The Darwin Initiative

FAQs & Common Issues:
the 'easy wins'

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Funded by UK Government

Administrative Eligibility

- Word counts are automatically enforced in Flexi-Grant

- Supporting documents required include:
  - Letters of support *including applicant organisation* as one pdf document
  - Last *2* sets of signed/audited accounts
  - Budget table (matches request and certification in application)
  - Past experience and awards (if new to Darwin as a lead) including contacts for references
  - CVs for key personnel: *partners and project team* as one pdf document

Meeting Darwin objectives

- Outlined in full in guidance
- Which convention & why
  - CITES is *only* relevant for specific trade projects and not just because you are working on a CITES listed species
  - Can you demonstrate communication with the Convention focal point – perhaps by letter?

Finances

- Does the budget add up and do the figures on the application and spreadsheet match?

- Large % matched funding unsecured – risky

- It is good to see a significant % of funds going directly to host country partners/costs – but no specified amount

- PL normally at least 10% of their time, if not clearly explain why

- % of funds on M&E (between 5% and 10%)

- Capital costs normally <10% otherwise clearly justify in text

- 'Consultancy costs' and 'Other' – provide adequate detail

- Make sure you only include audit costs for the lead organisation and only in the last FY

- Refer to Finance for Darwin&IWT document

- Allow for exchange rates to fluctuation – but no 'contingency'

Project team expertise

- Include CVs or ToRs of team members *critical* to delivery

- Ensure skills presented match the work proposed

- Tailor CVs to ensure *skills* are clear and avoid long lists of publications

- Relate CVs presented to budget table i.e. roles or names

- Avoid submitting teams with too many 'TBC' posts

Attention to Risk - Financial

Ensure you fully consider the risks and threats to your project including

- Fraud
- Bribery
- Natural disasters eg weather, disease, physical
- Staff retention and reliance on key people
- Change of government/partner personnel
- Exchange rates

These are *different* to the Assumptions in the logframe.

Monitoring and evaluation

Common problems that could be avoided

- Setting a target when there is no baseline

"with the exception of one outcome level income indicator, the logframe is devoid of targets. With no indication of project scope or targets, it is not possible to assess sustainability of the proposal"

- Including *untested* assumptions that are critical

"It would be good to have an assurance that producers are willing to work with the project, rather than this appearing as an Assumption"

- Not being clear *who* will undertake M&E or *when*

Monitoring and evaluation

Common problems that could be avoided

- A weak theory of change – your solutions should match the problems outlined

"The stage 2 application should include a clear Theory of Change detailing how research outputs will lead to implementation"

- Failure to provide outcome indicators for *both* biodiversity *and* poverty

"This policy level project needs to find a way of measuring impacts on poverty reduction - the logframe as it stands does not do this"

- Measure progress *throughout,* not just the final few months

"Outputs 1-4 don't have any interim milestones (i.e. start and end line only) and so tracking progress will be difficult"

- Does not demonstrate how you will *measure* what has changed i.e. not SMART

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Avoiding common issues on Flexi-Grant

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Q5. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
dd/mm/yyyy 📅 *	dd/mm/yyyy 📅 *	*

Q6. Budget summary

Year:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total request
Amount:		*		£0.00

Q6a. Do you have proposed matched funding arrangements?

◉ Yes

◯ No

*

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

*

You have entered 0 words (100 words max)

Q6b. Proposed (confirmed and unconfirmed) co-financing as % of total project cost *

Ensure dates are eligible for funding under this round

Budget figures here should match full budget

For matched funding, the % should be of the **total** project cost (not compared to the Darwin request)
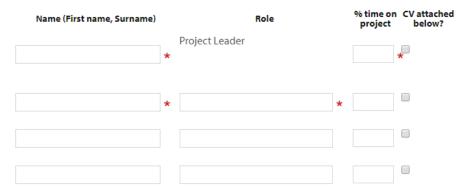
Staff names

Q10. Key project personnel

Please identify the core staff on this project, their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Please provide 1 page CVs for these staff, or a 1 page job description or Terms of Reference for roles yet to be filled. Please include more rows where necessary. These should match the names and roles in the budget spreadsheet.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	CV attached below?
*	Project Leader	*	☐
*	*		☐
			☐
			☐

Do you require more fields?

○ Yes

◉ No

Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the Project staff listed above. Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

Choose your file(s)	or drag and drop files here to upload
File name	Date uploaded	Action

Make sure that the staff names here match the names in the budget

This is for project staff key for delivery – no need to list **all** staff

For anyone named here:

- 1 page CV must be provided
- If funded, permission needed to change

Q12. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q12a. Your project must support the objectives of one or more of the agreements listed below. Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported and describe which objectives your project will address and how. Note: projects supporting more than one will not achieve a higher score.

- ☐ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- ☐ Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

- ☐ International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

- ☐ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- ☐ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

- ☐ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)

Q12b. Biodiversity Conventions

Please detail how your project will contribute to the objectives of the agreement(s) your project is targeting. You should refer to Articles or Programmes of work here. Note: No additional significance will be ascribed for projects that report contributions to more than one agreement.

*

You have entered 0 words (500 words max)

Only tick the conventions your project is directly contributing towards

Don't just list relevant agreements – sign-post **how** your project is contributing towards these

Additional materials

Q13. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and Impact. Provide information on how you will undertake the work (materials and methods) and how you will manage the work (roles and responsibilities, project management tools etc.). This may be a repeat from Stage 1, but you should update or refine as necessary.

*

You have entered 0 words (500 words max)

Please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams etc., using the File Upload below:

Choose your file(s) | or drag and drop files here to upload

File name	Date uploaded	Action

Methodology should be clear and link to logframe

Additional links/maps/ToC (for example) can be included as **one pdf** – but be reasonable!

They must not be used as a means of providing additional information or avoiding word limits!

Gender and sustainability

Q15. Gender

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender. Explain how your project will collect gender disaggregated data and what impact your project will have in promoting gender equality.

*

You have entered 0 words (300 words max)

Q16. Exit Strategy

State whether or not the project will reach a stable and sustainable end point. If the project is not discrete, but is part of a progressive approach, give details of the exit strategy and show how relevant activities will be continued to secure the benefits from the project. Where individuals receive advanced training, for example, what will happen should that individual leave?

*

You have entered 0 words (200 words max)

More on **gender** later – but make this specific to your project, not your organisation!

Sustainability is important. Short term exit strategy could include additional funding, but also consider longer term sustainability if so.

Other common issues

- Partnerships take time – new partnerships vs old and time taken to establish working relationships

- Avoid 'template' letters of support

- Don't underestimate how long it may take at project start up to finalise agreements, visas, staff recruitment etc.

- Attribution vs contribution and measuring change

  "high level of matched funding means attribution of achievements to DI funding will be challenging"

- Research projects often have unclear communication strategies and should consider who the audience is, how will they use the results, when will they be engaged etc.

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Your questions!

Questions? Financial

- Can we change the budget between Stage 1 and Stage 2?
- Overheads: What is considered a reasonable level?
- How important is it to show co-financing?
- How do you set staff costs? E.g. hourly rates, formulae …
- Is there specific guidance on capital costs?
- What are the audit requirements?
- Assessment of costs: what does this mean? Just VFM?
- What level of internal control should Finance have over the project?