Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE CHALLENGE FUND

UKaid from the British people

Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund

Guidance Notes for Applicants: Round 8

2021 - 2022

These guidance notes provide information on:

- what can be funded
- how to apply
- the process used to select projects for funding

Applicants should also read the Finance Guidance, which explains:

- what budgetary information you need in your application
- how the payments will be made if your application is successful, and how you should manage your budget
- when reporting is due and how it is linked to payments

Applications are made through the online application portal **Flexi-Grant** at ltsi.flexigrant.com

All guidance is available via the Flexi-Grant portal, and replicated on the Challenge Fund website below.

Applications are administered independently by NIRAS-LTS International.

Please read all the available guidance including the separate Finance Guidance before requesting additional assistance, as these provide answers to most queries.

Further resources and templates to support your application are available on the Forms and Guidance Portal, including:

Application Forms (for drafting purposes)	Change Request Forms
Application Templates	Terms and Conditions
Flexi-Grant User Guide	Reporting Forms
Claim Forms	Project Database

If you can't find the answer, please contact the IWT Challenge Fund Administration Team:

Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund

https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/	iwt-fund@ltsi.co.uk	+44 (0) 131 440 5506

For queries specific to using the Flexi-Grant system, email: flexigrant@ltsi.co.uk

c/o NIRAS-LTS International Ltd, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Penicuik, UK, EH26 0PL

© Crown copyright 2021

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.2. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2/ or email PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at IllegalWildlifeTrade@Defra.gov.uk

PB 14683

Glossary

Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources including, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
Country	Normally refers (unless otherwise stated) to any country on the eligible country list (see **Error! Reference source not found.** and Annex A), and not countries such as the UK.
Defra	The IWT Challenge Fund is a programme of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK Government.
Demand Reduction	Interventions aimed at the public desire to consume wildlife products from illegal and unsustainable sources.
Evidence	Ranges in format, quality and relevance and include, documented and undocumented experiences, data, studies, policies, best practices etc. but is particularly valued when it is quality assured, accessible, and applicable.
FCDO	The IWT Challenge Fund is co-funded with Defra by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK Government.
Innovation	New and creative ideas and their application to meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market demand. Innovations are sometimes existing solutions that are introduced or that are adapted to fit into a new context. An innovation is not the same as an invention. Rather, it refers to the practical implementation of a solution to have a meaningful impact in a society and for the environment.
IWT	All unlawful activities associated with the commercial exploitation and trade of wildlife, including live organisms, their parts or derivatives. Wildlife includes all wild fauna, flora, and fungi. Activities can be in contravention of national or international laws and regulations governing wildlife trade, for example the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
IWTAG	Illegal Wildlife Trade Advisory Group is a group of independent experts in IWT and poverty reduction that provide strategic advice, assess proposals and makes recommendations to Defra on funding decisions.
Lead Applicant	The individual who leads on the submission of the application and supporting materials and will be the project contact point during the application process.
Lead Partner	The partner who will administer the grant and coordinate the delivery of the project, accepting the Terms and Conditions of the Grant on behalf of the project.
Logframe	Logframes, also known as Results Frameworks, are essential project management tools that record the expected results to evidence the impact of a projects. Logframes are used by the IWT Challenge Fund to support programme and project monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Matched Funding	Additional finance that is secured to help meet the total cost of the project, including public and private sources, as well as quantified in-kind contributions.
Fund Administrator	Oversees the administration of IWT Challenge fund on behalf of Defra, and first point of contact for projects and applicants. The current fund administrator is NIRAS-LTS.
ODA	Official Development Assistance – commonly known as overseas aid – is when support, expertise or finance is supplied by one government to help the people of another country via activities that promote economic development and welfare as a main objective.
Partner(s)	Have a formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.
Poverty	Poverty is multi-dimensional and not solely about a lack of money; encompassing a range of issues to fulfil basic needs and better one's life with dignity.
Project Leader	The individual with the necessary authority, capability and capacity, and a full understanding of their role and associated obligations to take responsibility for delivering value for money, managing risk and financial controls whilst fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant.
Scale	The ability to take a proven approach to deliver greater impact either through accessing larger funds; through wider stakeholder uptake; adoption within other mechanisms or implementation in other locations.
Stakeholder	Are consulted, engaged and/or participate in project activities as they have an interest or concern in the project and its impact. They can also be partners, but if not, they would not have a budget management, or a formal governance role, within the project.
Value for Money	Good value for money is the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes. Value for money is not about achieving the lowest price.

Contents

Glossary ***2***

1 Introduction ***5***

2 What kind of projects can be supported by the IWT Challenge Fund? ***6***

2.1 IWT Challenge Fund objectives 6

2.2 Innovative and scalable solutions 8

2.3 Capability and capacity 8

2.4 Evidence and best practice 9

2.5 IWT and poverty reduction 9

3 Project requirements ***10***

3.1 Lead Partner and Project Leader 10

3.2 Partners 10

3.3 Size and length of projects 11

3.4 Gender equality 12

3.5 Value for money 13

3.6 Ethics 13

3.7 Safeguarding 13

3.8 Working with UK Embassies and British High Commissions 15

3.9 Communications 15

3.10 Monitoring and Evaluation 16

3.11 Terms and Conditions 16

4 How to apply ***17***

4.1 IWT Challenge Fund Round 8 Application Timetable 17

4.2 Completing the application form 17

4.3 Supporting evidence 17

5 Assessment process ***20***

5.1 Results of applications 21

5.2 Resubmission of applications 21

5.3 Assessment criteria 21

Annex A. Eligible Countries ***25***

Annex B. Awarded Grants ***27***

1 Introduction

The Illegal wildlife Trade (IWT) is a widespread and lucrative criminal activity causing major environmental and social harm globally. The IWT has been estimated to be worth up to £17 billion a year[1]. Nearly 6,000 different species of fauna and flora are impacted, with almost every country in the world playing a role in the illicit trade[2]. As well as the devastating consequences for biodiversity and ecosystems, IWT damages local communities, undermines national economies and therefore the development in some of the world's poorest countries.

The UK is a long-standing and committed global leader in efforts to eradicate the IWT. This was cemented at the ground-breaking IWT Conference Series, which in London in 2018 secured ambitious commitments from 65 governments across the globe to take urgent, coordinated action. The 25 Year Environment Plan[3] also published in 2018 sets out the UK Government's continued commitment to addressing the issue and providing targeted financial help to developing nations.

The IWT Challenge Fund is one of Defra's International Biodiversity Funds, co-funded with the FCDO, and underpins UK commitment. The fund was launched in 2014 and delivers on the UK's IWT Conference Series commitments by supporting projects that tackle IWT in developing countries. It has had significant reach: committing over £34m to 109 projects; working with local communities in over 50 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe; protecting a broad range of endangered species, including pangolins, jaguar and orchids, and; addressing some of the most pressing IWT issues.

The IWT Challenge Fund provides flexible funding to innovative and scalable solutions to drive transformational change. The IWT is a complex, fast changing and varied problem where traditional approaches that focus on the supply and anti-poaching interventions alone, have so far largely failed to solve. The IWT Challenge Fund sets out to stimulate the development of innovative and unconventional solutions to IWT that are responsive and relevant to local contexts. To really deliver on the impacts we want, successful interventions need to be scaled, facilitating a pipeline of proven projects for other public and private investment to support and deliver global change.

[1] UNEP - INTERPOL (2016). This estimate refers to the predicted value of the illegal trade in CITES listed species ($7-23bn). If you include the value of the illegal fishing (value of catch) and illegal timber trade, the estimate climbs to c.$170-200bn. Furthermore, if you include the ecosystem service values associated with these activities, the illegal logging, fishing, and wildlife trade has an estimated full global economic value of about $1 trillion to $2 trillion per year (World Bank, 2019).

[2] UNODC (2020)

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

2 What kind of projects can be supported by the IWT Challenge Fund?

2.1 IWT Challenge Fund objectives

The intended **impact** of the IWT Challenge Fund is to ***provide innovative and scalable solutions to reduce pressure on wildlife from illegal trade and, in doing so, reduce poverty in developing countries.***

2.1.1 Thematic focus

Proposals must align to one or more of the four project themes – listed below – which align with the pillars of action agreed and reconfirmed by global leaders at the IWT Conference Series. Figure 1. suggests areas under each pillar where the IWT Challenge Fund can advance global efforts and drive innovation.

1. **Reducing demand for IWT products**
2. **Ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents**
3. **Strengthening law enforcement**
4. **Developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT**

At each funding round, priority areas will be identified that are considered key opportunities for the IWT Challenge Fund to advance global efforts. For Round 8, we would particularly like to see projects which address the theme ***Reducing demand for IWT products*** and will seek to prioritise these areas as part of the assessment process.

Applicants are free to propose projects more widely across the themes providing they are innovative, urgent, or very high impact. All applications will be considered alongside the technical and impact assessment when identifying projects selected for funding (see Section 5 for further detail).

2.1.2 Species focus

IWT Challenge Fund support is available to projects that relate to **any species of fauna, flora and fungi impacted by IWT**.

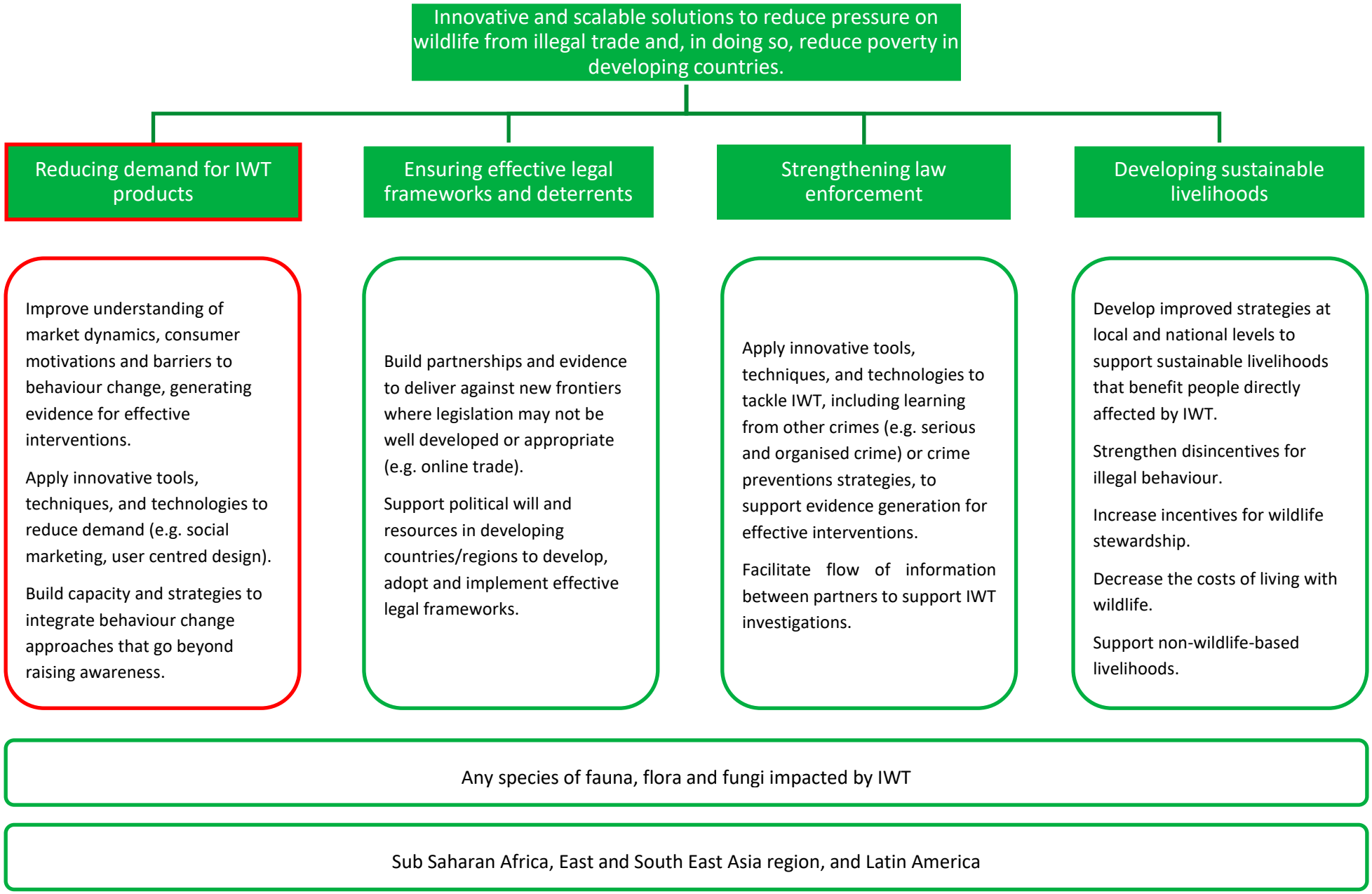
2.1.3 Geographical focus

Proposals should work in **sub–Saharan Africa, East and South East Asia and Latin America** and meet ODA eligibility requirements listed in Annex A.

2.1.4 High quality applications

Applications should propose ideas that test, or scale approaches aligned to one or more of the project themes. Applications should be able to **enhance the capability and capacity** of key stakeholders, **develop evidence of impact** (or potential impact if scaled) and **contribute to best practice** for supporting successful IWT interventions and deliver **simultaneous gains in tackling IWT and poverty reduction**. These aspects of an IWT Challenge Fund application are discussed in further detail below.

Figure 1. Thematic, species and geographic focus areas for IWT Challenge Fund projects. For Round, we will be prioritising projects which address the theme *Reducing demand for IWT products.*



2.2 Innovative and scalable solutions

Innovative and scalable solutions are needed to help drive transformational change in global efforts to tackle IWT and, in doing so, reduce poverty.

The IWT Challenge Fund is particularly interested in supporting projects that test and pilot ideas, which if proven successful within the lifetime of the project, can be scaled to deliver greater impact either through larger grants; embedding in policies and practices of key institutions; or adopted in other locations.

The application form asks applicants to set out their stage of development, and potential and vision for how to scale their work either during or post-project (see Box 1. Types of scaling approaches).

Projects which deliver new and innovative solutions or insights to IWT that have the potential to be scaled are more likely to receive funding under the IWT Challenge Fund.

Projects, including those funded under previous IWT Challenge Fund Rounds, that have demonstrated success can apply for funding to further scale interventions under the IWT Challenge Fund.

Box 1. Types of scaling approaches

- **Landscape scaling:** test an approach and then apply it more broadly at the landscape/seascape level.
- **Replication scaling:** test an approach and apply it in another geography.
- **Systems change scaling:** support system changes (e.g. legislation, technology) that have impacts beyond their original scale.
- **Capacitation scaling:** leaving a legacy of higher capacity to achieve change, e.g. through improving the capacity of organisations, key individuals, or regionally (e.g. geographic clusters of projects, combining to build capacity and momentum).

2.3 Capability and capacity

A significant limiting factor in tackling IWT is often gaps in capability and capacity.

Human and technical capacity, poor infrastructure, limited collaboration, and a lack of suitable equipment can all hinder efforts to tackle IWT across the illegal supply chain, especially in developing countries where resources may be scarce. Enhancing the capability and capacity of in-country stakeholders, including local communities, national organisations, and the private sector, is key to creating sustained impact after projects are complete.

Capability and capacity can be supported through a wide range of activities and structures including but not limited to structured training, work placements, mentoring, improved infrastructure, technology and equipment and partnership working. Multi-sectoral partnerships in particular are needed to share knowledge and experience and develop effective and sustainable solutions to IWT. This includes working with local communities, the private sector (whose infrastructure and processes are used to facilitate illegal trade, such as the transport, technology and financial sectors), NGOs, academia and government.

All IWT Challenge Fund projects are expected to include activities, structures and/or partnerships that will enhance the capability and capacity of key stakeholders during their lifetime. The approach adopted is for the project team to formulate and justify in the application.

2.4 Evidence and best practice

Due to the clandestine and complex nature of IWT, significant evidence gaps exist around the scale, impact, and appropriate responses.

Improving the development and use of evidence and best practice is essential to supporting more effective design and implementation of interventions and global strategies to combat IWT, while also making better use of limited resources.

In the context of the IWT Challenge Fund, we are prioritising improvements in the quality, accessibility and use of evidence during project design, monitoring, evaluation and learning. This will support the development of best practice to inform decisions on the design and implementation of successful interventions within the IWT Challenge Fund so we can contribute to the ambitious target set to halt biodiversity lost by 2030.

All IWT Challenge Fund projects should be based on the best available evidence and scientific theory; have a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to demonstrate impact and value for money; be able to demonstrate how they are going to promote learning and support best practice, including through the open access of project outputs.

Further guidance is provided under Section 3.9.1 Open access policy and data sharing and the accompanying Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance.

2.5 IWT and poverty reduction

The IWT exacerbates poverty and undermines sustainable development in some of the world's poorest countries.

All IWT Challenge Fund projects must support poverty reduction in developing countries. Projects should look systematically at the relationship between poverty and IWT. Project designs should explicitly consider how planned project activities to reduce IWT relate to poverty or to the efforts of people and/or states to alleviate poverty.

Poverty is multi-dimensional and not solely about a lack of money. It encompasses a range of diverse issues that are required to fulfil basic needs and better one's life with dignity. There are, therefore, many different ways in which a project can support poverty reduction, and approaches will differ from project to project (see: Box 2 Ways in which IWT Challenge Fund projects can contribute to poverty reduction).

Applications should state how a project's activities will support poverty reduction, including clearly identified beneficiaries. The anticipated impact on poverty should be reflected in the logframe, see the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance for further details.

Box 2: Ways in which IWT Challenge Fund projects can contribute to poverty reduction

- **Directly** e.g. through activities that help secure increased income for local communities, and therefore reduce the need to generate income through poaching, or through providing access to important assets for local communities whilst helping them to tackle IWT.
- **Indirectly** e.g. through safeguarding traditional rights and cultural values, increasing the voice of marginalised communities, increasing equality within communities, improved security through capacity building of local enforcement agencies.
- **Through practice orientated research** e.g. activities that expand the knowledge base on IWT and poverty.

A recent information note for Darwin Initiative – the IWT Challenge Fund's sister scheme - Poverty and the Darwin Initiative, might help you understand the multiple dimensions of poverty and how biodiversity projects can meaningfully contribute to economic development and welfare of people in developing countries.

If your project is focused on **demand reduction**, projects should clearly demonstrate all links to poverty reduction, including indirect, for example, showing how reducing demand can protect species at source thereby retaining local communities' ability to benefit from sustainable use where appropriate and reducing resource pressure on source governments from enforcement activities.

3 Project requirements

3.1 Lead Partner and Project Leader

Applications must be made by the Lead Partner, an organisation (not an individual) that agrees to the Terms and Conditions including managing the grant, its finances, reporting and governance.

Lead Partners can be based anywhere, and we strongly encourage projects to have in-country Lead Partners.

The **maximum annual value of funds** requested should not exceed 25% of the Lead Partner's average annual turnover/income for the previous 3 years.

There is no limit on the number of applications a Lead Partner may submit, but we would encourage internal co-ordination to ensure all submissions are competitive; Defra may consider the number of applications from a partner as part of their decision-making process.

The **Project Leader** is an individual, representing the Lead Partner, with the necessary **authority, capability and capacity,** and a full understanding of their role and associated obligations to take **responsibility** for delivering value for money, managing risk and financial controls whilst fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant.

3.2 Partners

Partnerships between organisations should align their interests around a common vision, combining their complementary resources, experiences and competencies and sharing risk, so they can maximise impact in terms of scale, quality, sustainability and benefits.

Partners have a **formal governance role and relationship with the project** that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

In contrast, **Stakeholders** would not have a budget management, or a formal governance role, within the project but are consulted, engaged and participate in project activities.

All IWT Challenge Fund projects are expected to work with in-country partners and build in meaningful and early engagement with in-country stakeholders.

3.3 Size and length of projects

We are expanding the eligibility criteria for both the grant size and length in Round 8 to support projects at different stages in their development on their pathway to scale. These project stages, categorised as Evidence, Main and Extra, may in the future form more distinct elements of the IWT Challenge Fund.

The guidance below sets out the anticipated IWT Challenge Fund grant size for each project stage along with the supporting evidence required in applications.

- **Evidence** - Projects between £20,000 and £100,000 – Projects which gather evidence to design an intervention. Applications should describe how the improved evidence base will be used to design an intervention and provide evidence for the problem the intervention will address and the gap it fills in existing approaches. Projects may include, for example, market research to design and baseline demand reduction interventions. Applicants are encouraged to develop evidence projects into full interventions as part of follow-on applications to the IWT Challenge Fund.

- **Main** - Projects between £100,000 and £600,000 – Projects which test new and innovative interventions to provide proof of concept at a smaller scale. Applications should provide evidence for the problem the intervention addresses, the gap it fills in existing approaches, and indicate its potential to be scaled in a real-world setting.

- **Extra** – Projects between £600,000 and £1.5 million – Projects which have already demonstrated success at a smaller scale and can be scaled. Applications should provide evidence of the intervention's success at a smaller scale, its potential impact at a larger scale and the political and operational feasibility to scale. Competition for *Extra* grants is expected to be strong, and we anticipate making only a limited number of grants of this size.

For Round 8, all projects should:

- Plan to start on or after 1 July 2022, and
- Ensure budget commitments end by 31 March 2026 at the latest.

A project's **value for money** in terms of its expected impact relative to cost (see Finance Guidance), is a more important consideration than its absolute size and length. Each project should have a realistic, and not an overly ambitious, budget and timeframe. All projects will have to meet financial and reporting requirements, therefore the costs of meeting these should be factored into proposals. For example, an evidence project that lasts longer than two years is unlikely to represent good value for money because of the high transactional costs involved with its delivery relative to the IWT Challenge Fund grant size.

3.4 Gender equality

Evidence from the *Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation* (www.espa.ac.uk) programme demonstrates that **women and men use resources differently**. For example, due to gender differences in roles and responsibilities, women in rural communities are often the main collectors of wild plant food and firewood, with men focusing on timber, wild meat, and control access rights and tenure due to patriarchal structures. As a result, women and men develop knowledge about different species, their uses and their management.

To shape and inform all biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction actions, it is **vital to understand** gender-differentiated biodiversity practices, gendered knowledge acquisition and usage, as well as gender inequalities in control over resources.

All projects must consider how they will contribute to reducing inequality between genders, with activities is expected to generate net benefits for women and children. If this is not the case for your project, you will need to set out why in your application including how you will ensure that your project will not intentionally or unintentionally increase inequality.

The approach taken to **Gender Equality** will be assessed at the proposal stage, with projects able to demonstrate a strong **understanding of gender**, with gender **integrated throughout their design** are likely to **score more highly**.

All projects are expected to report **indicators disaggregated by gender**. If you cannot the application will need to explain why not.

Some questions to consider early on:

- What are the prevailing gender norms in the host country in relation to division of labour, access and control of resources, and ability to participate in decision making?
- How do these prevailing norms affect the project, in terms of what it can achieve, how will it engage with stakeholders and how it needs to be designed?
- How will the project impact (positively and negatively) girls, boys, women and men in their domestic, economic and community roles and responsibilities and in term of access to and control over assets?
- How will the project provide opportunities for girls, boys, women and men to influence and participate in decision making?
- Does the intervention address underlying barriers that prevent girls and women from accessing opportunities created?
- How will risks and unintended negative consequences be identified, avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?

Girls and women are not a homogenous group, with additional layers of diversity including ethnicity, caste, age, religion, sexuality and disability status that need to be considered. Further resources include:

- Convention on Biological Diversity – Gender in the conservation of protected areas
- IIED – Gender and Biodiversity
- Nature – Gender in conservation and climate policy
- UN Environment Programme – Why gender is important for biodiversity conservation
- WWF – Gender and Conservation

3.5 Value for money

Projects must demonstrate good Value for Money in terms of the scale and legacy of the expected impact relative to cost.

For further guidance, see Finance Guidance.

Funded Projects should not significantly cut across or duplicate work, especially that being funded through other environment and development or research programmes.

Projects should consider evidence from relevant historical and existing initiatives, and reflect this in project design, incorporating lessons learnt, to maximise the chance of success.

Projects must deliver new and additional activity, above and beyond what might otherwise have occurred without the project.

Funding is for distinct projects with a clear end date and specific, measurable results, although they can be an identifiable project within a larger programme if it is made clear in the application.

The IWT Challenge Fund will not fund ongoing organisational running costs.

3.6 Ethics

Projects are expected to meet the **key principles of good ethical practice** and demonstrate this in the application. All projects must:

- meet **all legal and ethical obligations** of all countries involved in the project, including relevant access and benefit sharing legislation pertaining to the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge
- follow **access and benefit sharing best practice** where legislation is incomplete or absent
- include strong **leadership** with key stakeholders and local communities in target location are involved to enhance the incorporation of their perspectives, interests and knowledge, in addressing the wellbeing of those directly impacted by the project.
- recognise the value and importance of **traditional knowledge**, alongside international scientific approaches, and methods
- respect the **rights, privacy, and safety of people** who are impacted directly and indirectly by project activities
- use **Prior Informed Consent** (PIC) principles with communities
- protect the **health and safety** of all project staff
- uphold the **credibility of evidence**, research and other findings
- follow an **institutional ethics review** process

Funding may be frozen or withdrawn in the event that these principles are not met.

Staff involved in the design or conduct of research should maintain the independence and integrity of the process, including intellectual detachment from personal convictions relating to the topic.

3.7 Safeguarding

3.7.1 Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

Defra believes that everyone involved in delivering ODA funded projects, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of

harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. **Defra will not tolerate abuse and/or exploitation by staff or associated personnel involved in Defra-funded ODA projects.**

It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner to have appropriate and proportionate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, to protect not only direct and indirect beneficiaries but also employees and associated personnel of any partners.

Safeguarding can be addressed through the four pillars of **prevent, listen, respond and learn.**

In order to receive funding, the lead partner must:

- have a **safeguarding policy**, which includes a statement of your commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse
- keep a detailed **register of safeguarding issues** raised and how they were dealt with
- have **clear investigation and disciplinary procedures** to use when allegations and complaints are made, and have clear processes in place for when a disclosure is made
- **share your safeguarding policies with downstream partners**
- have a **whistle-blowing policy** which protects whistle blowers from reprisals and includes clear processes for dealing with concerns raised
- have in place a **Code of Conduct** for staff and volunteers that sets out clear expectations of behaviours - inside and outside the workplace - and make clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards.

3.7.2 Human rights

All UK supported projects must uphold our values and be consistent with our domestic and international human rights obligations. Human rights and International Humanitarian Law risks must be considered by projects prior to funding to ensure projects identify and mitigate risks for example of unlawful arrest or detention or unfair trial. This information will be used to assess the potential impact of any proposed assistance on these risks, as well as on reputational or political risk, prior to the provision of any funding.

You should consider what measures may be taken in order to mitigate any risk that might directly contribute to a violation of human rights and/or International Humanitarian Law.

Further information on the assessment of projects operating in the security and justice sector can be found in Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) guidance.

Further information about the UK Government's approach to Human Rights can be found on GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/human-rights-internationally.

3.7.3 Use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Informants)

The use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources, commonly known as 'Informants' carries significant risk for the informant and handlers. These risks may extend beyond the control of organisations that use informants, not least in criminal justice proceedings where in some jurisdictions it may not be possible to prevent the disclosure of the identity of sources. Defra therefore discourages the use of informants unless grantees have strong, relevant expertise within the project team, and can clearly demonstrate how you will ensure safe implementation and security of informants and any data collected.

3.7.4 Use of Undercover Operatives

The use of undercover (UC) operatives and methods is becoming increasingly common in tackling IWT and over-use may lead to security issues for persons and organisations using such tactics. There are also considerations regarding the appropriate and legal gathering of information that may subsequently be used in criminal proceedings. Defra therefore discourages the use of undercover operatives unless grantees have strong, relevant expertise within the project team, and can clearly demonstrate how you will ensure safe deployment of such methods.

3.8 Working with UK Embassies and British High Commissions

All applicants are encouraged to make contact with UK Embassies and British High Commissions in the project country; a list of these can be found on GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies

The purpose of this is to ensure that relevant UK Embassies or High Commissions are aware of proposed work, although we recognise that their capacity to support or engage with projects is varied. Applicants will not be penalised if they are unable to submit comments from the Embassy or High Commission alongside their application, provided they have made an attempt to contact them in sufficient time to allow engagement.

All applications will be shared with other UK Government Departments including the FCDO and their views will be taken into account in the assessment process.

If your application is successful, the relevant UK Embassies or High Commissions will be informed and may seek to publicise the award, or be involved in any formal launch, and may wish to develop a relationship with the project during delivery (depending on their resource levels).

A number of countries eligible for the IWT Challenge Fund may present potential security or political challenges. UK-based applicants should consult UK Government's travel advice website: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice. If the organisation leading the project is not based in-country you should consult your Foreign Affairs Ministry for advice before applying.

If you need advice on any security or political sensitivities, or if the UK Embassy or High Commission needs to be aware of sensitivities before making any announcement, please tick the relevant box on the application form.

3.9 Communications

Projects are funded from UK Official Development Assistance (ODA).

So, it is important to be able to clearly communicate how ODA funding is being utilised. At Stage 2 each applicant is asked to provide a very short, plain English summary of their projects and its expected results, which if successful will be used in communication activities. This summary should be written for a non-technical audience with little or no prior knowledge of the issue, and clearly describe the project plan and intended outcome.

During delivery, successful projects will be engaged to support wider communications and awareness raising activities to promote the IWT Challenge Fund and its projects.

3.9.1 Open access policy and data sharing

The UK Government is committed to "push for a global transparency revolution" in the availability and use of data to improve accountability, decision making, and to help deliver sustainable development outcomes to people living in poverty.

Projects are likely to generate significant outputs including datasets, best practices, peer-reviewed journal articles and technical reports which will be of value to other countries and stakeholders. All outputs should be made **available online and free to users**, unless there are particular sensitivities involved. This includes all derived and raw data on species, land cover and land use, through appropriate national, regional and global databases.

In your application, please consider the project outputs you expect to produce and how this information can be shared widely and freely. You may include appropriate costs in your budget to support open access publishing but be realistic about when articles will be published. It is likely that dates will fall outside the formal project, so it is worth considering matched funding for these costs.

Further information on open and enhanced access can be found on GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-research-open-and-enhanced-access-policy.

3.9.2 Transparency

To support understanding of ODA spend, and in line with the aim of the IWT Challenge Fund, successful project **applications**, along with subsequent **reporting**, **will be published** on the Challenge Fund website and elsewhere.

If there are **any sensitivities** within a project, for example detailed species location data that would increase threats, please bring this to our attention and these can be considered for **redaction prior to publication**.

3.10 Monitoring and Evaluation

A robust monitoring framework supports both the efficient delivery of the project as well the capability to demonstrate the direct or potential impact and value for money achieved.

Further guidance is given in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance.

3.11 Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants will be issued a grant award letter with the Terms and Conditions that will apply to the grant, including the grant purpose, value, period, and reporting and financial arrangements.

Copies of the Terms and Conditions are available (see Page 1), and you should understand these before making an application to ensure compliance will not be an issue. Defra retains the right to amend these conditions at any time.

4 How to apply

4.1 IWT Challenge Fund Round 8 Application Timetable

Stage 1 Applications (via Flexi-Grant only) Deadline – **23:59 GMT Monday 22 November 2021**

Results of Stage 1 and invite to Stage 2, expected by **early February 2022**

The Stage 2 application is accessed through the email confirming the Stage 1 result and is by invitation only.

Stage 2 Application (via Flexi-Grant only) Deadline – **23:59 GMT Tuesday 22 March 2022**
Results expected at the end of **May 2022 at the earliest**

Projects expected to start from **1 July 2022**

All applications will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the funding round close. If you have not heard after 5 days, please contact the IWT Administration Team.

4.2 Completing the application form

All applications must be submitted:

- through Flexi-Grant, using approved templates.
- with all questions and sections completed, referencing evidence where required,
- word count indicates the level of detail required; if appropriate n/a is acceptable
- in English, and
- signed, with a PDF signature uploaded as part of the Flexi-Grant application.

Competition for funding is strong, applications which are:

- are incorrect or incomplete
- do not match all published criteria, including eligible countries and dates
- submitted using the incorrect template

will be rejected as ineligible.

4.3 Supporting evidence

Only the supporting evidence set out below should be submitted.

If the **required evidence** is not submitted **with your application form**, or submitted on an incorrect/unofficial template, **it will be rejected as incomplete**.

The application form **provides sufficient space to make your case**, and the submission of unrequested material will significantly **detract from your application**.

All material must be uploaded to Flexi-Grant as a **PDF** or **Excel** file (JPEG is only acceptable for application signature).

4.3.1 Cover Letter (Stage 1 & Stage 2)

The cover letter is an opportunity to support your application, it should be brief (2 sides maximum-text size 12 and standard margins) and where possible refer to the application for further details rather repeating them here. The letter can set out clearly how you have responded to feedback and/or stakeholder input from previous applications (including Stage 1) during the design phase if appropriate.

The Cover Letter should be uploaded as a **single PDF file**.

4.3.2 Logframe (Stage 1 & Stage 2)

Completed logframe using the template provided (there are different templates for Stage 1 and Stage 2 projects) **submitted as a single PDF file**.

4.3.3 Budget and Financial Evidence (Stage 2 only)

Budget submitted using the correct Excel template, and fully compliant with the Finance Guidance.

See Finance Guidance for details of the financial evidence required to be submitted with your application to demonstrate Financial Capability and Capacity including audited or independently examined accounts for the last two years.

4.3.4 Project Timeline (Stage 2 only)

Project timeline using the template provided, and uploaded as a **single PDF file**.

4.3.5 Safeguarding Policy (Stage 2 only)

A copy of the Lead Partner safeguarding policy which includes a **statement of commitment to safeguarding** and a **zero-tolerance statement** on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and must be submitted at Stage 2 as a **single PDF file**.

4.3.6 CVs and Job Descriptions (Stage 2 only)

One-page CVs or job descriptions of all the key project staff **named in the application form**. If you cannot secure a CV from a named Project Staff member, please provide an explanation why, along with a summary of the skills and experience of the team member concerned.

CVs/job descriptions should be merged and uploaded as **a single PDF file**.

4.3.7 Letters of support (Stage 2 only)

Letters of support from all project partners (including the lead partner) should be on **headed paper and must be in English** (or with an English translation); letters of support from stakeholders are desired but not considered essential. Those written by high profile stakeholders or project partners are expected to be stronger, than from others, and act **as evidence of:**

- **support** for the application and the **importance** of the work to the organisation
- the **relationship** with partners and actors within the **host country**
- **support** and need for the **proposed project** (including any proposed Fellows)
- your **ability** to achieve high **quality results** and productive **partnerships**

If it is not possible to obtain a letter of support from any of the project partners, please explain why.

Letters of Support should be merged and uploaded as a **single PDF file**.

4.3.8 Risk Register

Submitted if awarded: A copy of the initial Risk Register, with Delivery Chain Risk Map, using the template provided. The Issue Log, included in the template, will only need to be edited once the first issue materialises during project delivery and therefore should be left blank at this stage.

4.3.9 Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy

Available on request: A copy of your policy setting out how the Lead Partner complies with legislation and relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption as covered in the Terms and Conditions **does not need to be submitted** but may be requested.

4.3.10 Ethics Policy

Available on request: Evidence that the Lead Partner will meet the **key principles of good ethical practice** (see 3.6) should be demonstrated in your response to the Ethics question in the application form. A copy of your ethics policy **does not need to be submitted** but may be requested.

4.3.11 Optional evidence

A **map**, **list of references** or a **Theory of Change** diagram can be **optionally** submitted in a **single combined PDF** file to support your application; but these **must not exceed 5 sides of A4 in total**, or it will make your application ineligible.

Table 1: Summary of Required and Optional supporting evidence for Stage 1 and Stage 2.

	IWT Challenge Fund	
	Stage 1	**Stage 2**
Cover Letter	Required (2 sides of A4 maximum)	Required (2 sides of A4 maximum)
Logframe	Required on Stage 1 template	Required on Stage 2 template
Budget and Financial Evidence	Only within Flexi-Grant application, no separate template or evidence required.	Required on correct Excel template. Audited or independently examined accounts for the last two years
Project Timeline	Not required	Required on Timeline template
Safeguarding Policy	Not required	Required
CVs and Job Descriptions	Not required	Required, one-page CVs or job descriptions of all the key project staff named in the application form.
Letters of support	Not required	Required from all project partners, absence needs to be justified. Optional from key stakeholders.
Risk register	Not required	Submitted if awarded, on Risk Framework Template, with Delivery Chain Mapping completed. Issues Log should not be completed.
Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy	Not required	Not required, but available on request.
Ethics Policy	Not required	Not required, but available on request.
Map, List of references and Theory of Change diagram.	Optional, maximum of 5 sides of A4.	Optional, maximum of 5 sides of A4.

5 Assessment process

All eligible applications that meet the required standard will be assessed by the **Illegal Wildlife Trade Advisory Group** (IWTAG), who are independent experts in IWT and poverty reduction (see, https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/about-us/).

IWTAG follows a strict code of practice: if any member has been involved in or is closely associated with an application, the applicant or a project partner, they **declare their interest** and play no role in its assessment or discussion at the Moderation Panel.

An overview of the process for assessment is:

1) **Initial Review:** Applications that are poor quality, incomplete or do not meet the essential eligibility criteria or standard will be rejected. You will be informed of the reasons for rejection.

2) **Independent Expert Review:** Applications are scored by at least three members of IWTAG, against the assessment criteria (5.3) to inform the discussion at the Moderating Panel.
3) **Moderating Panel:** IWTAG discusses comments and agrees the strongest applications to recommend for funding.
4) **Funding Decision:** Defra reviews IWTAG's recommendations and awards the grants.

Defra reserves the right to apply more stringent assessment at the Initial Review if the number of applications is high to ensure that the experts can robustly review those with the highest chance of being discussed at the Moderating Panel.

5.1 Results of applications

Once the Funding Decision has been made, **all Lead Applicants** (both successful and unsuccessful) **will receive notification** via email from Flexi-Grant.

If you are successful, in the case of a Stage 1 proposal, you will receive an invitation to Stage 2, if successful at Stage 2, an offer of funding. Defra retains the **right to clarify any issues** raised during the application process or to award funding **subject to required amendments**. If the applicant is subsequently unable to meet the requirements of the award, Defra retains the right to withdraw the offer.

Only unsuccessful Stage 1 applicants whose applications were competitive will receive feedback. All Stage 2 applicants will receive feedback.

5.2 Resubmission of applications

If your application is unsuccessful, you may submit a revised application to a future round.

A resubmitted application will **only be accepted once**, unless there is prior agreement owing to exceptional circumstances or the proposed project is significantly different.

Any resubmission should include a **cover letter** with your application, outlining how you have responded to any feedback to strengthen your application.

5.3 Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed by IWTAG against the criteria below. Unless noted, all benefits or impacts are in reference to the host country.

5.3.1 IWT Challenge Fund assessment Criteria

The assessment of the proposal is based the following criteria; Assessors scores are added into a single score to inform the Moderation Discussion.

The **same criteria are used at Stage 1 and Stage 2**, acknowledging the differences between the two stages:

At **Stage 1,** Assessors are looking for evidence that projects are innovative, offer value for money and have the **potential to deliver a competitive proposal** at Stage 2.

At **Stage 2**, Assessors are looking for **evidence** that projects have the necessary experience, support and have strong probability of **delivering sustainable benefits**, including the **feasibility to scale**.

Assessor Score = **Score 1 Technical Merit of Proposed Project** (0-6 points) **+**
Score 2 IWT and Poverty Reduction Impact of Project (0-6 points)

Score 1: Technical Merit of Proposed Project (0-6 points)

1) The **methodology** is robust, clear and appropriate to meet the identified need and achieve the targeted outcome.
2) Does the project present robust **logframe**, aligned to 2021 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance, including SMART indicators.
3) Demonstrates **good value for money**, in terms of the **scale** and **impact,** and includes the ability to **leverage matched funding**.
4) **Risks** are identified, assessed and have **clear mitigation actions**.

Additional questions considered at Stage 2

5) **Safeguarding and ethical issues** will be managed to a high standard.
6) The project has **sustainable exit strategy**, has demonstrated the **potential and feasibility to scale** where appropriate, and is designed to leave a **legacy**, through a real and lasting impact.
7) The **Project Team** has the necessary expertise to support the successful delivery of the project as evidenced by the submitted CVs.
8) The project has the **full support of parties** essential for success, covering the skills required to deliver the outcomes.
9) Provides a clear plan of how it will **make evidence** (including data, lessons learnt and best practices etc.) widely and publicly available.
10) The **budget** is realistic, justifiable and sufficient to achieve the project's outcomes.

Score 2: IWT and Poverty Reduction Impact of Project (0-6 points)

1) The project is supporting development of **innovative solutions and insights** that **addresses one or more of the four themes**:
   - Reducing demand for IWT products
   - Ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents
   - Strengthening law enforcement
   - Developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT
2) The project provides **evidence of its potential impact**, including the **problem it addresses**, and the **gap it fills in existing approaches**. *Evidence* projects should describe how the improved evidence base will be used to design an intervention, the problem the intervention will address and the gap it will fill. *Extra* projects should provide evidence of the intervention's success at a smaller scale and its potential impact at a larger scale.
3) The project does not duplicate other work, has analysed relevant historical and existing initiatives and will either build on or take work already done into account in project design to maximise lesson learning and synergies.
4) The project is tackling issues relevant to any **species** of fauna, flora and fungi impacted by IWT.
5) **Strong participation of national and local stakeholders**, either as the Lead Partner, Partner or stakeholders.
6) Demonstrates how it will strengthen the **capability and capacity** of key stakeholders.
7) The project can demonstrate how it will **reduce aspects of poverty**, with anticipated benefits logically captured in the project logframe and beneficiaries identified.

8) **Upper-Middle Income Countries** projects demonstrate that they will either:
   - have an impact in Least Developed or Low-Income Countries, or
   - contribute to the global public good, or
   - contribute to a critical issue that could not be made elsewhere.
9) **Gender inequality** is understood and reflected in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Priority assessment

Whether an application addresses the priority areas in Section 2 will be considered alongside the technical and impact assessment when identifying projects for funding.

5.3.1 Assessment Scoring

Points	Description
6	*Strong Demonstration.* Substantial evidence presented that it **meets all the of assessment criteria, with no concerns raised**; the majority of which are met to a high standard. There may be a few minor issues which if addressed may improve the project, but they are unlikely to be detrimental to the delivery of the project and should not prevent it from being funded without changes being made.
5	*Good Demonstration.* Good evidence presented that it **meets most of the assessment criteria, no major concerns identified.** The met criteria are mostly to a high standard. There are minor issues that could improve the project, but should not prevent it from being funded. It is likely to significantly contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Initiative.
4	*Acceptable Demonstration.* The proposed project **meets most of the assessment criteria, no major concerns identified.** The criteria it does meet are often to a good standard. There are a few minor issues that would improve this project which they would be advised to consider if funded. It is likely to contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Initiative.
3	*Moderate Demonstration* that the proposed project **meets many of the assessment criteria, some concerns raised.** Those met criteria are largely to an acceptable standard, and the concerns can be addressed. It has the potential to contribute to the objectives of the Darwin Initiative, if the issues are addressed to strengthen it.
2	*Weak Demonstration.* The project **meets some of the assessment criteria, or has raised concerns**. Those criteria it does meet are to a modest standard, but the application requires important changes to address the concerns and assessment criteria in order to make it competitive.
1	*Minimal demonstration.* The proposed project is unsatisfactory and **meets only a few criteria, or raises important concerns.** The proposal is likely to require significant revision.
0	*Not demonstrated.* The projects **fails to meet any of the criteria outlined and raises serious concerns** e.g. flawed approach, subject to serious technical difficulties or risks, unclearly written that it cannot be properly assessed, or is duplicative.

Annex A. Eligible Countries

The IWT Challenge Fund is entirely **Official Development Assistance (ODA) funded**, therefore activities must promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The countries eligible for support are listed in Table 1 and are on the current OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List. Proposals that work in sub–Saharan Africa, East and South East Asia and Latin America will be prioritised during the application assessment process. Prioritised countries are highlighted in Table 1.

Upper-middle income countries (UMICs) are eligible, however, projects applying to work in a UMIC must clearly **demonstrate a stronger case** for support. This includes operating in areas of strategic significance in tackling IWT and reducing poverty. Such applications must also clearly demonstrate that they will:

- advance knowledge, evidence and impact in **Least Developed or Low-Income Countries**, or
- contribute to the **global public good**, for example by advancing understanding and/or strengthening the knowledge base related to biodiversity conservation/sustainable use and poverty reduction, or
- contribute to **serious and unique advancements** on a critical issue as a result of specific circumstances of the upper-middle income country that could not be made elsewhere.

Table 1. Eligible Countries. Priority countries are highlighted in red.

Low Income Countries	Lower Middle-Income Countries	Upper Middle-Income Countries
Afghanistan	Armenia	Algeria
Angola	Bolivia	Argentina
Bangladesh	Cabo Verde	Belize
Benin	Cameroon	Botswana
Bhutan	Congo	Brazil
Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire	China (People's Republic of)
Burundi	Egypt	Colombia
Cambodia	El Salvador	Costa Rica
Central African Rep.	Eswatini	Cuba
Chad	Georgia	Dominica
Comoros	Ghana	Dominican Republic
Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	Guatemala	Ecuador
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Honduras	Equatorial Guinea
Djibouti	India	Fiji
Eritrea	Indonesia	Gabon
Ethiopia	Jordan	Grenada
Gambia	Kenya	Guyana
Guinea	Kyrgyzstan	Iran
Guinea-Bissau	Micronesia	Iraq
Haiti	Mongolia	Jamaica
Kiribati	Morocco	Lebanon
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	Nicaragua	Libya
Lesotho	Nigeria	Malaysia
Liberia	Pakistan	Maldives
Madagascar	Papua New Guinea	Marshall Islands
Malawi	Philippines	Mauritius
Mali	Sri Lanka	Mexico
Mauritania	Syrian Arab Republic	Namibia
Mozambique	Tajikistan	Nauru
Myanmar	Tunisia	Niue
Nepal	Uzbekistan	Paraguay
Niger	Vanuatu	Peru
Rwanda	Viet Nam	Saint Lucia
Sao Tome and Principe	West Bank and Gaza Strip	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Senegal		Samoa
Sierra Leone		South Africa
Solomon Islands		Suriname
Somalia		Thailand
South Sudan		Timor-Leste
Sudan		Tonga
Tanzania		Turkey
Timor-Leste		Turkmenistan
Togo		Venezuela
Tuvalu		
Uganda		
Yemen		
Zambia		
Zimbabwe		

Annex B. Awarded Grants

The **award is made to the Lead Partner**, not to an individual. The Project Leader will be the **first point of contact** for all aspects of project management (including financial management), and will be **responsible for the overall management of the project and accountability of the award**, on behalf of the institution they represent.

Contact details will be required for a **nominated individual from the finance section** of the institution to whom the award is made. This person may be identified once the grant has been offered.

Reporting Requirements

Projects must provide **Annual** and **Half Year** progress **reports** that are reviewed each year. These reports must provide robust reporting against intended objectives and include information on outputs and ethics and environmental impact.

All projects are required to submit a **Final Report** at the end of the award.

To continue receiving funding from the Darwin Initiative **reports must be complete and within deadlines**. If you do not meet these requirements your funding can be stopped.

Project datasets

Data collection, analysis, management and storage **protocols** should be established to ensure the **integrity of research findings and their subsequent use** within the research team, Darwin Initiative and eventual wider public domain.

The application should demonstrate that the **publication of results and secure data storage** has been thought through, a plan exists, and appropriate resources are included.

We encourage that where possible and appropriate data is shared directly or indirectly with **Global Biodiversity Information Facili**ty (GBIF.org) for wider accessibility.

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the **Privacy Notice**, available from the Forms and Guidance Portal.

This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).