Applicant: **Gittins, Caroline** Organisation: **British Indian Ocean Territory Adm<u>inistration</u>**

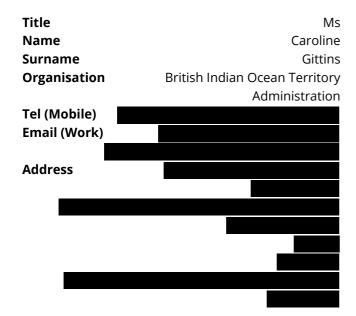
Funding Sought Funding Awarded: £0.00

DPLR3\1062

Coconut Chaos to Native Woodland: terrestrial restoration on Diego Garcia

The project aspires to better understand Diego Garcia's options for restoring terrestrial ecosystems where coconut monoculture has taken over. Feasibility sites will trial two methodologies for both assisted and full afforestation. Trial sites will be located in coconut dominated forest with hardwood understorey and a biodiversity focused nursery will be established. Measurable outcomes will be regrowth rates, tree diversity amongst other observations. Additionally, the project aims to connect people with nature by establishing a recreational trail in native woodland.

CONTACT DETAILS



DPLR3\1062

Coconut Chaos to Native Woodland: terrestrial restoration on Diego Garcia

Section 1 - Project Title & Contact Details

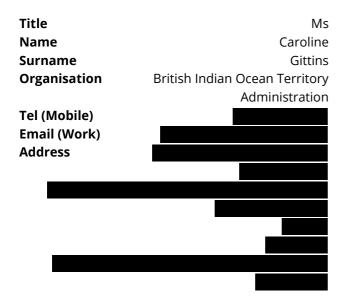
Q1. Project Title

Coconut Chaos to Native Woodland: terrestrial restoration on Diego Garcia

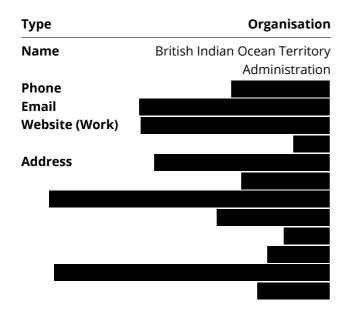
Q2. Please select whether you are applying as an organisation or as an individual (Guidance section 3 and Guidance Glossary)

Organisation

CONTACT DETAILS



GMS ORGANISATION



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.

☑ British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)

* 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)?

No

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):

Lead Partner name (if applying as an organisation; Guidance section 3.1):

British Indian Ocean Territory

Lead Partner Website (if applicable):	https://www.biot.gov.io/environment/
Is the Lead Partner based in a UKOT where the project is working (Guidance section 3.1)?	⊙ Yes
List other partners involved and where are they based:	N/A
Summary of roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project:	N/A
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).

- A R3 DPlus Local Cover Letter Coconut Chaos to

 Native Woodland terrestrial restoration on Dieg

 o Garcia
- O 11:27:34
- pdf 82.92 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.

The project aspires to better understand Diego Garcia's options for restoring terrestrial ecosystems where coconut monoculture has taken over. Feasibility sites will trial two methodologies for both assisted and full afforestation. Trial sites will be located in coconut dominated forest with hardwood understorey and a biodiversity focused nursery will be established. Measurable outcomes will be regrowth rates, tree diversity amongst other observations. Additionally, the project aims to connect people with nature by establishing a recreational trail in native woodland.

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?

This project aspires to restore terrestrial ecosystems where coconut monoculture has taken over.

The island's vegetation is a complex matrix of abandoned coconut plantations including areas where native plant species prevail. The term Coconut Chaos represents the monospecific, abandoned coconut plantations which have low biodiversity value and support few native species.

The project aligns with the Darwin objectives for improving biodiversity by reversing biodiversity loss and degradation. To achieve this, feasibility sites will trial two methodologies for both assisted and full afforestation. As stated in the British Indian Ocean Territory Ecosystem Action Plan (EAP) for Native Woodland 2021, native woodland covers 11.53 km2 of the terrestrial landmass in the archipelago, of which 9.6 km2 is found on Diego Garcia. As such the project will be conducted on Diego Garcia. Trial sites will be located in coconut dominated forest with hardwood understorey. Building on existing knowledge of the mapped vegetation in Diego Garcia will reduce the requirement for scoping suitable sites which helps ensure project remains time effective.

To determine the most effective methodology to suit the island, a comparison study of two methods will be conducted. For Assisted Afforestation, a 1ha2 plot will be clearfell of Coconut with a return period of 6 months to remove all sprouting coconut. For Full Restoration, a 1ha2 plot will clearfell Coconuts, remove the sprouting coconuts and additional planting of native saplings and reseeding in the under storey. To facilitate the later, the project will establish a bespoke plant nursery to achieve biodiversity outcomes.

Measurable outcomes will be to monitor the growth rates of saplings, record tree species diversity, quantify the weight of removed coconut green waste and to take observational data to measure other changes to biodiversity such as insect and crab abundance.

Another Darwin Plus object the project meets is regarding capability and capacity building. The proposal of the biodiversity focused nursery will enhance the capacity within oversea's territory by providing a bespoke space to use as a seed bank and regrow native saplings. To reduce costs, it is proposed the nursery is built from upcycled materials already on island and to re-use marine litter items from beach cleans as plant pots. Upskilling the Environment team will increase capability, this will be achieved by training them to use to pre-existing Chainsaw's which are not currently being used due to lack of resources allocated to woodland management. Additional training will be helpful regarding the operation of VH Radios as there's no mobile coverage on the Eastern arm of the island should there be reason to communicate it will need to be over radio. Furthermore, the project aims to connect people with nature by establishing a recreational trail in native woodland. The trail will lead personel along a path via impressive examples of large native trees which are interspersed with sites of heritage value. By including community engagement and awareness, BIOTA aspires to instil value for the native woodland in the personel on island and encouraging them to volunteer. The project outcomes will contribute to embedding good environmental decision-making in policies and processes. The British Indian Ocean Territory Ecosystem Action Plan (EAP) for Native Woodland 2021 states that restoration or rehabilitation of damaged or degraded habitat is an environmental goal within the management plan for the Chagos Archipelago. It is acknowledged that island ecological rehabilitation through converting former coconut plantation to native woodlands is a top priority for the BIOT Administration. By conducting a study into natural regeneration and assisted afforestation, the project will be meeting criteria of management plans.

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?

We acknowledge we cannot convert coconut chaos into native woodland within one year, therefore we propose the project findings inform a Reforestation Guidance document for use in perpetuity. The establishment of the plant nursery will facilitate ongoing reforestation being situated close to sites earmarked for reforestation. Additionally, to keep the native woodland at the forefront of peoples minds, we anticipate the recreational trail will instil environmental value into the island personnel and inspire them to volunteer to in future reforestation opportunities.

(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:

No Response

Section 5 - Project Outcome(s)

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

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

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

Checked	Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;
Unchecked	Climate change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;
Unchecked	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.

Measurable outcomes for enhancing biodiversity and reversing biodiversity loss will be to:

- monitor the growth rates of saplings,
- record tree species diversity,
- quantify the weight of removed coconut green waste using the weigh bridge in the solid waste disposal centre
- quantify the amount of compost the green waste can produce in the nursery
- take observational data to measure other changes to biodiversity such as insect and crab abundance.
- logging the quantity of seeds and saplings used within the trial site

Section 6 - Workplan

Q8. Workplan (Guidance section 2.2)

<u>Please provide anticipated dates for the start and end of your planned project here.</u> Please use the <u>Darwin Plus Local Project Workplan</u> (available at: <u>Darwin Plus website</u>) 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). <u>Please note that your project must start after 1 April 2024 and be completed by 31 March 2025.</u>

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 3 months):
01 April 2024	31 March 2025	12

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

- A R3-DPlus-Local-Workplan Coconut Chaos to Native Woodland terrestrial restoration on Diego Garcia
- ① 11:30:32
- pdf 188.35 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?

Funding provided by the British Indian Ocean Territory Administration:

- Staffing costs approx.
- Travel to and from the island approx.
- Accommodation while on island Navy Gateway Inns & Suites, Queen Standard room per night (across one year)
- Subsistence food costs while on island per diem
- Use of office WiFi monthly charge
- Staff travel insurance policy unknown

Staff costs: Match funding covered by BIOTA £0.00	

Consultancy costs:	N/A	£0.00
Overhead costs:	Match funding covered by BIOTA	£0.00
Travel & subsistence costs:	Match funding covered by BIOTA	£0.00
	Fuel consumption: Toyota Hilux,	
	A round trip to project site will be approximately 36 miles x 3 per week.	
On a wat in a santa.	Equals approx. per week. for the year	
Operating costs:		
	Currency converter: https://www.oanda.com/currency-	
	converter/en/	
Capital equipment:	Currency converter: https://www.oanda.com/currency-	
	converter/en/	
	Custom aluminium outdoor sign boards 1 v 2m including posts	
	Custom aluminium outdoor sign boards 1 x 2m, including posts:	
	Chain saw handling training x3 = VFH Radio training =	
	Online course is (including a free copy of the RYA VHF	
	Handbook, shown opposite, worth	
Othor Costs	Microllangouci	
Other Costs	Miscellaneous: Mosquito spray =	
	Suncream =	
	Refreshments for volunteers =	
	T-shirts to be made for volunteers = Headroom for vehicle hire to transport the Green Waste to be	
	removed from site =	
Total:		

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)

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

The equipment required will be for conducting fieldwork and to train project staff on how to use Chainsaw's safely. Additional costs for information panels will be essential for the recreational trail.

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

The additional costs will be for providing refreshments and drinks for volunteers, to provide bespoke volunteer incentives such as project t-shirts which can be made on island, items for working on site such as mosquito repellent and suncream. Additionally, hire of larger trucks which aren't currently quoted for.

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:
US Dollars	0.7926	https://www.oanda.com/currency- converter/en/? from=USD&to=GBP&amount=1	28 November 2023

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?

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

The project has been designed with cost saving in mind. The BIOT Administration have match funded expensive operational costs and we are utilising pre-purchased equipment to save on costs and shipping time. Safety PPE and tools are already in vast supply on the island, as such our out of territory spending will not detract from the benefit the project will bring to the territory. The off island training will directly enable us to make use of what's already on island.

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 British Indian Ocean Territory Ecosystem Action Plan (EAP) for Native Woodland 2021 states that restoration or rehabilitation of damaged or degraded habitat is an environmental goal within the management plan for the Chagos Archipelago. It is acknowledged that island ecological rehabilitation through converting former coconut plantation to native woodlands is a top priority for the BIOT Administration. By conducting a study into natural regeneration and assisted afforestation, the project will be meeting criteria of management plans.

The Strict Nature Reserve Regulations 1998 and Conservation (Restricted Area) Ordinance 1994 prohibits entry to all environmentally sensitive areas, including most of the remaining native woodland. Under these Regulations, it is an offence for anyone to enter any of the Reserves, or to carry out activities there, without the written permission of the BIOT Administration. Whilst we endorse the regulations, we acknowledge personel on island appreciate their time exploring nature, we aim to facilitate this outside of a designated area. We aspire to build capacity and awareness of the unique habitat by laying a recreational trail through undesignated woodland. This aim of the project will instil the value of nature whilst remaining aligned with legislation.

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.

- <u>BIOTA Letter of Support Assisted Forest Restor</u> ation
- © 08:25:15
- pdf 130.74 KB

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
Biosecurity: Introduction of invasive species through recreational use of trail	New military personnel on island receive an Indoctrination presentation which contains an Environment section. This will be a suitable platform to raise awareness of keeping kit clean to avoid transporting non native plant matter and seeds into reserves. Additionally, pre- existing material regarding biosecurity can be amended to include Biosecure Conduct on the trail.
Biosecurity: Grazing pressure from invasive species Should the afforestation measures increase the under canopy biodiversity, it might provide further food source for Rattus rattus. Presence of this species might cause an impact pathway to the afforestation project by exerting grazing pressure on the early success saplings.	If the impacts of grazing can be evidenced, remedial action will be taken in the form of pest control.
Safeguarding: Use of handling forestry equipment	Training will be provided for basic handling of chainsaws. Additionally, at all times it is required that 4 personal are chainsaw trained on island. By training the Environment Team the project will be funding best practise and ensuring our ongoing safety. Additionally, we will always be on site with those 4 personel.

Do you require more fields?

Yes

Risk	Mitigation
Safeguarding: PPE	The BIOT Administration already has PPE for using Chainsaw and scrub clearance. However, there's a distinct lack of female work PPE. Suitably fitted PPE will be provided for comfort and safety on site. It is acknowledged that the weather conditions in Diego Garcia are hot and humid and wearing PPE might cause overheating when on site. Lots of refreshments and short periods of work will be factored into safe ways of working
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: <u>Darwin Plus website</u> 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 m	ıy knowledge and beli	ef, the statements	made in this appl	ication are true	and e
the informat	ion provided is c	orrect.				

Checked

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

Checked

Name: Caroline Gittins

Position in the organisation: (if applicable)	Environment Officer				
Signature (please upload e- signature)	 ♣ signature transparent ★ 29/11/2023 ◆ 08:31:20 ♠ png 30.39 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.	Unchecked
(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 <u>Forms and Guidance Portal</u>.

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).

Project Title: Coconut Chaos to Native Woodland – terrestrial restoration on Diego Garcia

Darwin Plus Local

Provide a **Workplan** that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the following table as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project. Round 3 is for a **maximum of 12 months** with activities starting from 1 April 2024. All activities must be completed by 31 March 2025.

Please add/remove columns to reflect the length of your project. For each activity (add/remove rows as appropriate) indicate the number of months it will last, and shade only the months in which an activity will be carried out. The workplan can span multiple pages if necessary.

		No. of					UK Fi	inancial Y	ear 202	4/25				
Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	months		Calendar Year 2024 Calendar Year 2025						2025				
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	Preparing: Informal meetings with island stakeholders to introduce the project and plan	>1												
	Preparing: Sourcing equipment and PPE factoring in shipping times to island	1-2												
	Preparing: Identify a suitable location for the Biodiversity nursery which is unaffected by the Spring tides, collect the compost from Green Waste	1-2												
	Preparing: Attending Monthly Beach Cleans to gather suitable items to used as planters in Biodiversity Nursery e.g Fishing Buoys and crates	>12												
	Preparing: Visit Solid Waste Disposal Centre to acquire suitable material for building the nursery. Using free workshop build nursery and start planting.	>3												
	Preparing: Design methodology and data collection sheets for measurable outcomes	>2												

Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	No. of	UK Financial Year 2024/25													
		months		Calendar Year 2024										Calendar Year 2025		
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
	Capacity Building: Chainsaw Handling and VH Radio training, subject to staff availability to attend the UK whilst ensuring an Environment office remains in territory	1-4														
	Fieldwork: Identify the trial sites and mark with GPS way points	>2														
	Field work: Once staff trained - Clear-fell Coconuts in both trial sites and 6 month review period to remove Coconut sprouts	>3														
	Field work: Reseed the Full Reforestation trial site and introduce young saplings from the nursery	>3														
	Monitoring: Collect observational data for measurable outcomes	>5														
	Data Analysis including feasibility assessment for long term data collection and management options	>2														
	Field work: Mark out the Recreational Trail and lay palm path. When Equipment arrives install the Reflective path marks	>6														
	Capacity building: design information panels, get them produced and shipped to the island and installed	<12														
	Capacity Building: Trial facilitating guided walks to promote the site and running volunteer sessions in nursery	>6														
	Final Reporting	<1														

	Description (max 25 words)	No. of	UK Financial Year 2024/25												
Activity #		months	Calendar Year 2024										Calendar Year 2025		
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
														 	
														-	
														 	
														 	
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