unsure, please refer to the finance guidance for further information.

Q. Should the £3,000 audit cost be an additional claim or the only claim in your final budget?

A. You should include up to £3,000 to cover audit costs within the last financial year of your project. This does not need to be covered by Darwin funds but must be included to show audit is recognised as required at the end of the project. These funds should be included in the last financial year, but matched funding can also be used.

Q. To confirm, should our budget show just Darwin funding, or also allocation of matched funding?

A. The budget template is designed to show the full cost of the project and how you are going to fund it, including Darwin funding and matched funding.

Q. In regard to having the Government as partner implementer of the project, how does the Darwin Initiative feel about giving money to public entities?

A. The Darwin Initiative would be unable to provide funding for employees that are receiving a wage from the government and the work to be undertaken is part of their day to day work, however, if there are costs specific to the project, we could cover those costs.

Q. Is the matched funding column supposed to include both confirmed and unconfirmed matched funding or only confirmed?

A. This question is asking you to explain how you will deliver the full project and should include both confirmed and unconfirmed matched funding.

Q. Considering the short column size, how should the project role be explained within the budget template?

A. Within the budget we would expect the job title to be included when explaining the role rather than the specifics of what that person will be responsible for – i.e., try to fit to the space available.

Administration

Q. Do we need to state Covid-19 precautions in our application?

A. There is no specific question on Covid-19 precautions within the application form. However, if you view this as a particular risk to your project you may want to include this as a specific risk and how you will mitigate against it.

Q. We received the following feedback point: "explain why the local communities are not formal project partners" - can you explain more about this please, we usually see local communities (farmers) as beneficiaries as they won't manage budget or submit a letter or support. Are they formal project partners?

A. This depends on the specific project - if they are not managing budget or actively involved in project management then it sounds like they are not formal partners. However, even if they are not formal partners it is often beneficial to include letters of support for stakeholders and beneficiary groups too. We would recommend that you always respond to feedback within your cover letter and address the points raised.

Q. Do you prefer the signed declaration to be just the signature page or the whole proposal, signed?

A. If possible, please provide just the signature page.

Q. Are “in-house” English translations of all documentation (including letters of support from local partners/communities) acceptable or is it preferable to obtain a translation by a professional?

A. Yes, it is acceptable to include “in-house” English translations.

Q. Do all CVs need to put into one PDF, as with the letters of support?

A. Yes, please upload all CVs as one PDF file.

Q. Is there a template for the letters of support that you'd like us to use? If not, what type of information are you looking for?

A. There is no specific template for the letters of support however, we would expect letters to focus on the partners’ support, the strength of your relationship and acknowledge any specific responsibilities or financial contributions. Section 5.3.6 of the guidance document provides an overview of the types of information that should be included in the letter of support.

Q. In response to our feedback points we consulted more widely with stakeholders and experts. This generated some new ideas and information which led us to think we need to make some changes to our indicators. Is it OK to make these changes to our logical framework / indicators at this point?

A. Yes, we welcome any changes to the logical framework and indicators at Stage 2. However, if the changes are significant, please clearly specify which you have made these changes.

Q. In regard to letters of support, if the project is targeting the local government, will a letter from the local government suffice or do we also need a letter of support from the national government?

A. This really depends on what the project is doing. As the project is targeting local government, we want to see you have an existing dialogue and relationship however, it depends on what country you are working in and what type of work you are conducting if you would need the same for national government. If you are unsure when completing your application, please include an explanation of your decisions within your cover letter.

Q. Please can you provide some clarification that the project starts on 1st June, but fiscal years begin 1st April to 31st March

A. This is correct. We would encourage all projects to be aware of this and look at budgets in terms of fiscal year and not calendar year. Please be aware that the reporting cycle also runs to the fiscal years, rather than specifically linked to your project start date. If you have specific questions about this, please get in touch.

Q. We have tried contacting the FCDO in-country, however, are struggling to secure a response. Please can you advise on if there is more, we can do and if this will affect our application?

A. If you have tried contacting the FCDO in-country but not received a reply, please include this within your application to let us know. This will not affect your application and can be followed up by the Darwin Initiative following your submission.

Q. Just to be absolutely clear, it is only one additional file (PDF) with all extra information that is allowed: i.e., all CVs, letters of support, and background info?

A. We would like one PDF with all CVs and a separate PDF with all LoS (rather than a PDF with CVs and LoS combined). As you work through the application form, you will find there are different points where we request you to upload information. Each section will ask you to upload different information and we would request that you do not upload multiple versions of documents.

Technical

Q. In the past (perhaps they still do) Department for International Development used to have standard indicators for project? Does the Darwin Initiative have any standard indicators?

A. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning guidance does identify some standard indicators however, there is no requirement to use these currently and these are not Darwin Initiative specific. This will likely change in future and we will update you as that develops. For now, we would advise you choose indicators that are most appropriate for your project and if using standard indicators in your logframe please be clear on their source.

Project Staff

Q. We want to have two government staff involved 100% in the project however, as they are government staff, we cannot hire them. Please can you confirm how we should include this within our application form? Should we count them as project staff? Or should we do a sub-grant with the government as project partners which will include their team's time? Or a consultancy?

A. You should include any staff with involvement in the project within the application form. Within the budget you can include this as costs covered from an external source i.e., matched funding. We would also advise demonstrating the staff’s involvement by a clear and formal agreement with the government, perhaps a memorandum of understanding or sub-contracting that identifies the expectations of their roles and how they will be managed.

Q. How should PhD students contributing to the project be included with the project?

A. All individuals who are contributing to the delivery of the project should be treated as a member of the project team.

Q. We would like to hire some new Filipino staff, is it preferred to hire this staff within the lead applicant (UK charity) or the NGO partner in the Philippines?

A. This will depend on the specifics of your project It would make sense for your staff to be employed locally by the NGO however, if there is a reason to do it an alternative way then this can also be done. We would also recommend you consider employment law requirements when making this decision.

General

Q. The project partner section asks about whether or not they sit on a project management board - can you explain what your expectations are for the management of the project, i.e., what you'd expect a board would do beyond project team management.

A. When we refer to a project management board this can refer to any type of project governance structure, there is no strict expectation of what this may look like. This question is looking for applications to demonstrate the involvement of partners in project management and decision making and make the distinction with the role of stakeholders, who should not be involved in the management of the project.

Q. Is there a maximum number of partners within the consortium?

A. There are no specific restrictions of how many partners a project can have however, we would recommend considering whether everyone can work efficiently in the size of the consortium proposed.

Summarised Webinar Feedback

How useful did you find the webinar?

Of the 58 people who attended the webinar, 21 attendees provided feedback. 20 attendees reported finding the webinar **very useful** with 1 stating it was **moderately useful**.

How did you find the pace of the webinar?

Out of the 58 attendees a total of 52 provided feedback during the session on the pace of the webinar. 37 found the pace of the webinar **just right**, 11 found the pace **a bit too fast** and 4 stated it was **a bit slow**.

Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- Clear, practical information with fast and direct responses to questions
- Additional information that was not in the guidance
- Information on gender and safeguarding; financial details
- Great overview of application requirements and process and helpful clarifications provided
- Appreciate the time for open questions
- The discussion on what to consider in preparing the application, especially the common mistakes, gaps and omissions.
- Good answers to questions I had about changes between stages - such as potential financial alterations.
- Explaining what is needed for different sections of the application form
- All the presentations were very clear, the content of this question-and-answer session has covered almost everything what a second stage applicant need.
- Clarified some key areas of importance as well as answering Qs on some finer details
- Good to have people explain in talks rather than just reading guidance. I had read all guidance and still hadn't picked up on everything!
- Clarity of the content and the separation into 3 sections.
- Insights of the focus of the reviewers
- All the presentations were concise and clear on how to articulate the Stage 2 application in an effective manner.
- Clarification on gender and safeguarding.
- Gender recommendations and the do no harm approach
- Clear and specific information. I found the presenters friendly and approachable, and the information given relevant. I also found useful examples of previous Darwin project on the gender section.
- Answered most inquiries about PS2 [Stage 2] application. It provided a good guideline and advice to improve the application or to avoid making mistakes during the application process.
- It helped understand the global requirements of the project, how to comply with, especially for financial aspects, considerations on gender equality and communications.

Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- Could the slides be made available on the website just before the session or as the session goes to make sure we can check any slides we didn’t have time to properly capture?
- I think you should make this session 2 hours and slow the pace down
- Gender section - some more actual examples of best practice would have been great
- More on where the sources of information on the gender & safeguarding - does there need to be previous work done that outlines the situation e.g., work or income of different groups?
- Perhaps making sure to express all the short forms are written or explained (i.e., M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation)
- Possibly some more examples on risk aspects would've been helpful
- Thanks for being so clear, and also to responding well when I asked one of you to slow down, keep going like this.
- Not much to improve. Everything was clear and concise with all my questions answered.
- There was a lot of information and some questions are coming later. Would be good to have your introduction slides before the meeting
- It was hard at times to see the specific question that was answered at any given time (it's easier for me as non-native speaker, to read the question and hear the answer). it might be my Zoom display.
- Communication is an important component of the project, so it deserves more details by using some practical examples of best approaches.

Other comments submitted as feedback

- Though Ben Yexley mentioned that Defra want to see in-country lead partners, those of us in that category who were in attendance would have potentially struggled more with accents and pacing.
- This webinar covered almost everything what an applicant needs and was very clear.
- Very useful session
- We look forward to the upcoming webinars.
- Thank you for conducting such webinar, it is not only useful for Darwin Initiative, but also for proposal development in general. very appreciated.
- I have to get feedback from our HQ about Safeguarding issues. We have a comprehensive Code of Conduct which all staff must know.
- Perhaps having these webinars weeks ago could have been more useful. I learnt today that we will need a lot of paperwork to be done and translated
- Many thanks for organising this important session and it is very helpful

M&E Virtual Workshop session: Project design tools and importance of good evidence and indicators

Agenda

Agenda Item
Introduction to the Workshop
Project Design Tools - Why use project design tools - Articulating your "pathway to change" - Group Exercise: Introducing effective logframe development
Break
The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators - Identifying SMART indicators - Collecting and reporting evidence - Group Exercise: SMART indicators and means of verification
Workshop Close

To account for different time zones, this session was delivered twice.

- Session 1: A total of 57 people registered, and 54 people were able to attend.
- Session 2: A total of 52 people registered, and 49 people were able to attend.

Key points or common issues arising from both virtual workshops:

Project Design Tools

Key observations from participants in the logframe and theory of change exercises included:

- Initially it was fairly easy to sort the relevant statements however, it became harder the more you went through the exercise. It was difficult to differentiate between outputs and activities in this example.
- Found it difficult to understand the project from an external perspective.
- The statements were lacking in detail and appeared to be missing information.
- The problem statement did not reflect what they were doing, how they were going to do it, or how it would the project work long term.
- More details of how the project aligns with activities was required. The importance of clarity of language when defining outputs and activities to make sure logic follows through.
- The activities were often phrased as if they were results and needed more direction to make it more of an action.
- There were quite a few “leaps of faiths” where concepts were mentioned but not followed through. For example, the outcome statement mentions 10,000 community members but only 2 training sessions a year were mentioned.
- There is no mention of governance, capacity building, gender or equity within the statements. An understanding of a communication strategy is also not mentioned.
- An understanding of looking at the bigger picture and considering what the direct result of activities are to the overall objective.
- The exercise was interesting in thinking about where to begin when starting your logframe and why each part is important to the larger project.
- None of the statements are particularly SMART or timebound and seem quite vague. There is also no baselines or targets mentioned.

The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators

Key observations from participants in the indicators and evidence exercise included:

- The indicators were not SMART and did not include baselines, often not linked to an outcome or output.
- More detail was required in understanding the means of verification and how they provided evidence.
- It was difficult to identify an indicator for output 3 as it was unclear on what the output was trying to achieve.
- The indicators and means of verification often did not match up and it was hard to make a connection between both.
- The language used was often unclear and made it hard to differentiate between indicators and means of verification.
- There appeared to be gaps of logic which made the wider project difficult to understand. For example, there was mention of a “livelihood assessment” however, it was unclear what this was related to.
- The targets included were not achievable.

Summarised Feedback

Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- Interactive exercises
- Group work was useful and allowed for discussions
- Sharing of experiences with other organisations
- Great to have opportunity to ask question “face to face” in a smaller group to a Darwin facilitator

Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- More focused discussions in the group work
- More examples could be interesting
- The activities may be easier if the bulk of the work would be “lighter” like less outputs/ sticky notes
- A review of what a good logframe is
- Reviewing some of the feedback on applications or having a Q&A session to add specific queries over feedback
- It might be nice to have some good SMART indicators in the mix and some where there is still a lot of work to do to reformulate
- I’m a non-native speaker and reading the text in the group is hard with the group discussing in the background. Maybe allow 5 minutes of reading in quiet before discussion?
- Is there a possibility of having a voice instruction at the beginning of the webinar? it helps the initial confusion
- Miro trickier to use on smaller laptop only screen - although everything was still doable
- Echo appeared in the discussion

‘What Makes a Good Application?’ – Darwin Expert Committee Presentation

A total of 90 people registered, and 68 people were able to attend.

Q&A

Q. Do the Stage 1 reviewers also review the Stage 2 application so there is consistency in review of the proposal in terms of comments and subsequent responses?

A. Generally we try to allocate Stage 2 applications to the reviewers who have seen them at Stage 1 however, this is often not possible due to resourcing. Of the three reviewers at Stage 2, typically two would have reviewed the application at Stage 1.

Q. Should we support theory of change with figures or just narrative?

A. We would advise including both figures and an explanation to support your Theory of Change. Figures tell a thousand words, but a narrative helps clarify to the reviewer.

Q. Can you provide any guidance or useful information to include in justifying financial split across partners/countries?

A. The most important thing to consider is explaining why you have made the decision to split your finances in the way you have. We ask that projects provide a clear explanation of where money is being spent and, if not in-country, how you intend to spend that money.

Q. When preparing our Stage 2 application, should we retain much of the text from our first stage application, but deepen the explanation where possible and incorporate feedback?

A. Between Stage 1 and Stage 2 there is flexibility to make changes to your application however, we ask that you clearly explain why you have made these changes. The main thing to concentrate when completing your Stage 2 application is that you have addressed all the feedback provided from Stage 1.

Q. If we are working with a partner that has several divisions/ departments, should the support letter come from the relevant division, or from the top? How would this work for universities as partners?

A. We would recommend that you start by requesting a letter of support from the relevant department, you can then request subsequent letters from further up the chain. Letters of support can often take some time and so it can be useful to have one from the relevant division while waiting to hear back from higher levels.

Q. What is your opinion about the project being prescriptive, proposing a specific livelihood activity at the proposal stage versus proposing a process where communities identify the right livelihood for them during the project implementation.

A. Having a strong understanding of your approach to livelihoods demonstrates you have spoken with the target community and defined how you will achieve your outcome. However, you should also ensure your project is flexible to adapt to conversations that perhaps identify more appropriate alternative livelihoods.

Q. Do you have any tips on how to put together a strong CV when there is a 1-page limit?

A. The CVs provide an understanding of what skills an individual will bring to the project. Although it remains important to cover the person's qualifications and work history, we would advise you to focus particularly on the expertise and experience the person would contribute to the project.

Q. Is there a certain amount of co-financing the committee looks for?

A. No, we recognise that each project is quite different and therefore don't specify an exact amount a project much achieve. However, matched funding is highly desirable and if you don't have matched funding, you should provide an explanation.

Q. Can we change a lot in our logical framework from Stage 1 to Stage 2?

A. Yes, we welcome changes to the logframe between Stage 1 and Stage 2, especially if you are responding to feedback. However, we would ask that you please provide an explanation of all changes within your cover letter.

Q. How is it viewed if you change/increase the budget in the stage 2 application? For example, if the changes don't relate to feedback, but perhaps costs have increased, or something was left out in the Stage 1 application

A. As long as you explain why you are making the changes to your application; it will not affect the way the project is viewed.

Q. Could you please share if you have core or standard indicators that should be included in project proposals? If yes, please share where to find a list of indicators.

A. For this round we have introduced a new guidance document called the 'Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Guidance'. In this document we indicated that Darwin standard indicators will be available shortly, but these are not yet available. For now, if you are including standard indicators from other sources (e.g., NBSAPs) please make sure they are relevant for your project and clearly identify where they have come from. For further information please see the guidance on the Darwin website.

Q. Is the whole budget sent to the lead partner or will each partner receive their budget directly?

A. Currently all funds go directly to the lead partner who will be responsible for distributing it to the project partners.

Q. Do we have to provide a letter of support for organisations we have not identified as a project partner in Stage 1 but are currently in discussions with about collaborating?

A. We request that the lead partner as well as all partners provide a letter of support to be included within the application.

Q. After listening to the various webinars and coaching's, I feel from the team an inherent assumption / bias that the lead partner is outside of the country of focus. How can we flag and ensure that our proposal is understood as an entirely in-country endeavour?

A. We would recommend that you clearly explain this within your cover letter and when completing the relevant sections of the application form.

Q. Can we address specific reviewer comments in a separate document if they don't fit well into the application format?

A. For coherence within your application form, we would ask that all feedback is addressed within the application, with the cover letter outlining your response/signposting where this has been addressed within the application form. Your cover letter should not be relied upon to answer key questions within the application form.

Q. At Stage 2, will the DEC review Stage 1 application again and compare it with Stage 2 application?

A. Although reviewers may refer to Stage 1 applications to check if feedback has been addressed, the main focus will be to review what is written within the Stage 2 application.

Q. Is it possible to mark the addressed feedback in colour?

Unfortunately, you are not able to colour your application responses within Flexi-Grant but you can on documents attached as supporting material (e.g. cover letter).

Q. How does the panel value long-term policy change over shorter-term livelihood/biodiversity benefits?

The DEC recognise the relative merits of each type of project. Key things to consider would be:

- For projects with shorter-term livelihood/biodiversity benefits, consider project sustainability and how these benefits will continue/be assured post-project
- For policy projects, ensure you are realistic about what can be achieved within your project lifetime as we recognise policy changes can take time. Be clear on the policy change process (and which parts you will contribute towards/achieve) and ensure you articulate your longer-term pathway to change. If direct benefits cannot be measured within the lifetime of your project, ensure you are able to measure and demonstrate progress along your pathway to change to provide assurance these will accrue in the longer-term.

Summarised Webinar Feedback

How useful did you find the webinar?

Of the 68 people who attended the webinar, 23 attendees provided feedback. 20 attendees reported finding the webinar **very useful** with 3 stating it was **moderately useful**.

How did you find the pace of the webinar?

Out of the 58 attendees a total of 52 provided feedback during the session on the pace of the webinar. 37 found the pace of the webinar **just right**, 11 found the pace **a bit too fast** and 4 stated it was **a bit slow**.

Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- Personal insights from an expert panel member and clarifications on technical aspects such as logframe
- While some of it was stating the obvious (avoid typos and jargon), other bits were good to re-iterate...e.g align with treaties, with international convention objectives
- To the point explanations and clear answers in the Q&A
- Great presentation from Howard and Q&A session.
- Clear pointers on your logic and thinking.
- The most valuable piece of information I learned is that reviewers are not always subject matter experts in technical aspects of the proposal.
- It was good to hear that the assessors really want clear and succinct proposals. Its obvious I guess - but good to have it repeated.
- Clear and precise with good tips on many aspects of the process
- Howard's presentation and insights were really interesting
- Learning about what reviewers will look closely and assess
- Clear presentation. Listening to the responses on the questions was the most useful part today.
- Good and practical orientation for a 2nd Darwin Initiative application stage. Well organized in three main subjects. Clear and useful advices to improve the proposals.
- Howard Nelson's presentation was so insightful - it made the whole application and selection process seem much clearer. Really appreciated his generosity, insights and warmth. Thank you.
- The livelihood part was very helpful
- Insights from within the granting committee
- Howard explanation on how DEC see the application make me understand how to improve the proposal
- For me, I found the explanations on things we need to consider to make our application strong were very useful.
- Clear and concise guidance as always - and a useful reminder of key points to address in the Stage 2 application.
- Clear and precise presentations. Good Q&A
- Shone a light on some really important things to convey in the application
- The tips & reminders on what would make the proposal more likely to be approved and the answers to the questions.

- It covered many aspects of application and many questions regarding budget, partnership, logframe and more
- Perspectives of the evaluation team and how they operate

Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- I had to miss the M&E one yesterday and have been scouring the Web to find the recording...be great if this was accessible somewhere
- Use of examples from good or bad proposals to illustrate points made
- Example of projects that won / lost - not the specific ones - but categories. The bit about the alternative livelihoods project very good - more like that.
- Maybe some examples of bad vs good examples of sections that reviewers know are problematic
- Possibly more time for questions!
- Maybe would be good in the future if there is some presentation of trends on what are nature of the proposals Darwin supported over the years and draw key good practices out of these trends.
- Maybe 10 mins more for questions.
- I think 1h30 could have been planned for this great session as the Q&A unfortunately had to be cut short.
- I would like to see actual example sentences or paragraphs used more when making points about what the committee is looking for
- I would like to suggest extending time of the webinar from one hour to one and half hour.
- Ideally inputs from more than one evaluator

Other comments submitted as feedback

- I appreciate this opportunity and the detail provided in the stage 1 feedback!
- Really enjoyed this series of webinars
- Great webinar. Thanks for organizing this.
- There was a lot repeated from the 1st meeting
- An additional 15 minutes for questions would be useful
- Excellent presentations and discussions!
- Thank you for the webinar and the workshop as i'm still new in proposal writing this has been very informative.
- Thanks for all three sessions.
- It would be interesting to learn more about DECs roles and how they help shape Darwin - as part of a different session

Annex 1 – FAQ and Common Issues webinar attendee summary