

Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund: Assessing Stages 1 and 2 applications

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IWTCF

Advisory Group

The 11 Members are from Defra, other Government agencies, NGOs, academia, consultants with a wide range of expertise on IWT

Sift meetings are chaired by Defra International team and supported by LTS

An insight into the assessment process

■ Stage 1

- 3 reviewers read each application (31 applications each for Stage 1)
- Complete template on eligibility criteria and score 0-6 on technical and priority criteria (see table in Guidance Notes)
- Provide comments/queries for discussion and for feedback letters to applicants
- LTS ranks scores from the 3 reviewers + consolidates comments
- **Advisory Group sift meeting** briefly discusses highest scoring applications and in more detail applications which narrowly miss the proposed cut-off score.
- Reviewers are invited to explain their scores and the Advisory Group as a whole can comment. Some applications remain on the same score and do not proceed, others may be upgraded based on the further explanations. Not many applications are upgraded as reviewers' scores are generally consistent.

An insight into the assessment process

■ Stage 2

- 4 reviewers read each application
- Complete template on eligibility criteria and score 0-6 on technical and priority criteria (see table in Guidance Notes) and comment on budget, letters of support and logframe
- LTS ranks scores from 4 reviewers + consolidates comments
- **Advisory Group sift meeting** reviews the consolidated scores and again a discussion is held regarding the top scoring applications and also those which narrowly miss the proposed cut-off, or where there is a larger discrepancy in scores between reviewers.
- Based on the scoring, the Advisory Group agrees their priority projects. These are forwarded to ministers. The Secretary of State for Defra makes the final decision on which projects will be funded.

What makes a good Stage 2 application?



- Title – clear but interesting.
- Clear summary (several stage 1 projects failed to reference in the summary major activities/outcomes detailed later in the application, and vice versa).
- Don't assume any prior knowledge! Reviewers may have no previous knowledge of your work/previous IWTCF grants. Application must be written as a stand-alone document.
- Innovative where possible (e.g. less well studied species/area/community/issue? New methodology? Potential for scale?) ensure you highlight where your project differs from the norm. Or if its not particularly innovative, turn it around and state why you are choosing to replicate a methodology/extend to another area – because it has worked well previously and achieved xyz.

What makes a good Stage 2 application?



- Credibility – make sure you clearly articulate how your organisation (and partners) have the expertise to carry out this project. Have you done previous similar work – if so try to reference this and state how lessons learnt will improve this project.
- Project lead – CV must demonstrate capability to run this project; only include relevant information re skills and experience for leading this project. Stick to the page count.
- Stick to word counts throughout! Footnotes can only be used for references, not additional text. Hyperlinks are permitted but use them sparingly as reviewers will not have time to read multiple additional sources – don't rely on hyperlinks for essential information.
- Make sure you consider any feedback in your invitation to Stage 2. Reviewers will expect applicants to respond to this, or explain why they were unable to.

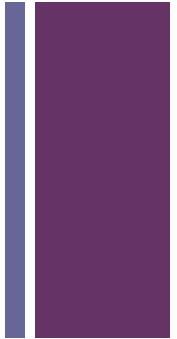
What makes a good Stage 2 application?



■ Logframe

- Try not to leave this till the last minute as it forms an important part of the application. Make sure you respond to any comments from reviewers. If you were not able to adhere to the feedback, explain briefly why not in your letter.
- The guidance notes provide a useful explanation for each level: impact/outcome/output etc and suggested indicators and means of verification.
- Over arching question is ‘does it make sense?’ i.e. will the activities result in the proposed outputs and will these likely lead to the proposed outcome? Will the outcome contribute to the impact?
- Keep it simple and concise and concentrate on a clear flow between the activities – outputs – outcome – impact
- Remember that reviewers will read many logframes and don’t have much time, so try to make it as clear as possible. Maybe ask someone unrelated to the project to have a quick read and see if it makes sense to them.

What makes a good Stage 2 application?



■ Budget

- Reviewers will look at the overall total budget (make sure it matches total budget on narrative application and careful re total budget and request from IWTCF if you have matched funds) to see if it seems broadly value for money for the activities listed and e.g. how much funding is spent in the country compared to retained by lead organisation.
- Each activity will also be looked at to see e.g. if costs of a workshop are reasonable and value for money. If you have previous experience working in this country, you can state that you are aware of the cost for these activities and have ensured VfM through previous research.

■ Letters of support

- Important to demonstrate support for your project from partners and beneficiaries. Don't go mad, but do include sufficient high-level letters to show reviewers that the project has been approved and that partners and beneficiaries are requesting the project, have agreed to be involved etc. If any partners are providing matched funding/in-kind support this should also be referenced in their letter.
- Minimum: letter from the lead organisation and the main partner organisation. Check your CEO is around before the submission date to approve/sign the form and the letter!

A few tips



- Letters of support – can take a while to receive, suggest requesting these asap
- Timeframe – carefully consider what you can practically achieve, given the challenges each project will face. Don't be overly ambitious.
E.g. working with Governments can be very time consuming and you will not always be in control of timeframes.
- Consider your timeframe with your budget. IWTCF pays in arrears, so your organisation will need to upfront costs for Q1 and will not receive final Q4 payment until after your final project report is approved.
- Don't be too ambitious in Q1 Yr1, its ok to use this as planning time and remember any activities in this quarter need to be funded upfront.

A few tips



- Remember the reviewers don't have much time to read each application, so make sure your project stands out, but also clear and concise so the overall purpose and outcome is immediately clear.
- Refer to the Guidance Notes re poverty alleviation contribution, its not just about money/employment etc.
- Gender – make sure this section is well considered. Articulate why and how your project will ensure maximum inclusion and benefit to a range of beneficiaries. If there are challenges within your subject area/country re gender make reference to this and how you will mitigate as much as possible.
- Finally, all LTS staff are lovely! Don't hesitate to email/call if you have queries re changes to your project, they are always very helpful and provide invaluable guidance – they've heard it all!

Thank you!

