



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



IWT Challenge Fund Stage 1 Webinar

20th July 2022

Overview

On Wednesday 20th July, two Stage 1 webinars for IWT Challenge Fund projects were hosted (one in the UK morning, one in the UK afternoon). The webinars provided applicants interested in applying to Round 9 of the IWT Challenge Fund with the following:

- An introduction to the IWT Challenge Fund and overview of the fund priorities and project requirements;
- How to work with UK Embassies and British High Commissions;
- An overview of the application process, including how to apply and where to locate the guidance and forms;
- Key things to consider for their Stage 1 application;
- The assessment criteria and application scoring process;
- What to expect if they are invited to Stage 2.

The slides and a recording from both sessions can be found on the [IWT Challenge Fund website](#).

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IWT Challenge Fund St1 Webinar Agenda

Agenda Item
Welcome & Introductions
Introduction to the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
Role of UK Embassies and British High Commissions
Questions
Overview of application process
Final Questions & Close

Notes on the IWT Challenge Fund webinar

The session was repeated to allow for different time zones.

Wednesday 20th July, 9am BST (UK morning session)

A total of 77 people registered, and 51 people were able to attend. See Annex 2 for details on the spread of people attending the webinar.

Wednesday 20th July, 4pm BST (UK afternoon session)

A total of 53 people registered, and 35 were able to attend. See Annex 2 for details on the spread of people attending the webinar.

Webinar Q&A:

Applicant organisations, organisational structure and track record

Is there any limit on how many IWT Challenge Fund grants one organisation can receive and does the number of previously won IWT Challenge Fund grants affect the assessment of new grant application?

At the review stage, your application is judged on technical merit and the number of grants previously won will not be taken into account. Following the technical review stage, successful applications will be reviewed by a Programme Board who may consider the diversity of spread and funding being fairly allocated. However, there are no specific limits on multiple awards being given to the same organisation.

My organisation has both USA 501c3 status, and UK charity status. Most of the funding comes from USA, if we apply through our UK org, which shows less funding, will that be a negative? Or can we apply from the USA org?

Organisations from both the UK and USA are eligible to apply. The decisions on which branch of your organisation should be specified by the lead partner needs to be taken by the applicant, but we would encourage you to consider the amount of funding you can request and demonstrable annual turnover in your audited accounts. If your UK funding is lower you may consider applying through your USA branch. However, please note the organisation that applies for funding will be responsible for administering the grant and distributing funds to project partners. You should also consider exchange rates as the grant will be administered in Pound Sterling.

If a new organisation applies with another partner, how can they build up evidence of completed projects as a Lead Partner?

As a partner on a project you would still be able to demonstrate some financial capability, as you will be managing their own budgets. However, if you are struggling to find a track record to put in your application, get in touch with us at BCF-IWTCF@niras.com and we may be able to support as Defra are keen to support small, local organisations.

Can I apply as Lead Partner (organisation), with myself as Lead Applicant, and partner with another Partner to manage the budget and have a role in governance. Or should the partner be the Lead Partner, and myself Lead Applicant?

The Lead Partner must be an organisation – this organisation will receive grant payments and is responsible for overall delivery of the grant. This organisation must provide a track record of finances – and so the organisation who is in charge of budget and governance should probably be the named Lead Partner (organisation). The Project Leader (an individual) doesn't necessarily need to be based at the Lead Partner organisation.

Are social enterprises/Community Interest Companies eligible to apply as Lead partner?

Yes, both are eligible to apply. Please look at the Financial Guidance for further information on the criteria on financial requirements.

Can the submission include one or two co-applicants? Or another implementing partner who is not a co-applicant?

In terms of people applying collaboratively, the project does need to be submitted by a Lead Partner (an organisation) who will be responsible for the administration of the grant and as the single point to receive funding. However, we do strongly encourage relevant partnerships at the organisation level and for leadership team we also welcome co-Project Leaders but it is helpful for us to have a named Project Leader.

Can we work as a sub-grantee on a Main project and lead an Evidence project?

Yes, there are no specific restrictions on how many applications you are involved in. If you are successful at Stage 1 we may ask for further information on how you expect to be involved with the multiple projects.

Eligible species

Concerning the species the project is focussing on, if you focus on multiple species groups (with multiple species per group), what would be the clearest way to upload this on Flexi-Grant?

We recommend that you provide as much information as possible on the specific species your project aims to focus on, though if you are working at a higher level or focusing on a specific group of species (e.g. orchids) grouping may make most sense. By being as specific as possible, you can help demonstrate to the IWT Advisory Group that you understand the context you are working in as well as help them gauge the potential impact of your project.

Can we apply for a project focusing on game birds for hunting?

Please refer to our definition of illegal wildlife trade (IWT) in the guidance. The IWT Challenge Fund can only fund projects focusing on species which are illegally traded. In this specific case it would depend on whether or not hunted game birds are classified as IWT in your focus country.

Would a project that targets illegal trade through demand reduction activities and reduces demand for legally traded species be eligible?

Your application should focus on the demand for the illegally traded species. Any impact on the legal trade would be considered a bi-product of the project. In general, you should explain what the impact of the project on other species may be but yes, this would be eligible.

Which scheme to apply for

If a project is based on gaps identified in an ongoing IWT Challenge Fund project, should we apply for an Evidence, Main or Extra project?

This is dependent on what the project aims to work on and could fall into any of the schemes. For further information relating to the specific criteria of each scheme, please see the Round 9 Guidance.

If a project was previously funded by the IWT Challenge Fund, can we apply for a "Main" grant to further develop and slightly scale up the proof of concept, or should all previously funded projects apply for the "Extra" grant?

There is no requirement for you to apply to the Extra grant and it is perfectly acceptable to scale up via the Main grant. Any follow-on grant should be discrete and innovative, and your application should make clear how the new project is distinct from your previous project (rather than simply continuing work carried out on a previous project). For example, it may be based on the same species or geographical area but you should explain how the work is new in your application.

Country Eligibility

If you work in both Upper Middle-Income and Low Income Countries, does that still count for the 70% projects allocated to Low Income and Lower-Middle Income Countries

If your proposed project is working in an Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC), you need to make it very clear how you meet the additional criteria for work in a UMIC (outlined on page 29 of the Guidance) but also how the money will be split between focus countries.

Can an organisation working in a middle income country participate? Can it participate by sharing know-how with countries with low income?

Lower Middle Income Countries are eligible and don't need to meet additional criteria, but projects applying to work in UMICs must clearly demonstrate how they meet the additional criteria. These are outlined on page 29 of the guidance and repeated here:

Upper Middle-Income countries (UMICs) are eligible, however, projects applying to work in a UMIC must clearly demonstrate a stronger case for support. This includes operating in areas of high importance for biodiversity and a clear poverty reduction need.

Such applications must also clearly demonstrate that they will also:

- advance knowledge, evidence and impact in Least Developed or Low-Income Countries, or*
- contribute to a global public good, for example by advancing understanding and/or strengthening the knowledge base related to biodiversity conservation/sustainable use and poverty reduction, or*
- contribute to serious and unique advancements on a critical issue as a result of specific circumstances of the upper-middle income country that could not be made elsewhere.*

Is a cross-border area between two countries eligible for funding under the IWT Challenge Fund if one of the countries is not on the eligible list?

The IWT Challenge Fund can only support the work in the eligible countries, listed on page 30 of the Guidance. To work in the cross-border area, you would have to be clear how the work in the ineligible country would fit in the wider work and meet any costs for activities focused there from matched funding.

I am from Sri Lanka. Is it possible to fund for to combat illegal wild Orchid trade?

Work in Sri Lanka and on orchids is eligible for support under the IWT Challenge Fund.

Would proposals outside the Geographical focus area not eligible for Round 9?

The IWT Challenge Fund can only support projects working in the eligible countries outlined on page 30 of the Guidance.

Does the IWT Challenge Fund projects working on internal IWT – i.e. trade within one country?

The IWT Challenge Fund accepts applications working both nationally and internationally. A key consideration for applicants wanting to focus on domestic IWT is to clearly demonstrate in your application that your work would be addressing illegal trade – i.e. by outlining the specific national laws which apply.

For an evidence project focussed on a Low Income country, can our researchers be based out of a non-eligible country (e.g. the UK/US)? There would be costs on the ground spent in a Low Income country, and others spent on staffing in the UK/US. What % should we look to spend in country?

It is acceptable to have staff based in ineligible countries. There is a strong focus of the fund for money to be spent in country to lead to on the ground impact, but there is often a strong argument to use international staff as their work (for example on desk-based research or project management) will be contributing to project implementation and impact in eligible countries, and for that reason these costs are eligible. It is hard to give a specific percentage and what is appropriate will vary on a case by case basis. If you do wish to include costs for international staff, we ask that you clearly specify why you have chosen this structure and why it is necessary. We strongly encourage projects to work with in-country partners to maximise in-country spend.

Poverty Reduction

Does your definition of poverty reduction include dimensions such as improving public health?

Yes, it definitely does. Our information note on poverty helps define what we mean by poverty. This was developed for our sister scheme the Darwin Initiative also applies to the IWT Challenge Fund and can be found here:

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>

How do you advise that an organisation links IWT and poverty reduction aspect for a strong application?

It is difficult for us to advise on a one size fits all approach as all projects address this differently. You may want to consider how people are affected by IWT in terms of livelihoods or in terms of access to justice or security and governance. Please note we interpret “poverty reduction” quite broadly, not just in terms of income/monetary wealth,

so please check the Round 9 Guidance for further information. Examples of how previous projects have addressed this can also be found on the IWT Challenge Fund website under the “Projects” tab.

Finance

What guidance can you give on providing an accurate budget figure at Stage 1 and how much budget change can there be between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

As much as possible we like to see an accurate budget at Stage 1 but we understand amendments may need to be made between Stage 1 and Stage 2. There are no specific limits on how much the budget figures can change. If you do make changes to your budget between each stage, you should clearly state why these changes have been made within your cover letter.

Is it acceptable for a large part of the budget to contribute to the salary of the project delivery team?

We would allow you to include salary time for staff involved on the project for delivery of the grant. There is no specific percentage guide for budget on a particular budget line as each project is different and requires different structures. We do not ask for the full budget at Stage 1 but feel free to have a look at the Stage 2 budget template as you may find it helpful to draft a Stage 1 budget and give you an idea of what we are looking for.

What is your view on funding for salaries and time of key participants?

It is completely acceptable to cover salary costs of project partners involved however please see section 1.8.7 of the Finance Guidance relating to sitting payments. This section outlines that we are unable to fund some costs which are supplementary to salary of things such as attendance at meetings.

Can we apply for funding for a project that will cover construction of facilities if that relates to IWT and poverty reduction?

In order for the project to be eligible, any construction would have to relate to IWT and poverty reduction. Construction of facilities is possible but we do have an indicative limit of 10% on capital spend – anything over this would have to be clearly justified. When reviewing your project, the IWT Advisory Group may question how this will be sustained following your project so please do consider this in your project design. If construction funds will be more than 10% you should look to cover this via match funding.

Other

Are there examples of when a previously funded IWT Challenge Fund project builds on activities conducted under the previous grant working in the same countries on the same species with the same agencies?

Yes, there are examples where projects have applied for follow up funding for a previous project. For further information on previous IWT Challenge Fund projects please look under the "Projects" tab on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

If considering an evidence based project, that seeks to address or highlight a current knowledge/evidence gap, what level of evidence is required to highlight this is a cause of concern in the first place and will benefit IWT reduction going forward?

It can be difficult to demonstrate a knowledge gap so we would ask that you clearly explain what the knowledge gap is in the best way possible and how you seek to address it. Further information on the criteria for Evidence projects can be found in the Round 9 Guidance.

Does Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing / Marine Protected Areas (MPA) protection qualify as Illegal Wildlife Trade?

You should make it clear in your application how your project will tackle the illegal trade of a species then it will be appropriate for funding under this round. In terms of MPA protection, this could also be funded under the Darwin Initiative. Please have a look at the criteria for the various Biodiversity Challenge Funds to see which would be most relevant for your project.

If we are resubmitting and in response to the feedback, can we still include a Letter of Support as additional material?

Letters of support are not expected at Stage 1 but if it is a response to specific feedback then we would encourage you to submit this with your application, ensuring any additional materials submitted are within the 5 page limit.

The Extra scheme requires the application to demonstrate a clear scaling pathway, building on good evidence from smaller projects to scale further. Could you please clarify what is considered as "good evidence"? Does the smaller project need to show success at the Impact level or Output level?

Across all three schemes, applicants are expected to have a specific Outcome but we do not typically ask for demonstrated success at the impact level. There may be a higher level Impact that the project is contributing to. Evidence towards progress to Outcome would be clear enough.

Concerning the logframe, to be sure, no activities should be added in Stage 1?

Yes, that is correct. There are different templates for Stage 1 and Stage 2. The templates can be found under the “Resources” tab on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

Are the three criteria of IWT impact, Poverty Reduction, Technical merit weighted equally?

Yes, all three criteria for funding are weighted equally. Further information on scoring can be found within the Guidance and you should consider how your project addresses the points outlined within your application.

How many hours do you recommend reserving to apply for the fund?

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide a definitive answer here. This will be very much dependent on the stage you are of the design process and to which scheme you are applying. It may be worth reaching out to previous projects for guidance on this to see if they can provide insights.

How does the IWT Challenge Fund view projects with a strong research angle? Should research-focussed projects go for Evidence and not for Main?

Projects with a strong proportion of funding supporting research may fit best under the Evidence scheme that is not to say that it wouldn't be eligible for a Main project.

Will there be a round 10 of the fund?

Our current plans are to run a funding Round 10 but all future decisions are subject to ministerial approval and funding available. All funding rounds will be communicated through our social media channels and mailing lists so we would recommend you connect via these platforms to stay up to date with the latest information on the fund.

Where can you access the paper format of the round one application form please?

Both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 application forms in Word format can be found under the “Apply” tab on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

What is deadline for applying to the IWT Challenge Fund?

Monday 22nd August 2022 23:59 BST.

Will the recording of this webinar be made available later?

Yes, the recording and proceedings of both webinars will be made available on the IWT Challenge Fund website after the event.

Please can you provide further information on the IWT Challenge Fund's requirements for evidence?

For all three schemes within the fund (Evidence, Main and Extra), we would like to see clear evidence of how you will measure progress within your project but also in terms of evidence for the necessity of the work you are proposing. The Evidence grant is specifically designed for projects which gather evidence to design an intervention. For further information, please check the Round 9 Guidance.

Selected Webinar Feedback

Following the completion of the webinar, detailed feedback was requested from participants. This is summarised below.

How useful did you find the webinar?

UK morning session: 14 attendees provided feedback. 9 attendees reported finding the webinar very useful and 5 attendees responded that it was moderately useful. No attendees fed back that it was not useful.

UK afternoon session: 11 attendees provided feedback. 9 reported finding the webinar very useful, and 2 attendees responded that it was moderately useful. No attendees fed back that it was not useful.

Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

UK morning session

- Being able to ask questions during the session was very useful.
- Information on the administrative issue of what can and cannot be done in Stage 1.
- Clarification on eligibility and how assessment is made for new start up organisations.
- Overview of the application process and listening to questions asked by others.
- Information on the eligibility to apply this funding and specific issue related to targeted species.
- The explanations given on the types, eligibility and the procedural tips that would come in handy when applying were very useful.
- Learning that you are open to questions via email and telephone is helpful. The level of knowledge all the panellists have was quite evident and appreciated.
- The requirements and clarifications on some aspects related to the application process.
- Given how substantial the application guidelines and documents are, it was helpful to have the team talk through the process, and outline the process according to stages.
- It was useful to hear clarification on key focus areas of the fund.
- The process of the application and the guidance on how to successfully complete it was useful.

UK afternoon session

- The conversation was very good and helped to write proposals.
- It was useful to hear the differences to Round 9 compared to previous rounds.
- The Q&A session was very helpful.
- The webinar was very comprehensive, covering different areas and questions.
- The session was useful in breaking down the application process.
- The explanations were very clear and informative.
- Great responses to questions and good clarity on criteria.

- It was very informative and exceptionally well prepared.
- The Q&A was great.
- The session provided further clarification on the grant process and contact with the local UK embassy.

Please share your thoughts on what you think could be improved

UK morning session

- Further insights into what approaches are preferred by the committee would be helpful.
- Can there be an easier way for the tedious application process.
- It would be useful to provide more information on the slide additional to what has been explained in the Guidance.
- Start-up organisations should have a different window opportunity for accessing the Challenge Fund.
- More time to discuss, I think we need 30 minutes more.
- How the IWT can impact the poverty enhancement and other purposed could be elaborated in depth.
- I would like to be able to find examples of what is being and has been funded.
- Please improve the requirements for Extra funds on the IWT.
- More examples of different projects you have previously funded might be useful to know.

UK afternoon session

- Maybe a more in depth explanation of the types of the organisations that are eligible to apply: NGOs, universities etc.
- Maybe share some good practices from previously funded projects in terms of project planning (e.g. indicators use etc).
- A breakout room for individuals to network.
- Maybe more on previous projects that have been funded and what made them strong.
- I don't think anything can be improved. The fact that you have taken the initiative to have a webinar is a huge bonus to prospective grantees
- Everything was excellent

Would you like to share any other comments?

UK morning session

- Although financial prudence is a good measure of accountability by well-established organisations, individual track records are also important to demonstrating impact of project implementation.
- I am the one who runs a US reg NGO that works in Kenya, that also has a UK charity. I was told by others that only UK orgs can apply. We DID apply twice before and had no

response, so gave up. But we try again with the new information. **[IWTCF post-webinar response: all applicants for Round 9 will receive a notification that their application has been received and a response to their application with the result after the Stage 1 sift]**

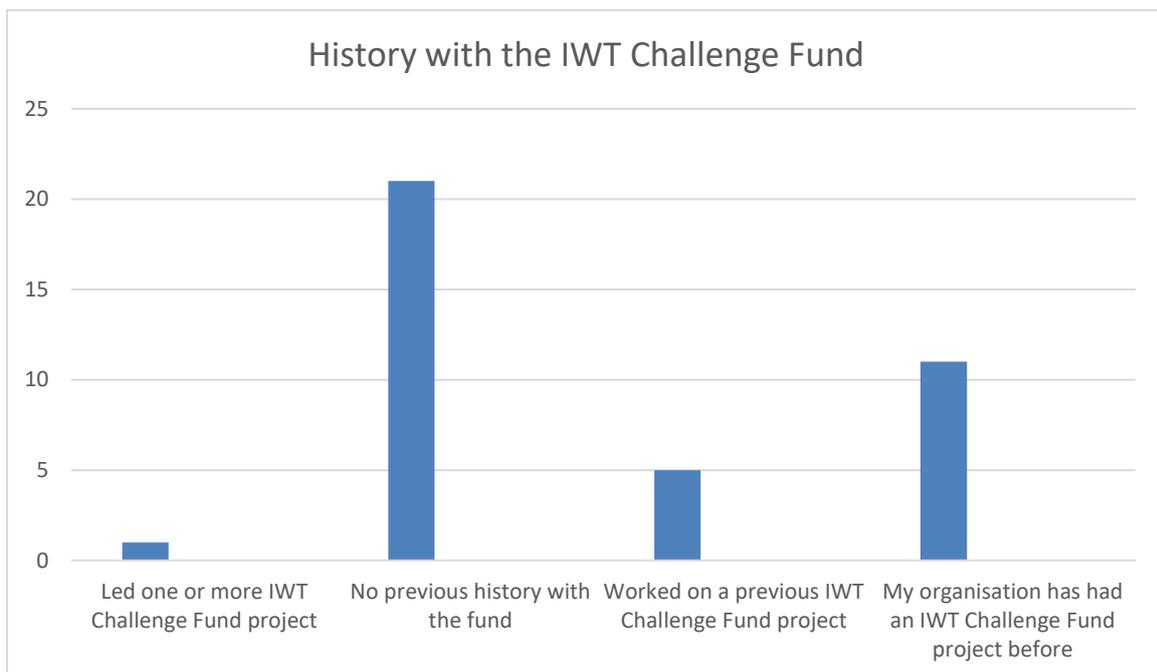
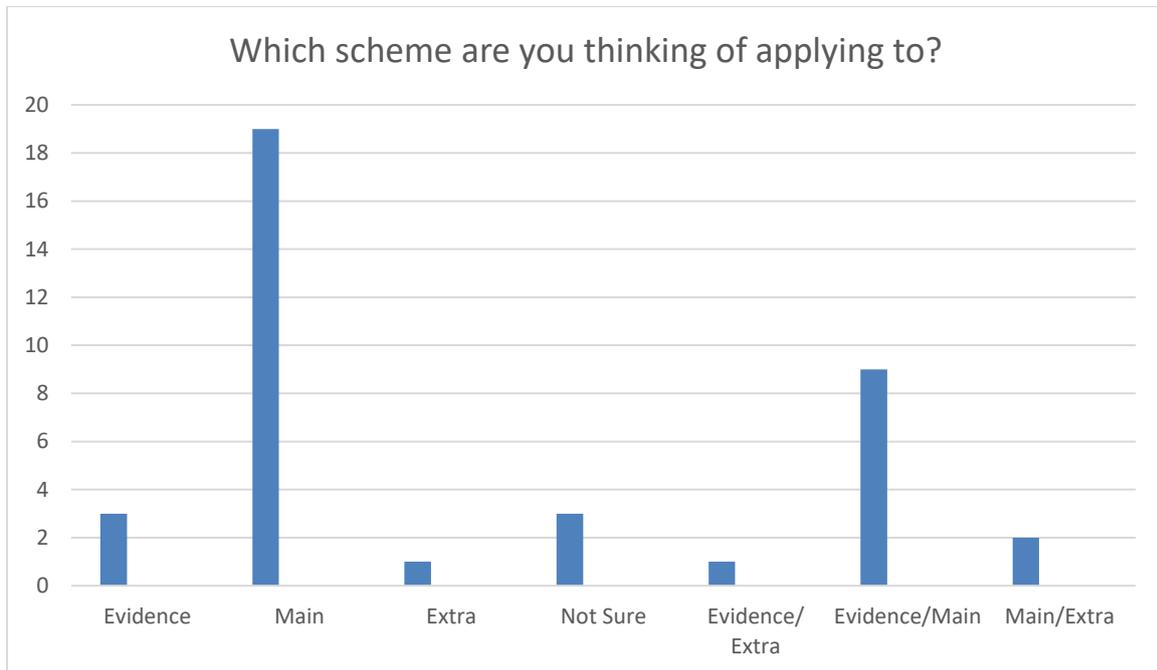
- If time, perhaps an example of an application that worked, plus feedback from the successful applicant about how much time it took to prepare the application.

UK afternoon session

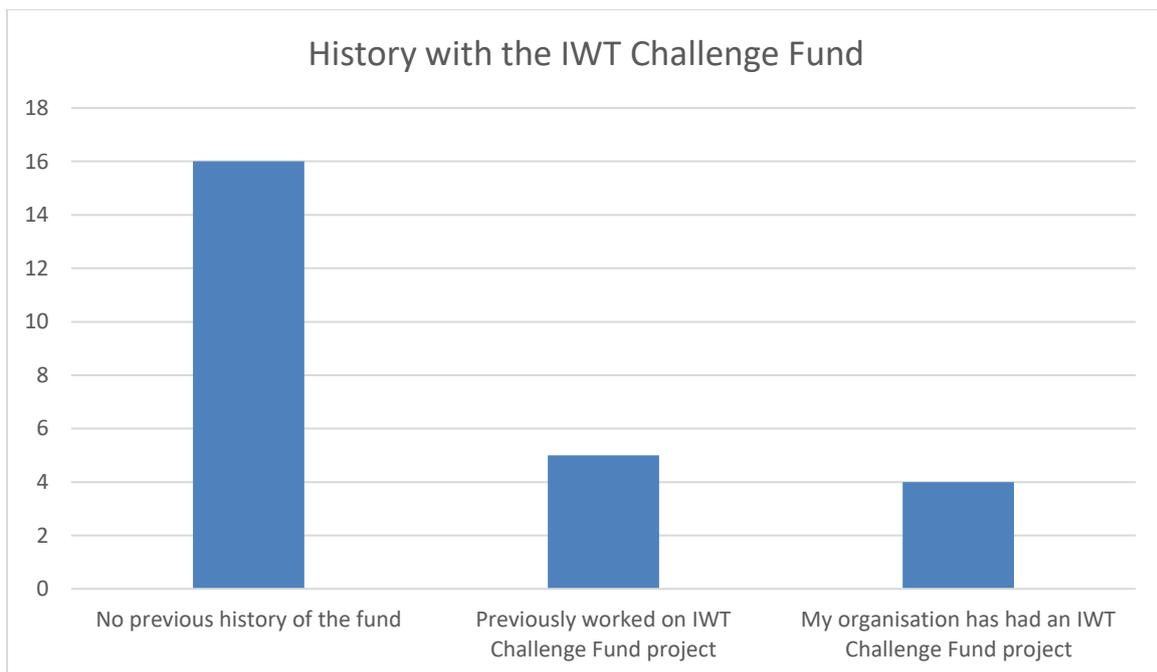
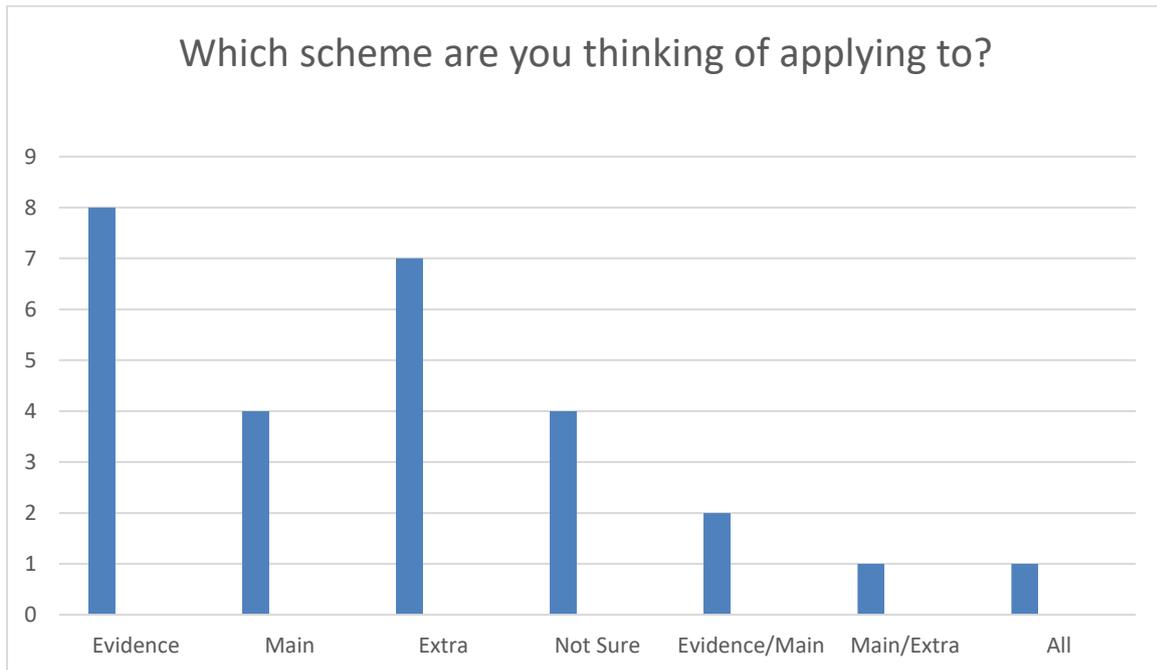
- Unfortunately, my organisation doesn't meet the criterion where it is necessary to demonstrate two years of financials. We are a new organisation but founded on a proof of concept and support from our Government partners. It seems a shame that this doesn't count for much. **[IWTCF post-webinar response: Financial due diligence is an important element of how the IWT Challenge Fund manages its financial risks. You will be eligible to lead a project after two years and can apply in partnership with another organisation this round]**

Annex 1 – IWT Challenge Fund Webinar Poll Responses

UK morning



UK afternoon



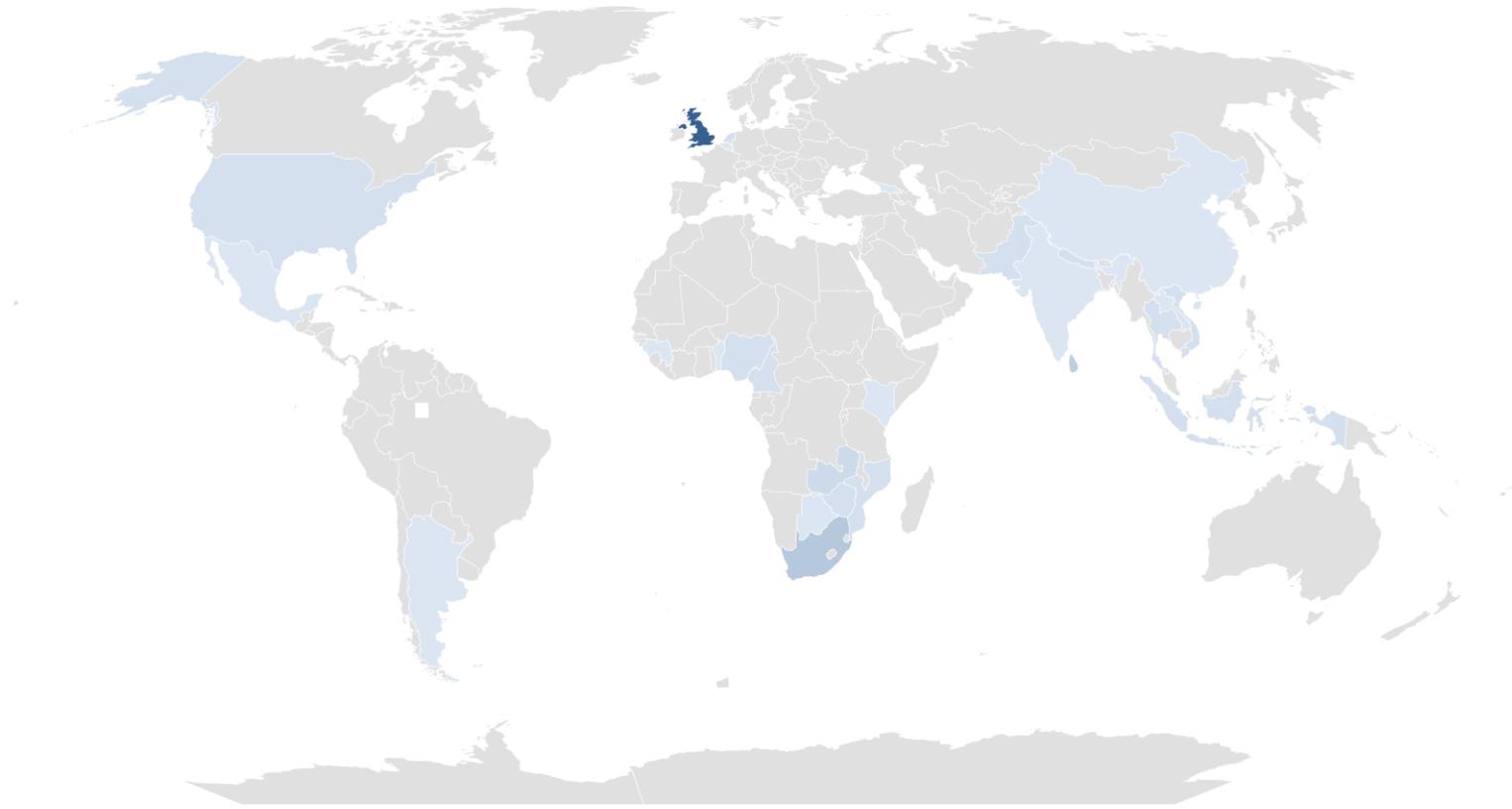
Annex 2 – Registrant geography / experience with the funds

Geographical spread of registrants - UK morning session

Attendees

23

1



Geographical spread of registrants - UK afternoon session

