



Information Note

Project Reporting

Interviewing a local Cordyceps respondent in Bhutan, Credit: P. Cannon, CABI

Key Messages

- All projects that receive funding from the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund are required to write reports.
- This information note aims to act as a guide for the different types of technical reporting under each of the schemes.
- The specific reporting requirements for your project depend on the scheme it is funded under, as the templates and timing for the reports can vary.
- It is important to check the relevant website regularly as all templates are updated annually. Please ensure that you are submitting your report using the latest available template covering the correct reporting period.
- Some reports such as the Annual and Final Reports are subject to independent reviews. The Review templates can be found on the fund websites alongside the report templates. You might find it helpful to consider these when writing your own reports to help you understand how your reports will be assessed.
- The final section of this information note highlights what to do and what to avoid to help you produce strong reports for your project.

The Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund are UK government grant schemes.

The Darwin Initiative helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment through locally based projects worldwide.

<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/>

Darwin Plus funds projects that aim to protect unique biodiversity and improve resilience to climate change within the UK Overseas Territories.

<https://dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk/>

The IWT Challenge Fund provides support to projects around the world that are tackling the illegal wildlife trade.

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/>

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 blog.darwininitiative.org.uk/



'Rice to the Occasion!' Outreach Opportunity Programme in Karpem village, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia, Credit: Sansom Mlup Prey

Project reporting for Darwin, Darwin Plus and the IWT Challenge Fund

This information note covers the reporting requirements for projects funded under the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund.

As a condition of receiving funding from the UK Government, all Darwin and IWT projects are required to write reports. Reports can broadly be categorised as **technical** or **financial**. This information note provides guidance on **technical reporting** only.

Further information on the **financial reporting (or claim form)** requirements for your project can be found in the relevant terms and conditions, Finance for Darwin & IWT guidance and claim form templates which can be found on the fund websites:

- **Darwin Initiative resources**
- **Darwin Plus resources**
- **IWT Challenge Fund resources**

The specific reporting requirements for your project depend on the scheme it is funded under, as the templates and timing for the reports can vary. As well as covering key reporting requirements for all types of projects, this information note will act as a guide on how to avoid common reporting mistakes and provide appropriate evidence.

The reporting templates for all projects can be found on the fund websites:

- **Darwin Initiative reporting templates**
- **Darwin Plus reporting templates**
- **IWT Challenge Fund reporting templates**

It is important to check the relevant website regularly as all templates are updated annually. Please ensure that you are submitting your report using the latest available template covering the correct reporting period.



Members of the Pimpollo community, Bolivia, preparing bags of soil for planting, Credit: A. Monro and RBG Kew

Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund: Main Project Funding

Main projects supported under Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund are required to produce reports twice annually (Half Year Report and Annual Report), as well as a report at the project end (Final Report). The Half Year and Annual Reports have **fixed dates regardless of your project start date**. The deadline for the Final Report will vary depending on your project end date.

Half Year Reports

Report type: Half year report

Deadline: 31st October

Purpose: A brief update on project progress and provides an opportunity to raise any queries or issues.

Half Year Reports are submitted every year and outline the progress that a project has made since project start or since the last Annual Report update (covering period April to September).

If the project began less than 6 months ago, it is expected you report on the progress since the start date until the end of September.

Half Year Reports should be 2-3 pages in length and in your report you are asked to:

- **Outline progress** against the agreed project implementation timetable (which you included with the application form).
- Give details of any **notable problems, unexpected developments and lessons learnt**.
- Highlight whether you expect any **significant underspend** in your budget.
- Raise any **other issues** related to the project, Darwin and IWT's management, monitoring or financial procedures.

Annual Reports

Report type: Annual Report

Deadline: 30th April

Purpose: Details the progress against planned activities and achievements **over the last year**, with clear reference to the project's expected Outputs and Outcome and indicators in your logframe, with supporting evidence provided.

Annual Reports are submitted every year and outline project progress between **1st April and 30th March** since project start (if the project started on or after 1st April) or since the last Annual Report (if the project started more than a year before). This may cover the same period as the previous Half Year Report, but the Annual Report is different because:

1. More detail is required in the Annual Report compared to the Half Year Report.
2. Annual Reports are subject to an independent review. Reviews provide an independent assessment of project progress for the period covered by the Annual Report (see page 8 for more information on the review process).

Annual Reports should be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes. In your reports, you are asked to:

- Comment on the development and maintenance of **project partnerships**.
- Provide an overview of **project progress** over the last year, providing **evidence in support of any statements** within the body of the report or as supporting annexes.
- Monitor critical assumptions and risks to project implementation.
- Outline how your project is contributing to the various conventions, treaties or agreements supported by Darwin and the IWT Challenge Fund.
- Describe how your project is contributing to **gender equality** and a **reduction in poverty**.
- Include a tabular update of project progress against the **logframe**.
- Provide an **overview of budget spend** over the reporting period.



Training of local NGO members on the identification of primate and gunshot sounds, Cameroon, Credit: WildCRU



White Hawkfish, *Amblycirrhitus earnshawii*, Credit: Shallow Marine Survey Group

Final Reports

Report type: Final Report

Deadline: Typically with 3 months of end date (but can be under 3 months)

Purpose: Details project achievement **over the full grant period**, with clear reference to the project's expected Outputs and Outcome and indicators in your logframe, with supporting evidence provided.

Final Reports should be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes. The Final Report should be standalone and cover the full project period – it should not rely on previous reporting. What is asked for in the Final Report is similar to what is asked for in the Annual Report, but the key differences are:

- A greater focus on achievements rather than progress to date.
- All projects are asked to report against “standard measures” – but the specific measures vary depending on the fund your project is supported under (i.e. Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus, or IWT Challenge Fund).
- Darwin projects are asked to report against some additional indicators/measures.

Like Annual Reports, Final Reports are subject to an independent desk-based review (see page 8).

Final Report Deadline

Unlike the Half Year and Annual Reports, the Final Report does not have a fixed submission date: it is usually due within three months of the project end date, however this is dependent on where the project end date falls in relation to other fixed reporting dates.

Depending on when the project finishes, the project may be required to provide an Annual report in addition to a Final report in its final year.

For example:

If the project ends on or before **30th April**, then the final report will be due within 3 months of project end and there would be no need to submit an annual report on 30th April of that year.

However, if the project ends in **May or June**, there are two options available:

1. The project can submit an Annual Report in April. They will then have 3 months from project end to submit a Final Report.
2. The project can forego completing an Annual Report in its Final year and only complete a Final Report. However, this would be due by 31st July at the latest (i.e. less than 3 months after the project end date).

In addition to Main Projects under the Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund, there are also some additional **small schemes** under the Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus which have **different reporting requirements**.

Darwin Initiative: Partnership Project Funding

Report type: Darwin Partnership Project Report

Deadline: This report should be completed and submitted within two funding Rounds as part of a Main Project Darwin Stage 1 Application

Purpose: To provide an overview of the Partnership Project

Partnership Projects are small grants intended to help organisations who are new to the Darwin Initiative to develop their application. Partnership Projects are only required to complete one report, and this should be submitted alongside the Stage 1 application for a Main Darwin Project.



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The report should be a maximum of 4 pages and provide:

- An overview of project activities.
- A description of any encountered setbacks or difficulties.
- An explanation of how the Partnership Project influenced the development of the proposed Main Project.



Commelinaceae or spiderwort in Argentina, Credit: G. Prance



Los Cedros Biological Reserve in Ecuador provides protection for sloths from hunting for the bushmeat trade, Credit: PRIMENET

Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus: Fellowship Funding

Darwin Fellows are expected to submit two reports - the Interim Report and the Final Report. The timing of these varies and will depend on the schedule of the Fellowship.

Darwin Fellows are expected to prepare these reports in conjunction with the Lead Organisation.

Fellowship Interim Reports

Report type: Darwin Fellowship Interim Report

Deadline: Within 1 month of halfway point

Purpose: A brief update on Fellowship progress and providing an opportunity to raise any queries or issues.

Fellowship Interim Reports should be a maximum of 3 pages in length. Fellows are asked to provide an **update on progress, outline achievements** and progress to date, and lay out the **next steps**.

Fellowship Final Reports

Report type: Darwin Fellowships Final Report

Deadline: Within 1 month of end date

Purpose: An overview of the full Fellowship, with supporting evidence provided.

Fellowship Final Reports should be a maximum of 6 pages, excluding annexes. Fellows are asked to comment on the overall achievements of the Fellowship, any lessons learnt, and the impact of the Fellowship.

“ Darwin Fellows are expected to submit two reports - the Interim Report and the Final Report. The timing of these varies and will depend on the schedule of the Fellowship

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Birhane Geremew in Ethiopia during University of Huddersfield led project focusing on participatory forest management, Credit: Indrias Getachew

Project Report Reviews

Annual and Final Reports are subject to an independent desk-based review.

Reviewers refer to the report they are reviewing (Annual or Final) as well as your original application form (including the logframe), as this forms part of your contract with Defra. In addition, they consider any agreed Change Requests for your project. They complete a Review using a template and assess the progress your project has made, either to date (in the case of an Annual Report Review) or overall (in the case of a Final Report Review), providing an overall score.

The Review templates can be found on the fund websites alongside the report templates. You might find it helpful to consider these when writing your own reports to help you understand how your reports will be assessed.

In order to score well, projects must:

- **Refer to the guiding notes under each question**, as these will help you understand what each section is looking for.
- Ensure you provide a **clear narrative report** in addition to a **tabular account of project progress against the logframe (if your project has a logframe)**.

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Ensure reporting is honest, with frank assessment of lessons learned, whilst remembering reports are published online

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- Answer all questions as best possible, ensuring you remind yourself what is included in your original application form (i.e. what you said you would do).
- Ensure any changes to your project compared to your original application form are clearly explained (or have approval via Change Request if needed).
- Ensure reporting is honest, with **frank assessment of lessons learned**, whilst remembering reports are published online.
- Provide **supporting evidence** with your report.
- Be mindful that project reports are published online. Personal information is redacted prior to upload, but it is helpful if you **clearly highlight any sensitive information** that should not be made public.

The next section will provide further information on these key considerations – what to do and what to avoid - to help you produce strong reports.

Change Requests

Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund projects are often operating in difficult environments, and sometimes changes need to be made to ensure success. We recognise that this can also require financial and/or administrative changes. The Change Request process exists to allow projects to adapt to changing and challenging circumstances.

Projects can request changes to their budgets, project staff, logframe or other elements of their project design. The requested change must be clearly justified, outlining how what you are proposing differs from the agreed project design, and be clear how your project would be impacted should the change not be agreed.

Further information on the types of amendments for which a Change Request is required can be found in the Change Request template itself (found on the same page as report templates) and in the **"Finance for Darwin & IWT"** Guidance.

Overview of all reporting requirements

Fund	Project type	Report	Deadline	Subject to independent review and scoring?
Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund	Main Project	Half Year Report	31 st October	N
		Annual Report	30 th April	Y
		Final Report	Within 3 months of end date (but can be shorter)	Y
Darwin Initiative	Partnership Project	Partnership Report	Upon submission of Main Project application	Reviewed as part of application process only
Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus	Fellowship	Interim Report	Within 1 month of halfway point	N
		Final Report	Within 1 month of end date	Y



Spiny leaves of Zanthoxylum thomasianum, Credit: Thomas Heller



Community seedbank project established in Analavory, Benin, Credit: Michelle Andriamahazo

Helpful Hints and Tips for Clear Reporting

Read your original application before you start

Your full application form (including your logframe and other supporting documentation) forms the contract between your project and Defra.

If you have made significant changes to your project (Outcome, Outputs, key personnel and/or budget) you should have agreed this with Defra via the Change Request process (see box on page 9). If you have made significant changes and have not had agreement for this please contact Darwin or IWT directly with a Change Request form which can be found here (the template is the same for all projects): <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/reporting-forms-change-request-forms-and-terms-and-conditions/>

Use your logframe

We will evaluate your progress against your logical framework (or logframe). You should report against the indicators you proposed and evidence to support this should be presented in annexes. The narrative report should clearly explain the role the project played in affecting any observed and reported on change – for example, changes in knowledge, species abundance or environmental indicators.

Examples of suitable reporting

In logframe:

Indicator in logframe	Progress in 20/21
Number of local people employed by the National park increases from 10 (2019 baseline) to 60 by 2022	In 2020/21 a further 40 local people were employed taking the total to 50 in 2020/21. Annex 4 provides the updated Management Plan on which page 73 provides data on number of local people employed.

In body of report:

“The project provided jobs and enterprise training to 56 individuals in the project period. Follow up surveys from participants suggested that the training had directly contributed to 23 individuals securing paid employment on a casual basis and directly contributed to 5 individuals securing employment on a permanent basis. The training was for 10 days over a 2 month period and covered issues such as ‘Customer Service skills’, ‘bookkeeping’ and ‘Computer use’. **Annex 5** provides the training manual and **Annex 6** provides the survey results.”



Cotton farmers in Ethiopia, Credit: L. King

Evidence is important

Try not to rely on 'because we said so' reporting. Wherever possible, support your statements with evidence and clearly link to this evidence in your reporting. Annexes should be named and/or clearly numbered, and you should select evidence carefully to support your reporting rather than sharing all project documents.

The evidence you use will likely vary depending on what you are demonstrating. Data triangulation, i.e. presenting evidence from multiple sources, may strengthen your claims. If possible, try to draw on independent evidence i.e. government statistics, material presented to other donor funders.

Evidence used to support statements of progress could include:

- Government documents
- Illustrative quotes from project beneficiaries/stakeholders
- Figures including graphs and tables
- Meeting minutes of Steering Committees/workshops etc.
- Photos and/or videos
- Newspaper articles
- Maps
- Project authored reports and academic papers
- Independent authored reports



Diploria labyrinthiformis, Credit: Charles Sheppard

What to do and what to avoid

What to do

1) Provide evidence to demonstrate where claims come from

"We are making good progress towards our goal, as demonstrated by data provided in table X."

"We carried out focus groups with local residents about their perceptions on local wildlife. We found that attitudes have improved since the project start. For example, one participant said '*I no longer feel scared walking to my field*'."

2) Move beyond reporting on outputs and focus on what has changed as a result of your project

"The workshop provided X community members with knowledge about sustainable pest management. Evidence from a follow-up survey indicated that chemical pesticide use has declined by 50%, which is expected to have positive impacts in local biodiversity (FAO, 2013). Crop yields for previously affected crops have increased by between 10-30%; thus, demonstrating a contribution to poverty alleviation."

What to avoid

As well as it being important to bear in mind what you *should do* – but it is equally important to consider what you *should not do* in your reporting.

1) Writing general statements without evidence

"We are making good progress."

"We believe this is true."

"We think that progress is adequate."

2) Only listing activity outputs without reference to the outcome of the work

- Number of workshops
- Number of plans created
- Number of maps generated

This may all be necessary first steps in securing change, but unless you follow up and present evidence of the effect this activity has had, then your statement of impact remains unsupported.

3) Talking about poverty as being only a monetary issue

Poverty is multi-dimensional with people moving in and out of poverty. What affects people's poverty status will change. Projects often assume that the only way to measure poverty alleviation is through reporting on monetary measures. However, projects should also include non-monetary measures and outline how the project has contributed to the wider components of wellbeing such as health and nutrition, literacy, and governance.

A project can contribute to poverty alleviation in several ways and may directly and/or indirectly benefit local communities. In both the Annual and Final Reports, it is important outline:

- How the project is contributing/contributed to improved human development and wellbeing.
- Who the beneficiaries are and how many are receiving/received benefits as a result of your project
- Whether the benefits provided are direct or indirect, and how they are being measured.

Project reports should provide clear evidence on how the project has contributed to poverty alleviation.

Additional information on poverty alleviation in the context of biodiversity conservation projects can be found in the **Darwin Initiative Poverty Information Note**.

4) Inadequately addressing gender

The International Development (Gender Equality Act) came into force in May 2014, ensuring that gender equality is an explicit objective in UK Government funded projects, including all projects funded under Darwin Initiative and IWT Challenge Fund. All projects should be able to demonstrate, where relevant, their contribution to gender equality and social inclusion.



Hector Keller speaking with Guarani during the Eden project in Bodelva, Argentina, Credit: G. Prance

Summary of Key Messages

This information note has been developed to help Darwin, Darwin Plus and IWT Challenge Fund projects understand the reporting requirements under each scheme and act as a guide on how to avoid common reporting mistakes and provide appropriate evidence.

We want to support projects in their reporting and encourage the use of the advice and tips included in this information note.

Top Tips

- Ensure you provide a clear narrative report in addition to a tabular account of project progress against the logframe.
- Provide supporting evidence with your report, ensuring that any statements of progress are clearly supported by relevant evidence.
- Read your original application and current logframe before writing your report, ensuring that any significant changes to the Outcome, Outputs, key personnel and the budget have been approved via the formal change request process.

- Use your logframe - project progress is evaluated against the logframe, we encourage projects to clearly report against the proposed indicators.
- Please check the relevant fund websites prior to submitting your report to ensure that you are using the latest version of the template (these are updated annually) and the correct one for your project.

This learning note was produced by NIRAS-LTS International www.ltsi.co.uk

For more information on the Darwin Initiative see www.darwininitiative.org.uk

For more information on Darwin Plus see www.dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk

For more information on the IWT Challenge Fund see www.iwt.challengefund.org.uk