Applicant: **Kleitou, Periklis**
Organisation: **Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab**
Funding Sought: [redacted]
Funding Awarded: **£0.00**

DPLR3\1046

“Mesophos” - Exploring the Mesophotic Zone of Cyprus UKOTs

Mesophos aims to explore the uncharted depths of Cyprus UK Overseas Territories’ (UKOTs) mesophotic zone. Our mission is to unveil the unexplored biodiversity, habitats, and ecological importance of the mesophotic zone, typically found between depths of 50-200 meters. By utilizing existing data and local knowledge, we will design ROV surveys to confirm the presence and assess the condition of mesophotic habitats. Through scientific discovery, Mesophos will foster effective management strategies to protect the mesophotic ecosystems of Cyprus UKOTs and beyond.

CONTACT DETAILS

Title	Dr
Name	Periklis
Surname	Kleitou
Organisation	Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab
Website (Work)	[redacted]
Tel (Work)	[redacted]
Email (Work)	[redacted]
Address	[redacted]

DPLR3\1046

"Mesophos" - Exploring the Mesophotic Zone of Cyprus UKOTs

Section 1 - Project Title & Contact Details

Q1. Project Title

"Mesophos" - Exploring the Mesophotic Zone of Cyprus UKOTs

Q2. Please select whether you are applying as an organisation or as an individual **(Guidance section 3 and Guidance Glossary)**

⦿ Organisation

CONTACT DETAILS

Title	Dr
Name	Periklis
Surname	Kleitou
Organisation	Marine and Environmental
Website (Work)	[redacted]
Tel (Work)	[redacted]
Email (Work)	[redacted]
Address	[redacted]

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab
Phone (Work)	[redacted]
Email (Work)	[redacted]
Website (Work)	[redacted]
Address	[redacted]

Section 2 - Overseas Territory(ies)

Q3. Overseas Territory (Guidance section 1.3):

Which UK Overseas Territory(ies) will your project be working in? Please note that in case of a non-permanent resident population you need to demonstrate a clear, meaningful, long-term link to the territory.

☑ Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia (on Cyprus)

*** if you have indicated a territory group with an asterisk, please give detail on which territories you are working on here:**

No Response

In addition to the UKOT(s) you have indicated, will your project directly benefit any other UK OT(s) or country(ies)?

⦿ Yes

Please list these below and describe how they will benefit:

The Mesophos project is directed to Cyprus UKOTs but its activities include appropriate strategies for the wider region. The outcomes of Mesophos will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of marine ecosystems, support conservation efforts, and inform sustainable management practices in distant regions including other UKOTs. Similarly, the methodologies used to explore the mesophotic zone will be evaluated and shared, and collaborative efforts with the UKOTs and Cyprus government (indicated by their Letter of Support) can lead to the extended use of the management recommendations and monitoring protocols, fostering conservation and the establishment of a wider marine ecological monitoring network.

Section 3 - Project Partners

Q4. Project partners (Guidance section 3.2)

In this section, please give details of all the partners involved (including the Lead Partner) and provide a summary of their roles.

Project Leader name (Guidance section 3.1):	Dr Periklis Kleitou
Lead Partner name (if applying as an organisation; Guidance section 3.1):	Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab
Lead Partner Website (if applicable):	www.merresearch.com
Is the Lead Partner based in a UKOT where the project is working (Guidance section 3.1)?	⦿ No
Please explain why this project is led from outside the UKOT:	MER’s headquarters are located approximately 10 km from the Akrotiri UKOT and has established a longstanding collaboration with the Sovereign Base Areas Administration (SBAA), undertaking various projects in the study area. MER's projects in Akrotiri and Dhekelia include mapping habitats shallower than 50 m, 3D cave mapping, assessing biodiversity and habitat status, monitoring protected species, and proposing management measures (refer to the Supplementary Material 1 for more details). MER's and BMF's enduring commitment to UKOTs is evident in our ongoing efforts to establish a co-participatory Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Akrotiri, in collaboration with authorities, aiming to safeguard fishery resources.
List other partners involved and where are they based:	The project will be implemented in collaboration with BMF, a UK-based charity dedicated to restoring ocean health by addressing overfishing. Furthermore, the Sovereign Base Areas Administration of Cyprus UK Overseas Territories, along with the national authority of Cyprus for the marine environment (Department of Fisheries and Marine Research - DFMR), have acknowledged the value of Mesophos for area management and have pledged their support and interest for its implementation.

Summary of roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project:	MER will coordinate the project and be responsible for the research design and associated field work for the monitoring of the mesophotic zone using a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), data processing, surveys with local fishers and project reporting. MER will provide the equipment and facilities for the execution of the field campaigns and samples analyses including vessels, personnel, ROV, laboratory and stereoscopes/microscopes. BMF will aid in public outreach of the project and sharing its results to an international community. If potentially important areas are identified, BMF and MER will work towards securing future research and long-term monitoring and management of those sites. This will be done by ensuring that the output of the project could be structured for future research and long-term monitoring of those sites (especially as part of our MPA efforts). BMF will extend the Mesophos impact to various UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), taking responsibility for transferring acquired knowledge to benefit other regions. SBAA and DFMR will provide all the permits necessary for the implementation of the project, mainly in accessing the designated sites. DFMR will provide existing data such as bathymetric maps and fisheries data which can be useful for a scientifically robust design of the sampling strategy. All four entities will use the data to integrate them into management and protection measures through the ongoing MPA initiative in Akrotiri, particularly aiming for the protection of identified sensitive species from mobile fishing gears such as trawling.
I confirm that all listed partners are aware of this application and have indicated support:	Checked

Attach a Cover Letter for your application (Guidance section 4.2).

Cover Letter_Mesophos
29/11/2023
15:52:24
pdf 575.72 KB

Section 4 - Project Summary & Description

Q5. Project Summary (Guidance section 3.8)

Please provide a brief summary of your project. This may be used in communication activities and/or published online, if your application is successful.

Mesophos aims to explore the uncharted depths of Cyprus UK Overseas Territories' (UKOTs) mesophotic zone. Our mission is to unveil the unexplored biodiversity, habitats, and ecological importance of the mesophotic zone, typically found between depths of 50-200 meters. By utilizing existing data and local knowledge, we will design ROV surveys to confirm the presence and assess the condition of mesophotic habitats. Through scientific

discovery, Mesophos will foster effective management strategies to protect the mesophotic ecosystems of Cyprus UKOTs and beyond.

Q6a. Description (Guidance section 2.1 and 6)

Please provide a description of your project, including:

- **the overall objective**
- **the current situation and the problem the project is trying to address**
- **what success will look like and how you will measure it**

Please be as specific as possible when describing the project, using quantified data and evidence where available. You may wish to consider: what are the specific threats to the environment that the project will attempt to address, and what should we know about these threats? What does your successful project look like? And how will you demonstrate whether and how your project has been successful?

The Mediterranean Sea faces a plethora of anthropogenic threats such as climate change, ocean acidification, invasive species, overfishing, and habitat destruction (Coll et al. 2010). To effectively address these challenges, management plans must be established and informed by a comprehensive understanding of ecosystem dynamics and species interactions (de la Mare, 2005). Currently, the Akrotiri UKOT is under consultation for the establishment of a marine protected area and fishery restriction zones. However, the mesophotic zones of both Cyprus UKOTs remain one of the least studied areas, and their conservation status is unidentified. Mesophotic zones can host important mosaics of assemblages composed of corals, sponges, bryozoans, crinoids, and ascidians, contributing to environmental resilience and ecosystem functioning (Castellan et al. 2022).
Fishers (personal communication, October 2023) and models (Martin et al. 2014) have indicated the presence of protected species like sponges, and maerl beds across the Cyprus UKOTs but no ground-truthing has confirmed these high probabilities to guide management actions. The primary threat to mesophotic ecosystems, potentially present in Cyprus UKOTs, comes from bottom trawling. Bottom trawling can lead to the mortality of benthic species and sediment resuspension, resulting in the smothering of sensitive habitats and long-term scarring. Fishing remains a major factor modifying marine ecosystems, impacting species diversity, total biomass, and habitat quality (Pusceddu et al. 2014). In the north-western Mediterranean Sea, trawled areas show substantial reductions in organic matter content, slower organic carbon turnover, and diminished biodiversity compared to untrawled areas (Pusceddu et al. 2014).
Mesophos aims to address these significant knowledge gaps and characterise mesophotic habitats in depths between 50 and 200 m at the Cyprus UKOTs. The objective is to develop a roadmap for the exploration and distribution of mesophotic habitats in Cyprus UKOTs, identify and assess potentially sensitive areas, and facilitate the uptake of management measures, especially regarding bottom trawling. Local ecological knowledge (>15 fishers), published literature, and available bathymetric data will be used to establish 32 stations at different depths in the two UKOTs. An ROV will be utilized for non-destructive, fine-scale surveys of macroscopic abundance, habitat diversity and distribution. ROV imaging will facilitate the collection of quantitative data, enabling identification of broad-scale patterns, and ecological assessments. In parallel, ROV samples will facilitate accurate species laboratory identification. Habitat presence and distribution data are essential for formulating effective environmental management plans, especially in mitigating anthropogenic disturbances. Therefore, Mesophos, through the identification of key mesophotic habitats, will create an evidence, science-based management framework for the two UKOTs. The outcomes of the project will be detailed in a final report, which will encompass ecological assessments of the mesophotic areas, spatial illustrations of priority sites, protocols, and methodological monitoring guidelines, as well as management recommendations for the protection and preservation of priority sites.
The first and primary measure of success for the project will be the number of sampling areas we have studied and assessed, following the analysis of data, local ecological knowledge, and relevant publications. An important impact indicator will be the number of identified priority sites that will host sensitive and protected habitats/species.

Secondly, our project's success will be showcased by the number of recommended conservation measures that the SBAA will consider adopting after consultation with them.
Thirdly, our project's success will be indicated by the willingness of the UKOTs and the Republic of Cyprus to follow our proposed methodology and protocols to explore the Mesophotic zone of the island beyond the UKOTs or for a long-term basis.
Finally, a notable outcome of the project will be the development of local capacity through expertise, methodologies, and protocols sharing and training of OT researchers/managers (>5 individuals) and local researchers (>5).

Q6b. Long-term sustainability (Guidance section 2.1 and 6)

Please describe the long-term benefits of the project and the change it will bring about. How will the outcomes of the project be sustained after the funding is finished?

The Mesophos aligns with many long-term goals for 2050 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), catalysing transformative action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and guide the implementation of policies, goals, targets, and strategies.
The primary objective of Mesophos is to supply data, protocols and transfer knowledge and expertise, as part of our exit strategy, for well-informed policy-making and marine management. For instance, Mesophos' results will contribute to an ongoing project that aims to develop an MPA model for Akrotiri for the management of fishery resources. The instituted protection will enable reduced fishery pressure, enhancing ecosystem resilience, and ensuring the sustained success of conservation outcomes beyond the project's funding period.
Additionally, the produced management measures, protocols, and expertise will establish a robust baseline and capacity for future benthic mesophotic monitoring both in UKOTs and Cyprus, addressing the human impacts such as climate change, fisheries, and invasive species. Involving fishers through surveys will raise awareness, endorsing participatory management approaches with enduring benefits. The identification of protected species and habitats will generate interest and attract funding for educational initiatives, scientific monitoring, and long-term data collection. MER and BMF are committed to advancing this process ensuring the long-term characterization of the areas.

(Optional) Please upload any additional and supporting materials or files (such as maps of project sites, etc) below. Maximum of 5 sides of A4, and is combined as a single PDF:

Mesophos Supplementary Material
29/11/2023
15:50:56
pdf 1.74 MB

Section 5 - Project Outcome(s)

Q7. Project Outcome(s) (Guidance section 1.2)

Successful Darwin Plus Local projects must demonstrate measurable outcomes in at least one of the themes of Darwin Plus with a clear focus on biodiversity and the natural environment, either by the end of the project or soon after through a credible plan.

Please confirm that your project has a clear focus on biodiversity and the natural environment.

Checked	**Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;**
Checked	**Climate change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;**
Checked	**Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment**
Checked	**Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.**

Please justify your selection. Please use quantitative information where possible here.

Biodiversity: The project aims to detect, assess, and protect biodiversity rich mesophotic habitats, including cnidarians, sponges, bryozoans, crinoids, brachiopods, ascidians, and maerl beds.
Climate: Mesophotic habitats are important for climate change mitigation, e.g., carbon sinks and sequestration, climate regulation.
Environmental quality: Identification of mesophotic habitats will aid their quality protection and restoration.
Capacity: Data will support the SBAA and DFMR for policymaking and management. In addition, >5 OTs managers/researchers will be trained on the project protocols and ROV, >20 fishers will be engaged through surveys, and >10,000 of the public will be informed through social media, increasing their environmental awareness.

Section 6 - Workplan

Q8. Workplan (Guidance section 2.2)

Please provide anticipated dates for the start and end of your planned project here. Please use the Darwin Plus Local Project Workplan (available at: Darwin Plus website) to provide a list of the individual activities you have planned for this project, a brief description of what each activity entails, and the months in which the activities will be carried out. If the project involves only one activity (e.g. a purchase), please still provide project start and end dates (noting estimated times for procurement). Please note that your project must start after 1 April 2024 and be completed by 31 March 2025.

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 3 months):
01 April 2024	30 March 2025	12 months

Please upload the completed Darwin Plus Local Project Workplan with your proposed project activities here

Mesophos Work Plan
29/11/2023
13:03:13
pdf 138.08 KB

Section 7 - Costs

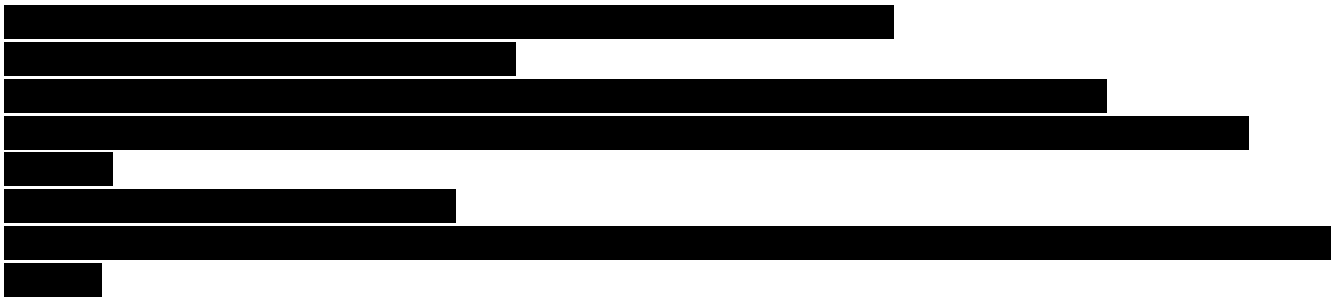
Q9. Costs (Guidance section 2.2 and please read the Finance Guidance)

Please provide a breakdown of costs to be funded through Darwin Plus Local (in GBP).

Are you seeking any matched funding for this project?

⦿ Yes

How much matched funding are you seeking and where from?



Budget line	Explanation	Cost in GBP
Staff costs:	Staff costs of MER's personnel involved in the project.	[redacted]
Consultancy costs:	N/A	£0.00
Overhead costs:	Calculated as 10% of the MER's staff costs only without considering other costs that are part of in-kind contribution.	[redacted]
Travel & subsistence costs:	N/A	£0.00
Operating costs:	N/A	£0.00
Capital equipment:	N/A	£0.00
Other Costs	N/A	£0.00
Total:		[redacted]

This section provides more information on the budget to help evaluators understand how you will use the funds you are requesting. You do not need to list all costs, but please list and detail costs of more than £1,000 per item below, under the appropriate budget line.

Details of staff costs over £1,000 (if relevant)

[redacted]

Details of overhead costs over £1,000 (if relevant):

[redacted], calculated as 10% of the MER's staff costs only without considering other costs that are part of in-kind contribution.

Details of travel and subsistence costs over £1,000 (if relevant):

No Response

Details of operating costs over £1,000 (if relevant):

No Response

Details of capital equipment costs over £1,000 (if relevant):

No Response

Details of consultancy costs over £1,000 (if relevant):

No Response

Details of other costs over £1,000 (if relevant)

No Response

If your project budget was prepared in another currency and converted to GBP, please provide the exchange rate, its source, and the date it was accessed:

Other currency:	Exchange rate:	Source of this exchange rate:	Date exchange rate accessed:
No Response	*No Response*	*No Response*	*No Response*

Darwin Plus Local has been created to build capacity and contribute to local economies in-territory.

What % of the total will be spent in the OTs?	50

If less than 80% of the total project spend is to be spent within the OT(s), please explain why.

Estimating the budget accurately is challenging due to the unique characteristics of Cyprus UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and their connection with the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. MER's headquarters are situated in Limassol, approximately 10 km away from Akrotiri, but a significant portion of the funding will be allocated to areas controlled by the UKOTs. Apart from staff costs, expenses such as accommodation, car and

boat fuel, and organizing workshops will be incurred in the UKOTs. Some personnel are based in the UKOT areas, so it is anticipated that they will utilize their budget there. The remaining staff budget is expected to be spent by employees in their respective areas of residence.

Section 8 - Local and National Priorities

Q10. Local and national priorities

Please explain how this project aligns with local and national priorities? You may wish to consider the project in the context of national environmental laws, objectives, strategies, territory specific agreements, action plans or policies.

The SBAA strategy involves consolidating all relevant marine environment data in UKOTs and prioritizing future actions to comply with environmental laws and agreements, ensuring the favourable status of ecosystems under the Barcelona Convention.
Recognizing a major knowledge gap in mesophotic areas, the project aims to identify crucial sites, guide fishery restrictions, and inform the reform of new and existing Management Plans.
For the first time, a mesophotic ecosystem baseline will be formed, providing essential data for future monitoring and science-based management.
The project will contribute to national, regional, and international legislation, including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Descriptors D1, D6, and D10), reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (Council of the European Union, 1992), and the guidelines of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (UNEP-MAP, 2008) of the Barcelona Convention. It also covers many of the 23 action-oriented global targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20, and 21.
Through an endorsement letter (attached), both the DFMR and SBAA acknowledged the importance and potential contribution of the Mesophos project towards their strategic goals for preservation of the marine ecosystems.

Will the project take place on Government owned land or water or involve biocontrol, invasive alien species control or eradication?

⦿ Yes

Please attach evidence that you have Government support for this project i.e. a Letter of Support. Applications which indicate that they do not take place on Government land or water, but which propose work that appears to the reviewers would be difficult/impossible to carry out without working on government land or waters may be ineligible if no Letter of Support is provided.

SBAA_DPlus_Local_MER
29/11/2023
16:00:00
pdf 186.9 KB

DFMR_DPlus_Local_MER
29/11/2023
15:59:52
pdf 1.06 MB

Section 9 - Project Risks

Q11. Project Risks

Please demonstrate your consideration of any risks involved in this project and how you intend to manage them. Please note the importance of health and safety and environmental risk assessment in the design of your project. If there is any possibility that your project may have negative impacts on the environment or human health, it is important that you provide a comprehensive analysis of potential environmental and human health risks, and the prevention measures you will take to ensure the work does not cause harm.

Depending on your project, you may wish to consider:

- **Biosecurity risks – particularly for projects involving external equipment.**
- **Safeguarding risks – particularly for projects involving vulnerable groups such as children, older people or people with disabilities.**

Risk	Mitigation
Severe weather conditions for field work	Field work will be conducted only if weather conditions are deemed suitable. There will be flexibility in the timescale and field work dates will be transferred if weather conditions are deemed dangerous.
Loss or damage of equipment	Regular maintenance of the equipment. In case of any damage or loss, the equipment will be rapidly replaced by a back-up one.
Researcher injury during field activities	Our team members are appropriately trained, skilled experienced in conducting such field research, risk assessments are in place for all activities and risk analysis will be carried out prior each mission. In case of any injuries appropriate actions will be taken according to a response plan. Staff are also trained to provide first aid assistance, while hospitals are within less than half an hour's drive from the proposed sites.

Do you require more fields?

⦿ Yes

Risk	Mitigation
Data sharing/collaboration and data infringement	All documents and outputs will be securely stored in a cloud-based system requiring password access, ensuring safe and protected access while promoting transparency and collaboration among partners.
Military exercises or other activities in the area	We will be in communication with the SBAA about any military activities in the area to avoid overlapping activities, all activities will be conducted after their permit.

Personal data from Local Ecological Knowledge surveys	Interviewees will be asked for permission and consent before any information is provided. Surveys, data storage and processing will adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation. Data collected will be securely stored in a cloud-based system, requiring password access for added security.
Impact or damage to vulnerable habitats in study areas.	The ROV will descent slowly to the study site and with reference to the ground to avoid direct impact. Practise with ROV fine control will be carried out at reference areas with soft sediment to train operators. ROV grab samples will only be carried out when deemed necessary, and only for identification purposes. Permission to do so will be granted by the DFMR and SBAA.
No Response	*No Response*

Section 10 - Terms & Conditions

Q12. Terms and conditions (Guidance section 3.10)

By applying for Darwin Plus Local you are adhering in full to the grant Terms and Conditions in full (available at: Darwin Plus website **and as referenced in the Guidance at section 3.10). For information, the Terms and Conditions include requirements for all applicants to (amongst other requirements as per the full Terms and Conditions):**

- **Uphold a zero tolerance for inaction approach to tackling sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.**
- **Where appropriate, make all reasonable and adequate efforts to address gender inequality and other power imbalances.**
- **Notify all cases of fraud and theft (whether proven or suspected) relating to the project to the Grant Administrator as soon as they identified.**

Please indicate you have read, and understood, and will adhere to the Terms and Conditions.

Checked

Supporting documents list (please have these ready to attach with application)

- **Cover Letter of no more than two A4 pages. (Guidance section: 4.2 has information on what this cover letter should include).**
- **If the project takes place on public land or water or is addressing invasive alien species, a Letter of support from OT Government.**
- **Project Workplan in the template provided for Darwin Plus Local (available at:** Darwin Plus website**).**
- **Map and additional information (optional) maximum five additional pages.**

If your application is successful

If your project application is successful, the Fund Administrator (NIRAS) will ask you to provide some financial evidence for due diligence checks before you receive your project grant. (Please see section 3.3 of the Darwin Plus Local Finance Guidance). Please be ready to provide this evidence promptly.

- **Financial evidence for organisations: Year-end financial statements, the latest management accounts or audited accounts (if you have these).**

- **Financial evidence for individuals**: Proof of identity such as a passport, ID card or driving licence and solvency (such as bank statements) and a police check.

Section 11 - Certification

Certification

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the statements made in this application are true and the information provided is correct.

Checked

I have the authority to submit an application on behalf of my organisation.

Checked

Name:	Periklis Kleitou
Position in the organisation: (if applicable)	Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab
Signature (please upload e-signature)	thumbnail_p kleitou signature 29/11/2023 16:02:18 jpg 8.81 KB
Date:	29 November 2023

Section 12 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance **documents, including the "Darwin Plus Local Guidance" and the "Darwin Plus Local Finance Guidance".**	Checked
If my proposed project takes place on public lands or water or is addressing alien invasive species, I have uploaded a Letter of Support from Government.	Checked
I have uploaded a cover letter that details the information requested in the guidance (Guidance section 4.2 has information on what this cover letter should include).	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions **for this fund.**	Checked
I have provided actual start and end dates **for my project that fit this Round.**	Checked
I have provided my summary budget based on UK government financial years **i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP in the application form.**	Checked

I have uploaded my project workplan using the specific template **provided.**	Checked
I have uploaded all supplementary documents if I have any.	Checked
(If copying and pasting into Flexi-Grant) I have checked that all my responses have been successfully copied into the online application form.	Checked
The application has been signed by a suitably authorised individual **(clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).**	Checked
I have checked the Darwin Plus website **immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.**	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Plus website**.**	Checked

We would like to keep in touch!

Please check this box if you would be happy for the lead applicant (Flexi-Grant Account Holder) and project leader (if different) to be added to our mailing list. Through our mailing list we share updates on upcoming and current application rounds under Darwin Plus. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share project news. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

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 Darwin Plus including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	No. of months	UK Financial Year 2024/25											
			Calendar Year 2024									Calendar Year 2025		
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1	Coordination and management of the project													
2	Local ecological knowledge (LEK) surveys with >15 fishers, >3 scientists, and >3 managers of the area													
3	Compilation of data (LEK, bathymetry) and development of the research design and protocol for the field surveys													
4	Field surveys using an ROV at 32 stations to cover the zones 50 – 200 m (16 stations at Akrotiri and 16 stations at Dhekelia)													
5	Assessment of the environmental status of the mesophotic stations using multiparametric indices													
6	A final report with the project results, including a monitoring protocol for the mesophotic depths in UKOTs, and management recommendations													
7	Dissemination & Communication: A project profile on partners' websites by M2, at least monthly posts on partners' social media, in-house presentation of ROV and protocols to OTs managers/researchers (M11), and a presentation of results in a final conference/workshop (M12)													