

# **DPLR1\1026**

## **Can Ascension be predator free?**

### Overall objective

At the end of this project, Ascension will employ global best practice to reduce the impact of introduced predators on the island's biodiversity to the maximum extent possible. Eradication is the ultimate aim and will be pursued by AIGCFD if recommended by experts.

### Current situation/problem trying to address

Non-native species are the greatest threat to Ascension's terrestrial biodiversity. Black rat, house mouse, rabbit, sheep and myna birds were all introduced to Ascension following the discovery of the island by humans in 1501. Ascension's native wildlife and plants evolved in the absence of terrestrial predators and have poor natural defences. Introduced predators and grazers are identified as a major threat to the following biodiversity in the Ascension Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP):

Seven endemic plant species

Green turtle

Sooty tern

At least 7 endemic invertebrates

In addition, the introduced species diminish people's recreational enjoyment of wild places on the island. However, it is beyond AIGCFD's capacity to conduct quantitative monitoring of direct impacts.

Current rodent control efforts on Ascension are limited to mechanical traps and rodenticide bait stations deployed around the settlements, roads, footpaths and sensitive biodiversity sites. The type of rodenticide used is varied to prevent resistance developing, but the basic method of rodent control has changed little in decades. The result of this control is moderate and localised suppression of populations, but rodents are still present year-round and periodic booms occur following heavy rain. No control of rabbits, sheep or myna birds is currently being undertaken on Ascension.

The impact of introduced species is a problem faced by many countries. New Zealand are global-leaders in species control and are setting the bar both in ambition and achievement. Methods are moving on and Ascension is being left behind without access to expert advice.

### How the project will address problem

This project will enable Ascension to access the best available methods for non-native predator control and raise ambition of what can be achieved. Consultants Wildlife Management International (WMIL), who have been central to the world-leading work on New Zealand will visit Ascension to undertake a comprehensive assessment and produce tailored recommendations that reflect the island's habitat and capacity. Options for eradication will be explored and sufficient information compiled to allow informed stakeholder engagement. Training and mentoring will be provided to AIGCFD to embed new methods and set ambitious targets.

Specific project actions include:

- AIGCFD compile information on Ascension habitat maps, non-native predator and grazer distribution, their population dynamics and biodiversity impacts.
- WMIL visit Ascension to assess non-native populations, island habitat and current control efforts.
- WMIL work with AIGCFD team to develop and embed new control methods and meet key decision-makers on island
- WMIL produce report identifying opportunities for eradication with clear route map and sufficient information to progress to stakeholder engagement and funding application.
- WMIL produce protocols for improved control methods where eradication is not possible. Designed to be within AIGCFD's capacity and supported by training and mentoring.

#### Recognising and measuring success

This project would be successful if it provides the impetus, road map and stakeholder support for an eradication attempt where this is appropriate. Where eradication is not possible, a re-energised and more effective control programme that results in lower biodiversity impacts will be pursued.

Stretched resources mean direct monitoring of rat populations cannot be justified as it would come at the expense of control efforts. Instead, project success will be measured by:

- The number of eradication programmes progressed to the detailed planning phase
- The long-term removal rate of bait from stations as a proxy for local rat density

## PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

---

**Title** Dr  
**Name** Diane  
**Surname** Baum

**Organisation** Ascension Island Government

**Website (Work)** [REDACTED]

**Tel (Work)** [REDACTED]

**Email (Work)** [REDACTED]

**Address** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

# DPLR1\1026

Can Ascension be predator free?

## Section 1 - Project Title & Contact Details

---

### Q1. Project Title

Can Ascension be predator free?

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

Organisation

#### PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

---

<b>Title</b>	Dr
<b>Name</b>	Diane
<b>Surname</b>	Baum
<b>Organisation</b>	Ascension Island Government
<b>Website (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Tel (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Email (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Address</b>	[REDACTED]

#### GMS ORGANISATION

---

Type	Organisation
<b>Name</b>	Ascension Island Government
<b>Phone (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Email (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Website (Work)</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Address</b>	[REDACTED]

## Section 2 - Overseas Territory(ies)

---

### Q3. Overseas Territory (Guidance section 1.3):

Which UK Overseas Territory(ies) will your project be working in? Please note that in case of a non-permanent resident population you need to demonstrate a clear, meaningful, long-term link to the territory.

St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha\*

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

Ascension

In addition to the UKOT(s) you have indicated, will your project directly benefit any other UK OT(s) or country(ies)?

No

## Section 3 - Project Partners

---

### Q4. Project partners (Guidance section 3.2)

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

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

Diane Baum

---

**Lead Partner name (if  
applying as an  
organisation; Guidance  
section 3.1):**

Ascension Island Government Conservation and Fisheries Directorate  
(AIGCFD)

---

**Lead Partner Website (if  
applicable):**

www.ascension.gov.ac

---

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

Yes

---

**List other partners  
involved and where are  
they based (Guidance  
section 3.2):**

NA

---

Summary of roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project:

AIGCFD

-  Overall project management including budgeting and reporting
-  Collate existing information on predator abundance and control
-  Facilitate WMIL visit to Ascension
-  Organise and attend training sessions with the consultant
-  Organise stakeholder and public consultation

---

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

Checked

---

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

-  [Darwin local - Non-native Predators - Cover Letter](#)
-  12/02/2023
-  20:53:17
-  pdf 164.91 KB

---

## Section 4 - Project Summary & Description

### Q5. Project Summary (Guidance section 3.8)

Please provide a brief summary of your project. This may be used in communication activities and/or published online, if your application is successful.

Non-native predators and grazers pose a significant threat to Ascension's biodiversity. Current control efforts suppress rodent populations, but significant impacts remain. This project will draw on new techniques and expertise developed in New Zealand, the global leaders in introduced predator control. Consultants will assess the feasibility of eradicating non-native species from Ascension or alternatively recommended improved methods for adaptive control. The result will be Ascension adopting international best practice and reducing the impact of non-natives to the maximum extent possible.

### Q6. Description (Guidance section 2.1)

Please provide a description of your project, including:

- the overall objective
- the current situation and the problem the project is trying to address
- what success will look like and how you will measure it

Please be as specific as possible when describing the project, using quantified data and evidence where available. You may wish to consider: what are the specific threats to the environment that the project will attempt to address, and what should we know about these threats? What does your successful project look like? And how will you demonstrate whether and how your project has been successful?

## Overall objective

At the end of this project, Ascension will employ global best practice to reduce the impact of introduced predators on the island's biodiversity to the maximum extent possible. Eradication is the ultimate aim and will be pursued by AIGCFD if recommended by experts.

## Current situation/problem trying to address

Non-native species are the greatest threat to Ascension's terrestrial biodiversity. Black rat, house mouse, rabbit, sheep and myna birds were all introduced to Ascension following the discovery of the island by humans in 1501. Ascension's native wildlife and plants evolved in the absence of terrestrial predators and have poor natural defences. Introduced predators and grazers are identified as a major threat to the following biodiversity in the Ascension Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP):

Seven endemic plant species

Green turtle

Sooty tern

At least 7 endemic invertebrates

In addition, the introduced species diminish people's recreational enjoyment of wild places on the island. However, it is beyond AIGCFD's capacity to conduct quantitative monitoring of direct impacts.

Current rodent control efforts on Ascension are limited to mechanical traps and rodenticide bait stations deployed around the settlements, roads, footpaths and sensitive biodiversity sites. The type of rodenticide used is varied to prevent resistance developing, but the basic method of rodent control has changed little in decades. The result of this control is moderate and localised suppression of populations, but rodents are still present year-round and periodic booms occur following heavy rain. No control of rabbits, sheep or myna birds is currently being undertaken on Ascension.

The impact of introduced species is a problem faced by many countries. New Zealand are global-leaders in species control and are setting the bar both in ambition and achievement. Method are moving on and Ascension is being left behind without access to expert advice.

## How the project will address problem

This project will enable Ascension to access the best available methods for non-native predator control and raise ambition of what can be achieved. Consultants Wildlife Management International (WMIL), who have been central to the world-leading work on New Zealand will visit Ascension to undertake a comprehensive assessment and produce tailored recommendations that reflect the island's habitat and capacity. Options for eradication will be explored and sufficient information compiled to allow informed stakeholder engagement. Training and mentoring will be provided to AIGCFD to embed new methods and set ambitious targets.

## Specific project actions include:

- AIGCFD compile information on Ascension habitat maps, non-native predator and grazer distribution, their population dynamics and biodiversity impacts.
- WMIL visit Ascension to assess non-native populations, island habitat and current control efforts.
- WMIL work with AIGCFD team to develop and embed new control methods and meet key decision-makers on island
- WMIL produce report identifying opportunities for eradication with clear route map and sufficient information to progress to stakeholder engagement and funding application.
- WMIL produce protocols for improved control methods where eradication is not possible. Designed to be

within AIGCFD's capacity and supported by training and mentoring.

#### Recognising and measuring success

This project would be successful if it provides the impetus, road map and stakeholder support for an eradication attempt where this is appropriate. Where eradication is not possible, a re-energised and more effective control programme that results in lower biodiversity impacts will be pursued.

Stretched resources mean direct monitoring of rat populations cannot be justified as it would come at the expense of control efforts. Instead, project success will be measured by:

- The number of eradication programmes progressed to the detailed planning phase
- The long-term removal rate of bait from stations as a proxy for local rat density

**(Optional) Please upload any additional and supporting materials or files (such as maps of project sites, etc) below. Maximum of 5 pages:**

 [WMIL Quote - Ascension Island Key Invasive Species Feasibility Study - 10-2-2023 \(002\)](#)

 13/02/2023

 16:35:38

 pdf 617.6 KB

## Section 5 - Project Outcome(s)

---

### Q7. Project Outcome(s) (Guidance section 1.2)

**Successful Darwin Plus Local projects must demonstrate measurable outcomes in at least one of the themes of Darwin Plus, either by the end of the project or soon after through a credible plan.**

**Please tick which theme(s) of Darwin Plus your project underpins:**

Checked	<b>Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;</b>
Unchecked	<b>Climate change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;</b>
Unchecked	<b>Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment</b>
Checked	<b>Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.</b>

**Please justify your selection.**

This project will reduce Biodiversity loss by reducing the impact of one of the greatest threats to the

persistence of Ascension's endemic and protected species. This will be achieved by building Capability and Capacity within the AIG Conservation and Environmental Health Teams to undertake best-practice control methods following training and mentoring by international experts.

## Section 6 - Project Timeline

---

### Q8. Project timeline (Guidance section 2.2)

Please provide anticipated dates for the start and end of your planned project here. Please use the Darwin Plus Local Project Implementation Timetable Template (which can be downloaded below) to provide a list of the individual activities you have planned for this project, a brief description of what each activity entails, and the months in which the activities will be carried out. If the project involves only one activity (e.g. a purchase), please still provide project start and end dates (noting estimated times for procurement). Please note that your project will need to be completed by 31 March 2024.

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 3 months):
01 April 2023	31 March 2024	1 year

Please upload the completed Darwin Plus Local Project Implementation Timetable template with your proposed project activities below.

-  [R1-DPlus-Local-Implementation-Timetable- N on-native predators](#)
-  12/02/2023
-  17:43:03
-  pdf 133.48 KB

## Section 7 - Costs

---

### Q9. Costs (Guidance section 2.2 and please read the Finance Guidance)

Please provide a breakdown of costs to be funded through Darwin Plus Local (in GBP).

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

Yes

How much matched funding are you seeking and where from?

AIGCFD will provide the following in-kind contribution

- Staff costs - [REDACTED]
- Accommodation - [REDACTED]
- Transport during WMIL visit - [REDACTED]

Budget line	Explanation	Cost in GBP
<b>Staff costs:</b>	NA	████
<b>Overhead costs:</b>	NA	████
<b>Travel &amp; subsistence costs:</b>	Travel and subsistence visit for New Zealand-based consultant	██████
<b>Operating costs:</b>	NA	████
<b>Capital equipment:</b>	NA	████
<b>Consultancy costs:</b>	Predator control consultant	██████
<b>Total:</b>		██████

This section provides more information on the budget to help evaluators understand how you will use the funds you are requesting. You do not need to list all costs, but please list and detail costs of more than £1,000 per item below, under the appropriate budget line.

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

*No Response*

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

*No Response*

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

Flights to UK - █████  
 Accommodation in UK - █████  
 Flights to Ascension - █████  
 Subsistence costs 17 days @ █████ per day = █████  
 Car hire on Ascension 14 days @ █████ per day = █████

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

*No Response*

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

*No Response*

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

30 days of consultancy time @ █████ per day

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

*No Response*

If your project budget was prepared in another currency and converted to GBP, please provide the exchange rate, its source, and the date it was accessed:

Other currency:	Exchange rate:	Source of this exchange rate:	Date exchange rate accessed:
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response

**Darwin Plus Local has been created to build capacity and contribute to local economies in-territory.**

What % of the total will be spent in the OTs? 

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

No Response

## Section 8 - Local and National Priorities

### Q10. Local and national priorities

**Please explain how this project aligns with local and national priorities? You may wish to consider the project in the context of national environmental laws, objectives, strategies, territory specific agreements, action plans or policies.**

The Ascension Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) cites rodents and non-native predators as major threats and identifies control action as a priority for all of the following habitats or species:

- Turtle nesting beaches
- Seabird nesting sites
- Green Mountain National Park
- Endemic plants
- Land crabs
- Endemic invertebrates

The Biosecurity section of the BSAP includes a priority action to explore new and innovative methods to control non-native species.

The Ascension Biosecurity Strategy states that eradication of non-native species is the ultimate aim and should be pursued wherever feasible.

**Will the project take place on Government owned land or water?**

Yes

**Please attach evidence that you have Government support i.e. Letter of Support.**

 [ALG Letter of support - Darwin Local R1 - Non native predators](#)

 12/02/2023

 18:00:29

 pdf 144.58 KB

## Section 9 - Project Risks

## Q11. Project Risks

Please demonstrate your consideration of any risks involved in this project and how you intend to manage them. Depending on your project, you may wish to consider:

- Biosecurity risks – particularly for projects involving external equipment.
- Safeguarding risks – particularly for projects involving vulnerable groups such as children, older people or people with disabilities.

Risk	Mitigation
Injury or harm to AIGCFD or WMIL staff when undertaking surveys or deploying control methods.	Risk assessments will be prepared and followed before any survey or control work takes place. These will draw on the local knowledge of AIG and the expertise of WMIL.
Control methods harm humans or non-target species.	The control methods used would be recommended by WMIL considering safety and nontarget impacts. All safety requirements and guidance would be followed at all times.
The consultant concludes there are no opportunities for eradication or potential improvements in control methods within the capacity of AIGCFD.	Control methods on Ascension have not fundamentally changed in decades and so it is likely there will be scope for improvements given the advances being made in New Zealand. Even if improved control would require a significant increase in resources, this information will be presented to decision-makers on Ascension for them to decide what level of priority and funding is appropriate to address this issue.

Do you require more fields?

No

## Section 10 - Terms & Conditions

### Q12. Terms and conditions (Guidance section 3.10)

By applying for Darwin Plus Local you are adhering in full to the grant Terms and Conditions in full (available at: <https://dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk/apply> and as referenced in the Guidance at section 3.10). For information, the Terms and Conditions include requirements for all applicants to (amongst other requirements as per the full Terms and Conditions):

- Uphold a zero tolerance for inaction approach to tackling sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.
- Where appropriate, make all reasonable and adequate efforts to address gender inequality and other

power imbalances.

- Notify all cases of fraud and theft (whether proven or suspected) relating to the project to the Grant Administrator as soon as they identified.

**Please indicate you have read, and understood, and will adhere to the Terms and Conditions.**

Checked

**If your application is successful:** If your project application is successful, the Fund Administrator (NIRAS) will ask you to provide some financial evidence for due diligence checks before you receive your project grant. (Please see section 3.3 of the Darwin Plus Local Finance Guidance). Please be ready to provide this evidence promptly.

**Financial evidence for organisations:** Year-end financial statements, the latest management accounts or audited accounts (if you have these).

**Financial evidence for individuals:** Proof of identity such as a passport, ID card or driving licence and solvency (such as bank statements) and a police check.

## Section 11 - Certification

---

### Certification

**I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the statements made in this application are true and the information provided is correct.**

Checked

**I have the authority to submit an application on behalf of my organisation.**

Checked

**Name:** Diane Baum

---

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

---

**Signature (please upload e-signature)**

	<a href="#">Dee signature</a>
	12/02/2023
	18:03:44
	jpg 7.12 KB

---

**Date:** 12 February 2023

---

## Section 12 - Submission Checklist

---

### Checklist for submission

	<b>Check</b>
<b>I have read the Guidance documents, including the “Darwin Plus Local Guidance” and the “Darwin Plus Local Finance Guidance”.</b>	Checked
<b>If my proposed project takes place on public lands or water, I have uploaded a Letter of Support from Government.</b>	Checked
<b>I have uploaded a cover letter that details the information requested in the guidance (Guidance section 4.2 has information on what this cover letter should include).</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 summary budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP in the application form.</b>	Checked
<b>I have uploaded my project implementation timetable using the specific template provided.</b>	Checked
<b>(If copying and pasting into Flexi-Grant) I have checked that all my responses have been successfully copied into the online application form.</b>	Checked
<b>The application has been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).</b>	Checked
<b>I have checked the Darwin Plus website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.</b>	Checked
<b>I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Plus website.</b>	Checked

### **We would like to keep in touch!**

**Please check this box if you would be happy for the lead applicant (Flexi-Grant Account Holder) and project leader (if different) to be added to our mailing list. Through our mailing list we share updates on upcoming and current application rounds under Darwin Plus. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share project news. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.**

Unchecked

### **Data protection and use of personal data**

Information supplied in the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the **Privacy Notice**, available from the [Forms and Guidance Portal](#).

This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising Darwin Plus including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Project Title: Can Ascension be predator free?

### Darwin Plus Local

Provide a **Project Implementation Timetable** that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the following table as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project. Projects are based on UK Financial Years (**1 April – 31 March** - therefore starts April 2023).

Please add/remove columns to reflect the length of your project. For each activity (add/remove rows as appropriate) indicate the number of months it will last, and shade only the months in which an activity will be carried out. The workplan can span multiple pages if necessary.

Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	No. of months	UK Financial Year 2023/24											
			Calendar Year 2023									Calendar Year 2024		
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1	Compile information on Ascension habitat maps, non-native predator and grazer distribution, their population dynamics and biodiversity impacts.	2												
2	WMIL visit Ascension and assess habitat and predator distribution.	1												
3	WMIL work with AIGCFD team to develop and embed new control methods.	1												
4	Meetings between AIGCFD, WMIL and key decision-makers on island	1												
5	WMIL produce report identifying opportunities for eradication	6												
6	WMIL produce protocols for improved control methods where eradication is not possible	6												

Project Title: Can Ascension be predator free?

Activity #	Description (max 25 words)	No. of months	UK Financial Year 2023/24												
			Calendar Year 2023									Calendar Year 2024			
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
7	AIGCFD begin implementing new protocols	2													