

DPR9S2\1026

From Pseudoscorpions to crickets: securing Ascensions Island's unique invertebrates

This project will provide the first strategically-planned survey of Ascension's endemic and native terrestrial invertebrates, filling a major knowledge gap for the island's globally-threatened biodiversity. The data generated for endemic species will be embedded into the National Biodiversity Action Plan and implemented by AICFD. High-risk invasive non-native invertebrates will be identified, and training plus support materials established to allow targeted monitoring and control. Engagement resources and activities will raise the profile of Ascension's endemic invertebrates.

Section 1 - Contact Details

CONTACT DETAILS

Name Diane
Surname Baum
Website ascension-island.gov.ac
Tel (Work) [REDACTED]
Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Other
Name	Ascension Island Government
Phone (Work)	[REDACTED]
Email (Work)	[REDACTED]
Website	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Section 2 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q3a. Project title

From Pseudoscorpions to crickets: securing Ascensions Island's unique invertebrates

Q3b. What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DPR9S1\10008

DPR9S1\1050

Q4. UKOT(s)

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

St Helena (ODA eligible), Ascension and Tristan da Cunha* (ODA eligible)

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

Ascension

Q4b. In addition to the UKOTs you have indicated, will your project directly benefit any other Territories or country(ies)?

Yes

Please list below.

We will work with the St Helena National Trust to share knowledge and expertise across the islands. Initially Ascension will benefit from St Helena's more developed invertebrate conservation programme, but by the end of the project we expect there to be a two-way exchange of knowledge.

Q5. Project dates

Start date:

01 July 2021

End date:

30 June 2024

Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):

3 years

Q6. Budget summary

Year:	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total request
Darwin funding request (Apr - Mar)	£58,655.00	£70,059.00	£40,381.00	£13,751.00	£ 182,846.00

Q6a. Do you have proposed matched funding arrangements?

Yes

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

AIG – staff time, overheads, accommodation for project officer and visiting partners
CEH – overheads and sampling equipment provided in-kind

Q6b. Proposed matched funding as % of total project cost (total cost is the Darwin request plus other funding required to run the project).

Section 3 - Project Summary and Conventions

Q7. Summary of Project

Please provide a brief summary of your project, its aims, and the key activities you plan to undertake.

Please note that if you are successful, this working may be used by Defra in communications e.g. as a short description of the project on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Please write this summary for a non-technical audience.

This project will provide the first strategically-planned survey of Ascension's endemic and native terrestrial invertebrates, filling a major knowledge gap for the island's globally-threatened biodiversity. The data generated for endemic species will be embedded into the National Biodiversity Action Plan and implemented by AICFD. High-risk invasive non-native invertebrates will be identified, and training plus support materials established to allow targeted monitoring and control. Engagement resources and activities will raise the profile of Ascension's endemic invertebrates.

Q8. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Please detail how your project will contribute to the aims of the agreement(s) your project is targeting. What key OT Government priorities and themes will it address? You should refer to Articles or Programmes of Work here. You should also consider local, territory specific agreements and action plans here.

This project will support AIG to meet its obligations under Article 7 (Identification and Monitoring) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by filling a major gap in knowledge about endemic and native invertebrate species on the island and providing the necessary information to identify appropriate management tools to protect them. Red listing of endemic invertebrates will ensure this information is shared internationally.

Article 8 of the CBD (In-situ Conservation) will be supported through the widening and strengthening of Ascension's protected area management plans, which currently do not contain any measures to conserve endemic invertebrates.

The public engagement strand of this project will help meet obligations under Article 13 of the CBD (Public Education and Awareness) to educate and involve the Ascension community in efforts to conserve these often neglected taxa and to raise global awareness of Ascension's invertebrate biodiversity.

The UK Government's 25-year plan: A Greener Future states the objective of no species extinctions in the UK Overseas Territories. This project will support that objective by providing the essential information needed to underpin protection for terrestrial invertebrates. Invertebrates contain the highest level of endemism on Ascension, but have received relatively little conservation effort and so are a priority for species extinction prevention.

This project will address acknowledged deficiencies in the Ascension NBAP by providing the information necessary to add endemic terrestrial invertebrates either as dedicated Species Action Plans or features of existing protected areas.

AIG have recently introduced the Ascension Biosecurity Strategy. A key aim of the strategy is to use the most effective and sustainable means of controlling non-native species already present on the island. By providing expert identification on invertebrate species found on the island, this project will help to deliver this aim by enabling the prioritisation of the highest risk species and the identification of more effective species-specific control measures.

Section 4 - Lead Organisation Summary

Q9. Lead organisation summary

Has your organisation been awarded a Darwin Initiative award before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

Yes

If yes, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
DPLUS113	Dr Diane Baum	Climate Resilience and Conservation of Ascension Biodiversity
DPLUS096	Dr Diane Baum	Building Ascension's Biosecurity Capacity
DPLUS063	Dr Sam Weber	The Ascension Island Ocean Sanctuary
DPLUS047	Mike Haworth	Reduce, reuse, recycle – developing a waste management strategy for
DPLUS046	Dr Sam Weber	Tracking marine megafauna at Ascension Island
DPLUS021	Dr Nicola Weber	Ascension Island Marine Sustainability

Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts? If you select "yes" you will be able to upload these. Note that this is not required from Government Agencies.

No

If no, please provide details.

Lead partner is an OT Government agency so not required

Section 5 - Project Partners

Q10. Project Partners

Please list all the partners involved (including the Lead Organisation) and explain their roles and responsibilities in the project. Describe the extent of their involvement at all stages, including project development.

This section should illustrate the capacity of partners to be involved in the project. Please provide Letters of Support for the Lead Organisation and each partner or explain why this has not been included.

N.B: There is a file upload button at the bottom of this page for the upload of a cover letter (if applicable) and all letters of support.

Lead Organisation name: Ascension Island Government

Website address: www.ascension.gov.ac

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): AIGCFD has responsibility for protecting biodiversity on Ascension and employs a total of 16 conservation staff based on the island to implement the National Biodiversity Action Plan and associated strategies.

AIGCFD identified the need for this project and have led its development. They will provide overall project management and reporting, oversee invertebrate sampling and incorporate management plans into the NBAP. Implementing the management plans will be undertaken by AIGCFD as a legacy of this project. Control actions for high priority non-native species will be undertaken by AIGCFD as part of its Biosecurity Strategy. AIGCFD will lead on delivering the public engagement strand of the project through the delivery of public presentations, school events and the creation of a project video.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

Have you provided a cover letter to address your Stage 1 feedback? Yes

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

Yes

1. Partner Name: IUCN Mid Atlantic Island Invertebrate Specialist Group (MAIISG)

Website address: www.maiisg.com

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The IUCN's Mid Atlantic Island Invertebrate Specialist Group (MAISG) has over 40 international members that are experienced invertebrate specialists; and has links to the wider IUCN network, including the IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group and the IUCN Invertebrate Conservation Committee and the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group.

MAISG has significantly contributed to project development, including shaping the Logical Framework and methodology.

Throughout the lifespan of the project MAISG will provide specialist advice and support, including participating in the steering group. They will provide experience and international contacts on best practice methods on both invertebrate conservation and invertebrate identification. As well as, advising on processes and techniques for invertebrate sampling and identification, plus conservation planning for species. Also, providing staff coaching to improve skills and capacity on invertebrate conservation and project management.

Vicky Wilkins (MAISG co-chair) is embedded as a technical advisor, she will increase project capacity, support delivery and strengthen international action. She is currently working on the St Helena invasive invertebrate control project DPLUS104 and so can provide a link. MAISG will work through the Species Recovery Trust, the UK host organisation for MAISG. International expert time on planning, invasive species and identification will be provided as in-kind.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

Do you have more than one partner involved in the Project?

Yes

2. Partner Name: UK Centre for Hydrology and Ecology (UKCEH)

Website address: www.ceh.ac.uk

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology is an independent, not-for-profit research institute, carrying out excellent environmental science across water, land and air. UKCEH science underpins environmental policies, commercial innovation and conservation action all around the world.

As the UK's primary ecological and hydrological research institution UKCEH has breadth of expertise to draw on to deliver the project. UKCEH will contribute technical expertise as a member of the PSG and be responsible for co-ordination of all scientific aspects of the project. This will build on previous work in collaboration with AIGCFD, Dr Gray has been involved in work on Ascension for the past 22 years, including invertebrates, endemic plants and invasive species.

Dr Gray will work closely with Howard Mendel (NHM) who has worked with Dr Gray on Ascension since 2003 to deliver an invertebrate sampling and training programme. UKCEH has also successfully collaborated on previous project with SNHT, and VW on St Helena and is collaborating on a current Darwin project with SH Government.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

3. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): *No Response*

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes
 No

4. Partner Name: St Helena National Trust (SHNT)

Website address: www.trust.org.sh

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

SHNT have developed considerable expertise in terrestrial invertebrate cataloguing and management through previous Darwin-funded projects on St Helena. Through DPLUS104 they have recently begun trialing methods for the control of damaging non-native species including big-headed ants, which are also a high priority for control on Ascension. The opportunity to learn from St Helena's experience and take advantage of the many similarities in natural habitats and invertebrate fauna between the islands make SHNT a natural partner for this project.

SHNT will provide training in survey and sample processing techniques and advise on the production of species management plans and engagement resources. The results of their big-headed ant control trials will become available during the course of this project and allow SHNT to share knowledge on the most effective methods and how to deliver them.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

5. Partner Name:

No Response

Website address:

No Response

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

No Response

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes
 No

6. Partner Name:

No Response

Website address:

No Response

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

No Response

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes
 No

If you require more space to enter details regarding Partners involved in the Project, please use the text field below.

No Response

Please provide a cover letter responding to feedback received at Stage 1 if applicable and a combined PDF of all Letters of Support.

[Darwin R9 stage Invertebrates Letters of support](#)
01/02/2021
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pdf 746.57 KB

[Darwin Plus 9 - Invertebrates -Letter responding to Stage 1 feedback](#)
01/02/2021
15:17:23
pdf 596.5 KB

Section 6 - Project Staff

Q11. Project Staff

Please identify the core staff on this project, their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project. Further information on who should be classified as core staff can be found in the guidance.

Please provide 1 page CVs for these staff, or a 1 page job description or Terms of Reference for roles yet to be filled. These should match the names and roles in the budget spreadsheet. If your team is larger than 12 people please review if they are core staff, or whether you can merge roles (e.g. 'admin and finance support') below, but provide a full table based on this template in the PDF of CVs you provide.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Diane Baum	Project Leader	5	Checked
Vicky Knight	Project Co-Leader	10	Checked
Jonathan Holt	Survey Co-ordinator	20	Checked
To be recruited	Project Officer	100	Checked

Do you require more fields?


Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Vicky Wilkins	Project Advisor	15	Checked


Alan Gray	Project Advisor	8	Checked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked
No Response	No Response	0	Unchecked


Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the Project staff listed above as a combined PDF.

Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

 Darwin R9 Invertebrates - CVs

 01/02/2021

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 pdf 1.16 MB

Have you attached all Project staff CVs?

Yes

Section 7 - Background & Methodology

Q12. Problems the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of environment and climate issues in the UKOTs.

For example, what are the specific threats to the environment that the project will attempt to address? Why are they relevant, for whom? How did you identify these problems? How will your proposed project help?

Please cite the evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem (references can be listed in your additional attached PDF document which can be uploaded at the bottom of the page).

Ascension has a unique assemblage of species with high levels of endemism (Ashmoles 1997, 2000). There are approximately 21 endemic terrestrial invertebrate species (Churchyard et al. 2014), including the world's largest pseudoscorpion *Garypus titanius*. Invertebrate knowledge is incomplete but 595 species have been recorded (including marine), of which 113 are non-natives, and this is over 50% of Ascension's known native flora and fauna of 1059 species (Churchyard et al. 2014)). However, a comprehensive survey of Ascension's invertebrates is lacking, and invertebrate biodiversity is significantly underestimated. Without data, it is impossible to conserve endemic species and they are currently neglected in the island's NBAP (only one

SAP) and were not considered in the protected area network design. Ascension's ecology is changing rapidly because of aggressive non-native plants and there is a risk that many endemic invertebrates will be lost before they are discovered.

Invasive invertebrate species also pose a serious threat to Ascension's endemics. Without the ability to identify high-risk invertebrates, it is impossible to mount the targeted response called for in the new Ascension Biosecurity Strategy. For example, the big-headed ant (*Pheidole megacephala*) is a ferocious predator (Wetterer et al 2007), which could significantly impact native invertebrates, plants and ground-nesting birds. However, a targeted response has not yet been attempted because of knowledge gaps.

Based on previous experience, it is impossible for AIGCFD to retain a broad range of invertebrate identification skills long-term. Therefore, this project will build capacity by collating data, filling knowledge gaps and enabling the prioritisation of the most threatened endemics and most damaging invasives. The result will be the development of conservation and biosecurity control plans and activities that are focused on these priorities and can be implemented by non-specialists on Ascension.

Q13. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and Impact. Provide information on:

- How you have analysed historical and existing initiatives and are building on or taking work already done into account in project design. Please cite evidence where appropriate.
- The rationale for carrying out this work and a justification of your proposed methodology.
- How you will undertake the work (materials and methods).
- How you will manage the work (role and responsibilities, project management tools etc.)

Please make sure you read the [Guidance Notes](#) before answering this question.

(This may be a repeat from Stage 1 but you may update or refine as necessary)

Based on past experience, creating broad invertebrate identification capacity within AIGCFD is not realistic. This project will instead provide materials for on-island identification of the most threatened endemic and high risk invasive invertebrates and produce management and control plans to be used by non-specialists in existing roles.

Previous efforts to survey Ascension's invertebrate fauna have been limited in duration and scope and often focused on particular taxonomic groups. This project will build on that base, collating existing data and taking a strategic sampling approach that fills gaps and extends knowledge.

DPLUS038's habitat distribution map will be used to plan the sampling strategy and identify habitat use.

DPLUS021's Ascension Biodiversity Catalogue (ABC) will be used to collate invertebrate data.

This project will help to implement the Ascension Biosecurity Strategy DPLUS096, by improved invertebrate surveillance and control measures.

The results of DPLUS104's trials of big-headed ant (*Pheidole megacephala*) control methods will be used to recommend control methods on Ascension.

Roles and Responsibilities

The AIGCFD Project lead will oversee all workstreams and take responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, reporting and budgeting. UKCEH, SHNT, MAISG and NHM, will support the project through training, advice and conservation planning. A project officer will be employed on Ascension to deliver most project activities.

Project Activities

Collation of existing data

The project officer will identify existing invertebrate data, for example 2015 UKOTs stocktake, and collate them in ABC standardised format.

Invertebrate sample collection

UKCEH and SHNT will advise on a sampling strategy (malaise trapping, pitfalls and sweep netting together with site selection criteria) that addresses knowledge gaps. The project officer, assisted by AIGCFD, will undertake sampling.

Specimen Identification

Specimens of species caught will be sorted by the project officer (pretrained by UK experts) and identified to species level where possible. Where necessary, samples will be sent to experts from SHNT, NHM or MAISG for identification.

Invertebrate database and reference material

New sampling records will be added to the ABC by the project officer, together with GIS distribution data and an abundance index and made available internationally via SAERI. DNA samples will be stored for each species allowing future primer development and molecular identification.

Endemic and beneficial species management plans

Species Action Plans for endemic invertebrates will be developed under the NBAP framework with planning expertise from MAISG, and SHNT. Invertebrate needs will be fully integrated into conservation planning, with actions embedded into protected area management plans and invertebrates beneficial to endemic plants incorporated into species plans. MAISG will facilitate IUCN Red Listing for at least ten endemics.

Targeted biosecurity surveillance and control

UKCEH will support the development of identification guides for the 19 high-risk invasive invertebrates and control plans for three high risk invasives. Techniques developed on St Helena to control big-headed ants, will be trialled and monitored on Ascension.

Engagement

Drawing on the experience of SHNT and MAISG to design school events and create a booklet describing Ascension's endemic invertebrates. A video showcasing the most charismatic endemics will be distributed online to reach a global audience.

If necessary, please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams, and references etc., as a PDF using the File Upload below.

 [Darwin R9 stage 2 Invertebrates References](#)

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Section 8 - Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

Q14. Project Stakeholders

Who are the stakeholders for this project and how have they been consulted (include local or host government support/engagement where relevant)? Briefly describe what support they will provide and how the project will engage with them.

The main stakeholders for this project are the Nature Reserve Managers and Biosecurity Team within AIGCFD who will use the information and resources produced. These teams have been heavily involved in the development of the plan to ensure the outputs are tailored to their needs and can be embedded in existing plans and strategies for sustainable benefits beyond the lifetime of the project. The need they identified for external expertise in invertebrate species identification and conservation planning is reflected in the design of this project. The emphasis on creating outputs that can be used by non-specialists was the result of discussions about the realistic future capacity of AIGCFD.

Other invertebrate specialists have been involved with the development and content of the project. The experience of how St Helena has catalogued its native invertebrate fauna and incorporated this into conservation planning has been extremely valuable. The SHNT and external experts who worked on the St Helena projects have shaped this proposal and become project partners for Ascension bringing insight into the most efficient way to undertake sample identification and the importance of public engagement.

The local community on Ascension will become important stakeholders in this project as we seek to raise awareness about invertebrate conservation and encourage people to become actively involved in protecting threatened species. This proposal has been discussed with the elected Council and Administrator on Ascension to ensure there is strong support amongst policy makers.

Q15. Institutional Capacity

Describe the lead organisation's capacity (and that of partner organisations where relevant) to deliver the project.

AIGCFD is the government body responsible for developing local biodiversity policy and delivering commitments under domestic legislation and multinational agreements. It is based on Ascension and employs 16 members of staff with expertise in marine and terrestrial biology who carry out almost all conservation activity undertaken on the island. Over the past five years it has successfully completed externally-funded projects with a value in excess of £1million.

MAISG has over 40 international invertebrate expert members, and MAISG have been involved in Ascension's invertebrate conservation for the last six years. MAISG is part of the IUCN Species Survival Committee and can access a wide range of specialist advice from the IUCN network.

UKCEH has for over 50 years led global efforts to understand and manage the human impact on the environment. Over a third of our research projects are delivered with international partners. UKCEH science incorporates the entire range of terrestrial biodiversity. UKCEH also has a connection to the pioneering ecological survey work on Ascension (Duffey 1964) and has for over 20 years delivered ecological research in the South Atlantic making it ideally placed to deliver this current project.

The SHNT have played a leading role in designing and implementing invertebrate conservation programmes on St Helena. They have a team of staff dedicated to invertebrates, who have specialist

knowledge of South Atlantic species. SHNT are currently delivering DPLUS104, but have additional capacity to assist with this project and benefit from synergies between them in strands such as training and public outreach.

Q16. Project beneficiaries

Who will your project benefit? You should consider the direct benefits as a result of your project as well as the broader indirect benefits which may come about as a result of your project achieving its Outputs and Outcome. The measurement of any benefits should be included in your project logframe.

This project will benefit Ascension's native and endemic invertebrate species by increasing population size, improving native habitats and species diversity. Data collection will form the foundation to create resources and tools for better conservation and biosecurity planning. A better understanding of endemic species will lead to a more integrated conservation management approach. Currently AIGCFD staff have conservation of native invertebrates as part of their work programme but their skills and capacity are limited. Therefore this project will significantly increase skills and abilities to conserve native and endemic invertebrates, as well as increase effectiveness, and the overall impact of teams.

Established invasive species will be identified. This will allow for timely identification of new invasive species as part of the island's biosecurity controls, reducing pressures on endemic species and habitats, and further improving ecosystem health and resilience. Species-specific control plans for the highest risk species already established on Ascension and the implementation of big-headed ant control within the project duration will benefit residents by protecting and underpinning economic activities such as tourism and recreational activities.

Engagement with residents and visitors will bring greater understanding and appreciation of Ascension's unique invertebrates both on a local and global scale.

Section 9 - Gender and Change Expected

Q17. Gender (optional)

How is your project working to reduce inequality between persons of different gender? At the very least, you should be able to provide reassurance that your proposed work is not increasing inequality. Have you analysed the context in which you are working to see how gender and other aspects of social inclusion might interact with the work you are proposing?

The current make-up of the AIGCFD is 81% female, meaning that if this project went ahead it would provide an example of women leading the delivery of conservation action.

We will make a dedicated effort to ensure events organised through this project are fully inclusive and take place at times and locations that do not present a barrier to particular groups attending. The range of communication methods, timings and activities will be designed to make them available and accessible to all members of the community ensuring no discrimination based on gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Q18. Change expected

Detail the expected changed this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who will benefit a) in short-term (i.e. during the life of the project) and b) in the long-term (after the project has ended). Please describe the changes for the environment and, where relevant, for people in the OTs,

and how they are linked.

Short-term:

The outputs of this project will provide a step change in AIGCFD's ability to safeguard endemic and native invertebrates and control the most damaging invasive species. Ascension's endemic invertebrates will be integrated into conservation management for the first time. This project will provide an immediate understanding of key priorities and rapid implementation of activities to secure Ascension's endemic invertebrate fauna and other conservation features threatened by high risk invasive invertebrates. Enhanced biosecurity measures will improve the lives of local residents by protecting people's health, food security and economy. Conservation professionals on Ascension will gain confidence that the database and plans created through this project will allow best practice in invertebrate conservation and biosecurity. Awareness of Ascension's invertebrate fauna will increase on the island and globally during the lifetime of the project creating interest and stimulating further research.

Long-term:

The invertebrate database will allow AIGCFD staff to make informed and considered conservation and biosecurity assessments in the long-term, benefiting their work programmes. An increased profile from red listing will lead to more funding and research opportunities, underpinning future work and benefiting AIGCFD capacity. In the long-term increased skill and capacity of conservation professionals on Ascension will lead to direct improvements in the quality of habitats and reduction of threats resulting in more secure native invertebrate populations. The conservation planning will embed invertebrates into the NBAP, protected area management plans and Biosecurity Strategy resulting in long-term application of conservation actions for invertebrates across the island and increasing impact and efficiencies in biosecurity. The project will also establish a close bond between AIGCFD and SHNT and a global support network of experts interested in Ascension's invertebrates. Public engagement activities will increase understanding of the importance and uniqueness of Ascension's invertebrate diversity and secure wider support for conservation measures to protect them.

Q19. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change. This should be an overview of the overall project logic and outline how you expect your Outputs to contribute towards you overall Outcome, and, longer term, your expected Impact.

This project will place invertebrates at the heart of conservation management on Ascension through the delivery of the outputs:

Output 1 – Creation of a database of Ascension's invertebrate fauna in the nature reserves and most threatened unprotected areas will enable strategic planning of conservation and biosecurity activities. Such a database is beyond the current capacity of AIGCFD and the external support provided through this project is essential to realise this crucial step.

Output 2 - Long-term conservation of endemic invertebrates will be achieved by incorporating them into the established NBAP framework and AIG land use policy. This will mean invertebrate conservation is integrated into the workplans being delivered by AIGCFD staff and reported on through annual reviews.

Output 3 – This project will provide support to identify the most damaging invasive invertebrate species already present on Ascension and produce tailored control plans for three species. The plan for controlling big-headed ants will be initiated within the project duration. Surveillance monitoring for the 19 highest risk new threats will be enabled by upskilling AIGCFD staff.

Output 4 - Engagement activities will ensure the island community and wider public is aware of its unique

invertebrate fauna and support future conservation efforts.

Q20. Exit strategy

State how the project will reach a stable and sustainable end point, and explain how the outcomes will be sustained, either through a continuation of activities, funding and support from other sources or because the activities will be mainstreamed in to “business as usual”. Where individuals receive advanced training, for example, what will happen should that individual leave?

AIGCFD has led the design of this project meaning the outputs are tailored to the specific needs of conservation practitioners working on Ascension. Ways to incorporate the results and resources produced into existing workplans are already identified. AIGCFD has the remit and capacity to undertake conservation action on Ascension, but currently lacks invertebrate expertise. This project will provide that expertise and allow the protection of endemic invertebrates to be mainstreamed within AIGCFD’s core-funded programme.

Comprehensive invertebrate data will be added into the Ascension Biodiversity Catalogue for continual use by AIGCFD. DNA invertebrate samples will allow primer development, as Ascension is moving towards DNA biodiversity surveys. Connections with SHNT and international experts will allow long-term support on invertebrates.

AIGCFD experiences high staff turnover and retention of very specialist knowledge is difficult. This is acknowledged in the project design. The species identification guides, conservation and control plans will be produced by experts but will be accessible and deliverable by people with a general conservation background.

Raising awareness of invertebrate conservation amongst the community will create support required for long-term action in this area. Community awareness and education materials will be retained on the AIGCFD website and at the school for future use.

Section 10 - Funding and Budget

Q21. Budget





Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet. Note that there are different templates for projects requesting over and under £100,000 from the Darwin Plus budget.

- [R9 D+ Budget form for projects under £100,000](#)
- [R9 D+ Budget form for projects over £100,000](#)

Please refer to the [Finance Guidance for Darwin/IWT](#) for more information.

N.B: Please state all costs by financial year (1 April to 31 March) and in GBP. Darwin Plus cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

Budgets submitted in other currencies will not be accepted. Use current prices – and include anticipated inflation, as appropriate, up to 3% per annum. The Darwin Initiative cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

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-  [darwin-plus-round9-Invertebrates - budget-over-100k \(1\)](#)
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Q22. Funding

Q22a. Is this a new initiative or a development of existing work (funded through any source)?

New initiative

Please provide details:

AIGCFD is the only organisation undertaking conservation work on Ascension and there are no other initiatives or overlapping projects working on terrestrial invertebrates.

Q22b. Are you aware of any other individuals/organisations/projects carrying out or applying for funding for similar work?

No

Q23. Co-financing

Are you proposing co-financing?

Yes

Q23a. Secured

Provide details of all funding successfully levered (and identified in the Budget) towards the costs of the project, including any income from other public bodies, private sponsorship, donations, trusts, fees or trading activity, as well as any your own organisation(s) will be committing.

(See [Finance for Darwin/IWT](#) and [Guidance Notes](#))

Donor organisation	Amount	Currency code	Comments
AIGCFD	██████	GBP	In-kind contribution of staff time, accommodation and vehicle for project officer and sampling equipment

UKCEH	██████████	No Response	In-kind contribution of overheads and sampling equipment
No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	0	No Response	No Response

Q23b. Unsecured

Provide details of any matched funding where an application has been submitted, or that you intend applying for during the course of the project. This could include matched funding from the private sector, charitable organisations or other public sector schemes. This should also include any additional funds required where a donor has not yet been identified.

Date applied for	Donor organisation	Amount	Currency code	Comments
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response

Do you require more fields?

No

Section 11 - Finance

Q24. Financial Controls

Please demonstrate your capacity to manage the level of funds you are requesting. Who is responsible for managing the funds? What experience do they have? What arrangements are in place for auditing expenditure?

Grant payments will be administered through Ascension Island Government's bank account, with project expenditures tracked by the AIG Finance Department. AIG has a fully dedicated financial accounting and management team. The Government currently manages capital and reserves of £██████████. The Finance and Conservation Departments have jointly managed many biodiversity conservation projects, large and small, over the last 10 years, including those funded by RSPB, OTEP, Blue Marine Foundation and the Darwin Initiative. AIG's main accounts are subject to an annual, independent financial audit and a specific audit would be undertaken for this project.

Q25. Financial Management Risk

This question considers the financial risks to the project. Explain how you have considered the risks and threats that may be relevant to the successful financial delivery of this project. This includes risks such as fraud or bribery, but may also include the risk of fluctuating foreign exchange and internal financial processes such as storage of financial data.

Ascension Island Government financial statements are audited annually which involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to Ascension Island Government's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, the auditors read all the financial and non-financial information in the Introduction to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by them in the course of performing the audit.

All externally funded projects are also managed under Ascension Island Government's financial regulations including the contract regulations for procuring, or tendering for works or goods, and the accounting officer is responsible for ensuring these regulations are followed.

Q26. Balance of budget spend

Explain the thinking behind your budget in terms of where funds will be spent. What benefits will the Territory see from your budget? What level of the award to you expect will be spent locally? Please explain the decisions behind any funding that will not be spent locally and how those costs are important for the project.

A large proportion of the budget (████) will be spent on employing a dedicated project officer to provide the short-term additional capacity required to carry out the survey work and prepare conservation and biosecurity planning resources. These activities are central to the success of the project and AIGCFD will need support on Ascension to deliver them.

The other major expenditure (████) is expert assistance (both through partners and consultants) with species identification and plan preparation. This expertise is not available on Ascension and can only be sourced from external organisations. The purpose of the project is to build a definitive catalogue of Ascension's invertebrates and create resources that AIGCFD can have confidence using for many years to come. This requires the use of a range of internationally-recognised experts to create those resources and build capacity.

Q27. Capital Items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin Plus funding, please indicate what you anticipate will happen to the items following project end. If you are requesting more than 10% capital costs, please provide your justification here.

Only █████ of the project budget will be spent on capital items. All items purchased will be retained on Ascension and used by AIGCFD for invertebrate conservation work beyond the end of the project as follows:

- Sampling equipment will be used for endemic species and protected area monitoring as part of AIGCFD core workplans.
- The rugged laptop will be used to record field monitoring data by AIGCFD
- The high RAM desktop will provide the processor power needed to stack images of invertebrates and send composite images for remote identification. This will continue to be required beyond the end of the project to identify new biosecurity interceptions.
- Any specimen containers remaining after the project will be used by AIGCFD to collect future samples for monitoring and biosecurity activities.

Q28. Value for Money

Please describe why you consider your application to be good value for money including justification of why the measures you will adopt will secure value for money.

AIGCFD has used its previous experience of managing projects on the island to ensure that costs are realistic. Staff costs are in line with AIG salaries and having a full-time dedicated project officer who will be trained in the UK and St Helena and based in Ascension offers the most efficient use of budget. Travel costs are unavoidably high given the difficult access to Ascension, but could reduce if the island's runway is repaired during the project.

This project will rely on a wealth of specialist expertise that will be obtained through remote communication tools to allow multiple experts to contribute without the need for expensive international travel. In many cases our project partners will be able to draw on their networks to provide invertebrate expertise at low or no cost representing excellent value for money.

Wherever possible, we will use local capacity available within AIGCFD to carry out field work and learn lessons from the work done through Darwin projects on St Helena to ensure the best use of resources for invertebrate surveying and invasive species control.

Much of the sampling equipment required for the survey work is already present on Ascension or will be provided by project partners. This has reduced new capital expenditure to just ████ of the overall budget.

The project has a significant value-for-money impact, as it will benefit 100s of native and many endemic invertebrate species.

Q29. Outputs of the project and Open Access

All outputs from Darwin Plus projects should be made available on-line and free to users whenever possible. Please outline how you will achieve this and detail any specific costs you are seeking from Darwin Plus to fund this.

AIGCFD already operates an open access data management policy and will ensure that all outputs are made accessible online through the AIGCFD website and publicised through AIGCFD social media. AIGCFD is also part of a SAERI-hosted information network where data from the South Atlantic OTs can be easily discovered and accessed online by external users (<http://www.south-atlantic-research.org/ims-gis>). All data from this project will be documented within this online metadata system. Project partners will provide additional support to widen accessibility and will publish information on their websites when appropriate, for example all invertebrate Red Listing will be published on the main IUCN Red List website.

Section 12 - Safeguarding

Q30. Safeguarding

Projects funded through Darwin Plus must fully protect vulnerable people all of the time, wherever they work. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place. Please confirm the lead organisation has the following policies in place and that these are available on request:

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





Please outline how you will implement your policies in practice and ensure that downstream partners apply the same standards as the lead organisation.





All members of AIGCFD and partner organisation staff working on the project will be required to read AIG's Safeguarding Policy and state they are aware of procedures for raising issues or making a complaint. A clause will be included in all partner agreements requiring them to have their own safeguarding policy, Code of Conduct and register.

Volunteers working on the project will have to sign AIGCFD's Volunteer Agreement that sets out the standards of behavior expected of volunteers and the commitment AIGCFD will provide to support them. It also explains the mechanism through which volunteers can raise any issues confidentially with AIG's HR department or social worker.

Young people will be encouraged to take part in volunteering through this project. This will be primarily done through established youth groups and we will ensure their safeguarding requirements as well as AIG's Child Safeguarding Policy are followed. Advice will be sought from the AIG social worker about whether any additional safeguarding measures are needed for particular volunteer groups or tasks.

Please upload the Lead Organisation's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF

 [Doc 099 Code of Management - July 2014](#)
 01/02/2021
 15:36:20
 pdf 323.94 KB

 [AI Child Protection procedures 2015 final \(June 2015\)](#)
 01/02/2021
 15:36:12
 pdf 220 KB

Section 13 - Logical Framework





Q31. Logical Framework

Darwin Plus projects will be required to monitor (and report against) their progress towards their expected Outputs and Outcome. This section sets out the expected Outputs and Outcome of your project, how you expect to measure progress against these and how we can verify this.

- [Stage 2 Logframe Template](#)

Please complete your full logframe in the separate Word template and upload as a PDF using the file upload below. Copy your Impact, Outcome and Output statements and your activities below - these should be the same as in your uploaded logframe.

Please upload your logframe as a PDF document.

 [Darwin R9 Invertebrates - Logframe](#)
 01/02/2021
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 pdf 156.49 KB

Impact:

To protect and secure the recovery of Ascension Island's unique native and endemic invertebrate fauna through island-wide conservation measures, including enhanced knowledge, capacity and invertebrate biosecurity controls and surveillance.

Outcome:

Data, knowledge, tools and resources facilitating the integration of invertebrates into conservation and biosecurity planning systems; fostering understanding, resulting in improved biodiversity conservation and reduced invasive invertebrate species impacts

Project Outputs

Output 1:

Comprehensive and fully accessible database of invertebrates on Ascension, including all existing records and results of strategic sampling effort

Output 2:

Invertebrates integrated into long-term conservation planning

Output 3:

Targeted biosecurity response for potential and existing 'high risk' invertebrate invasives that would impact Ascension's protected species by introducing a species-specific control assessment and surveillance measures

Output 4:

Information materials and engagement activities raise awareness of Ascension's invertebrate importance and diversity both nationally and internationally

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

It is advised to have less than 6 Outputs since this level of detail can be provided at the Activity level.

No

Activities

Each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.

- 1.1 Training and upskilling of Project Officer in UK and St Helena, by knowledge exchanging with existing UKOT invertebrate specialists
- 1.2 An invertebrate record database template is built with appropriate fields and format, that will allow comprehensive recording as well as integration into wider data systems
- 1.3 Historic invertebrate data records and associated references are collated and integrated into the Ascension Biodiversity Catalogue
- 1.4 Undertake invertebrate surveys on 100 sites, taking samples and recording associated environmental data
- 1.5 Survey samples are processed and identified using initial sorting to groups and family by Project Officer and groups labelled, and sent to external specialists in St Helena National Trust, Natural Museum.
- 1.6 Voucher specimens linked to DNA samples of each species stored on Ascension and sent to BIOSCAN project to establish DNA reference collection for Ascension
- 1.7 Verified species records added to Ascension Biodiversity Catalogue (ABC) and made available via SAERI

- 2.1. Red listing process is undertaken working with MAISG and appropriate IUCN taxon Specialist Groups is used for review, and submitted for publishing
- 2.2 Endemic invertebrate conservation plan written based on background information and consultation with project partners
- 2.3 Invertebrate actions, species and broader actions, are incorporated into protected area management plans and development control guidance
- 2.4 Training in invertebrate conservation is delivered to AIGCFD staff and volunteers by the Project Officer supported by international specialists

- 3.1 Profiles of 19 invertebrate species including best-practice surveillance and control methods will be researched and written using existing invasive species databases and partner input
- 3.2 Training on surveillance and control of 19 high-risk invasive invertebrate species provided to 3 staff in the AIGCFD team
- 3.3 Surveillance methods for high risk invertebrates implemented as part of existing biosecurity monitoring

3.4 Control methods for high risk invasives incorporated into existing AIG biosecurity response protocols
3.5 Control methods for BHA applied in trial sites and complementary monitoring undertaken to understand impact of control

4.1 Create short booklet on Ascension's endemic invertebrates is written and designed and published both as a hard copy and an online version

4.2 Plan and deliver school events run, engaging 65 pupils with Ascension's invertebrates

4.3 Produce a video showcasing Ascension's invertebrates and distribute via AIGCFD website

Section 14 - Implementation Timetable

Q32. Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities

Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the Excel spreadsheet template as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project.


[Implementation Timetable Template](#)

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 fill/shade only the quarters in which an activity will be carried out.

 [darwin-plus-round9-imp-timetable Invertebrat](#)

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Section 15 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q33. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe, referring to the Indicators above, how the progress of the project will be monitored and evaluated, making reference to who is responsible for the project's M&E.

Darwin Initiative projects are expected to be adaptive and you should detail how the monitoring and evaluation will feed into the delivery of the project including its management. M&E is expected to be built into the project and not an 'add' on. It is as important to measure for negative impacts as it is for positive impact. Additionally, please indicate an approximate budget and level of effort (person days) to be spent on M&E (see [Finance Guidance for Darwin/IWT](#)).

The creation of an M&E framework will be a high priority at the beginning of the project. The framework will be tied to the indicators and verification methods set out in the logframe and the timetable included in this application. The AIGCFD project lead will be responsible for drawing up this framework and overall management of the M&E process with input from project partners on specific work packages.

M&E of project progress will be carried out quarterly through a meeting with all project partners to assess progress in delivering the activities shown in the project timetable and achieving outputs according to the logframe indicators. Where important milestones are missed, all relevant project partners will agree actions to regain the original timetable and prevent other outputs being delayed as a consequence.

An adaptive approach will be taken whereby actions that are failing to produce the required outputs and outcomes will be reviewed and revised during virtual meetings of the project partners.

Total project budget for M&E in GBP (this may include Staff, Travel and Subsistence costs)	£ [REDACTED]
Number of days planned for M&E	24.00
Percentage of total project budget set aside for M&E (%)	[REDACTED]

Section 16 - Certification

Certification

On behalf of the

company

of

Ascension Island Government

I apply for a grant of

£182,846.00

I certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the statements made by us in this application are true and the information provided is correct. I am aware that this application form will form the basis of the project schedule should this application be successful.


(This form should be signed by an individual authorised by the applicant institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)


- I have enclosed CVs for project key project personnel, letters of support, budget and project implementation timetable (uploaded at appropriate points in application).
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report are also enclosed.


Checked

Name	Diane Elizabeth Baum
Position in the organisation	Director of Conservation and Fisheries

Signature (please upload e-signature)

 [Diane Baum signature](#)

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Date

01 February 2021

Section 17 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance documents, including the "Guidance Notes for Applicants" and "Finance Guidance" .	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 this proposed project.	Checked
I have provided a budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that the budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.	Checked
The application has been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
I have attached my completed logframe and timeline as a PDF using the templates provided.	Checked
I have included a 1 page CV or job description for all the Project staff identified at Question 11, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a letter of support from the Lead Organisation and main partner organisation(s) identified at Question 10, or an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a cover letter from the Lead Organisation, outlining how any feedback at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant.	Checked
I have included a signed copy of the last 2 years annual report and accounts for the Lead Organisation, or provided an explanation if not.	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 GOV.UK.	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 the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and our sister grant scheme, the IWT Challenge Fund. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share our quarterly project newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in this application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the latest copy of the Privacy Notice for Darwin, Darwin Plus and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund available [here](#). This Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information, but not personal data, may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead organisation, location, and total grant value) on the GOV.UK and other websites.

Information relating to the project or its results may also be released on request, including under the 2004 Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, Defra will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor will we act in contravention of our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).