

# **DPLR4\1062**

## **The Road to Recovery: removing historical pollution from Nature Reserves**

A number of vehicles were placed around remote areas of Ascension Island prior to the Falklands War and used as target practice by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). These vehicles remain in-situ in an area which was later designated as a Nature Reserve to protect Sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) which nest here in internationally important numbers. This project aims to remove this legacy litter which is polluting the Nature Reserve and endangering protected seabirds and plants.

# DPLR4\1062

The Road to Recovery: removing historical pollution from Nature Reserves

## Section 1 - Project Title & Contact Details

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### Q1. Project Title

The Road to Recovery: removing historical pollution from Nature Reserves

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

Organisation

#### PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

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Title	Dr
Name	Tiffany
Surname	Simpson
Tel (Work)	[REDACTED]
Email (Work)	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]

#### GMS ORGANISATION

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Type	Organisation
Name	Ascension Island Government Conservation and Fisheries Directorate
Phone (Work)	[REDACTED]
Email (Work)	[REDACTED]
Website (Work)	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]

## Section 2 - Overseas Territory(ies)

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**Q3. Please state whether the same (or similar) project proposal has previously been submitted to the UK Government for funding, including through Darwin Plus Local, Defra's other Darwin Plus grant schemes or other UK Government funding mechanisms. Failure to do so may result in the application being ineligible.**

No

#### **Q4. 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.**

St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha\*

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

Ascension Island

**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**

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#### **Q5. Project partners (Guidance section 3.2)**

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

**Project Leader name (Guidance section 3.1):** Tiffany Simpson

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**Lead Organisation name (if applying as an organisation; Guidance section 3.1):** AIG Conservation

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**Lead Organisation Website (if applicable):** [www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation](http://www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation)

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**Is the Lead Organisation based in a UKOT where the project is working (Guidance section 3.1)?**  Yes

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**List other partners involved and where are they based:** None

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Summary of roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project: n/a

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I confirm that all listed partners are aware of this application and have indicated support: Checked

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

-  [20240624 AIG Letter of support - Darwin Local R 4 - The Road to Recovery - removing historical pollution from Nature Reserves](#)
-  24/06/2024
-  11:24:39
-  pdf 154.13 KB

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## Section 4 - Project Summary & Description

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### Q6. 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.**

A number of vehicles were placed around remote areas of Ascension Island prior to the Falklands War and used as target practice by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). These vehicles remain in-situ in an area which was later designated as a Nature Reserve to protect Sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) which nest here in internationally important numbers. This project aims to remove this legacy litter which is polluting the Nature Reserve and endangering protected seabirds and plants.

### Q7a. 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 objective of this project is to remove Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) in the Mars Bay Nature Reserve which were installed here as target practise for the Falklands War by the MoD. The Nature Reserve was designated in 2003 to protect sooty terns which nest here in internationally important numbers (~194,000 pairs, RSPB 2006); the critically endangered Ascension Spurge plant (*Euphorbia organoides*) and anchialine pools which are home to miniature shrimps found no-where else on earth ([www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation/projects](http://www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation/projects)).

The legacy HGVs have been in location for over 40 years, rusting in place and polluting the local area with plastics, toxic battery acids and other damaging chemicals. Heavy rains in recent years have washed smaller engine pieces around the reserve and into the path of sooty terns with chicks found perished in engine springs. In addition, the Ascension Spurge plant grows nearby with the seedbank expanding closer and closer to the vehicles.

The Ascension Island Government (AIG) Conservation Directorate have been working to conserve the biologically important species found on the reserve. One area of management identified removing the legacy litter on the reserve and to control the resulting pollution. Staff have removed what they can by hand however the vehicles remain somewhat intact so will remain in-situ unless considerable effort is made to remove them. Until they are removed, small pieces of metal will continue to wash through the reserve into the path of nesting seabirds and toxic chemicals will continue to seep into the ground, polluting the Nature Reserve and the surrounding Ascension spurge seed-bank.

The AIG Conservation Directorate have worked with island stakeholders to remove this legacy litter. In May 2024, five smaller vehicles were removed by the United States Space Force as a donation in kind towards the conservation works on Ascension Island. This work involved creating a temporary road to the vehicles to allow their removal. These vehicles were situated in an area close to an existing road so access was relatively straightforward.

A further eight larger HGV's remain within the Nature Reserve, however accessing these will require substantial more work as they are situated in an uneven lava field. The previous works have shown that removing the vehicles is possible however the costings for the remaining work are not currently within the capacity of the AIG Conservation Directorate or the military.

The vehicles were originally installed using helicopters however this would not be a cost-effective or safe manner to remove them. An assessment was made by the AIG Director of Operations and a crane and other heavy vehicles will be required to remove the legacy vehicles. This project would facilitate the construction of a new temporary road to access the legacy vehicles and the operating costs for necessary plant equipment.

Project success will be measured by the complete removal of this legacy litter and no birds found injured as a result of this legacy refuse. The road will be left as a legacy of this project and may be used for other Nature Reserve management e.g. invasive species removal, rodent control and accessing bird colonies for other research.

Rowlands BW and Sanders S. (2006) Ascension (pp 19-28) in SM Sanders, ed. Important Areas in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. Sandy, UK: RSPB

## Q7b. 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?**


Removal of these legacy vehicles will be a stand-alone project but the benefits to the nesting seabirds and endemic plants would be enormous. Without intervention, the vehicles will continue to rust on-site and the resulting chemicals from decomposition will continue to pollute the Nature Reserve. Once removed by HGVs, the site can be cleaned by hand to remove this pollution. There would be no additional work required once this project is completed.


Sooty tern chicks have been found stuck in engine pieces washed out from these vehicles so a complete removal will ensure the birds are able to successfully fledge from this Protected Area without the threat from man-made


debris. The endemic Ascension spurge will also be able to thrive in this area without the risk from hazardous chemicals.

**(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:**

 [The Road to Recovery supporting materials](#)

 21/06/2024

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 pdf 978.47 KB

## Section 5 - Project Outcome(s)

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### Q8. 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 note: Any proposals including research or monitoring are required to demonstrate a clear link to tangible outcomes for conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment. Please explain how any new research will be applied to drive environmental outcomes on the ground.**

**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;**

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**Please tick which additional theme(s) of Darwin Plus your project contributes to (if relevant):**

Unchecked **Climate change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;**

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Checked **Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment**

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Unchecked **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.**

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

The vehicles are currently rusting in-situ, polluting the Nature Reserve with plastics, battery acid and other toxic chemicals. Smaller engine pieces are washing in the reserve and sooty tern chicks have been recording interacting with these, perishing as they become stuck in engine parts. This project will remove this man-made threat from the Protected Area, improving the condition of the site and creating a safe haven within a Protected

Area for seabirds to successfully fledge their chicks. The critically endangered Ascension Spurge will also be able to thrive here without the threat of chemical pollution.

## Section 6 - Workplan





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### Q9. 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: <https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/>) 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 October 2024 and be completed by 31 March 2025.**

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 3 months):
01 October 2024	31 March 2025	6 months

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

-  [r4-dplus-local-implementation-timetable-template-Road to Recovery](#)
-  21/06/2024
-  18:22:42
-  pdf 120.27 KB

## Section 7 - Costs

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### Q10. 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?**

AIG in-kind matched contribution of staff time:

Director of Conservation: £ [redacted] ([redacted])

Director of Operations: £ [redacted] ([redacted])

Coastal Reserves Manager: £ [redacted]

Budget line	Explanation	Cost in GBP
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<b>Staff costs:</b>	Hire of 7 Specialist HGV operators. 22.5 hours per week x 3 weeks	£ [REDACTED]
<b>Consultancy costs:</b>	AIG contributing staff time from Director of Operations to consult on the project.	£0.00
<b>Overhead costs:</b>	AIG will cover all overhead costs	£0.00
<b>Travel &amp; subsistence costs:</b>	Staff already on island and housed through the Ascension Island Government.	£0.00
<b>Operating costs:</b>	Plant hire for 8 HGV vehicles including fuel costs Equipment already owned by the Ascension Island Government will be utilised for this project.	£ [REDACTED]
<b>Capital equipment:</b>	Plant vehicles and equipment already owned by the Ascension Island Government will be utilised for this project.	£0.00
<b>Other Costs</b>	None identified	£0.00
<b>Total:</b>		34,536.00

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)

Hire of seven specialist Heavy Goods Vehicle Operators from Ascension Island Government  
22.5 hours per week x three weeks.

£ [REDACTED] per hour x 22.5 hrs = £ [REDACTED]

£ [REDACTED] x 7 personnel = [REDACTED]

#### 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):

Operating costs including fuel and plant hire:

4 dumper trucks to transport material to site: £ [REDACTED] x 22.5hrs = [REDACTED] x 4 trucks = £ [REDACTED] x 3 weeks = £ [REDACTED]

2 JCB for loading material to trucks: £ [REDACTED] x 22.5hrs = [REDACTED] x 2 vehicles = [REDACTED] x 3 weeks = [REDACTED]

1 track loader to move material in the area: £ [REDACTED] x 22.5hrs = £ [REDACTED] x 3 weeks = £ [REDACTED]

1 water truck to harden material: £ [REDACTED] x 22.5hrs = £ [REDACTED] x 1 week = £ [REDACTED]

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

n/a

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

n/a



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

n/a

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**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:**

<b>Other currency:</b>	<b>Exchange rate:</b>	<b>Source of this exchange rate:</b>	<b>Date exchange rate accessed:</b>
<i>No Response</i>	<i>No Response</i>	<i>No Response</i>	<i>No Response</i>

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**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?

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

*No Response*

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## **Section 8 - Local and National Priorities**

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### **Q11. 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.**

Ascension Island has published their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan ([www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation/projects](http://www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation/projects)) which provides an overarching vision and blueprint for how Ascension will protect its biodiversity and meet its commitments under international agreements and local strategies. Ascension has a number of Protected Areas in line the UK Government's commitments under the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Target 3 for area-based protection of important biodiversity sites.


The Mars Bay Nature Reserve was identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife in 2006 due to the internationally important population of sooty terns that nest here. The removal of legacy litter was highlighted in the Management Plan for the Wideawakes Fairs Nature Reserves. This project will directly contribute towards the action plan for this Protected Area, providing a safe nesting site for a locally protected seabird and conserving the water-table access by the critically endangered Ascension spurge plant.


**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.**

 [20240624 AIG Letter of support - Darwin Local R  
4 - The Road to Recovery - removing historical po  
llution from Nature Reserves](#)

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## Section 9 - Project Risks

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### Q12. 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
Health risks associated with working with Heavy Goods Vehicles and equipment	Ensure HGV equipment is operated by trained and qualified personnel only. HGVs to undergo regular maintenance and pass local road worthiness testing. Operators to wear appropriate PPE. Risk Assessment created by AIG Safety Officer, agreed and understood by staff. Dynamic risk assessments performed throughout project operations.
Disturbance to nesting seabirds	Work to take place outside of nesting season. Environmental Impact Assessment to be completed before works begin.
Disturbance to Ascension spurge	Work to take place in areas avoiding seedbank and mature plants. Environmental Impact Assessment to be completed before works begin.

**Do you require more fields?**

No

## Section 10 - Terms & Conditions

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### 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: <https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/>).
- 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**

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### **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:** Jolene Sim

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**Position in the organisation: (if applicable)** Acting Director of Conservation

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Signature (please upload e-signature)

 [Jolene Sim signature](#)  
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Date: 24 June 2024

## 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 (found at: <a href="https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/">https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/</a> ) 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 (available at: <a href="https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/">https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/</a> ).	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).

Project Title: Road to Recovery: Removing historical pollution from Nature Reserves

### Darwin Plus Local

Provide a **Project Implementation Timetable** that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the following table as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project. Round 4 is for a **maximum of 6 months** with activities starting from 1 October 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.

Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	No. of months	UK Financial Year 2024/25					
			Calendar Year 2024			Calendar Year 2025		
			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1.	Building the road to the vehicles	22.5 hrs a week for 3 weeks						
2.	Accessing the vehicles and removal by crane/other HGV equipment	1-2 weeks						
3.	Clearing the site by hand to remove smaller pieces of debris	1-2 weeks						
4.	Final evaluation and reporting	1						