

Applicant: **Berna, Kendyl**
Organisation: **Beyond The Reef**
Funding Sought: **£50,000.00**

DPLR5\1016

Beyond The Reef - Ghost Gear Clean Up 2025

Our project objective is to reduce and prevent the damage that is currently happening to the marine ecosystem of the British Virgin Islands as a result of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (also referred to as ALDFG or "ghost gear") that continues to trap and kill marine species and smother coral reefs in an unregulated manner long after the fishing gears intended use.

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

Name	Kendyl
Surname	Berna
Organisation	Beyond The Reef
Website (Work)	[REDACTED]
Tel (Work)	[REDACTED]
Email (Work)	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]

DPLR5\1016

Beyond The Reef - Ghost Gear Clean Up 2025

Section 1 - Project Title & Contact Details

Q1. Project Title

Beyond The Reef - Ghost Gear Clean Up 2025

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

☒ Organisation

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

Name	Kendyl
Surname	Berna
Organisation	Beyond The Reef
Website (Work)	
Tel (Work)	
Email (Work)	
Address	

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	Beyond The Reef
Phone (Work)	
Email (Work)	
Website (Work)	
Address	

Section 2 - Overseas Territory(ies)

Q3. Please state whether the same (or a similar) project proposal has previously been submitted (or you are planning to submit it) to the UK Government for funding. This includes through Darwin Plus Local, Defra's other Darwin Plus grant schemes or other UK Government funding mechanisms. Failure to share this information may result in the application being ineligible (see Guidance section 2.1.1).

☒ Yes

Please provide details including the grant scheme applied for, round number, project and/or application number, whether your submission was successful and in case this is a resubmission, how you have addressed the feedback in your cover letter.

Yes, we were the recipient of a Darwin Local Round 2 grant.

Application #DPLR2\1016

Project Title: Beyond The Reef BVI- Ghost Gear Cleanup

We received a score of "2" from our last project and will be able to be even more efficient this round.

Q4. Overseas Territory (Guidance section 1.3):

Which UK Overseas Territory(ies) will your project be working in?

☒ British Virgin Islands (BVI)

*** 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 here and describe how they will benefit:

Removal of abandoned lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) from BVI waters could have an impact on other UK territories such as neighboring Anguilla in that it is removing this debris from the endless cycle of degradation.

Section 3 - Project Partners

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)

Kendyl Berna

Lead Organisation name: (if applying as an organisation; Guidance section 3.1)	Beyond The Reef
Lead Organisation Website (if applicable):	www.1beyondthereef.com
Is the Lead Organisation based in a UKOT where the project is working? (Guidance section 3.1)	☒ Yes
List other partners involved and where are they based:	Our key partnerships and stakeholders are the people of the British Virgin Islands, it's hard working fisherfolk, our marine tourism sector and the government including the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change. Outside of Beyond The Reef, we will also contract "24/7 Trucking" for garbage disposal services. Each stakeholder will be involved from beginning to end and are based in the British Virgin Islands.
Summary of roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project:	Our primary goal is to maintain healthy reefs and a balanced ecosystem, benefiting both people and marine life. We aim to inspire renewed enthusiasm for conservation within our territory. In terms of specific responsibilities, Beyond The Reef will handle the boat, fuel, coordination, commercial scuba divers, and the collection of ALDFG (ropes, pots, nets, and other debris) from neighboring islands back to Tortola for proper disposal. We will then partner with 24/7 Trucking to transport the collected debris from the dock at Village Cay Marina on Tortola—where Beyond The Reef is based—to the island's incinerator or recycling facility, if feasible. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will receive detailed data on the amount of debris collected, ensuring our project is conducted with government support. Fisherfolk will act as our eyes on the water, reporting large ropes or nets found in coral reefs and on beaches, as well as identifying areas among our 60 islands with the most abandoned fishing gear needing removal. By fostering collaboration among all stakeholders, we will raise awareness about the damaging effects of “ghost gear” on the environment and the fish stocks that local fishermen rely on, furthering education and understanding of this critical issue.
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).

Section 4 - Project Summary & Description

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.

Our project objective is to reduce and prevent the damage that is currently happening to the marine ecosystem of the British Virgin Islands as a result of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (also referred to as ALDFG or "ghost gear") that continues to trap and kill marine species and smother coral reefs in an unregulated manner long after the fishing gears intended use.

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?

Abandoned fishing gear is a significant global issue, characterized by its unregulated nature, severe impact on marine life, and long lifespan, which can transport it thousands of miles from its original location. This gear contributes to the smothering of delicate coral reefs, entangles large marine species such as sharks, whales, dolphins, and turtles, and breaks down into microplastics which is then ingested by smaller creatures like fish and seabirds.

While most discarded fishing gear and plastics found on our reefs and coastlines originate from outside our territory, we also face the challenge of thousands of local fish pots that abandoned after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. These "ghost pots" perpetuate a cycle of trapping and killing fish, which, in turn, attract and ensnare even more marine life.

Our primary objective is to identify, assess, and address all ghost gear that continues to harm the marine ecosystem in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). The island's coral reefs are already threatened by Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease, making the smothering of fragile corals by ghost gear a particularly urgent issue.

We will initiate our efforts by using a boat towed camera to survey various locations and collaborating with the government and local fishermen who may have identified areas with abandoned pots, ropes, and nets. Ghost gear found will be either completely removed using salvage equipment and commercial divers or modified to ensure they no longer pose a risk, allowing safe passage for marine species. Alongside gear removal, we will focus on strengthening collaborations among fishermen, government agencies, and other marine stakeholders.

Our quantitative goals include surveying 15 proposed areas across the BVI and removing all hazardous materials found there. We anticipate collecting approximately 1,000 pounds of gear per cleanup day, with around 50% of

that being fishing-related debris. With 15 cleanup days planned, this could result in the removal of 15,000 pounds of debris from the ocean and coastline. After each event, we will categorize the collected debris into "fishing gear" and "other", recording the volumes for each category. These anticipated quantities are based off our previous clean ups.

We simultaneously aim to improve and strengthen collaborations among all marine stakeholders in the territory. These partnerships will help educate stakeholders about the legal and illegal boundaries for fish pots and establish an official reporting system for hazardous marine debris moving forward.

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?

This project will again be a win-win for conservationists and fisherfolk alike both in the short and long term in that it will eliminate a substantial portion of the unnecessary "ghost killing" of marine species which is harmful to both the marine environment as well as to fishermen. By removing 15,000 lbs of debris from the ocean and coastline it will have a direct immediate and long-term effect in preventing additional damage to wildlife in the form of trapping, entanglement and digestion as well as the smothering of our fragile surrounding coral reefs.

It will additionally bring enhanced awareness to this cause within our territory and help us to further establish our organization as a go-to resource for reporting particularly large lost and abandoned fishing gear as well as traps, nets and the general areas that are in particular need of cleaning.

We will take detailed reporting notes and collect scientific data on the amounts and items that we are removing. This will be useful data for both our own government and community as well as the entire Caribbean and marine science industry for understanding types and quantities of ALDFG that circulates our waters.

(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:

 [Darwin 2025 Cleanup Locations Map](#)

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Section 5 - Project Outcome(s)

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;**

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

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.

We aim to conserve BIODIVERSITY and boost fish biomass by breaking the cycle of “ghost gear,” particularly the “ghost pots” that unregulatedly attract and trap fish.

Corals are already suffering from CLIMATE CHANGE, and the damage caused by ALDFG exacerbates this issue.

Overall, this initiative will enhance the British Virgin Island’s ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY .

Additionally, the project emphasizes CAPACITY BUILDING by engaging the government, fisherfolk, and the broader community in reporting efforts. We will share updates on our cleanup events through community boards to keep everyone informed.

Section 6 - Workplan

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/how-to-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 April 2025 and be completed by 31 March 2026.**

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 3 months):
01 June 2025	01 December 2025	6 months

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

 [Darwain Local 2025 Workplan](#)

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Section 7 - Costs

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? (Please note that this is optional and there is no requirement to seek matched funding for Darwin Plus Local projects).

☒ No

Budget line	Explanation	Cost in GBP
Staff costs:		
Consultancy costs:	0	£0.00
Overhead costs:	0	£0.00
Travel & subsistence costs:		
Operating costs:		
Capital equipment:	0	£0.00
Other Costs		
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)

We will have 1 Captain and 4 crew/commercial scuba divers per boat during our cleanings. We will also pay our Marine Biologist to help process data and create reports for both Darwin Local and the BVI Government.

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

No Response

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

We will be departing to and from the island of Tortola each day and going to neighbouring islands within the BVI. The islands range from 6 to 26 miles away from our base, so we are taking an average of what we believe the fuel might be to and from each cleanup day.

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

In addition to the cost of the boat and its equipment (inclusive of all scuba equipment and tanks), we will also be outsourcing the disposal to 24/7 Trucking which will cost us [REDACTED] We will also require at least one staff member to be available to unload the boat and load into the trash bins. We also are currently recycling and storing all recyclable ghost nets at our warehouse that we hope to ship to a plant that can recycle them, but will not include this in costs.

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

Miscellanies items such as gloves, rope cutters, hacksaw blades, biodegradable trash bags etc: [REDACTED]

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	25 October 2024

Darwin Plus Local has been created to build capacity and contribute to local economies in-territory (Guidance section 2.1.1 and section 1.8.4 of the Finance Guidance).

In-territory spend is defined in Darwin Plus Local as including funding spent on:

- Equipment purchased in-territory;
- Equipment that cannot be acquired in-territory and is therefore purchased abroad, but will remain and be used in-territory beyond the life of the proposed Darwin Plus Local project;
- Training or skills that cannot be acquired in-territory and are therefore purchased abroad, but will be used in-territory beyond the life of the proposed Darwin Plus Local project;
- Time for consultants or staff based in-territory.

In-territory spend does not include:

- Time for consultants or staff who are based abroad, even if they travel to the OT to undertake the work;
- Shipping and import costs for equipment purchased abroad;
- Travel and subsistence costs where they incur spend outside the OT.

What % of the total will be spent in-territory? 100

If less than 80% of the total project spend is to be spent in-territory, please explain why.

No Response

Section 8 - Local and National Priorities

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.

As a UK Overseas Territory, the British Virgin Islands play a significant role in the UK's ecosystem biomass and biodiversity. In recent years, the BVI has focused on enhancing its "blue economy," primarily through tourism, especially eco-tourism in the marine sector, which includes scuba diving and sailing vacations. Therefore, maintaining clean coastlines and pristine reefs is crucial for the territory. Preserving its natural beauty is essential for both environmental integrity and tourism appeal, ensuring the viability of the BVI's environmentally friendly economy.

Additionally, we hope this project will spark ongoing discussions with the community and government about establishing a registration system for fish pots. This would allow lost or abandoned pots to be reported and retrieved, facilitating their return to their rightful owners.

Will the project...

Take place on Government owned land or water?

☒ Yes

Involve biocontrol, invasive alien species control or eradication?

☒ No

Require permit(s) from Government departments for completion of activities?

☒ Yes

If you have answered yes to any of the questions above, 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.

Section 9 - Project Risks

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.
For example, you should consider the ratio of vulnerable people or children to adults, ensuring there are appropriate background checks of all staff, and informing vulnerable groups and children of their right to safety and protection.

Risk	Mitigation
Rough weather during surveys or cleanup days.	The daily monitoring of weather forecast.
	Named storms within 50 miles of territory will result in us stopping all operations.
	An additional one month allocated to complete all clean up days that were postponed due to weather.
	If weather deteriorates during the day, operations will be postponed until calmer.

Diver safety including: 1- Diver separation 2- Diver entanglement 3- Puncture wounds 4- Diver running out of air 5- Diver decompression illness	Mandatory pre dive safety checks and pre dive briefing. Standby divers available on board.
	Regular servicing and maintenance of equipment.
	Each diver has adequate safety equipment which includes a knife and gloves.
	Sea, weather conditions and tide will be assessed each day before work is carried out.
	All divers are to follow the safe diving practices code of conduct.
Vessel engine failure	Oxygen & First Aid kits will be readily available on board our boats.
	Mandatory regular servicing and maintenance Pre and post engine checks.
	Ensure vessel is refueled when it reaches no less than a 1/3 tank.

Do you require more fields?

☒ Yes

Risk	Mitigation
Damage to boat towed camera	Qualified and experienced personnel only to work on the project.
	Check Navigational charts and ensure in shallow areas the tow fish depth is adjusted.
	Daily briefings to ensure all personnel know their roles.
No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response

Section 10 - Terms & Conditions

Q13. 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: <https://darwinplus.org.uk/how-to-apply/local-applications/> 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, is addressing invasive alien species or includes activities requiring a permit, a Letter of support from OT Government.
- Project Workplan in the template provided for Darwin Plus Local (available at: <https://darwinplus.org.uk/how-to-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

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: Kendyl Berna

Position in the organisation:
(if applicable) Founder

Signature (please upload e-signature)

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Date: 26 October 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: https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/) 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: https://darwinplus.org.uk/apply/local-applications/).	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).