Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Stage 2 workshop

10th January 2018

Workshop Proceedings

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
09:30	**Arrivals and Registration** (Tea and coffee on arrival)
10.00	**Welcome by the IWT Challenge Fund Secretariat** - Welcome by Defra - Changes for Round 4
10:15	**Introduction to the Workshop** - Purpose of the workshop - How the day will work - Introductions - exercise
10:30	**Overview of Frequently Asked Questions/Common Issues** - Common administrative and finance queries - Collection of questions received from applicants and responses
11.00	**IWT Advisory Group Presentation: What Makes a Good Application?** - Presentation by a member of the IWTAG - Q&A
11:30	**The Importance of Gender in IWT Projects** - Integrating gender into IWT projects
11:45	**Communicating your Ideas** - Framing your project appropriately - Translating complexity into simplicity - exercise
12:00	**Lunch**
13:00	**Project Design Tools** - Why use project design tools - Logframes and theories of change - Introducing effective logframe development - exercise
14:10	**Tea and Coffee Break**
14:20	**The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators** - Identifying SMART indicators - Collecting and reporting evidence - Means of verification - exercise
15.30	**Q&A, Feedback and Wrap Up**
16:00	**Workshop Close**

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

Key points or common issues arising from the morning sessions

Welcome by the IWT Challenge Fund Secretariat

Q. If we don't plan for enough time at project start up, are we able to roll over funds into the next financial year?

We ask that projects plan sufficient time at project start up to factor in any risk of delays, and recommend that projects don't plan too many activities in the first few months – particularly if recruitment is planned. Through the change request procedure, projects can adjust their project over its lifetime in response to changing situations on the ground. However, requests to move funds between financial years are heavily scrutinised and are approved on a case by case basis when the budget allows and when the reason for change is outside of the control of the project/could not have been anticipated. We cannot guarantee such requests will be approved.

Overview of Frequently Asked Questions/Common Issues

Finance and Admin

Q. What are Darwin's exact guidelines concerning funding of vehicles, crop processing facilities, accommodation and teaching facilities?

See 'Finance for Darwin&IWT' Section 1.7 for details. The only restriction is that Defra will not fund the purchase of land or the erection of permanent buildings. All other capital costs are considered acceptable, but we would expect applicants to consider value for money: does the project need the purchase or would rental/lease work? How do you ensure you buy the best product at the most cost effective price? Remember to include taxes, shipping, import, as well as how easy the product will be to maintain. Cheapest is not always best in developing countries. Be prepared to justify a decision, but you do not need Defra's approval on procurement. If you do want to build something permanent, this can still be part of the project if the costs for this are met by matched funding.

Q. What are the audit requirements?

See 'Finance for Darwin&IWT' Section 1.4 for details. For any total award over £100,000, you are required to organise an independent examination/audit of the grant provided to the lead organisation from the IWT Challenge Fund at the end of the project. A total of £1,500 (maximum) can be allocated in the final financial year of the IWT project budget for these costs. The amount is ring-fenced and any underspend may not be reallocated elsewhere in your budget.

Q. Can we write support for monitoring and evaluation of the project into the budget?

See 'Finance for Darwin&IWT' Section 1.9 for details. Yes - please do. We recommend you allocated approximately 5-10% of your budget to M&E.

Q. Could you clarify requirements for letters of support?

IWT Guidance Section 7.3. LoS are required from all main partners, PLUS the applicant organisation.

Q. Are successful projects eligible to apply for IWT Challenge Fund grants in the future to provide legacy and continued development of work?

Yes. You can apply for funding for as many different projects as you wish in as many rounds as you wish. There is no guarantee of future funding however.

Q. Clarity regarding IWT co-funding restrictions for projects versus activities

Co-financing for your proposed project is highly desirable, but is not obligatory. Where there is co-financing/matched funding, there are no requirements for it to be at a particular level. For projects with co-financing it is important to ensure the elements of the project funded by Darwin are specific, clearly identified and accounted for. It should be clear which activities will be funded by Darwin and which activities will be co-financed.

Q. Could you please provide more detail on how we should calculate overheads? If an applicant is covering staff costs from other sources as co-financing and can quantify these costs, can co-financed staff costs be considered as part of the project's total staff costs in a given year when calculating overheads for that year? (The financial guidelines state that, "the proportion of overheads claimed in any year is not greater than 40% of the 'staff costs' budget for that year.")

See 'Finance for Darwin&IWT' Section 1.3 for details. Any relevant overheads not being requested from Darwin/IWT can certainly be included as matched funding on the basis that the costs will have to be covered to ensure the staff inputs are fully costed. If the applicant organisation costs are higher than the % acceptable, any balance can certainly be met by matched funding and should be included in the budget to show this.

Q. Could you please clarify what Question 17a. Harmonisation is asking for. Is this question asking about existing work that the lead applicant is doing, existing work by any partners on the application or any existing work in the project's target area?

It could be any of these - if relevant to what you are proposing, please consider any of these situations.

Q. What type of documents are appropriate to submit as evidence of having been in contact with the FCO in the project country? Should applicants request letters of support from the FCO?

A formal Letter of Support from the Embassy/HC can be a valuable addition to any application however it is recognised that many cases FCO does not have the resources to engage in detail and may not even be able to respond to an applicant. This is therefore not a requirement.

Q. Do all lead applicants need to submit letters of support from their own organisations?

See IWT Guidance Section 7.3 for further details. Yes - as evidence of your organisation's support for your application and the importance of the work to your organisation.

Q. What would you want to see in the budget report?

Answer based on assumption this is asking about reporting on funds if successful. We will look for the level of detail in the report templates and claim forms, which are largely the same as the high level budget lines, but do look at the final claim report template as we may ask for additional information at project end. We do not ask for detailed reporting on finances. But you should also be aware that we may choose any organisation for a spot audit (see 'Finance for Darwin&IWT').

Q. How would finance help to present a good application?

Ensure the costs are realistic and based on actual costs (not rounded); ensure that the spreadsheet is fully completed and the figures match those in the application form.

Q. What level of internal control should finance have over the project?

We would expect any organisation to manage their project funds to at least the same level of rigour as they apply to their organisation's finances, and to a level that would be acceptable by an auditor.

Q. What level of coordination is expected from partners working on similar projects or receiving Defra funding?

Demonstrating an understanding of other geographically or technically relevant interventions will help to strengthen your application. Where other relevant work is ongoing it is important to demonstrate complementarities with your intervention whilst avoiding duplication of effort. We encourage projects to talk to one another and if there are opportunities for working together or making efficiencies from economies of scale or making judicious use of flights, we would encourage this also. But there is no specific requirement.

Q. How much variance in budgets will be permitted between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Any variance of budget would be accepted as long as it is clearly justified. In general we would not expect a significant difference, but recognise things change between St1 and St2 and also that feedback may have resulted in a change of approach.

Q. Do IWT projects need to follow UK government guidelines on per diem/Daily Subsistence Allowance rates?

There aren't strict requirements or guidelines when it comes to travel and subsistence (T&S) costs under IWT projects, however we ask that costs are reasonable. In section 1.5 of the Finance guidance it states "T&S costs should be clearly justified and offer the best value available. Defra may ask you to justify or reduce your T&S request if they believe it is excessive".

Technical

Q. Could you give examples of how the gender component can be addressed when not central to the application?

Projects should, as a minimum, demonstrate a 'do no harm' approach to gender issue. This requires proposals to demonstrate an understanding of local realities and social norms in the project site.

The Darwin Initiative website, the sister scheme to the IWT Challenge Fund, contains the project documents for all Darwin projects and can be searched for examples of conservation projects engaging with gender issues. The Darwin Gender newsletter from June 2015, provides further examples of projects engaging with gender.

Q. What are the expectations in terms of monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation is a key part of all successful IWT projects. The scheme is funded through Official Development Assistance funding and this brings with it a requirement that projects are able to demonstrate their contribution to poverty alleviation. Consequently projects are required to have robust logframes including indicators to measure, and evidence to verify, project progress and achievements. As a general rule we would suggest allocating between 5 and 10% of the project budget to monitoring and evaluation.

Q. How to frame a good indicator in the logframe?

Good logframe indicators should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound). Further information on what is meant by this can be found in the presentation slides from the workshop, as well as in the exercise handout from the day.

Q. How many outputs and indicators should we be thinking about for a grant size of £151,000?

There is no set rule relating to numbers of outputs for IWT projects. Given time and budget constraints, we would suggest that projects limit themselves to a maximum of 5 outputs. The number of indicators required also depends upon the project in question. However it is important to strike a balance between ensuring that you gather adequate evidence to demonstrate progress against all aspects of each output/outcome, whilst not overburdening the project team or unnecessarily diverting funds away from implementation.

Q. What do you look for in a good logframe?

No logframe is ever perfect; they can always be revisited and improved. A strong logframe articulates a clear and logical pathway to change, identifying the overarching goal of the intervention and the key steps required to achieve it. It includes SMART indicators to facilitate the collection of robust evidence of progress, and includes a comprehensive assessment of key assumptions (factors beyond the control of the project that may impact upon successful project delivery, and which must therefore be monitored).

Q. Advice on making logframe indicators SMART

A useful exercise to test whether your logframe indicators are SMART, is included in the exercise handout from the workshop, available here.

Q. How to better explain indirect benefits to local communities

When outlining indirect benefits from IWT projects to local communities in your application it is particularly important that the logic of your intervention is clear and that you are able to articulate this in a convincing way. This is especially relevant for proposed demand reduction interventions which are often focused on countries where demand for IWT products is high whilst citing indirect poverty benefits in source countries. In such cases it is important to outline the impact pathway through which these benefits will be felt in source countries.

Q. Log framework – discussion around the definition of the impact, outcome and outputs, how these differ, and what makes them strong.

More detail on the definitions on logframe components was provided on the day and is available in the presentation slides, here.

Q. Does IWT have guidance on or standards for approaches to promoting gender equality?

More detail on integrating gender considerations into your IWT project was provided on the day and is available here.

Q. Timeframe for achievement of outcome-level indicators: Do all outcome-level indicators need to be achieved/measureable by the project's end date? For projects that will provide indirect benefits over time, for example, by helping to create optimal conditions for long-term generation of benefits, can outcome-level indicators be measured after the conclusion of the project?

The project outcome is the project's overarching objective. As such it must be achieved within the lifetime of the project. All outcome level indicators therefore need to be achieved and measurable by project end. Where benefits are expected to be achieved beyond the lifetime of the project, proxy indicators that provide a clear indication that the preconditions for success have been achieved can be a useful tool.

General

Q. What are the most common mistakes/stumbling blocks made in applications?

See Q&A slides and don't assume IWTAG can read between the lines - be clear about what you will be doing and how it will be measured.

Q. When two applications are closely matched how do you decide between them? (i.e. what should we focus on to make ours stand out?)

Applications are all different and there is no magic answer to this. Overall, make your application clear and accessible and it will stand out and be marked better!

Q. What do you think is the weakest part of our proposal so far which we can work on during the Stage 2 application?

If you address the feedback provided, this should address the weakest sections.

Q. Can we change the project's title between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Yes – however, this might be worth flagging in your cover letter.

IWT Advisory Group Presentation: What Makes a Good Application?

Q. How can we balance innovation with risk in our proposal?

This is a challenge for all applicants as innovation in proposals is highly valued. However with greater levels of innovation comes increased risk. There is no simple way to balance this trade off however one option is to include a pilot phase in the initial stages of your project, with a clear contingency plan developed in case the work does not progress as planned.

Q. Is it possible for all applicants to receive detailed feedback on their proposal?

Detailed feedback is currently given to all successful applicants, high scoring unsuccessful applicants, and those submitting ineligible proposals. Lower scoring unsuccessful applicants receive more generic feedback that encourages them to revisit the application guidance if they wish to reapply in the future.

Q. Is it possible to provide applicants with the 'raw' feedback direct from the advisory group reviewers?

This is not possible as feedback on proposals is not finalised until applications have been discussed in the sift meeting. Feedback provided to applicants is based on these discussions.

The Importance of Gender in IWT Projects

Q. How could you implement a 'do no harm' approach if you are enforcing a ban on bushmeat hunting?

The 'do no harm' approach is focused on not exacerbating existing social inequalities. In this case, assuming bushmeat hunting is illegal, the focus of the project is on reducing illegal activity and is therefore aimed at preventing harm. If bushmeat hunting is legal at the project site, then any interventions to reduce bushmeat hunting should ensure that any negative impacts on local livelihoods are counterbalanced with the provision of new livelihoods opportunities that, at a minimum, do not increase gender inequality and exclusion of marginalised groups.

Q. How can our intervention engage with women, when we are working with rangers, the majority of whom are men?

It is recognised that in many instances prevailing social norms will mean that engaging an equal number of men and women in a project is not possible. What is important is to demonstrate that serious consideration has been given to gender issues and where possible the intervention has been designed to reduce inequality, whilst operating within existing social norms.

Key points or common issues arising from the afternoon sessions

Project Design Tools

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

- The importance of using consistent language in logframes to ensure the various components of the logframe are as easy to identify as possible.
- It is often challenging to distinguish between project activities and outputs.
- Some activities seem repetitive, perhaps because they deliver against multiple outputs, and some outputs don't appear to have obviously relevant outputs. This could be an indication that there is a gap in the project logic.
- Assumptions are not always clear – clearly articulating assumptions can help demonstrate the project logic and strengthen the project logframe.
- Sometimes the problem/impact/outcome statement can seem vague or broad. It can therefore be hard to tie the project activities or outputs back to them, with a risk that there are gaps in the logic.
- The project logframe is one means of ensuring that gender considerations are effectively integrated into project design.

The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators

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

- Indicators must be specific. Where they are not, it becomes difficult to identify where on the logframe they should be placed.
- Indicators should be selected that are comprehensive enough to measure all aspects of a project's outputs and outcome.
- Developing effective indicators takes time. Don't leave it until the last minute!
- When developing indicators it is useful to engage the people who will ultimately be tasked with monitoring project progress.
- Identifying baselines is a crucial part of indicator development. If you do not yet know all of the relevant baselines for your intervention it is important to make it clear when, and how these will be identified.

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