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# **DPR12S2\1007**

## **Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem**

The Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) is one of the most important wetlands in Cyprus with socio-economic and ecological significance. Part of an IBA, a Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, and a Ramsar Site, ASL is threatened by land use and climate changes, which exert a significant impact on this fragile ecosystem. By implementing concrete on the ground actions, including restoration (plants and soils), raising awareness, stakeholders' engagement, the project will enhance long-term resilience of the ASL.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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**Title** Prof  
**Name** Ioannis  
**Surname** Vogiatzakis  
**Organisation** [REDACTED]  
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**Email (Work)** [REDACTED]  
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# DPR12S2\1007

Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem

## Section 1 - Contact Details

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### CONTACT DETAILS

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<b>Title</b>	Prof
<b>Name</b>	Ioannis
<b>Surname</b>	Vogiatzakis
<b>Organisation</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Tel (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Email (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Address</b>	[REDACTED]

### GMS ORGANISATION

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Type	Organisation
<b>Name</b>	Open University of Cyprus
<b>Phone (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Email</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Website</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Address</b>	[REDACTED]

## Section 2 - Title & Summary

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### Q3. Title:

Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem


### What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DPR12S1\1123


DPR12S1\1057


Please attach a cover letter as a PDF document.

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 [Cover letter OUC final](#)

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## Q4. Summary of project

Please provide a brief non-technical summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking.

Successful Darwin Plus Main projects must demonstrate substantial measurable outcomes in at least one of the themes of Darwin Plus either by the end of the project's implementation or via evidenced mechanisms for post-project delivery.

Preference will be given to discrete projects implementing existing identified environmental solutions on the ground.

The broad themes of Darwin Plus Main are:

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

The Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) is one of the most important wetlands in Cyprus with socio-economic and ecological significance. Part of an IBA, a Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, and a Ramsar Site, ASL is threatened by land use and climate changes, which exert a significant impact on this fragile ecosystem. By implementing concrete on the ground actions, including restoration (plants and soils), raising awareness, stakeholders' engagement, the project will enhance long-term resilience of the ASL.

## Section 3 - UKOT(s), Dates & Budget Summary

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### Q5. UKOT(s)

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

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

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

*No Response*

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

- Yes

If so, list here.

**Focus of work:** Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia (on Cyprus)  
**UKOTs**

**Other Territories/ country(ies):** Cyprus

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## Q6. Project dates

**Start date:** 01 April 2024  
**End date:** 31 March 2027  
**Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):** 3 years

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## Q7. Budget summary

Year:	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total request
Amount:	£155,532.00	£143,210.00	£97,361.00	£396,103.00

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## Q8. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

Yes

Please ensure you clearly outline your matched funding arrangement in the budget.

## Q9. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how you will fund the project if you don't manage to secure this?

We have no unconfirmed matched funding.

## Q10. Have you received, applied for or plan to apply for any other UK Government funding for the proposed project or similar?

No

## Section 4 - Problem statement

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### Q11. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in the UKOTs, relating to at least one of the themes of Darwin Plus:

**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 the need for your project? Please cite the evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem.**

Salt lakes in arid and semi-arid regions of the world have significant socio-economic, ecological and cultural value (Jellison et al., 2004; Oren et al., 2009). They are characterised by successive alternations of flooding and dry periods, which creates a unique and highly dynamic environment supporting remarkably distinguishable organisms (Williams, 2002). Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) is recognized as the most important coastal wetland in Cyprus as it provides critical habitat for endemic plants, breeding, and migratory birds as well as ecosystem services, some of which are exclusive to the ASL ecosystem, owing to its unique functions and biodiversity. ASL is part of the Akrotiri Important Bird Area and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area under SBA ordinances and as a Ramsar Site.

Despite its ecological importance, urbanisation, ongoing land use changes, and increased economic activities in the area resulted in the formation of an “isolated natural patch” in a human-dominated matrix (a “pressure zone”) with a diverse and unknown degree of impact on biodiversity and ecosystem functions. These pressures have seen an unprecedented increase in the last four years with large-scale developments north of the ASL (Casino, luxury residences, golf courses under development), planned reformation of Lady's Mile beach (including upgrading of existing restaurants and increased visitation) east of ASL, as well as uncontrolled access and illegal activities to the west of the ASL (Merras area) (see Map in additional material). In addition, the Policy Statement of the SBAs was published in May 2022, establishing the legal framework (planning zones and relevant procedures) for the Non-Military Development and therefore the grounds for land-use change within the non-military parts of SBAs. The combination of land use changes from ongoing developments, and the adverse impacts of climate change, such as prolonged droughts and reduced precipitation (Hadjinicolaou et al., 2011), is currently contributing to the degradation of ASL while mechanisms and measures to shield this fragile wetland are currently insufficient. The existing Akrotiri Peninsula Environmental Management Plan, published in 2012, identified threats and pressures to the ALS, which need to be revised and considered to update the Management Plan and to propose measures and restrictions under a Management Order.

Given the scale and intensity of the pressures and threats in the area, there is an urgency to intervene and protect this fragile ecosystem. The aim of this project is to enhance the resilience of the ASL ecosystem by addressing the above threats and enabling long-term conservation. Through this project, the degree of natural and anthropogenic threats in the surrounding ASL “pressure zone” will be quantified, while concrete actions to increase ecological functioning resilience such as soil crust protection (Chamizo et al. 2018) and plant micro-reserves will be applied (Kadis et al., 2013; Antonika et al., 2020). Generated knowledge will increase awareness of ASL value, leaving a legacy to the SBAA for the protection, restoration and monitoring of this ecosystem, whilst providing support for better environmental governance through stakeholders’ engagement.

## **Section 5 - Environmental Conventions, Treaties and Agreements**

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### **Q12. Environmental Conventions, Treaties and Agreements**

**Please detail how your project will contribute to the aims of the national and/or international agreement(s) your project is targeting. What key UKOT Government priorities and themes will it address and how? You should also consider local, territory specific agreements and action plans here. Letters of support from UKOT Government partners/stakeholders should also make clear reference to the agreements/action plans your project is contributing towards.**

The proposed conservation project aims to support DEFRA’s environmental activities in OT and contribute towards OT related targets of the 2021 Environment Act such as taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi, and where possible to prevent human-induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in England and the Overseas Territories. The project’s objectives align and are expected to contribute positively to the following UN Sustainability Development Goals: SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation (Targets 3, 5, 6); SDG 13 Climate Action (Target 3) and SDG 15 Life on Land (Targets 1,

4, 8, 9). This project is in line with the CBD, by directly contributing to the Aichi targets (1-2, 15, 19). It is directly linked to the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the EU Nature Restoration Law and supports the Ramsar Convention under which the ASL was designated as a wetland of international importance, by promoting the conservation of the ASL. The project also contributes to the objectives of the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, under which measures should aim to achieve favourable conservation status for strictly protected species and habitats. It will make a significant contribution in quantifying anthropogenic threats and provide data to evaluate the ecological state of the ASL, in order to increase its long-term resilience, which is in accordance with the provisions of the two Nature SBA ordinances: 'The Protection and Management of Nature and Wildlife Ordinance of 2007' and 'Game and Wild Birds Ordinance 2008'. The quantification of pressures and threats will provide information to support appropriate assessments for future proposed developments in the wider area, which may, in combination, have a negative impact on protected species and habitats. Along these lines, the project also considers the requirement for environmental monitoring for the impacts of developments on species and habitats under the Policy Statement for the Non-Military Development of the SBAs of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. The project is linked to the Akrotiri Management Plan and conservation objectives developed by the SBAA under the designation as Special Area of Conservation - SBA/SAC/01/(2015). Results will provide scientific data and information necessary for the revision of the Management Plan and the development of a Management Order, outlining measures, prohibitions and restrictions for the protection of the SAC and broader ASL area, both statutory requirements under the SBA legislation. Specific restrictions of access to locations of conservation priority habitats will contribute directly to objectives under the current Management Plan and the need to prevent disturbance to important parts of the ASL. Activity 7 will build on the procedural steps of a typical "sustainability appraisal" (as presented on the online guidance of the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government).

## Section 6 - Method, Project Stakeholders, Gender, Change Expected, Pathway to Change & Exit Strategy

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### Q13. Methodology

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

- how you reflected on and incorporated **evidence and lessons learnt** from past and present similar activities and projects in the design of this project.
- the specific approach you are using, supported by **evidence** that it will be effective, and **justifying why you expect it will be successful** in this context.
- how you will undertake the work (activities, materials and methods).
- how the **main activities** will be and where these will take place.
- how you will **manage the work** (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

The team has collective experience on projects related to conservation of salt lake ecosystems (e.g. LIFE18 IPE/CY/000006, implementation of the Article 8 Water Framework Directive, LIFE+ Project 08 ENV/CY/000460). Methods tested by the team (Ioannidou et al. 2021) will be used for preliminary land use change assessment. Good practices from the implementation of Plant Micro reserves in Cyprus will be adopted (LIFE08 NAT/CY/000453). Knowledge generated from Fellowships (DPLUS123;171) and projects DPLUS056 and DPLUS088 will be used. The project is also complementary to the current project (DPLUS141) and the MedIsWet project for the protection of Akrotiri wetlands. The accumulated knowledge and skills gained from the above efforts, ensures the successful implementation of the proposed project. Enhancing the resilience of ASL biodiversity and ecosystem functions will ensure long-term benefits to nature and society, by implementing the following main activities (leader of the activity in brackets):

1. Spatial Prioritization Framework [OUC]: The activity will combine pressures spatially (land use/cover- LULC

changes around the ASL) and climate change (i.e., Standard Precipitation Index, Soil Moisture Index) with available biodiversity data for birds, butterflies, moths in and around the ASL. This will enable evidence-based spatial prioritisation of priority conservation/restoration areas within the ASL “pressure zone” and will create a baseline for monitoring future LULC changes. Results will inform the revision of the area’s Management Plan and the development of a Management Order, outlining measures, prohibitions and restrictions. This is in line with statutory requirements of the SBAA and the requirement under the Policy Statement for the Non-Military Development of the SBAs to provide monitoring for the impacts of developments on species and habitats.

2. Establishing Plant Micro-Reserves (PMRs) [SBAA]: At least 5 PMRs for different Red Data Book (RDB) species will be established based on a list of seven candidate species according to the SBAA ED (see additional material). The final selection will depend on data completeness and quality. Long-term monitoring and conservation will take place in PMRs. Signs will be placed at the entrance of PMRs, describing the concept, the species, their value and importance.

3. Biological Soil Crust (BSC) Restoration [OUC]: BSC restoration in selected degraded ASL areas will take place using mulching with dead plant material locally collected and cyanobacteria inoculation to increase stability and provide favourable nutritional conditions for the survival of plant communities. Biocrust formation in degraded soils improves overall soil conditions and enhance water availability. Knowledge transfer and support on appropriate techniques has been secured from the UCJR Spain, experts in BSC (see Letter of Support).

4. Ex-situ conservation for targeted species [OUC]: This activity will contribute towards the effective conservation and long-term survival of the targeted taxa and will focus on a) plant conservation in botanic gardens and b) storage of seeds and propagules. Under this activity, collaboration with the RoC Department of Forests and Agricultural Research Institute has been established, to use their facilities (see Letter of Support).

5. Aquatic habitat re-creation in degraded areas [OUC]. Restoration and re-creation of new aquatic sites (within the ASL) will take place on selected areas based on field observations on BSC condition, LULC changes map, and aquatic vegetation. A candidate area of ecological importance for this activity is the seasonal saline lagoons site west of the main ASL, which host important species (e.g. Kentish Plover, Little-ringed plover, *Ruppia maritima*).

6. Regulating vehicle and visitors’ access [SBAA]: Based on Activity 1, Activity 6 will streamline further actions on placing directional and informational signs on the ecological importance of the area, as well as placing restriction bars at selected locations to exclude drivers from the targeted habitats and the lakebed. This action will complement and build on a relevant action of current project (DPLUS141), based on evaluation of benefits gained through access restriction to important conservation sites of the area.

7. Sustainability Appraisal [DICE/UniKent]: A sustainability appraisal (enriched with graph theory analysis of cause-effect relationships between drivers – impacts) will be employed to: a) inform the selection of in-situ conservation projects; b) actively engage all relevant stakeholders in public participation exercises, including interviews and focus groups to identify ASL-tailored sustainability objectives; workshops to integrate scientific and expert knowledge on project impacts; transparent public consultation at least twice in the assessment process; c) assist in the development of a post adoption reporting and monitoring strategy. Raising awareness of the conservation projects will also be facilitated through a project website, newspaper articles, and interviews in local radio stations.

## 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 Competent Authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, involved with various delegated functions in the area, have been consulted with the aim to support the objectives and actions of the project. Relevant letters have been obtained from key authorities, who work in collaboration with the SBAA ED. The Department of Forests (DoF) will be providing valuable information for actions relevant to the RDB plant species. Both DoF and The Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) will be supporting the ex-situ conservation action by providing their facilities to conserve seeds and propagating material in Fassouri Nursery and the National Genebank respectively. The Water Development Department (WDD) will support the aquatic habitat restoration action through their knowledge



and expertise of the area. The Department of Environment (DoE) will be supporting with knowledge and experience exchange since they are the Environmental Competent Authority of the Republic of Cyprus. The local authorities (Municipalities and Communities of the area) and local businesses (e.g. restaurant owners in Lady's mile beach) will be key stakeholders to engage in the awareness raising component of the project, given that conservation actions and measures to be implemented require acceptance and support by local communities. NGOs based in Cyprus and particularly those with interest in the area (Birdlife Cyprus, Terra Cypria, Enalia Physis) will be consulted throughout the project to ensure their support for actions, uptake of knowledge and consistency with projects undertaken by these organisations. All of the above stakeholders will be actively engaged in Activity 7.

## **Q15. Gender equality and social inclusion**

**All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social characteristics. Explain your understanding of how individuals may be excluded from equal participation within the context of your project, and how you seek to address this. You should consider how your project will proactively contribute to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and how you will engage participants in a meaningful way.**

The project abides by the principle of gender equality and equal opportunities in all project activities. It will ensure equal access to the tools and training resulting from the project by people of different genders. The Consortium will take all appropriate measures to hire staff members as well as incorporate associated researchers, students and volunteers into the project, using transparent and open procedures. In addition to ensuring equal employment in staffing, and equal opportunity for involvement of researchers and scientists in the project, the Consortium is committed to ensuring gender equality at the level of decision making. Half of the team comprises women, two of which in senior roles. Dr. Hadjistylli Stavrinide (female), will monitor and report on gender participation in all project activities. She will be responsible for ensuring gender equality and other equal opportunities issues, as well as for discussing and reviewing such issues periodically with other members of the Consortium. Outputs will be discussed in a series of meetings with stakeholders with different socio-economic background, gender, education level, and actively ensure social inclusion (access to disabled people etc.). Dissemination activities will be through official and unofficial channels using social media but also conventional approaches (i.e. leaflets and briefs, community presentations). Selective project briefs will be produced for different audiences (layman to expert). In the engagement with other actors in the various project activities (e.g., networking events, policy dialogue, training, etc.) it will abide by non-discrimination principles with respect to gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion, and disability status. In any of the on site and networking activities that may involve study participants, end users, subjects or consultants, gender differences may come up as an issue. In such cases, gender will be addressed as an integral part of the project to ensure the highest level of scientific quality.

## **Q16. Change expected**

**Detail the expected changes this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who will benefit a) in the 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.**

**When talking about how people will benefit, please remember to give details of who will benefit, differences in benefits by gender or other layers of diversity within stakeholders, and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used.**

This project will enhance the resilience of ASL to current and future threats, guarantee the continued provision of ecosystem functions, the delivery of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation for the long-term. In

the short term, it will consolidate existing knowledge on the ASL ecosystem, while generating high quality new knowledge. More specifically, the change expected can be broken down as:

1. Identification of areas that are in need of restoration, using a spatially explicit prioritization framework of pressures and ecological data ensuring replicability of this methodological approach and therefore change future assessments that will benefit the SBAA and local authorities;
  2. Restoration and re-creation of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats which will increase the areas resilience and adaptation to climate change with multiple benefits for the ASL biodiversity in general;
  3. The establishment of PMRs in combination with concrete ex situ conservation activities secures the long-term conservation of key Red Data Book plant species of which there are seven present in ASL;
  4. The Biological Soil Crust restoration using a novel ecological technique to re-establish biocrust taxa, will contribute to ecosystem productivity, fertility, and function and change the way that restoration of salt lakes, and arid systems in general, is carried out;
  5. Reducing disturbance to key priority areas will benefit key plant species and habitats and guide further needs for the protection of this fragile ecosystem;
  6. Increasing Awareness for the importance of ASL: Using targeted actions for communication and dissemination the project will reach a large number of different target groups while at the same time change attitudes and perceptions on the importance of ASL for biodiversity and its benefits to local communities;
  7. A full Sustainability appraisal will identify facilitators and barriers towards the adoption of sustainable management of ASL and find paths for public engagement and decision-making stakeholders maximising knowledge generation and its uptake delivering societal appreciation with benefits to nature and people.
- The successful implementation of the project has the potential to leverage investment in Cyprus and beyond in order to scale up the proposed approach to other similar environments.

## Q17. Pathway to change

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

This project supports the delivery of long-term sustainable management for ASL ecosystem and has been designed with specific core activities to this aim. It will significantly add to existing knowledge and will use a spatial approach to assess changes in LULC as well as ongoing pressures on ASL ecosystem, while identifying priority areas that need restoration and protection. It will enhance the resilience of ASL area by applying in situ and ex-situ conservation actions that will lead to the restoration of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and benefit the biodiversity of this important wetland. It will promote the conservation of species and habitats for the long term by regulating access to key areas, and it integrates a social component involving stakeholders that by the end of the project will be able to actively participate and have a better understanding of the management regime of ASL. The latter will help the SBAA maintain the targeted priority sites in their restored and improved state beyond the end of the project. All of the above respond to the urgent call to protect biodiversity from threats such as land degradation, climate change and the on-going development in the Akrotiri peninsula.

## Q18. Sustainable benefits


**How will the project reach a sustainable point and continue to deliver benefits post-funding? Will the activities require funding and support from other sources, or will they be mainstreamed in to "business as usual"? How will the required knowledge and skills remain available to sustain the benefits? If relevant, how will your approach be scaled? How will you ensure your data and evidence will be accessible to others?**


The alignment of the project with real needs of the SBAA ensures that activities and evidence are mainstreamed into SBAA business as usual. The project will contribute directly to the legislative needs of the SBAA under the status of the ASL as a designated SAC, by providing scientific data and information to support the revision of the Management Plan as well as the preparation of a Management Order outlining restrictions and prohibitions for


the protection of the site. It will also provide background information for baseline monitoring for the ongoing and future developments in the region and the ecological assessment of their impacts. These are statutory requirements for the SBAA and in this respect, no additional funding will be required to uptake results and ensure sustainable benefits.


The conservation actions of the project (PMRs, BSC, aquatic habitat restoration) will continue to be monitored by the SBAA post project completion, since it falls under the competencies of the Environment Department. To facilitate this, 2 Environmental Wardens will participate in the actions, gaining knowledge, training and expertise through the participating scientists/ conservationists, ensuring long term viability of these actions. OUC scientists will continue to support the conservation actions by monitoring and providing their expertise and knowledge post-project to the personnel of the Environment Department in areas of experience gaps (e.g. soil crust restoration). The establishment of access restrictions will be maintained by the SBAA and the relevant prohibitions that will be part of the Management Order will be monitored and enforced by SBAA personnel, as part of their ongoing surveillance of the area. To allow reproducibility of the work, open access to scientific/ publications and underlying data will be ensured. The knowledge and outputs (maps, data) of the project will be available to all partners and the public via the project’s website.

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

 [Additional material](#)

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## Section 7 - Risk Management

### Q19. Risk Management

**Please outline the 6 key risks to achievement of your Project Outcome and how these risks will be managed and mitigated, referring to the Risk Guidance. This should include at least one Fiduciary, one Safeguarding, and one Delivery Chain Risk.**

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Inherent Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
<b>Fiduciary (Financial)</b> Budget overruns or funding shortfalls due to unforeseen expenses	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	A detailed project budget with itemized expenses and contingencies has been developed and will be regularly monitored tracking expenditures and identifying variances. Based on former project experiences, unforeseen expenses will be addressed by the consortium through budget allocation or their own emergency reserves (own contribution) if needed.	Minor

<b>Safeguarding</b>	Daily interactions must follow professional and ethical standards safeguarding all parties involved. Fieldwork in Akrotiri salt lake and the surrounding habitats, especially during summer, can expose project personnel to physical risks (e.g. snakebite, injury) and health hazards (e.g. sunstroke, exhaustion).	Major	Possible	Major	Partners will adhere to OUC Code of Ethics Policy which includes Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policies, and code of conduct. Field safety will be ensured through training and protective equipment for all field personnel. Safety protocols and emergency response plans will be developed and enforced at an early stage in the	Moderate
<b>Delivery Chain</b>	Delays in acquiring essential equipment, sensors, or materials can hinder project timelines and data collection.	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	A detailed Delivery Chain Risk Map (DCRM) will be developed at an early stage in the project to monitor processes and improve understanding of how funding flows through the delivery chain and to ensure the achievement of our objectives. DCRM will include aspects of procurement delays, equipment maintenance etc.	Minor
<b>Risk 4</b>	Expensive monitoring equipment (moth-traps) can be damaged due to accidents, theft, or environmental factors (e.g. storms)	Major	Possible	Major	The moth-traps will be secured within fenced areas bearing SBAA deterrent sign. SBAA ED wardens will implement regularly inspection patrols. In case of imminent extreme events expensive equipment will be temporarily removed for safety reasons from the field.	Moderate
<b>Risk 5</b>	Data collected in the field may be at risk of loss or interception during transit or storage at the data center	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Data security will be ensured by (a) a cloud provider that uses strong encryption to protect data at rest and data in transit, (b) the OUC secure servers and (c) weekly backups at external hard drives. All field data will be transferred to the cloud directly upon retrieval.	Minor

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**Risk 6**

Restored terrestrial and aquatic habitats might not recover as expected due to unforeseen ecological complexities. Restoring degraded areas using dead plant materials and cyanobacteria (an approach tested for the first time in Cyprus) depends on complex parameters related to local conditions difficult to foresee or control beforehand.

Major

Possible

Major

Experienced team members will continuously monitor and assess habitat recovery progress, and adapt, restoration approach based on real-time data and changing ecological conditions. Knowledge transfer and support on BSC techniques and analysis has been secured from experts in UCJR, Spain (see Letter of Support) who guide the consortium, overcome challenges

Moderate

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## Q20. Project sensitivities

**Please indicate whether there are sensitivities associated with this project that need to be considered if details are published (detailed species location data that would increase threats, political sensitivities, prosecutions for illegal activities, security of staff etc.). Please note your response to this question won't influence the outcome of your application.**

Yes

**Please provide brief details.**

The main issue is lobbying for land development in and around ASL. As a result, the pressures/threats that will emerge from the spatial pressure analysis (Activity 1) may be in conflict with local business interests, such as restaurants and large developments surrounding the ASL. Other project sensitivities include locations of RDB plant species and the PMR sites, which could, although an extreme scenario, be targeted. Access restrictions may also be a sensitive issue for local communities favouring access or illegal activities within the ASL and addressing this will require active engagement and awareness raising (Activity 7).


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## Section 8 - Workplan


### Q21. Workplan

**Provide a project workplan that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the Word template as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project.**

 [BCF Workplan Template 2023-24 FINAL](#)

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## Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

### Q21. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan

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

**Darwin Plus projects will need 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).**

Project Management and Coordination will be carried out by OUC in order to secure active, collaborative and transparent management based on clear internal communication, throughout the project. OUC will be in charge of all management tasks foreseen in the Grant Agreement, liaising with DARWIN and the partners, responsible for all deliverables and reports. On a day-to-day basis, a Project Manager (PrM) will provide support to the Project Coordinator (PrC), Dr. Vogiatzakis. The PrM will communicate closely with Activity leaders to handle all problems that may arise during implementation. In Month 1, an Operational Plan (OP) will be developed, considering all important aspects in detail (managerial, financial, communication, reporting, etc.) that affect the project's smooth operation. The OP will also include guidelines for internal communication, providing partners with sources and content of information on ongoing activities. A Monitoring plan (MP), set up by OUC will include a set of clear and measurable (SMART) indicators (in addition to the ones in the logFrame) to follow project progress (these will indicatively include: no of participants in events, no of hits on Website, feedback from authorities, downloads of deliverables).

Steering Committee (StC) The implementation of the project will be monitored by OUC and overseen by the StC with representatives from all consortium partners led by the Project Coordinator (PrC). Meetings of the StC will take place online every two months. The StC first meeting will take place in parallel with the project's kick-off meeting in Akrotiti in Month 1. The StC will be responsible for setting up quality criteria and standards and ensuring that these are satisfied throughout the project implementation. The StC will monitor, discuss and make decisions on the progress of the project, identify drawbacks and approve alternatives if required, review the technical work and suggest improvements, evaluate the progress, assess the performance of the project and revise the Risk Assessment Plan (RAP).





Risk management: The RAP, which is drafted already, will be finalised in Month 1 to allow the proper and timely monitoring of scheduled activities and ensure the smooth operation of the project. It will also include a Delivery Chain Risk Map (DCRM) to monitor processes and risks related to the funding flows and ensure the achievement of the project objectives. The RAP, revised every 3 months, will i) estimate the risk of a Task based on the Likelihood (L) of an identified/ hazardous event occurring and the Severity (S) of its impact, ii) evaluate the expected constraints and risks and iii) develop appropriate contingency plans. All deviations from the initial plan will be handled with utmost care as to minimise the potential risk to outcomes, ensuring the timely delivery and high quality of deliverables. The budget and level of effort to be spent on M&E by partners is given below: Project Coordinator (10% - ██████████) – 26 days, Project Manager (40% - ██████████) – 104 days, P. Charilaou (3% - ██████████) – 8 days, M. Stavrinide-Hadjistylli (6% - ██████████) – 16 days, J .Tzanopoulos (3% - ██████████) – 8days.

<b>Total project budget for M&amp;E (£)</b>	██████████
<b>(this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)</b>	
<b>Total project budget for M&amp;E (%)</b>	16
<b>Number of days planned for M&amp;E</b>	162

## Section 10 - Logical Framework

## Q23. Logical Framework (logframe)

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

- 
-  [BCF St2 and Single Stage Logical Framework Template Apr23\(1\)](#)
  -  02/10/2023
  -  20:23:59
  -  pdf 28.27 KB

### Impact:

Build Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) resilience to natural and anthropogenic changes by incorporating novel conservation approaches, improvement of knowledge, ensuring long-term benefits to biodiversity and people.

### Outcome:

ASL ecosystem enhancement by in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the local community

### Project Outputs

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#### Output 1:

Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL

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#### Output 2:

Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL

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#### Output 3:

Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL

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#### Output 4:

Regulated access to conservation priority habitats

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#### Output 5:

Implementation of sustainability appraisal and raising awareness ASL ecosystem importance and conservation projects

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### Do you require more Output fields?

It is advised to have fewer 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, 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.**

- 1.1 Data collection for Spatial Prioritization Framework
- 1.2 Application of Spatial prioritisation procedure (pressure analysis)
- 1.3 Report and Map of SP areas
- 2.1 Bi-weekly plant sampling during flowering period for two years
- 2.2 Mapping of RDB plant distribution and threats
- 2.3 Delineation of PMRs sites and reporting
- 2.4 Placement of signs and fences for PMRs
- 3.1 Selection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to be restored
- 3.2 Terrestrial plant and aquatic plant sampling during flowering period
- 3.3 Moths, grasshoppers surveys in the beginning and at the end of the project
- 3.4 Collection of dead plant material for BSC restoration and Cyanobacteria Lab testing
- 3.5 Application of dead plant material and Cyanobacteria inoculation for BSC restoration
- 3.6 Hydromorphological restoration (removal of barriers and alien plant species, plant native riparian species)
- 3.7 Collection of seed and propagules and transfer it to DoF and ARI facilities
- 4.1 Assessment of Access in ASL
- 4.2 Place restriction bars and signs to forbid access to targeted habitats and the lake bed
- 5.1 Development of project's website
- 5.2 Preparation and development of Sustainability report
- 5.3 Interviews and focus groups
- 5.4 Organise three workshops on the importance and management of ASL
- 5.5 Publish three Policy briefs and a leaflet
- 5.6 Publish three articles in local newspapers and give two interviews in local radio stations
- 5.7 Peer-reviewed article in international open access journal


## Section 11 - Budget and Funding


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### Q24. Budget

**Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet which provides the Budget for this application and ensure the Summary page is fully completed. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet.**

 [\\_DarwinPlus Budget v04 final](#)

 02/10/2023

 20:27:42

 xlsx 90.66 KB

### Q25. Alignment with other funding and activities

**This question aims to help us understand how familiar you are with other work in the geographic/thematic area, and how this proposed project will build on or align with this to avoid any risks of duplicating or conflicting activities.**

**Q25a. Is this new work or does it build on existing/past activities (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)?**

New Initiative



### **Please provide details:**

The involvement of SBAA guarantees alignment with existing and past funding projects in the UKOT and beyond (island of Cyprus) and ensures streamlining SBAA activities in ASL. The project is linked to the Akrotiri Management Plan and the development of a Management Order for the protection of the SAC and broader ASL area. It will also contribute to the efforts of SBBA to raise environmental awareness through joined activities with the Akrotiri Environmental Centre. Concrete on the ground synergies with past and previous efforts include:

Activity 1: We will use knowledge generated from the implementation of the Article 8 (Water Framework Directive and LIFE+ Project 08 ENV/CY/000460 in Larnaca Salt Lake, LIFE18 IPE/CY/000006 on ecosystem services mapping in Natura 2000. It will use data from DPLUS123, 172, knowledge and data from DPLUS141, DPLUS056, DPLUS088.

Activity 2: We will adopt good practices from the previous Plant Micro reserves in Cyprus (LIFE08 NAT/CY/000453), use knowledge/data from DPLUS141, and data from DPLUS171.

Activity 4: We will use knowledge/data from DPLUS141 as well as data from DPLUS171.

Activity 5: We will employ good restoration practices from LIFE10 NAT CY 000716 in Oroklini wetland.

Activity 6: We will use data and knowledge from DPLUS141.

### **Q25b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for work in the geographic/thematic area to the proposed project?**

Yes

**If yes, please give details explaining similarities and differences, and explaining how your work will be additional, avoiding duplicating and conflicting activities and what attempts have been/will be made to cooperate with and share lessons learnt for mutual benefit.**

Current projects in Akrotiri include DPLUS141 and DPLUS171.

DPLUS141 primarily focuses on habitat restoration activities, specifically on Akrotiri wetlands (reed-bed management) and Cape Pyla (invasive acacia management), along with the implementation of an access management plan. However, the proposed project focuses on restoration efforts within the ASL, encompassing both terrestrial and aquatic sites, whereas DPLUS141 on Akrotiri marsh. Furthermore, in situ and ex situ conservation on threatened plant species (Activity 2) concern a different set of RDB plant species, thus continuing the effort and enriching the knowledge gained from DPUS141. Activity 6 in the proposed project builds and complements DPUS141 by regulating vehicle and visitors' access at selected areas, and evaluating benefits gained through access restriction to important conservation sites. Additionally, the proposed project aligns with DPLUS171 by conducting field surveys and distribution mapping of five RDB species that require further investigation. The key difference lies in the ex situ conservation action (i.e. storing seeds and propagules) in ARI Genebank. To strengthen collaboration in a structured manner among partners in DPLUS141, DPLUS171 and the proposed project, a common meeting at the very beginning will be hosted by the SBAA in order to streamline activities, share lessons and avoid potential overlaps.

### **Q26. Balance of budget spend**

**Defra are keen to see as much Darwin Plus funding as possible directly benefiting UKOT communities and economies. While it is appreciated that this is not always possible every effort should be made for funds to remain in-Territory.**

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

Seventy percent (70%) will be spent in activities locally and will benefit the SBA area of Akrotiri (habitats, species, local communities). All works to be contracted out under the project (fencing, sign posting, information boards

etc) will be done by local firms. Specialised items may be sourced from abroad if not found locally (e.g. drone, camera, software). A small amount c.5% of the project's budget will be on consultancy services to URJC in Spain for Biological Soil Crust (BSC) work since this expertise is lacking in Cyprus. Given their track record with DARWIN projects and significant expertise needed for Stakeholder Engagement, DICE/UniKent's share of 18% of the budget will be of excellent value for money for the project. A key element of our budget balance is spending on scientific personnel who cover all expertise needed, apart from BSC. Personnel are from within the Island community, so gained experience will remain within Cyprus. Most of the investment will stay in the SBAs, which benefit from the outputs. SBAs which do not have their own academic institutions rely on UK or Cyprus universities. Five percent (5%) of the budget (capital items and fencing, sign posting) will be managed by the SBAA ED.

## Q27. 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.**

The project will be managed and implemented by OUC staff with significant input from SBAA ED and DICE/UniKent. It is founded on the considerable knowledge and experience of SBAA ED, in the wider ASL area. It involves highly skilled personnel with a deep understanding of the conservation and community related issues in question (from the biological, socio-economic perspectives), plus an excellent track record of successful management of conservation projects community-based research and capacity-building, usually financed on small budgets. OUC has a very good track record of executing good-value conservation projects DICE/UniKent has an impressive track record of implementing good-value Darwin Initiative projects. Therefore, the projects' path will likely be comparatively smooth and economically efficient, particularly since the amount of existing knowledge, expertise, administrative support and established infrastructure to be contributed constitutes a sizeable and effective in-kind contribution. OT personnel will continue to monitor PMRs and access restriction measures after the project completion. The project budget has been prepared to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness, complemented by matched funding from all three partners. The project will gain from ongoing projects (DPLUS141; 123) where available data will be used for further evaluation and analysis. The project has been designed to minimise the requirement to purchase heavy equipment (e.g. cars, machinery) while stakeholders engagement (Activity 7) is envisaged in all stages (including communities, local businesses and various Republic of Cyprus Departments). The whole project team and experts will contribute to the local OT economy. Based on the above the project proposal represents excellent value.

## Q28. 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.**

The project's capital items include ArcGIS software and licences (for up to two users), a drone, one laptop, a camera and moth traps. The capital cost for these items accounts for less than 10% of the project's total budget. The ArcGIS software, the drone and the camera will be utilised by the SBAA ED, while the laptop and moth traps will be used by OUC, to support all project activities. All items will remain accessible to the partners after the project completion.

## Section 12 - Safeguarding and Ethics

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### Q29. Safeguarding

**All projects funded under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds must ensure proactive action is taken to promote the welfare and protect all individuals involved in the project (staff, implementing partners, the public and beneficiaries) involved in the project from harm. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have specific procedures and policies in place.**

**Please upload the following required policies:**

- **Safeguarding Policy:** including a statement of commitment to safeguarding and a zero tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** which details a clear process for dealing with concerns raised and protects whistle blowers from reprisals.
- **Code of Conduct:** which sets out clear expectations of behaviours – inside and outside the workplace – for all involved in the project and makes clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards.

**If any of these policies are integrated into a broader policy document or handbook, please upload just the relevant or equivalent sub-sections to the above policies, with (unofficial) English translations where needed.**

**Please outline how (a) beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff are made aware of your safeguarding commitment and how to confidentially raise a concern, (b) safeguarding issues are investigated, recorded and what disciplinary procedures are in place when allegations and complaints are upheld, (c) you will ensure project partners uphold these policies.**

**If your approach is currently limited or in the early stages of development, please clearly set out your plans address this.**

OUC has established and implements a Code of Ethics Policy (available through OUC's website) that includes Safeguarding, Whistleblowing Policies and code of conduct (updated version approved by OUC's Senate and Council on 7/11/22). The Policy establishes professional and social behaviours for the interaction between OUC employees, but also between employees-students and employees-collaborators of OUC. Adherence to the Policy is essential, as it indicates the commitment of individuals to specific principles. OUC is responsible to ensure a healthy and creative environment. None of the employees, students, or partners will be subject to any form of adverse treatment if they submit complaints, and file reports, or when they participate/assist in an investigation into a possible violation of the Code of Ethics. OUC is committed to maintain the confidentiality of complaints and dedicated to integrating safeguarding into all work aspects.

In the context of this project, where OUC is leading, we are committed to ensuring that these safeguarding principles and practices are consistently applied in all project activities by all project partners. In addition, project partners, SBAA ED and DICE/UniKent, have their own safeguarding policies that align with OUC's policy. We include OUC's policy in Greek and the Table of Contents in English.

## **Q30. Ethics**

**Outline your approach to meeting the key principles of good ethical practice, as outlined in the guidance.**

This project does not involve activities or research related to biotechnology, medicine, genetics, drug testing, or the processing of special categories of personal data, falling under the jurisdiction of the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee (<http://www.bioethics.gov.cy>). Additionally, it does not employ substances or processes that could potentially harm humans, animals, plants, or the environment.

We have obtained support letters from DoE, DoF, WDD, ARI, which enable knowledge sharing and address the project activities. No harm will be inflicted on Cyprus wildlife during our research at ASL. The implementation of the proposed activities is designed to avoid any potential negative impacts or risks to the environment or the stakeholders involved. Overall, the project will be implemented following the related EU and UK legislation covering the following aspects: 1) environmental protection, 2) gender equality, 3) open access policy and data sharing, 4) no discrimination, 5) personal data handling and 6) health and safety.

All partners have considerable experience of running projects of this type and of ensuring that rigorous standards for assessing health and safety risks are applied to all project staff at all times. They are also well versed in maintaining the independence and integrity of the research process.

## Section 13 - Project Staff

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### Q31. Project staff

Please identify the core staff (identified in the budget), their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Ioannis Vogiatzakis	Project Leader	10	Checked
Paraskevi Manolaki	Freshwater Ecologist	20	Checked
Sawas Zotos	Ecologists/GIS analyst	20	Checked
Elli Tzirkalli	Project Manager/Invertebrates Ecologist	80	Checked





Do you require more fields?

Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Athina Papatheodoulou	Vegetation Ecologists	13	Checked
Marilena Stamatiou	Field Biologist	7	Checked
Pantelis Charilaou	Scientific Advisor	3	Checked
Margarita Hadjistrylli	Scientific Advisor	6	Checked
Varnavas Michael	Conservation Warden	5	Checked
Kypros Constantinou	Conservation Warden	5	Checked
Josef Tzanopoulos	Sustainability Appraisal Expert	3	Checked
Peter Matthews	Socio-ecological systems expert	55	Checked

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

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 CVs  
 02/10/2023  
 20:39:04  
 pdf 555.45 KB

**Have you attached all project staff CVs and job descriptions?**

Yes

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## Section 14 - Project Partners

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### Q32. Project partners

**Please list all the Project Partners (including the Lead Partner who will administer the grant and coordinate delivery of the project), clearly setting out their roles and responsibilities in the project including the extent of their engagement so far.**

**This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included.**

**Lead partner name:** Open University of Cyprus

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**Is the Lead Partner based in a UKOT where the project is working?**  Yes

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**Why is this organisation the Lead Partner, and what value to they bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**

The Open University of Cyprus (OUC), established in 2002, is the country's second public university. As the national authority on distance learning and collaboration, OUC plays a key role in the Smart Specialization Strategy of Cyprus (S3Cy), which emphasizes the development of eLearning initiatives and the establishment of Cyprus as a regional centre for education and research and as of September 2017, has assumed responsibility for the Cyprus National Open Data Portal. OUC has received funding from FP7, H2020, LIFE+, ENI-CBC MED programmes of the EU and the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation. Within OUC the Terrestrial Ecosystems Management Lab ([templab.ouc.ac.cy](http://templab.ouc.ac.cy)) has been successful in attracting 4 million Euros the last 10 years from external funding/. With a track record of 20 large projects and coordination experience in 5 collaborative international projects. TemLab has an active collaboration with all government departments, which deal with nature conservation. Over the years the lab has acquired extensive experience in ecological monitoring at various scales (from field/habitat to landscape), currently leading the first national ecosystem services assessment and operating three citizen science initiatives (on butterflies, reptiles and roadkills). OUC will be responsible for overall coordination of the project and leading Activities 1,3,4,5.

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**Allocated budget (proportion or value):** 

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**Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)**  Yes

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**Have you included a Letter of Support from the Lead Partner?**  Yes

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**Do you have partners involved in the Project?**

Yes

**1. Partner Name:** SBAA Environmental Department (SBAA ED)

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**Website address:** <https://sbaadministration.org/index.php/galleries/environmental>

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**What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**

The SBAA Environmental Department provides advice and policy on all environmental matters within the Sovereign Base Areas in support of British Forces Cyprus and encourages good ecological and conservation practices in order to meet statutory requirements. Among other duties and responsibilities for the environment, SBAA ED manages the Akrotiri Education Environmental and Information Centre which is part of the Cyprus network for environmental education. SBAA ED, will provide the necessary permissions and oversee, on site project activities, share its strong local knowledge of ASL ecosystem, and engage with stakeholders to contribute to the project's objectives. The SBAA has been working towards the ASL's protection for over 20 years and has successfully implemented several projects that have improved the environmental conditions of Akrotiri Peninsula. Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre will be utilised for outreach activities and laboratory equipment. SBAA ED will lead the establishment of PMRs and regulating access in selected areas of ASL ecosystem (Activities 2,6).

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**UKOT-based/other Partner**  UKOT-based

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**Allocated budget (proportion or value):** 

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**Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)**  Yes

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

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**2. Partner Name:** Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE)/ University of Kent (UniKent)

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**Website address:** <https://research.kent.ac.uk/dice/>

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The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) within UniKent was founded in 1989 with a mission “to conserve biodiversity and the ecological processes that support ecosystems and people, by developing capacity and improving conservation management and policy through high-impact research”. In 2019 DICE awarded a Queen’s Anniversary Prize in recognition of our “pioneering education, capacity building and research in global nature conservation to protect species and ecosystems and benefit people”.

**What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):**

DICE members have led more than 30 Darwin Initiative projects, illustrating their ability to achieve conservation, poverty alleviation and capacity building goals.

Our wealth of experience and expertise in conservation projects, sustainability assessments and public engagement places us in an ideal position in regards to the successful undertaking of sustainability appraisal component of this project.

Roles/responsibilities: DICE in UniKent will carry out the sustainability appraisal component of the project that will also inform the selection of the conservation projects to be carried out. It will also work in close collaboration with SBAA ED and Open University of Cyprus on public engagement and awareness raising activities to take place on ASL (Activity 7).

<b>UKOT-based/other Partner</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Other
<b>Allocated budget (proportion or value):</b>	
<b>Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
<b>Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

**3. Partner Name:** *No Response*

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**Website address:** *No Response*

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**What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):** *No Response*

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<b>UKOT-based/other Partner</b>	£0.00
<b>Allocated budget (proportion or value):</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> UKOT-based
<b>Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

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

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**4. Partner Name:** *No Response*

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**Website address:** *No Response*

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What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity): *No Response*

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**UKOT-based/other Partner**  UKOT-based  
 Other

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**Allocated budget (proportion or value):** £0.00

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**Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)**  Yes  
 No

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

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**5. Partner Name:** *No Response*

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**Website address:** *No Response*

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What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity): *No Response*

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**UKOT-based/other Partner**  UKOT-based  
 Other

---

**Allocated budget (proportion or value):** £0.00

---

**Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)**  Yes  
 No

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

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

**6. Partner Name:** *No Response*

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<b>Website address:</b>	No Response
<b>What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):</b>	No Response
<b>UKOT-based/other Partner</b>	<input type="radio"/> UKOT-based <input type="radio"/> Other
<b>Allocated budget (proportion or value):</b>	£0.00
<b>Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure)</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<b>Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Please provide a combined PDF of all letters of support.

-  [Support letters](#)
-  02/10/2023
-  21:30:42
-  pdf 649.83 KB

## Section 15 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

### Q33. Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Plus, Darwin Initiative or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund) funding before?

No

If no, please provide the below information on the lead partner.

<b>What year was your organisation established/ incorporated/ registered?</b>	01 January 2002
<b>What is the legal status of your organisation?</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> University
<b>How is your organisation currently funded?</b>	Being a state University. OUCs main source of income is Government funding (50%). This is supplemented by student fees mainly for postgraduate degrees and competitive research funding. There is a small amount (less than 5%) coming from donations.

**Describe briefly the aims, activities and achievements of your organisation. Large organisations please note that this should describe your unit or department.**

<b>Aims</b>	OUC's mission "To provide equal opportunities to all in accessing tertiary education irrespectively of age, place and pace of study, and to promote science, knowledge, education, research and lifelong learning with the method of open and distance education".
<b>Activities</b>	OUC's activities include the development of cutting-edge study programmes, teaching, research, outreach on research and innovation but also distance and life-long learning. OUC provides scientific advisory to the State and consultancy services to the private sector in topics where it excels (i.e. pedagogy, ICT, environmental and health management).
<b>Achievements</b>	OUC was awarded the following Chairs and awards: UNESCO Chair on "Visual Anticipation and Futures Literacy towards Visual Literacy", Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Chair, Jean Monnet Chair on "European Union Institutions, Rights and Judicial Completion", Leader in Education Awards (2019-2021) and 25m Euros in research funding (2013-2023).

**Provide detail of 3 contracts/projects held by the Lead Partner that demonstrate your credibility as an organisation and provide track record relevant to the project proposed.**

**These contracts/awards should have been held in the last 5 years and be of a similar size to the grant requested in your application.**

<b>Contract/Project 1 Title</b>	COST ACTION SMILES ( <a href="http://www.cost-smiles.eu/">www.cost-smiles.eu/</a> )
<b>Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)</b>	██████████
<b>Duration (e.g. 2 years 3 months)</b>	4 years (2022-2026)
<b>Role of organisation in project</b>	Lead Partner responsible for overall project coordination, management, monitoring and liaison with the funding agency. OUC provides the following services: support to partners for their administrative responsibilities, internal communication procedures, project governance structures, daily management, management of administrative issues, financial management, Preparation of the interim and final progress reports.
<b>Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project</b>	The aim of this action is to provide a platform for coordinated interdisciplinary research on several aspects of mapping and assessment of ecosystem services in small and medium European Islands. Objectives include: Synthesise current knowledge of the role of islands as ES suppliers, convey and share knowledge among scientists, policy makers and stakeholders, develop an integrated framework of island ES assessment, support Science-Policy-Society (SPS) based best practices, employ participatory processes, generate proposals on concrete applications of nature-based solutions. Major outputs include: database on Islands Natural Capital, Framework for island ES assessment, Scientific Publications, Policy Briefs, Communication outputs.

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**Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)** Mrs Estelle Emerieau, Science Officer, COST Association  
estelle.emeriau@cost.eu

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**Contract/Project 2 Title** LIFE- IP PHYSIS (pandoteira.cy)

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**Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)** ██████████ for OUC's WP (out of ██████████ project value)

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**Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months)** 10 years (2019-2029)

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**Role of organisation in project** Leader of the Ecosystem Services Assessment Work Package (2019-2026), responsible for scientific coordination of 6 partners, financial management of the WP, Preparation of the deliverables and internal reports progress reports.

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**Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project** The aim of the action is the establishment of the conceptual framework for ecosystem services assessment in Cyprus, specifically adapted to the local conditions but based on the existing methods developed in Europe and the UK. In addition, it will to provide a complete assessment through mapping and economic valuation of ecosystem services in a range of Natura 2000 sites (N2K) on the island under different policy scenarios. The outputs include a methodology for mapping and assessment of the main ES in five broad ecosystem types and a series of maps and economic valuations of ES in N2K sites.

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**Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)** Mrs Elena Stylianopoulou  
e.stylianopoulou@environment.moa.gov.cy  
Acting Director Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment,  
Republic of Cyprus

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**Contract/Project 3 Title** AGROASSIS (<https://laona.org/the-project-life-agroassis/>)

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**Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)** ██████████ OUC's Budget)

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**Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months)** 51 months (2022-2026)

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**Role of organisation in project** Scientific coordination of biodiversity and soil monitoring WorkPackage. Coordinating 4 partners, management of administrative issues, financial management, preparation of the deliverables, internal and progress reports

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**Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project**

The project's objectives are to:

- Promote minimum tillage or no-tillage and mulching in cereal fields and orchards of drylands
- Combine the above practices with effective afforestation of degraded field margins,
- Provide additional means to government authorities to more efficiently monitor land management, and to promote educational activities on desertification combat.

- Kick-start compost production in Cyprus by creating two facilities

Main outputs include restoration and creation of 7km<sup>2</sup> of habitats, production of 1 000 m<sup>3</sup>; 700 tn/yr of compost. Guidelines and policy briefs for combatting desertification Education material on desertification. Creation of a Science-Policy-Society Platform.

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**Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)**

Dr Panayiotis Dalias (p.dalias@ari.gov,.cy)

Project Coordinator, Agricultural Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Republic of Cyprus

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**Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts?**

Yes

## Section 16 - Certification

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### Certification

**On behalf of the**

Company

**of**

Open University of Cyprus

**I apply for a grant of**

£396,103.00

**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 enclose CVs for key project personnel, a cover letter, letters of support, a budget, logframe, Safeguarding and associated policies, and project workplan.
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (covering three years) are also enclosed.





Checked

<b>Name</b>	Ioannis Vogiatzakis
<b>Position in the organisation</b>	Professor
<b>Signature (please upload e-signature)</b>	 <a href="#">Ioannis Vogiatzakis signature</a>  02/10/2023  15:10:57  pdf 194.17 KB
<b>Date</b>	02 October 2023

**Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.**

 <a href="#">Accounts OUC 2</a>  02/10/2023  14:59:22  pdf 104.7 KB	 <a href="#">Accounts OUC 1</a>  02/10/2023  14:59:13  pdf 100.7 KB
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**Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF**

 <a href="#">Code of Ethics OUC 17.11.2022</a>  02/10/2023  21:43:49  pdf 1 MB
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## Section 17 - Submission Checklist

### Checklist for submission

	<b>Check</b>
<b>I have read the Guidance, including the "Guidance Notes for Applicants", "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance", "Standard Indicator Guidance", "Risk Guidance", and "Finance Guidance".</b>	Checked
<b>I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for this fund.</b>	Checked
<b>I have provided actual start and end dates for the project.</b>	Checked
<b>I have provided my budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.</b>	Checked
<b>I have checked that our budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.</b>	Checked
<b>The application been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).</b>	Checked
<b>I have attached the below documents to my application:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a cover letter from the Lead Partner, outlining how any feedback received at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant and referencing any potential conflicts of interest, as a single PDF.</li> </ul>	Checked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided and using "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance" and "Standard Indicator Guidance".</li> </ul>	Checked

• my budget (which meets the requirements above) using the template provided.	Checked
• a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts for the Lead Partner, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
• my completed workplan as a PDF using the template provided	Checked
• a copy of the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct (Question 28).	Checked
• 1 page CV or job description for each of the Project Staff identified at Question 30, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not, combined into a single PDF.	Checked
• a letter of support from the Lead Partner and partner(s) identified at Question 31 and relevant OT Governments, or an explanation of why not, combined into a single PDF.	Checked
My additional supporting evidence is in line with the requested evidence, amounts to a maximum of 5 sides of A4, and is combined as a single PDF.	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
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 the Darwin Initiative 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 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 the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (24/25)				Year 2 (25/26)				Year 3 (26/27)				Year 4 (27/28)				Year 5 (28/29)			
			Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL</b>	3																				
1.1	Data collection for Spatial Prioritization Framework	1																				
1.2	Application of Spatial prioritisation procedure (pressure analysis)	2																				
1.3	Report and Map of SP areas	3																				
<b>Output 2</b>	<b>Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL</b>	33																				
2.1	Bi-weekly plant sampling during flowering period for two years	15																				
2.2	Mapping of RDB plant distribution and threats	18																				
2.3	Delineation of PMRs sites and reporting	6																				
2.4	Placement of signs and fences for PMRs	6																				
<b>Output 3</b>	<b>Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL</b>	36																				
3.1	Selection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to be restored	3																				
3.2	Terrestrial plant and aquatic plant sampling during flowering period	12																				

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (24/25)				Year 2 (25/26)				Year 3 (26/27)				Year 4 (27/28)				Year 5 (28/29)			
			Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
3.3	Moths, grasshoppers surveys in the beginning and at the end of the project	12																				
3.4	Collection of dead plant material for BSC restoration and Cyanobacteria Lab testing	21																				
3.5	Application of dead plant material and Cyanobacteria inoculation for BSC restoration	24																				
3.6	Hydromorphological restoration (removal of barriers and alien plant species, plant native riparian species)	30																				
3.7	Collection of seed and propagules and transfer it to DoF and ARI facilities	18																				
<b>Output 4</b>	<b>Regulated access to conservation priority habitats</b>	33																				
4.1	Assessment of Access in ASL	9																				
4.2	Place restriction bars and signs to forbid access to targeted habitats and the lake bed	24																				
<b>Output 5</b>	<b>Improvement of the awareness level of ASL ecosystem importance and implementation of sustainability appraisal</b>	36																				
5.1	Development of project's website	9																				



Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (24/25)				Year 2 (25/26)				Year 3 (26/27)				Year 4 (27/28)				Year 5 (28/29)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5.2	Preparation and development of Sustainability report	30																				
5.3	Interviews and focus groups	9																				
5.4	Organise three workshops on the importance and management of ASL	18																				
5.5	Publish three Policy briefs and a leaflet	9																				
5.6	Publish three articles in local newspapers and give two interviews in local radio stations	9																				
5.7	Peer-reviewed article in international open access journal	6																				

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake ecosystem

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p><b>Impact:</b> (Max 30 words)</p> <p>Build Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) resilience to natural and anthropogenic changes by incorporating novel conservation approaches, improvement of knowledge, ensuring long-term benefits to biodiversity and people.</p>			
<p><b>Outcome:</b> (Max 30 words) ASL ecosystem enhancement by in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the local community</p>	<p>0.1 Degraded areas of ASL restored (project target 10 sites, 5ha terrestrial and 5ha aquatic habitats) <b>[DPLUS-D12]</b></p> <p>0.2 Increase of plants, moths and grasshopper records in ASL restoration sites by year 3 (baseline to be established in the first year, project target 10%) <b>[DPLUS-D04]</b></p> <p>0.3 Local community engagement of 7 villages and 500 inhabitants</p>	<p>0.1 Restoration of at least 10 degraded areas across ACL ecosystem</p> <p>0.2 Plant surveys (quadrats), grasshoppers surveys (fixed transects), moth surveys (moth traps) on restoration sites in year 1 and 3</p> <p>0.3 Records of public consultation exercises, workshop and focus groups reports</p>	<p>SBAA provides access to the project team to implement conservation actions and surveys across the ASL</p> <p>SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities.</p>
<p><b>Outputs:</b> 1. Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL</p>	<p>1.1 Identify 10 areas of conservation concern and high conservation value of at least 10 ha in total <b>[DPLUS-C08]</b></p> <p>1.2 Consortium Agreement of at least 5 targeted areas where actions will take place</p>	<p>1.1 Map of the identified conservation priority areas, year 1</p> <p>1.2 Consortium Agreement report</p>	<p>All datasets available to project team</p>

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake ecosystem

<p><b>2.</b> Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL</p>	<p>2.1 Identify 5 PMRs of 0.5 hectares <b>[DPLUS-C08]</b> 2.2 Establishment of at least 5 PMRs for red data plants of ASL <b>[DPLUS-C02]</b></p>	<p>2.1 Report on PMRs submitted 2.2 Spatial file with PMRs locations along with geotag images of the red data plants</p>	<p>Involve both SBAA and local authorities for the PMRs establishment</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL</p>	<p>3.1 Restoration of at least 5 degraded terrestrial sites of 5 ha following BSC across ASL area <b>[DPLUS-12]</b> 3.2 Restoration of at least 5 degraded aquatic sites of 5 ha <b>[Ramsar Convention, DPLUS-D12]</b> 3.3 Establishment of ex-situ seed bank of targeted plant species (red data book/macrophytes)</p>	<p>3.1 Plant species survey 3.2 Aquatic plants species survey 3.3 Report on seed bank status</p>	<p>Access to terrestrial and aquatic habitats remains feasible for the duration of the project</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Regulated access to conservation priority habitats</p>	<p>4.1 Restricted access and sign-posting in at least 5 priority areas by project end (5 restrictions points)</p>	<p>4.1 Access Management Plan</p>	<p>Access restriction to be followed by local community and visitors</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Implementation of sustainability appraisal and raising awareness ASL ecosystem importance and conservation projects</p>	<p>5.1 Development of one sustainability report 5.2 Project website (100 visitation per month) 5.3 Three workshops hosted by SBAA on the importance and management of ASL per year. Target 250 attendees (of which 20% decision-</p>	<p>5.1 Published sustainability report 5.2 Google analytics (number of visitation) 5.3 Workshops attendance sheets 5.4 Google analytics for year 3 (number of downloads) 5.5a Newspaper and audio file (number of people reached)</p>	<p>SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities.  A minimum number (10%) of local stakeholders participate in the public consultation exercise  Up to 90% of CY nationals participate to the workshops</p>

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake ecosystem

	<p>makers), 50% women, per workshop <b>[DPLUS-C14]</b></p> <p>5.4 Three Policy briefs downloaded from the project website at least 100 times in year 3 <b>[DPLUS-C18]</b></p> <p>5.5a Three articles regarding the project results submitted in local newspapers and two local radio interviews by year 3 <b>[DPLUS-C15]</b></p> <p>5.5b One Journal article on ASL long-term conservation strategy submitted by year 3 to open access journal <b>[DPLUS-C17]</b></p>	5.5b Journal confirmation email	
<p><b>Activities</b> (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. Each activity should start on a new line and be no more than approximately 25 words.)</p> <p>1.1 Data collection for Spatial Prioritization Framework</p> <p>1.2 Application of Spatial prioritisation procedure (pressure analysis)</p> <p>1.3 Report and Map of SP areas</p> <p>2.1 Bi-weekly plant sampling during flowering period for two years</p> <p>2.2 Mapping of RDB plant distribution and threats</p> <p>2.3 Delineation of PMRs sites and reporting</p> <p>2.4 Placement of signs and fences for PMRs</p> <p>3.1 Selection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to be restored</p> <p>3.2 Terrestrial plant and aquatic plant sampling during flowering period</p> <p>3.3 Moths, grasshoppers surveys in the beginning and at the end of the project</p> <p>3.4 Collection of dead plant material for BSC restoration and Cyanobacteria Lab testing</p> <p>3.5 Application of dead plant material and Cyanobacteria inoculation for BSC restoration</p> <p>3.6 Hydromorphological restoration (removal of barriers and alien plant species, plant native riparian species)</p> <p>3.7 Collection of seed and propagules and transfer it to DoF and ARI facilities</p>			

Project Title: Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake ecosystem

- 4.1 Assessment of Access in ASL
- 4.2 Place restriction bars and signs to forbid access to targeted habitats and the lake bed
- 5.1 Development of project's website
- 5.2 Preparation and development of Sustainability report
- 5.3 Interviews and focus groups
- 5.4 Organise three workshops on the importance and management of ASL
- 5.5 Publish three Policy briefs and a leaflet
- 5.6 Publish three articles in local newspapers and give two interviews in local radio stations
- 5.7 Peer-reviewed article in international open access journal