  

### Darwin Initiative Workshop for

### *Stage 2 Applicants*

### Monday 3 November 2014

### ZSL, London

We held a workshop for Stage 2 Applicants to the Darwin Initiative. The theme of this workshop was ‘Implementable Applications’.

This workshop was first held in 2013 in response to requests from applications for more information on how to meet the new DFID funding criteria.

We proposed the theme ‘Implementable applications’ in 2014 because our concern is not just that projects can meet the essential funding criteria and be funded, but that the eventual projects are in good shape and capable of presenting evidence of the effect they are having on biodiversity and, for DFID funded projects, poverty alleviation.

We’re seeing applicant’s present ever more complex applications which include extensive logframes and are concerned that some of these applicants are being overambitious with their plans for M&E in an attempt to meet what they consider to be DFID funding criteria.

Part of the objective today, therefore, was to work with applicants to better understand the difference between what it is possible to measure through your project vs. what is necessary to measure. This is to ensure all projects funded by Darwin are fully implementable from day 1 and have minimal issues with implementing their projects.

## Session 1: Common Mistakes

* Don’t make the assumption that better environmental management equals biodiversity benefits - ensure you are testing this assumption otherwise you run the risk of not meeting the Darwin Initiative’s requirement to make a contribution to biodiversity conservation.
* Ensure your application fully details how your project will contribute to the Conventions supported by the Darwin Initiative. Sometimes applicants appear to pay lip service to the Conventions which reduces its value in terms of the Darwin Initiative’s overarching objective which is to support developing countries meet their commitments under the Conventions.
* New partnerships take time. Therefore if your project is based on a brand new partnership ensure you build sufficient time into your workplan in the first year to cope with this.
* If you have significant match funding for your project, please ensure you are able to define what work is to be undertaken with Darwin funds and what work will be undertaken with your match funding.
* If you are undertaking a research project it is not sufficient to end the project with a publication in the hope that it will be read and used. We expect you to have defined the audience of your research and how you will engage this audience. Consider outlets in addition to peer reviewed research particularly given the timescales it takes to have your work published.
* It is essential that you are able to define who the beneficiaries are of your project – in the short-term and (particularly for policy orientated DFID funded projects), the long-term beneficiaries. It is also essential for DFID applicants that you be able to define what will change for these beneficiaries. It is not sufficient to define the number of communities who will benefit. We need to understand how many households or individuals will benefit from this work.
* Please consider the wider poverty benefits your work may have. Income is a commonly used indicator yet it is difficult to demonstrate a difference in income within the 3 years of Darwin funding. You may wish to consider widening your view on what aspects of poverty you will affect. The recent learning note on poverty and biodiversity may be of interest <http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/assets/uploads/2014/05/DI-Learning-Note-poverty-and-biodiversity-2014-Final.pdf>
* For projects that are identifying alternative livelihoods as a means of reducing impacts on biodiversity please ensure that you have identified what the current markets are for these products (i.e numbers of tourists to an area for ecotourism project), what your route to market is and that you have the relevant expertise on your project for doing so.

Common mistakes: M&E

* If you are applying for DFID funding please ensure you present outcome indicators for both biodiversity AND poverty. For Defra funding please ensure you at least present a biodiversity indicator.
* Please ensure you have identified HOW you might measure the indicators presented. For example what methodology might you use to demonstrate a change in capability as a result of your project?
* Try to disaggregate your data by gender whenever it is appropriate.
* Ensure you are measure the resultant change rather than the inputs/activities you have put into a system.
* Monitor your assumptions and regularly revisit them. Failure to identify what are critical assumptions or detail how you might mitigate them is common and yet could be a fatal error to your project.
* Please do not set a target for your indicators unless you either have a baseline or have good evidence of the success of this approach elsewhere. If your project is a pilot project that intends to set its baseline in the first year we really would not recommend setting ambitious targets of the effect you might have on poverty status of beneficiaries.
* Try to elaborate your M&E plan – who will measure the various indicators, how they will measure these indicators, what the cost of measuring these indicators will be and what evidence you will present to support this.

Common mistakes: Team and CV’s

* Make sure you present all the CV’s of the team members who are critical to the delivery of the project
* Make sure you have tailored the CVs so that the skills needed for the project are well represented.
* Try to relate the job title on the CV’s to the job title in the budget form
* Avoiding submitting teams with too many roles that are ‘To be confirmed’ or ‘To be decided’. This represents a risk to the Darwin Initiative that it will take you some months to identify key team member which could mean delays to your project.
* Avoid ‘boiler plate’ letters of support. These are identical letters of support written by various partners – this suggests they have minimal interest or knowledge in your project and have been told what to write.

Common mistakes: Budget

* Please check the final budget figure in the excel sheet matches the word document.
* If your capital costs exceed 10% of the total budget please attempt to justify this expenditure.
* If you put figures in the ‘other’ section of the budget please explain what these are
* If you put figures in the ‘consultancy’ section of the budget please explain what these are
* Ensure you submit both your Institution’s annual report AND your last 2 years accounts

## Session 2: Frequently asked questions

Q: Do accounts need to be audited?

A: Yes – either audited or independently examined to be eligible for Darwin funding.

Q: Does disaggregating your data by gender even apply to policy orientated projects?

A: Where appropriate yes. You may wish to consider representativeness of females on governance bodies, or the gender of individuals that have been supported in building their capacity. Basically please disaggregate your data by gender where possible.

Q: Is it possible to make changes to your project budget between stage 1 and stage 2?

A: Yes but if it is a significant change please explain why there has been this change. If the changes are to the methodology or logframe this is perfectly acceptable. Indeed we would expect applicants to make change to their logframe after the workshop.

Q: What overheads are acceptable?

A: We will be sending out advice shortly on this issue.

Q: Is there a minimum level of match funding expected?

A: There is no specified minimum - just what is appropriate to your project. Not all projects will need match funding whereas others require substantive funding. An inability to identify where this match funding is coming from represents a risk to the Darwin Initiative which will consider whether this is a risk worth taking when reviewing your application.

Q: Where should we talk about our assumptions?

A: Talk about them within your logframe and in question 27 on your ‘Project based monitoring and evaluation’.

**Session 3: Afternoon exercises**

## Exercise 1: Identify the Outputs from the Outcomes

Below there are 2 projects with their logframe Outcome, outputs, assumptions and activities mixed up. Try to identify the different statements and why. We’ve given you a clue by telling you how many of each statement there should be (answers given at the end).

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Project 1 | Project 2 |
| Outcome | 1 | 1 |
| Output | 4 | 4 |
| Assumption | 3 | 5 |
| Activity | 8 | 6 |

Project 1: **21-006 Balancing conservation and livelihoods in the Chimanimani Forest belt, Mozambique**

* 40+ communities will be engaged in a range of natural resource-based livelihoods options, increasing household incomes and reducing loss of biodiversity and carbon stocks across the Chimanimani forest belt.
* A minimum of 4 Forest Learning trails opened, and educational materials produced, generating greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity (and threats to it) across the forest belt and engaging schools in biodiversity conservation
* Carry out targeted plant surveys in each of the four forest areas, focussing on less-disturbed areas.
* Compile summary botanical report for each of the four forest areas
* Establish forest sample plots in two forest areas [3-4 plots in each area]
* Existing natural resource based livelihood strategies – honey production, dried forest fruits, tourism and conservation agriculture – expanded to benefit 2,281 households
* Forest surveys produced for each of 4 distinct forest areas, with a specific focus on useful plants identified by the communities (e.g. food and medicinal plants) and conservation priority species
* Government remains committed to conserving the forest belt and enabling local people to develop sustainable livelihoods. Expansion of forestry concessions or granting of large land concessions for commercial agriculture would undermine the overall strategy and push local people further into the forests. Monitored by MICAIA and mitigated by working closely with the Administration of the Chimanimani TFCA and relevant government entities.
* Identify (at IIAM and Kew) botanical voucher specimens collected during survey work
* Land use and sustainable off take plans created for the forest belt, including community managed conservation areas and communal and family sustainable agriculture zones
* Local leaders (community and traditional) remain committed to the project and its vision. The complex local context, including a ‘grey economy’ of informal gold mining, creates ‘opportunities’ for local leaders. Change can be threatening if it is not accompanied by alternative opportunities at least as valuable. Engaging leaders and enrolling them in the vision is critical.
* Map vegetation types and habitat quality using field survey data and available spatial imagery
* Mobilize communities and facilitate the production of maps and land use plans (zones) using a variety of participatory methodologies
* Organise the involvement of officials from the government’s department of geography and mapping to demarcate officially the proposed conservation zones
* Project finance and investment can be found to scale up alternative livelihood opportunities. If this is not the case then people will continue with whatever livelihood strategy they can manage, however unsustainable it might be. MICAIA Foundation has a successful record of setting up social enterprises, including NDZOU Camp and Mozambique Honey Company. A significant pledge of funds towards scaling up honey production has already been received by Kew Foundation.
* Work with each community, through a series of organised meetings, to prepare plans for access to forest resources (off-take), establish management committees for the conservation zones, and provide training to the members of these committees.

**Project 2: Strengthening marine protected areas and marine ecotourism benefits in Sudan**

* Acoustic monitor array deployment inside DMNP and Sanganeb MPA and flagship elasmobranch species tagged.
* Community Visioning Workshop (x1) held with a broad group of stakeholders (local community members, businessmen, state and federal government officials), and communications on progress maintained through Output 4.
* Experienced facilitator that is able to manage a broad range of stakeholders and bring them to a common vision;
* Increased awareness of the globally significant marine biodiversity and flagship species found in Sudan's Red Sea among a broad range of national, regional and international stakeholders
* Meeting with WCGA Officers at the start and end of the project to complete MPA Management Effectiveness Assessments (using WWF-World Bank Scorecard method or equivalent).
* National capacity to effectively manage two existing MPAs in Sudan strengthened through building a common future vision among a wide range of stakeholders, renovating existing infrastructure, procuring new equipment and using the scientific results to update the DMNP zoning plan.
* Nature-based ecotourism livelihoods in Mohammed Qol and Dugonab and understanding of economic value of dive industry and potential for sustainable growth improved.
* Prepare business plans for nature-based ecotourism livelihood opportunities that are both equitable and gender balanced.
* Relationships between Red Sea State government and WCGA remain stable;
* Scientific knowledge about marine biodiversity and flagship species is increased and national capacity for monitoring is strengthened by training in scientific and participatory monitoring methods, generating data for use in biodiversity planning and management.
* Suitable trainees are identified and remain in the same institution at least for the duration of the project;
* The park building is in suitable condition for renovation and there is sufficient commitment from WCGA to undertake required work and ensure that the renovated building is maintained and the running costs covered;
* To strengthen Sudan's MPA management capacity, increase knowledge and awareness of marine biodiversity and flagship species, and assist two local communities to realise biodiversity benefits through sustainable nature-based livelihoods.
* Training of Sudanese partners in coral reef monitoring survey methods (Cousteau Divers, Reef Check) and field surveys (x 3) to implement monitoring.
* Update zoning plan for DMNP on the basis of the community visioning workshop and scientific surveys and identify key biodiversity hotspots for consideration as new MPAs for inclusion in MPA Network.
* WCGA are interested to learn about MPA Management Effectiveness Assessment methods and to monitor progress.

## Answers to Exercise 1:

**Project 1: 21-006 Balancing conservation and livelihoods in the Chimanimani Forest belt, Mozambique**

**Outcome**

40+ communities will be engaged in a range of natural resource-based livelihoods options, increasing household incomes and reducing loss of biodiversity and carbon stocks across the Chimanimani forest belt.

**Outputs**

1. Forest surveys produced for each of 4 distinct forest areas, with a specific focus on useful plants identified by the communities (e.g. food and medicinal plants) and conservation priority species
2. Land use and sustainable off take plans created for the forest belt, including community managed conservation areas and communal and family sustainable agriculture zones
3. Existing natural resource based livelihood strategies – honey production, dried forest fruits, tourism and conservation agriculture – expanded to benefit 2,281 households
4. A minimum of 4 Forest Learning trails opened, and educational materials produced, generating greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity (and threats to it) across the forest belt and engaging schools in biodiversity conservation

**Assumptions**

A1: Government remains committed to conserving the forest belt and enabling local people to develop sustainable livelihoods. Expansion of forestry concessions or granting of large land concessions for commercial agriculture would undermine the overall strategy and push local people further into the forests. Monitored by MICAIA and mitigated by working closely with the Administration of the Chimanimani TFCA and relevant government entities.

A2: Project finance and investment can be found to scale up alternative livelihood opportunities. If this is not the case then people will continue with whatever livelihood strategy they can manage, however unsustainable it might be. MICAIA Foundation has a successful record of setting up social enterprises, including NDZOU Camp and Mozambique Honey Company. A significant pledge of funds towards scaling up honey production has already been received by Kew Foundation.

A3: Local leaders (community and traditional) remain committed to the project and its vision. The complex local context, including a ‘grey economy’ of informal gold mining, creates ‘opportunities’ for local leaders. Change can be threatening if it is not accompanied by alternative opportunities at least as valuable. Engaging leaders and enrolling them in the vision is critical.

**Activities**

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| --- | --- |
| Activity 1.1 | Carry out targeted plant surveys in each of the four forest areas, focussing on less-disturbed areas. |
| Activity 1.2 | Identify (at IIAM and Kew) botanical voucher specimens collected during survey work |
| Activity 1.3 | Map vegetation types and habitat quality using field survey data and available spatial imagery |
| Activity 1.4 | Compile summary botanical report for each of the four forest areas |
| Activity 1.5 | Establish forest sample plots in two forest areas [3-4 plots in each area] |

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| Activity 2.1 | Mobilize communities and facilitate the production of maps and land use plans (zones) using a variety of participatory methodologies |
| Activity 2.2 | Organise the involvement of officials from the government’s department of geography and mapping to demarcate officially the proposed conservation zones |
| Activity 2.3 | Work with each community, through a series of organised meetings, to prepare plans for access to forest resources (off-take), establish management committees for the conservation zones, and provide training to the members of these committees. |

Project 2: Strengthening marine protected areas and marine ecotourism benefits in Sudan

**Outcome**

To strengthen Sudan's MPA management capacity, increase knowledge and awareness of marine biodiversity and flagship species, and assist two local communities to realise biodiversity benefits through sustainable nature-based livelihoods.

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| Output 1 | National capacity to effectively manage two existing MPAs in Sudan strengthened through building a common future vision among a wide range of stakeholders, renovating existing infrastructure, procuring new equipment and using the scientific results to update the DMNP zoning plan. |
| Output 2 | Scientific knowledge about marine biodiversity and flagship species is increased and national capacity for monitoring is strengthened by training in scientific and participatory monitoring methods, generating data for use in biodiversity planning and management. |
| Output 3 | Nature-based ecotourism livelihoods in Mohammed Qol and Dugonab and understanding of economic value of dive industry and potential for sustainable growth improved. |
| Output 4 | Increased awareness of the globally significant marine biodiversity and flagship species found in Sudan's Red Sea among a broad range of national, regional and international stakeholders |

Assumption

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| --- | --- |
| Assumption 1 | Relationships between Red Sea State government and WCGA remain stable; |
|  | Experienced facilitator that is able to manage a broad range of stakeholders and bring them to a common vision; |
|  | The park building is in suitable condition for renovation and there is sufficient commitment from WCGA to undertake required work and ensure that the renovated building is maintained and the running costs covered; |
|  | WCGA are interested to learn about MPA Management Effectiveness Assessment methods and to monitor progress. |
|  | Suitable trainees are identified and remain in the same institution at least for the duration of the project; |

Activities

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| --- | --- |
| Activity 1.1 | Community Visioning Workshop (x1) held with a broad group of stakeholders (local community members, businessmen, state and federal government officials), and communications on progress maintained through Output 4. |
| Activity 1.4 | Update zoning plan for DMNP on the basis of the community visioning workshop and scientific surveys and identify key biodiversity hotspots for consideration as new MPAs for inclusion in MPA Network. |
| Activity 1.5 | Meeting with WCGA Officers at the start and end of the project to complete MPA Management Effectiveness Assessments (using WWF-World Bank Scorecard method or equivalent). |
| Activity 2.1 | Acoustic monitor array deployment inside DMNP and Sanganeb MPA and flagship elasmobranch species tagged. |
| Activity 2.8 | Training of Sudanese partners in coral reef monitoring survey methods (Cousteau Divers, Reef Check) and field surveys (x 3) to implement monitoring. |
| Activity 3.2 | Prepare business plans for nature-based ecotourism livelihood opportunities that are both equitable and gender balanced. |

## Exercise 2: SMART indicators

From the Log Frame provided, undertake a SMART analysis of each indicator, assessing whether it is:

* **SPECIFIC:** Is it Specific: Appropriately phrased for the level in the project results hierarchy (e.g. is an input indicator used as an output indicator, is an output indicator used as an outcome indicator?) Will it measure whether the output will be achieved, or measure whether the outcome delivers the change that is anticipated.
* **MEASURABLE:** How will the indicator be measured? Will it need a baseline to be established first?
* **ACHIEVABLE:** Can the project achieve the indicator in the time scale and with the resources available to it? Is the information that needs to be collected to measure the indicator available at an acceptable cost?
* **RELEVANT:** Will the indicator deliver relevant management information that may be used to improve the project’s performance?
* **TIME-BOUND:** Is there an indication of when the indicator milestone is expected to be met?

Score out of 10 for the SMARTness of each indicator i.e. score out of 2 for S, out of 2 for M etc.

2 = fits the requirements

1 = ok but weak

0 = weak and does not meet the requirements

## Exercise 3: Developing an M&E Plan

Use the blank matrix below to start developing an M&E plan for your project. This is a useful exercise to identify whether the indicators you have set out in your logframe are feasible, are realistic and are built into the project workplan and budget from day 1. You may find once you start doing this exercise that you can identify cheaper proxy indicators that would provide similar quality of information – they may even provide some independent verification of your work.

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| What needs to be monitored/ evaluated | Evidence/ data required | Where evidence / data is to be sourced | When and how often information required | Roles and responsibilities | Who | Resources (time, £, staff, input from others) |
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