New Project Webinar 12th June 2018 and

Workshop 18th June 2018, Zoological Society of London

In June 2018, two events were hosted for new projects funded under Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund (IWT-CF) Round 4. These events were open to new grantees under the IWT funding scheme, and the webinar was a joint event for grantees under both IWT and Darwin.

On 12th June, a webinar was held for new projects to introduce the financial and administrative reporting systems for new Darwin Initiative and IWT Challenge Fund projects. The aim of this webinar was to welcome newly funded projects, and provide advice and support relating to financial, administrative, and technical reporting for Darwin and IWT projects.

On 18th June, an in person workshop was held at the Zoological Society of London. The workshop content built on the previous week's webinar and was focused on reporting, communications and lesson sharing for new projects. The aim of the workshop was to provide advice and support relating to project monitoring and evaluation and communications, and to provide a forum for projects to network with those working on similar topics and areas, to foster lesson learning.

This note covers the presentations that were given on both days, including questions and answers, and notes on the workshop activities carried out by participants. All the presentation slides from the webinar and workshop are also available via the Darwin website here.

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Expectations of new projects
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Notes on the new project webinar

This was the second time a webinar had been held for new Darwin and IWT projects. A total of 64 people registered, and 60 people were able to attend. See Annex 1 for details on the spread of people attending the workshop.

The objectives of the session were:
- To provide an introduction to the DI & IWT Challenge Fund
- To 'meet' the Darwin Initiative key people and understand their roles
- To get an insight into the administration and reporting requirements under Darwin & IWT

The webinar gave participants the opportunity to ask questions on project administration, finance, reporting, and communications. Questions and responses are summarised in the following section of this report. Surveys carried out during the webinar indicated that the pace of the webinar was about right. Following the completion of the webinar more detailed feedback was requested from participants. This is also summarised below.

Webinar Q&A

Financial and admin questions

You will find most information regarding financial management of your projects in the document below, which will be an excellent reference resource throughout the duration of your project.

- The "Finance for Darwin and IWT" document can be found here:
  http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects

Q: Having made the changes requested in the original letter, when we will receive the award paperwork so we can start 1st July?

Please send through your caveat responses as soon as possible. Once this has been done, these will be reviewed and agreed, then award paperwork will be shared for you to begin your projects. We will do this as quickly as possible.

Q: Is it possible to request changes to indicators now (i.e. to the logframe before the project starts) if the situation has changed?

If you don't have funding caveats, we would prefer you complete your grant paperwork first. Once your grant has been accepted, please go through the Change Request procedure to get these suggested changes approved. Please ensure you read all of the guidance on the Change Request template form. The Change Request template can be found:

- Darwin Initiative – http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/reporting-forms
- IWT Challenge Fund - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/illegal-wildlife-trade-challenge-fund-forms-and-templates-for-existing-projects

Q: For projects that haven't started yet, will minor changes in budget be allowed before we start? If yes, how do we proceed? Do we need to use the Change Request forms?

If your changes have been given as a funding caveat, there is no need to use the Change Request form. If you would like to make a change now but it wasn't a caveat, we would recommend completing your offer paperwork first, then completing a Change Request form. Note that a Change Request may not be necessary for minor budget changes (i.e. if there is no movement of money between financial years, or if virement between budget lines is less than 10%). If budget changes are linked to core personnel named for whom CVs were provided with the application, these will need to get approved.

Q: Is there a % change (virement) allowed between budget lines without making a Change Request?

Yes, there is a 10% change discrepancy allowed between budget lines and this can be applied with common sense if the figures involved are small. For example, if a line had £100 and you moved it all elsewhere, the % would be 100%, but the figure is small so need not involve a Change Request. Projects are expected to manage their funds efficiently and to use this flexibility sensibly. We expect to see the level of funds going to in-country partners to remain at least as high as at application stage, so if your proposed virement affects this, please do get in touch with your justification.

Q: When you say 'budget lines' do you mean the pre-determined budget categories (e.g. Travel and Subsistence) or the individual budget lines that applicants have entered within each category (e.g. International Travel, National Travel etc.)?

When talking about virements between budget lines and the 10% discrepancy, we are referring to the high-level summary categories such as "Travel and Subsistence" or "Staff Costs".

Q: Does the budget year follow the fiscal year?

Yes, Darwin and IWT projects must follow the UK financial year i.e. 1st April to 31st March.

Q: Do we still need to send the original 'wet' version of claim forms?

No. Previously, projects have needed to submit hard copies of claim forms, with "wet" original signatures. Clear electronic signatures are now accepted, so there is no need to send hard copy claim forms.

Q: Presumably the final claim covers actual spend for the full year, and final payment deducts the advance payments? Also, if we underspend in Year 1, do funds roll into Year 2?

Yes. Your Actual claim accounts for spend for the year and the claim is the balance of funds minus advances. Funds should be spent within the budgeted financial year. If circumstances mean this is expected to change, please submit a Change Request outlining your expected change of budget spread across your project. You should do this as soon as you are able and remember there is no guarantee this will be agreed, so you should not assume it is possible until confirmed by Defra.

Q: Do we need to substantiate annual actual spend claims with evidencing documents?

No. The claim form is signed to certify spend is accurate. You should hold all the documentation, but we will only ask to see if it you are asked to take part in a Spot Audit.

Q: If we get the Q4 payment in arrears, should we claim the Q1 of the next year before the Q4 payment?

Yes. This is an unusual feature of the way payments work. It reflects the fact that the Q4 payment can only be made when the appropriate paperwork has been provided, and we appreciate that this may take some time. You can claim the Q1 for the next year before the Q4 for the previous year. Payments for both are subject to return of the Annual Acceptance Form/Annual Report respectively.

Q: When does the project audit have to happen?

The project audit should take place when the project had ended and all expenditure has been gathered in. It is required for all projects with an award from Darwin/IWT of over £100,000.

Q: At the end of the project, can we plan for the audit to take place before the final project report is submitted to Darwin?

Yes – but it must include all project costs. Ideally, the audit will happen alongside the writing of the final report so they can be submitted together.

Q: Our overseas partner are leading on workshop costs, can we (grant holder) sub-grant to them to cover these workshop costs, and submit evidence to you about that transfer having taken place, or does the partner organisation need to submit individual receipts to us to submit to you?

You, as the grantee, are responsible for all spending of the award, and arrangements for sending funds to partners are for you to agree as appropriate. All funds are payable to the grantee only.

However, as the grantee you must be satisfied that the funds are being spent appropriately by your partners.

Q: On our Scoping Award project, we have an extra staff member going to the project site who is in addition to the 2 named staff. Can we claim minor costs for them, i.e. food, local travel etc., or does it have to be funded separately?

The costs of two travellers can be funded through your scoping award grant. If there is no additional cost, the additional traveller can be included. For example, if a vehicle was taking the two main travellers into the field, and there was space for the third person in the vehicle, we would have no objection to them using that space and making best use of available resources. In addition, actual costs related to preparatory work e.g. in-country visits to assess technical facilities, travel and field-work costs incurred by in-country partners to visit field sites and colleagues can be covered by the award.

Q: Question on the audit, when does audit normally start and end? And how do you select projects for spot check?

The main project audit is to be organised by the grantee at project end, as outlined above. Defra selects a few projects for a Spot Audit each year. Projects are selected using a number of criteria, which included performance, (both technical and financial) and a range of organisation to ensure we are confident that the broad range of grantees meet our requirements, and to ensure we reduce the burden on any one organisation.

Q: Do partners in country need to keep original receipts?

It is your responsibility as grantee to manage the financial records for the project and to follow good financial practices. This would normally include retaining receipts for all costs. These could be retained in hard or soft copy, in country or with the grantee. As far as possible, follow your own organisation's financial systems.

Q: Is there any flexibility around timing of submitting the claim forms – e.g. if there is a delay for some reason would that render the claim void?

Payment schedules are detailed in section 4.1 of the 'Finance for Darwin & IWT' Guidance. For main projects, as the Advance claims are simply 25% of your total grant award for that year, we would recommend submitting within the period outlined period. Actual claims are due by 31st May, and claims submitted more than 3 months after the financial year end (i.e. after 30th June) may not be paid. If you believe your project is likely to underspend, please do not submit a claim that would take you over what you expect to spend. Please get in touch to discuss what is happening with your project.

The Claim form templates for Darwin can be found here: http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/claim-forms and those for IWT can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/illegal-wildlife-trade-challenge-fund-forms-and-templates-for-existing-projects

Q: Are there criteria for the audit company that is used?

The audit criteria are outlined in full in the 'Finance for Darwin & IWT' Guidance – "The independent examiner/auditor should be a full member in good standing of a professional accounting body affiliated to the International Federation of Accountants. A current audit practising certificate is not required". Further details on audit requirements can be found under section 1.4.

Q: When do we sign the agreement?

If you have caveats, please submit these as soon as possible. Only once you have responded to caveats will you be issued with your grant award paperwork. Once you have received your grant award paperwork, you can sign this and return to us immediately.

Technical reporting

Q: Is this both a financial and a technical report, half yearly & annually?

Half year reports are due on 31st October, with Annual Reports due on 30th April. Both ask for some financial information which should be reported as accurately as possible. We recognise that sometimes you may be unable to finalise your annual spend in time for the annual report deadline so while these figures should be as accurate as possible, they need not be final - it is the Actual Claim (or Q4) which is accepted as the final figures for the year.

Q: Is it possible to discuss queries before the reporting deadlines?

Yes, LTS International is happy to support on both technical and financial reporting queries before the deadlines. We would recommend considering the guidance contained in the reporting templates as well as looking at relevant information notes on our website:
http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/publications/information-notes-and-reviews

It can also be helpful to look at the "review" templates, as this will give you an indication of how your report will be assessed by the independent reviewer.

Q: What are the most common reporting issues etc. that people experience when reporting?

As well as an information note on lessons from Annual and Final Report Reviews (some of which relate to reporting) the "Writing a Darwin Report 2018" document is updated annually, as is the guidance in the reporting forms, and takes into account some of the key reporting issues observed.

Please also review the "Do's" and "Don'ts" in the slides, which cover some of these common issues.

Q: What is the overlap between reports? Do you include info from the half-year report in the annual report, or just the previous 6 months?

Half Year Reports cover the period 1st April to 30th September and annual reports cover the period 1st April to March 31st (i.e. you will need to report on the April-September period twice – however, the level of detail required at the half year reporting stage is much less).

Q: In our 1st year, as we start on the 1st of July will our half year report cover the first 3 months of the project only?

Yes, half year reports are all due on the same date each year (31st October) regardless of when your project starts. This year, projects starting at the beginning of July will be reporting on their first 3 months only. Next year, you will be reporting on a six month period at the end of October.

Q: Does the year in the logframe follow the financial year? So Quarter 1 in the logframe refers to 1st April.

Yes, when referring to project years we refer to the Defra financial year, which runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Q: When will feedback be received on annual reports?

Once you have submitted your annual report, it is independently reviewed by a monitoring and evaluation expert. Please allow up to 8 weeks for us to return the completed annual report review to you.

Project communications

Q: Is there a plan to put IWT reports up on the website too?

At the moment, the Darwin website (http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/) includes the application forms and reports for all projects. There isn't anything equivalent for IWT Challenge Fund projects at present, but the plan is to develop a similar website for the fund in future. You will be consulted before any IWT materials are posted online.

Q: Will you send us Darwin Initiative logo to use?

The Darwin logo is available to download from the Darwin website - http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/use-of-darwin-logo-and-publicity

Darwin projects can use the Darwin logo on project outputs and communications. The IWT Challenge Fund, projects should use the UKAID logo alongside the phrase "Funded by the UK Government through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund" as in Clause 11 of the IWT Challenge Fund Terms and Conditions. Please contact IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk if you need any help accessing the relevant logo.

Q: Is there an obligatory/standard acknowledgement statement we need to use?

Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of your award for wording to acknowledge funding.

Q: When will the list of IWT projects funded this year be published? When can we announce our successful projects?

It is expected that the successful projects will be announced in early July, but this is not yet confirmed.

Projects will be notified when they are able to publicise their successful projects.

Other

Q: Can new fellowships be linked to an ongoing project?

Yes. If you identify a promising individual on a project and want to put them forward for a Fellowship award, this is fine. This is how most fellowships are identified.

Q: Can you summarise the trends in Darwin and IWT funding volumes? Are you expecting expansion in the schemes in the next years?

As set out in the recently published 25 Year Environment Plan, the UK Government remain committed to supporting the IWT Challenge Fund and Darwin Initiative.

Q: The offer letter states subsequent years are funded "subject to parliamentary approval". When is this determined?

Government departments have their budgets agreed on an annual basis so technically cannot confirm funds for the next financial year until internal budgets have been agreed. We normally aim to issue annual award letters in late February/early March to confirm funds for the following financial year. In the 25 years since Darwin started, we have not had any indication that funds for ongoing projects would not be agreed.

Maintaining a high profile for outcomes the projects deliver helps secure support for them – so ensure you mention Darwin Initiative/IWT Challenge Fund support and use logos wherever possible!

Selected Webinar Feedback

How useful did you find the webinar?

All 45 webinar attendees that responded to the feedback reported finding the webinar useful. 27 attendees reported finding the webinar very useful, and the remaining 18 respondents reported finding it moderately useful.

Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

It would be good to have more specific information/feedback on the application process and strengths/weaknesses of stage 2 applications.

Given clear and illustrative examples of the common mistakes on half-year and annual reports might be very helpful. Especially for those who have English as their second language.

This was informative, as this is my first time to be involved in a DI project. I may have other questions after reviewing online resources. It would be good to indicate in the minutes from the webinar where we can send further questions.

Never received Darwin award before so I am new to it all, which is why I found the pace slightly too fast. There's a lot of info, I appreciate, so perhaps a slower delivery is not possible. Would have been nice to be able to click back through the slides. Overall it was good and really useful so thanks very much.

I found it too slow for me as I am familiar with Darwin and IWT grants but given the mixed audience, the pace and usefulness was probably right.

I found that there was only a small technical hitch when two speakers were on at the same time. Apart from that very impressed with the quality of the presentations.

It was a useful session and I will encourage other folk in our organisation to use it when it becomes available. Thank you.

Separate Webinars for different types of people e.g. one for admin/finance, one for project lead, one for technical staff - But really good overall.

It would be great, if you provide more examples on good and bad technical reporting

Do you have any suggestions for future webinar topics?

Maybe a couple more real life examples i.e. showing a claim form or showing how evidence was used to support the logframe.

On common hot issues as they arise during the year/project cycle.

Social media and promoting Darwin/ IWT projects - best practice, what to avoid etc.

Detailed financial reporting requirements including reporting from overseas partners

Capacity building of local partners.

IWT-CF New Project Workshop Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
10:00	**Arrivals and refreshments**
10:30	**Welcome and introduction to the workshop**
10:45	**Presentation - Developing an M&E plan**
10:55	**Group Exercise – Developing an M&E Plan**
11:30	**Refreshments & Elevator Pitch**
11:50	**Presentation - Communications**
12:00	**Group Exercise – Developing a communications strategy**
12:30	**Case Study 1**
13:00	**Lunch**
13.30	**Case Study 2**
14:00	**Group Exercise – Common themes and measurement challenges**
14.45	**Refreshments**
15.05	**Q&A and Panel Discussion**
15.50	**Highlights Session & Wrap Up**
16.00	**Close**

Notes on the New Project workshop

The workshop day was focused on reporting and communications, and on providing the opportunity to make connections between projects with similar themes and geographies. This allowed new IWT-CF projects the opportunity to explore common themes and challenges. In addition the project leaders from two recently completed projects attended and presented on key lessons learnt during the lifetime of their project.

Developing an M&E Plan

A short presentation was given focused on how to systematise the collection of evidence using a monitoring and evaluation plan. The presentation looked at what an M&E plan is, why they are a useful tool, and how to develop a simple M&E plan. The value of revisiting Stage 2 application logframes and indicators, and updating as necessary, was emphasised.

The M&E plan presentation was followed by a group activity. Workshop attendees were asked, in pairs, to complete a basic M&E action plan using the template provided. Attendees reported finding this a useful exercise that encouraged them to build upon the core documents created during the project planning stage and to go further, thinking about how evidence will be systematically collected, by whom and at what cost.

Communications

The second technical presentation of the day focused on project communications. The aim of this session was to emphasise the importance of effective communication at the project level, and to outline the communications channels through which this can be achieved. The presentation outlined the key elements of a simple communications strategy and introduced the idea of using interest and influence tools for stakeholder analysis. It also outlined the existing and potential future IWT-CF communications channels of use to projects.

The communications group work gave attendees the opportunity to practice some of the ideas introduced in the presentation. Projects were split into small groups and asked to use a copy of their logframes to start to develop a communications strategy. Attendees were encouraged to think about their motivation for communication, as well as the key audiences with whom they should be communicating.

Case Study 1: Developing long-term law enforcement capacity to protect the Mali elephants

Dr Susan Canney from the Wild Foundation presented on IWT-CF Project 018 "Developing long-term law enforcement capacity to protect the Mali elephants". This three year project funded under Round 2 of the Challenge Fund, aimed to improved enforcement capacity in Mali whilst developing sustainable livelihoods for communities affected by IWT. The presentation documented the significant implementation challenges faced by the project, particularly as a result of the severe deterioration of the security situation in Mali in 2014/15. The importance of developing a wide network of influential stakeholders was identified as a key contributor to the continued success of this project in the face of significant external challenges. The importance of adopting a flexible

approach to implementation, and the value of effective communications with the IWT-CF secretariat were also highlighted.

Case Study 2 – Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement

The second presentation of the day from an existing IWT-CF project was given by Alison Mollon of Fauna and Flora International. Alison presented on IWT 034 "Reducing IWT through synergising community decision-making, benefits and law enforcement," a two year enforcement and community development focused project, funded under Round 3 of the Challenge Fund. Working with three communities the project aimed to reduce instances of lion and elephant poaching through a combination of involving local women and men in decision-making, and providing economic and other well-being incentives. A number of challenges were highlighted including the difficulties in reconciling the long term aims of communities with the shorter term aims of donor funding, and challenges around demonstrating impact over a two year project. Project success factors were also outlined including the importance of working with local partners, effective communications, and robust planning for monitoring and evaluation.

Group Exercise – Identifying common challenges and ways to learn from each other

The aim of this exercise was to provide projects with an opportunity to network with each other, to identify opportunities for information sharing and learning, and to think about opportunities for coordination and complementary working. Participants were split into groups broadly corresponding to geographical and technical focus. In their groups projects discussed the technical IWT challenges that they intend to address, strategies for effective monitoring and evaluation, and the importance of sustainability and exit plans. Productive discussions were had around coordinating and communicating with key stakeholders, the importance of developing a robust theory of change and logframe, and tracking short term impacts over the lifetime of projects. The exercise also provided a useful opportunity for projects to discuss useful resources to address identified challenges and other potential avenues for future collaboration.

Lessons for new projects from current projects

As part of a panel discussion and workshop wrap up, top tips for new projects previously gathered from ongoing projects, were presented. A range of useful advice was provided such as:

> "It is important to note down all assumptions, develop SMART indicators to track them and indeed monitor the assumptions and feedback into the project design. In addition to assisting in adapting project management, it will improve reporting."

> "Be patient… be flexible" "Be realistic about how long it will take to set up your project."

> "Contact the local British Embassy as they often have a good contact network and knowledge of other groups/projects working in the country."

> "Time spend building partnerships with key stakeholders is time well invested."

> "A strong relationship with the appropriate UK Embassy or Consulate can be very useful for a project, but also consider making contact with the British Chamber of Commerce if this is relevant for your project".

Feedback

"Good interaction between projects – it's really helpful to know what overlap there is!"

"Great opportunity to meet and learn – well organised."

"Good having previous and current grant winners to hear stories."

"We all found it hugely helpful and appreciate the time and effort that went into organising this."
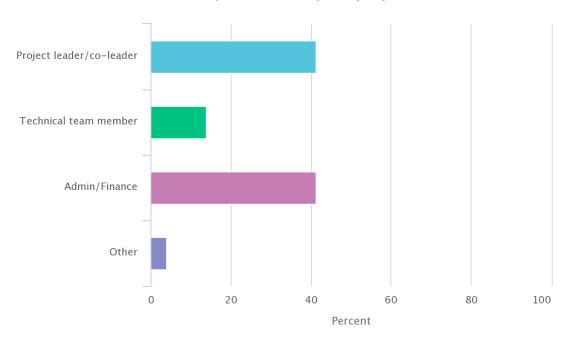
"It was wonderful to discuss the common challenges we all face and share ideas of how to overcome and proactively prevent problems popping up. The structure to the day kept things flowing and engagement easy."
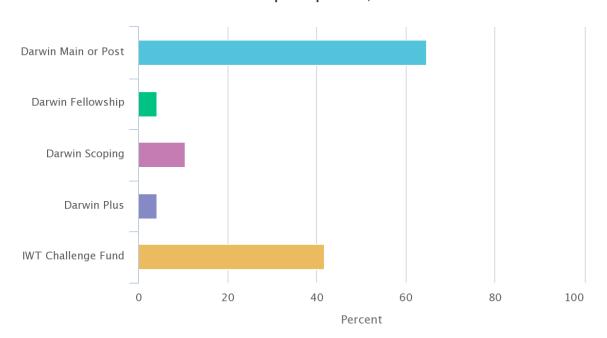
Annex 1 - Webinar Poll Responses

What is your role on your project?

Role	Percent
Project leader/co-leader	~41
Technical team member	~14
Admin/Finance	~41
Other	~4

What sort of project do you work on? (you may select multiple options)

Project type	Percent
Darwin Main or Post	~65
Darwin Fellowship	~3
Darwin Scoping	~10
Darwin Plus	~4
IWT Challenge Fund	~42

What is your history with Darwin and IWT?

	Percent
I have no history with Darwin/IWT	
My organisation has had a Darwin/IWT project before	
I have worked on a Darwin/IWT project before	
I have led one or more Darwin/IWT projects before	