**Darwin Plus Main: Annual Report Review**

**Submit to:** [**BCF-Reports@niras.com**](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) **including the project ref in the subject line**

# Darwin Plus Project Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project reference |  |
| Project title |  |
| Territory(ies) |  |
| Lead Partner |  |
| Project partner(s) |  |
| Darwin Plus grant value |  |
| Start/end dates of project |  |
| Reporting period (e.g. 1 Apr 2022-31 Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2) |  |
| Project Leader name |  |
| Project website/blog/social media |  |
| Review date |  |

The notes in blue are guidance for the reviewers and not all guidance questions need to be answered – only those that are relevant to this project. **Please remove the guidance notes from all sections before submission.**

This review should provide an independently verified summary of the progress the project has made in the last 12 months or since the project started. Please therefore ensure any statements of progress and/or impact are made with clear reference to evidence submitted. Please ensure all comments (positive and negative) can be supported by reference to material submitted with the Annual Report.

This review will be shared with the project and relevant UK Government Departments. It may also be shared with organisations asked by the UK Government to review the effectiveness of Darwin Plus. There is no plan to share the review publicly. However, you should be aware that all information held by HMG can be subject to a freedom of information request.

You will be supplied with the full project file to undertake your review. The full application forms the contract between Defra and the project. Please ensure you read this first. It may also be helpful to read the full Annual Report template as this includes similar guidance that will help you understand what the project was asked to report on.

Some projects may have made changes to their project since its start. Projects are required to seek approval for changes at the Impact, Outcome, or Outputs levels (Activity level changes do not require approval). These changes if approved should be documented in Change Request Forms which will be in the file you receive.

If you have a project that has unapproved changes to its design please check with the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Administrator before proceeding any further   
(BCF-Reports@niras.com).

It is expected that this report will be 5-8 pages in length. Please do not exceed this limit excessively.

### Project summary

Please use maximum of half a page (ideally less) on this section.

* Give a brief summary of the project, its Outputs and main activities.
* This section should only contain facts about the project based on information contained in the Annual Report.
* Feel free to copy and paste from the project report for this section if it is suitable, but ensure the language makes sense.

### Comments and queries for Project Leader

Do you have any specific comments for the Project Leader? These should include an overall impression of the project as well as queries or concerns that you may have. Can you pass on information that could benefit the project? It is important that you state clearly whether your comments need to be addressed by the project and when. Therefore please indicate whether your comments:

1. Are urgent and should be discussed between the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Administrator and the project (for financial and project management issues);
2. Are simple clarifications that should be addressed before the next Annual Report (i.e. with the next half year report which is due 31st October each year but does not get a full technical review);
3. Are not urgent but require more than a simple clarification and should be addressed with next year’s Annual Report (due 30th April each year and which you may well be asked to review);
4. Do NOT require a response from the project and are merely for information.

Please use the following table to summarise your comments elsewhere in the review (but ensure you provide adequate written text):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | Comment | **Discuss with BCFs Admin** | **Next half year report** | **Next Annual Report** | **No response needed** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |

### Project stakeholders/partners

Darwin Plus projects should engage/support key stakeholders and partners, but recognising the differences between territories and that some have no local population. Comment on the extent and quality of collaboration between all formal partners and key stakeholders of this project.

* Has the project been working with host territory(ies) stakeholder groups?
* To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project planning and decision-making?
* Have there been particular challenges, achievements, and/or lessons learnt with stakeholder engagement?

### Summary of progress

### Implementation of Activities

Briefly comment on how the project has progressed with the implementation of its activities. Give a brief assessment of the quality of the activities conducted (e.g. the technical, research or training component(s)) according to the information available. Are any variations from the planned activities (in the original application) explained adequately?

### Progress towards Outputs

Please comment on information provided in the report on Outputs for the year.

* Is the project making adequate progress towards their expected Outputs?
* Are any variations from the Outputs (in the original application) explained adequately?
* Has it established, and is it measuring, Output level indicators? Is adequate evidence of progress provided?
* Has it reviewed its Output level assumptions to ensure they still hold true?
* What external factors have constrained or enabled the delivery of Outputs?

### Progress towards Outcome

* Is there evidence that the project is achieving its Outcome?
* Is the project on track to achieve its Outcome targets?
* Has it established baselines and is it measuring Outcome level indicators? Is adequate evidence of progress provided? Has the project assessed the extent to which the measured Outcome can be attributed to the project activities?
* Has it reviewed its Outcome level assumptions to ensure they still hold true?
* What external factors have constrained or enabled the delivery of its Outcome?
* Could the project do anything differently (adapt or refine current activities) to improve project Outcome?

### Project support to environmental and/or climate outcomes in the UKOT’s

The overarching objective of Darwin Plus is to provide support to the UKOTs to achieve strategic long-term outcomes for the natural environment. Please describe the progress the project has made in this year to support the achievement of this objective.

* What contribution has the project made to key UKOT Government priorities and themes e.g., Environmental Charters, national biodiversity strategies, and environmental action plans etc.
* Is there evidence that the project is working to support the host Territory(ies) to meet their obligations under multi-lateral agreements extended to the UKOTs, particularly those on biodiversity and climate change?
* How has the project improved capacity to manage environmental assets in the UKOTs?
* Are there any noticeable achievements this year?

### Contribution to gender equality and social inclusion

All projects are required to promote equality between persons of different gender and social characteristics and should be able to demonstrate their contribution.

* Is there evidence that the project is contributing to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and engaging participants in a meaningful way?
* Could the project do anything differently (refine or adapt current activities) to improve how it addresses equality and social inclusion?
* Are there any notable achievements this year?
* Please provide comment on the proportion of women on the Project Board and the proportion of project partners that are led by women.

### Monitoring, evaluation and lessons learnt

* Is the M&E sufficiently robust for this project? If not, how could they do better?
* Have they made suitable use of evidence and indicators to highlight their progress?
* Have the Darwin Plus Standard Indicators been selected and reported against appropriately?
* Has the project considered the extent to which measured Outcome and Impact can be attributed to their activities?
* Would anything improve the project e.g., revision of logframe, integration of lesson-learning to project etc.?
* Are there any obvious lessons learnt that the project has not highlighted?

### Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

* Has the report responded suitably to requested issues raised in the last year’s Annual Report or in any award letter which included feedback for the project to consider?

### Risk Management

* Have any new risks arisen in the last 12 months the project had not previously accounted for?
* Have any significant adaptions been made to the project design to address changes to risk?

### Sustainability and legacy

* How likely are project Outputs, Outcome and Impact to be sustained after the project ends?
* Does the project have a suitable exit strategy?
* Is there anything that could be done to improve the project’s sustainability?

### Early indicators of transformational change

Defra is eager to understand key success factors of Darwin Plus projects, in particular considering their potential to influence change at a higher or wider level – i.e. “transformational change”. Transformational change involves making system-level changes that will shift the trajectory toward improved environmental outcomes. The changes are ultimately large-scale, catalytic, and long-lasting, altering the way a system operates. Please clearly outline any ways in which you think the project has the potential to or may be contributing to transformational change at the landscape scale or beyond.

* Does the project have the ability or potential to significantly influence change in a transformational way?
* Are there any clear early indicators of project success in achieving transformational change?
* Will or has the project proven a viable model or approach that could be scaled at the landscape level, in another geography or scaled systematically (policy adoption)?
* If yes, are what are the factors that have helped identify this or enabled this to happen?

### Darwin Plus identity

* Has Darwin Plus been suitably recognised in the materials produced so far?
* Is Darwin Plus support recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity or does it form part of a larger programme?

### Safeguarding

Biodiversity Challenge Funds are committed to supporting projects develop and strengthen their safeguarding capabilities and capacity to prevent, listen, respond and learn.

Please provide a comment on the project’s approach to safeguarding within the last 12 months. You should consider the following:

* Has the project updated its safeguarding policy within the last 12 months?
* Have any concerns been investigated within the last 12 months?
* Has there been any training conducted and/ or are there any developments or activities planned around safeguarding in the coming year?
* Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on safeguarding?

Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.

### Project expenditure

The Annual Report should tabulate the budget for the last year against expenditure, explaining any variations from the agreed project schedule. Are stated changes in the budget justified, and is the level of detail adequate? Please include comment on the level of matched funding mobilised during the reporting period. You are not expected to review the budget in detail. If this section is incomplete, please still carry out your review as we can deal with the finances separately if necessary.

### General assessment

* What is your overall impression of the project based on the information available to you?
* Please let us know of particularly noteworthy Activities or Outputs that you consider are worth being highlighted by Darwin Plus as good practice.
* This section should be no more than half a page of text and should summarise the comments made above.

What score would you give this project based on the following scoring system? Please do not use any half scores i.e. 2/3.

**Score:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Description** | **Achievement of Outputs/Outcome** |
| 1 | Likely to be **completely** achieved | The Outputs/Outcome are well on the way to completion (or completed) |
| 2 | Likely to be **largely** achieved | There is good progress towards Outcome completion and most Outputs have been achieved, particularly the most important. |
| 3 | Likely to be **partly** achieved | Only partial achievement of the Outcome is likely and/or achievement of some Outputs. |
| 4 | Only likely to be achieved **to a very limited extent** | Outcome unlikely to be achieved but a few Outputs likely to be achieved. |
| 5 | **Unlikely** to be achieved | No progress on Outputs or Outcome |
| X | **Too early** to judge | It is impossible to say whether there has been any progress towards the final achievement of Outputs or Outcome. This score should not be used unless at least one of the following criteria are met:  Project is postponed because of conflict; external constraints; recruitment delays |