



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affa



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development



## Darwin Initiative

Workshop for New Darwin Projects  
23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

ZSL  
Outer Circle,  
Regent's Park,  
London NW1 4RY



### Contacts

Darwin Projects  
c/o LTS International  
Pentlands Science Park  
Bush Loan  
Penicuik  
EH26 0PL

Email: [Darwin-projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-projects@ltsi.co.uk)

Tel: 0131 440 5181

**Workshop for New Darwin Projects**  
**31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**



The Darwin Initiative hosted a workshop at ZSL on 23rd March 2015 for all new projects to the Darwin Initiative, funded under Round 21 of funding (main projects and Darwin Plus). The workshop was open to staff of newly-funded projects (technical, administrative and financial) and had the following objectives:

- To provide an introduction to the Darwin Initiative and what it entails for projects;
- To meet the Darwin Initiative key people and understand their role and who to contact;
- To get an insight of the administration and reporting requirements under DI;
- To meet other Darwin project staff and build links between projects;
- To undertake practical exercises to develop a Theory of Change, Monitoring and Evaluation Plans and Communications plans.

The afternoon session was intended specifically for those engaged in the technical management of their Darwin Initiative projects to support them in evaluating impact and measuring success. The afternoon session covered:

- SMART indicators
- Developing an M&E plan
- Developing a communications strategy

This is a short note covering the presentations that were given that day. All the presentation slides from this workshop are also available via the Darwin website for reference.

## 1. Welcome to the Darwin Initiative

Lesley King of LTS International (the contractors responsible for administration of the Darwin Initiative) welcomed all who attended the workshop.

### 1.1. Introduction to the Darwin Initiative

Launched in 1992, at the Rio Earth Summit, the Darwin Initiative has been funding projects since 1993. In 2003 a review of the Darwin Initiative saw the introduction of Post-projects, Scoping awards and Fellowships. In 2009, the Government made a commitment to the UK Overseas Territories which resulted in the establishment of the UKOT's Challenge Fund. In 2010, recognising the significant impact on poverty alleviation the Darwin Initiative has made, the UK's Department for International Development made a commitment to support the Darwin Initiative financially, introducing the dual objectives in both poverty and biodiversity. In 2013, there was a focus on Illegal Wildlife Trade, resulting in 5 projects being awarded funding in this area. In 2014 the focus was on ABS and the plant treaty.

### 1.2. Introduction to the Darwin Initiative 'management'

The Darwin Initiative is managed and supported by a number of groups. The workshop provided an introduction to all of these groups, including their function and how to contact them.

**Darwin Secretariat:** Housed in Defra, the Secretariat comprises of Clare Hamilton and Sally Cunningham. Their role is to provide overall management and strategy of the Darwin Initiative, deal with publicity and events, manage the administration contract, support the Darwin Expert Committee (including appointments), and provide Ministerial advice (including Parliamentary Questions, correspondence, briefings).

**Darwin Experts Committee:** The Committee comprises some of the UK's top conservation professionals and some of the world's leading experts on development issues. The Committee provides their time for free, to support the applications process. Their role is to review and score all applications received to the Darwin Initiative and to provide the Minister with recommendations on which projects to fund.

**LTS International:** Contracted by the Defra to administer the Darwin Initiative, the day to day LTS team includes Eilidh Young (Darwin administrator) and Lesley King (M&E technical advisor). The LTS team will be in regular contact with all projects under the Darwin Initiative, both by e-mail and phone. They provide regular support to on-going Darwin projects.

Eilidh Young [Darwin-Projects@LTSI.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@LTSI.co.uk)  
Lesley King [Lesley-King@LTSI.co.uk](mailto:Lesley-King@LTSI.co.uk)

## 2. Applying to the Darwin Initiative

Sally Cunningham of Darwin Secretariat in Defra discussed the high quality of Round 21 applications. The Darwin Initiative is a strongly competitive fund with no shortage of great applications submitted each year. This means that the projects that are eventually funded really are some of the best projects proposed, anywhere. In Round 21 (2014/15) the Darwin Initiative received 357 Main applications at stage 1, 57

applicants were invited to stage 2 and from this, 19 projects were funded by the Darwin Initiative. Of 43 Darwin Plus Applications, 11 new Darwin Plus projects were funded. 2 Scoping projects, 4 Darwin Fellowships and 2 Post projects were also funded.

### **3. Darwin Initiative reporting Systems – Technical and Financial**

Lesley King, provided a presentation on the technical and financial reporting requirements of the Darwin Initiative including some tips on how to reduce the reporting burden.

Darwin Initiative projects have a number of requirements with regards to reporting. It is important to recognise that this reporting is not just a 'tick box' exercise since this information is vital for Defra to report on the effectiveness of its Darwin spend to the UK Government.

Requirements on Darwin projects can broadly be divided into:

- Project technical reporting
- Project financial reporting

#### **3.1. Technical Reporting**

Projects are required to report twice per year for the duration of their grant:

- Half year reports (October 31<sup>st</sup>)
- Annual reports (April 30<sup>th</sup>)
- Final report (3 months after the close of your project).

Project reports are posted on the Darwin website (minus contact details and financial details). A reminder will be sent 1 month before they are due to help you.

Payments of funds to your project is linked to your technical reporting therefore it is important to ensure you meet deadlines (and report effectively) to continue receiving funding. Details are provided below.

#### **3.2. Financial Reporting**

You can claim your funds from the Darwin Initiative quarterly. The first 3 quarters of the year are advance claims (and in the first year have no other linked requirements) with the final quarter is based on actual expenditure. After the first year, the second quarter claim is linked to submission of your annual report. This means if your annual report is delayed or deemed unsatisfactory, further instalments of funds will also be delayed. In the fourth quarter of any year, claims are based on actual expenditure.

In your final year Defra requires your Darwin finances to be audited and the audit letter submitted with your final claim. Retention of your budget is made in the final year until satisfactory submission of your final report (3 months after the close of your project). Table 1 should provide you with a summary of the ties between financial claims and technical reporting. Slightly different processes apply to the smaller schemes, and grantees are made aware of this in their offer letters.

Claim	Technical Reporting	Financial Reporting	Other
<b>Quarter 1 advance</b>	n/a	n/a	Year 1 – signed award acceptance form. From Year 2 onwards – signed annual grant acceptance form.
<b>Quarter 2 advance</b>	From year 2 onwards, annual report received	From year 2 onwards, Quarter 4 actual claim received and verified.	n/a
<b>Quarter 3 advance</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Quarter 4 actual</b>	Annual report received	Quarter 4 actual claim received and verified	n/a
<b>Final claim less retention</b>	Final Report	Final Claim Form	n/a
<b>Retention</b>	Satisfactory review of Final Report	n/a	n/a

To claim your funds from the Darwin Initiative, forms must be received in hard copy with a 'wet' signature. E-mail copies are not sufficient for payment unless you have a specific agreement to this effect. To help you keep track of payments, LTS will e-mail you when your claim has been authorised so you know when to expect payment to your account.

### 3.3. Handy tips to reducing the reporting burden

You will be asked to report against your original application at all times, except where changes have been approved.

To avoid writing long reports that are time consuming (for both you the author and also the reviewer) there are ways and means of reducing the amount of effort involved. We highly recommend using clearly measurable indicators in your reporting (and internal evaluation of your progress against intended objectives). Creative thinking in terms of means of verification can also substantially reduce the effort that goes into reporting to the Darwin Initiative.

## 4. Darwin Communications Materials

Joanne Gordon looks after the Darwin communications materials. Contact her if there is any support you are looking for to promote your project. [Joanne-Gordon@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Joanne-Gordon@ltsi.co.uk)

There are a number of resources available to Darwin projects to help them promote their work. These include:

- [Darwin website](#)
- [Darwin newsletter](#)
- [Twitter account](#)

- [Facebook page](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Flickr Page](#)
- [LinkedIn Alumni group](#)
- [You Tube channel](#)
- [Learning notes](#)
- [Darwin workshops](#)

**Newsletter:** The newsletter is quarterly and relies entirely on Darwin projects for materials. We request that projects submit short articles (1 page A4 maximum) and good quality images. This newsletter has wide coverage in Defra and DFID as well as the wider Darwin community. Images really do sell this newsletter rather than long weighty articles. A request for articles is sent out by e-mail to all Project Leaders.

**Twitter Account:** [@Darwin\\_Defra](#) is our handle and #Nature4Life is our hashtag. We regularly 'tweet' about projects via this account. We have 1,956 followers and we are regularly promoted by other pertinent organisations.

**Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/DarwinInitiative?ref=hl> The Darwin Initiative has a Facebook page which was launched in 2014. Please 'like' our page and start interacting with us.

**YouTube Channel:** This is a place where we are pulling together videos posted by Darwin Initiative projects. You can host your videos on your own webpage but please share the link with us so we can help promote your work.

**Blog:** We launched the blog in 2015, and so far it is being well received. We discuss issues of Biodiversity and Poverty, and well as other interesting thematic areas of Darwin, and introducing new projects and areas of monitoring and evaluation.

## 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

### 5.3 Theory of Change

Paddy Abbot of LTS International introduced the concept of Theory of Change (ToC) as a way of articulating a project's design theory. ToC maps out what your project is trying to achieve from the problems you have identified, the assumptions associated with this and the conditions required for this change to occur. By designing a ToC, you answer the following questions:

- What is it you are trying to do?
- How will it deliver a change in something and what are your assumptions?
- What are the conditions that need to be in place for that change to happen?
- How will the change in something address the problems that you have identified?

By using ToC, any changes or additional risks that arise during the project can be built into its design, to ensure they are mitigated against as much as possible, again improving working towards improved overall impact of the project.

## 5.1. Indicators

Indicators are what will be measured to show progress and outcome. A good indicator will be SMART:

S	=	Specific
M	=	Measurable
A	=	Achievable
R	=	Relevant
T	=	Time bound

Simon Mercer of LTS International introduced as a way of measuring change. It is important to have means of verification and provide evidence of indicator achievement. Indicators are both qualitative and quantitative factors or variables that provide a simple, reliable, means to measure achievement and assess performance. Indicators provide feedback on effectiveness of the approach being used, and demonstrate concisely and coherently the results of your work, letting project staff and others know how you are being successful. There must be a Means of Verification linked to both direct indicators, and indirect (proxy) indicators.

## 5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Planning

All projects were asked to complete a monitoring and evaluation plan as part of their application. This is a useful tool that projects would be well advised to review once their project starts. It enables project participants to plan what data needs to be collected, by whom the data needs to be collected, when do they need to collect the data and how should they collect this data. This can be built into project work plans, roles and responsibilities of team members, job specifications etc. If used correctly, M&E plans ensure feedback and lesson learning. Developing an M&E plan also ensures the provision of sound evidence, which is essential for demonstrating projects impact. Impact should grow if an M&E plan is in place as milestones, indicators, assumptions and risks are monitored and measured throughout the project.

## 5.3 Communications Strategy

Lesley King discussed the importance of communicating effectively to influence change. Good communications strategy will:

- Engage stakeholders
- Influence people
- Manage expectations of what your project can achieve

By building a communications strategy, you prevent communications becoming ad hoc and ineffective. Strategies also target the correct audience, and make sure communication have impact. Using a stakeholder analysis of interest/influence, ensures different communications products are targeting the correct audience. Key elements to consider in a communications strategy are:

- Who
- Why
- What

- Where/When

All the materials used in the afternoon activities are available on the [website](#). We encourage projects to revisit these and continue working on Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, Theory of Change and logframe updates. We also encourage projects to develop a communications plan, to make sure you promote your work effectively.



## 6. Attendance List

First Name	Surname	Organisation	Project	Email
Steve	Edgington	CABI	Rescuing and restoring the native flora of Robinson Crusoe Island	<a href="mailto:s.edgington@cabi.org">s.edgington@cabi.org</a>
Alan	Stewart	University of Sussex	Complete Altitudinal Rainforest Transect for research and conservation in PNG	<a href="mailto:a.j.a.stewart@sussex.ac.uk">a.j.a.stewart@sussex.ac.uk</a>
Ross	Macleod	University of Glasgow	Sustainable Manu: Biodiversity conservation through sustainable development and rainforest regeneration	<a href="mailto:ross.macleod@glasgow.ac.uk">ross.macleod@glasgow.ac.uk</a>
Steve	Redpath	University of Aberdeen	Collaborative conflict management for community livelihoods and snow leopard conservation	<a href="mailto:s.redpath@abdn.ac.uk">s.redpath@abdn.ac.uk</a>
Paul	Wilkin	RBG, Kew	Conserving Madagascar's Yams through Cultivation for Livelihoods and Food Security	<a href="mailto:p.wilkin@kew.org">p.wilkin@kew.org</a>
Anna	Elvidge	WWT	Establishing Sustainable Management of the Lake Sofia Catchment Madagascar	<a href="mailto:anna.elvidge@wwt.org.uk">anna.elvidge@wwt.org.uk</a>
James	Ravine	WWT	Establishing Sustainable Management of the Lake Sofia Catchment Madagascar	<a href="mailto:james.ravine@wwt.org.uk">james.ravine@wwt.org.uk</a>
Katherine	Robinson	TRAFFIC	Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products	<a href="mailto:katherine.robinson@traffic.org">katherine.robinson@traffic.org</a>
Anastaysiya	Timoshyna	TRAFFIC	Enhancing management and benefit flows in Vietnam's wild medicinal products	<a href="mailto:anastasiya.timoshyna@traffic.org">anastasiya.timoshyna@traffic.org</a>
Ian	Darbyshire	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	Harnessing agricultural ecosystem biodiversity for bean production and food security	<a href="mailto:i.darbyshire@kew.org">i.darbyshire@kew.org</a>
Ruth	Sharman	RSPB	Sustainable management of an Ethiopian rangeland for biodiversity and pastoralists	<a href="mailto:ruth.sharman@rspb.org.uk">ruth.sharman@rspb.org.uk</a>

Paul	Donald	RSPB	Sustainable management of an Ethiopian rangeland for biodiversity and pastoralists	<a href="mailto:paul.donald@rspb.org.uk">paul.donald@rspb.org.uk</a>
Michael	Halewood	Bioversity international	Mutually Supportive implementation of the Nagoya protocol and plant treaty	<a href="mailto:m.halewood@cgiar.org">m.halewood@cgiar.org</a>
Billy	Fairburn	Birdlife	Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into community forestry in Nepal	<a href="mailto:billy.fairburn@birdlife.org">billy.fairburn@birdlife.org</a>
David	Thomas	Birdlife	Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into community forestry in Nepal	<a href="mailto:david.thomas@birdlife.org">david.thomas@birdlife.org</a>
Hannah	Becker	Fauna & Flora International	Supporting Community Conserved Areas in Uganda for biodiversity and livelihoods.	<a href="mailto:hannah.becker@fauna-flora.org">hannah.becker@fauna-flora.org</a>
Amy	Reed	Fauna & Flora International	Supporting Community Conserved Areas in Uganda for biodiversity and livelihoods.	<a href="mailto:amy.reed@fauna-flora.org">amy.reed@fauna-flora.org</a>
Vicky	Kindemba	Buglife	Tanzanian freshwater invertebrate conservation and their use for ecosystem assessments	<a href="mailto:vicky.kindemba@buglife.org.uk">vicky.kindemba@buglife.org.uk</a>
Aaron	Davis	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and climate resilience at Yaya Biosphere Reserve	<a href="mailto:a.davis@kew.org">a.davis@kew.org</a>
Chris	Lyal	NHM	Pierre du Plessis Fellow	<a href="mailto:c.lyal@nhm.ac.uk">c.lyal@nhm.ac.uk</a>
Amelia	Baracat	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	Harnessing Agricultural Ecosystem Biodiversity for Bean Production and Food Security, Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and climate resilience at Yaya Biosphere Reserve, Conserving Madagascar's yams through cultivation for livelihoods and food security	<a href="mailto:a.baracat@kew.org">a.baracat@kew.org</a>
Derek	Henry	Environment and Natural Resources Directorate in St Helena's Government		
Sally	Cunningham	Defra		<a href="mailto:darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk">darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk</a>

Claire	Miller	Defra		<a href="mailto:darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk">darwin@defra.gsi.gov.uk</a>
Paddy	Abbot	LTS International		<a href="mailto:paddy-abbot@ltsi.co.uk">paddy-abbot@ltsi.co.uk</a>
Jami	Dixon	LTS International		<a href="mailto:jami-dixon@ltsi.co.uk">jami-dixon@ltsi.co.uk</a>
Joanne	Gordon	LTS International		<a href="mailto:Joanne-gordon@ltsi.co.uk">Joanne-gordon@ltsi.co.uk</a>
Lesley	King	LTS International		<a href="mailto:lesley-king@ltsi.co.uk">lesley-king@ltsi.co.uk</a>
Simon	Mercer	LTS International		<a href="mailto:simon-mercet@ltsi.co.uk">simon-mercet@ltsi.co.uk</a>