# Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund

## Stage 2 Workshop

## 22nd February, 1st and 2nd March 2022

## Webinar and Virtual Workshop Proceedings

During February and March 2022, three events were held for applicants invited to Stage 2 of the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Round 8.

On 22nd February a webinar session for Stage 2 IWT Challenge Fund applicants was held via Zoom. The webinar focused on frequently asked questions and common issues encountered by applicants and provided the opportunity for applicants to ask any specific questions related to their applications. The virtual workshop on 1st March focused on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the effective use of project design tools, and the importance of good evidence and appropriate indicators. On 2nd March a presentation given by Naomi Doak, a member of the IWT Advisory Group, provided insight for Stage 2 applicants on what makes a good application and allowed applicants to gain a better understanding of the key considerations of the IWT Advisory Group when reviewing applications.

This note covers the frequently asked questions as well as those specific to different areas of the application process and includes answers to these.

The presentations plus the exercise handout can be accessed via the IWT Challenge Fund website: here.

The "Guidance for applicants" and "Finance guidance" documents should be your first reference point if you have queries when developing your application. These can be accessed via Flexi-Grant and also on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

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## Overview of Frequently Asked Questions and Common Issues Webinar

A total of 42 people registered, and 39 people were able to attend. See Annex 1 for details on the spread of people attending the webinar.

The objectives of the session were to:

- Respond to frequently asked questions related to eligibility, finance, Flexi-Grant, gender, safeguarding and communications.
- Provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions of the IWT Challenge Fund administrators and Defra.

The webinar was open to IWT Challenge Fund Stage 2 applicants.

# Webinar Q&A

## Finance

**Q. Is there a % limit for budget allocated to staff salaries?**

A. As different projects work in different ways, there is no specific budget limits allocated to staff salaries. However, we ask that you ensure your budget is realistic and appropriate for the project. In terms of project staff, salaries should be relevant to the project and you should consider employing and paying local staff costs where possible. We would recommend providing a clear justification of any high budget costs (including staff costs) within your cover letter for the Advisory Group to consider when reviewing your application.

**Q. Is it possible to submit audited accounts for 2019 and 2020 as our 2021 accounts audit will not be complete until after the Stage 2 deadline?**

A. We ask that you please submit the most recently audited accounts. If you are currently waiting for the 2021 audit to be completed, then we will accept the 2019 and 2020 audited accounts. If the 2021 audited accounts will be available shortly then please note this within your application form and we may come back and ask for these after the submission deadline.

**Q. Should Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) and Travel costs for participants attending a workshop be included within the budget under Operational or Travel costs?**

A. As these costs are related to travel we would normally expect to see these included within the budget under Travel costs. However, we understand that some organisations may account for them in a different way. If your organisation normally accounts for any costs in a different way, then we do not require you to change them to adhere to our budgets.

**Q. Please could you advise what the expectation is for matched funding, as a % of total project cost?**

A. There is no specific level for matched funding required as each project varies, but matched funding is recommended. If your project is working within an Upper-Middle Income Country we would strongly advise you to include matched funding.

**Q. What percentage of budget would you like to see go towards the country where the project is taking place?**

A. It is difficult to give a specific percentage for this. However, we would prefer to see a significant amount of spending benefiting people in-country where possible. We appreciate this will depend on the project and the work that is being completed and therefore ask that the budget is appropriate to your project.

**Q. Is there a flat rate for overheads?**

A. Primarily this will be decided by how your organisation normally applies overheads. We do not have a flat rate for overheads but do have limits to what we are willing to pay. If you are within the limits that are outlined in the Finance Guidance this should be fine.

**Q. Should all matched funding be financial contributions or could it also be the provision of venues, etc, that would otherwise have required project funding?**

A. Yes, it can. It can often be difficult to attribute financial value to these things but please do try to as best possible and include within the budget. There is also space provided within the application form to highlight if something is "in-kind" support.

**Q. Does matched funding have to be spent within the same project period funded by IWT Challenge Fund?**

A. If matched funding is supporting the project that is funded by the IWT Challenge Fund then the terms of the project are the start and finish dates so yes, match funding should be spent in the same project period.

## Administration

**Q. Would it be beneficial to include Letters of Support from organisations that are neither partners nor stakeholders, but that act as references in favour of the partners and stakeholders?**

A. If your application would benefit from the inclusion of additional Letters of Support then you can include them. However, you should consider the number of additional materials you are including. We would advise limiting your Letters of Support to those directly involved in the project (i.e. partners and stakeholders). Track record references are also not required at Stage 2 – we only require the information requested in the application form itself.

**Q. What kind of evidence of support from eligible country governments would be sufficient? Would a letter from a relevant government department suffice?**

A. Typically, we would expect to see a Letter of Support from the department that you will be working with. This may depend on whether your project is looking to address something at a national or local level but should provide an indication of support from the most relevant government department.

**Q. What is meant by a Letter of Support from the government of the host country? Can it be from a regional government authority or does it have to be national?**

A. Letters of Support should initially be provided by the people you are directly working with and who are actively contributing to the project. However, if you are able to demonstrate a higher level of commitment from a regional or national authority then you should include this within your application. Letters of Support from other relevant in-country posts showing commitment are also very welcome. Generally, we would advise that you start locally and work up.

**Q. Do we need to add the Memorandum of Understanding between our organisation and the partners or government officials (e.g. protected area directors?) in supplement of their support?**

A. If you already have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a government agency then please submit this with your application. If the original document is not in English, please ensure you include a translated summary. As an MoU does not typically include specific details relating to a project, you should also include a Letter of Support specifically relating to the project.

**Q. Please can you explain what is meant by a "Project Board", referenced in Q34, and what representation on this board would look like?**

A. Within the application form a "Project Board" refers to any kind of project governance structure including a board, a steering committee or any other management structure that sits across the partnership. We would expect to see members of the "Project Board" actively engaging in project management, driving the direction and progress of the project, and making decisions on future activities.

**Q. Q34 indicates a Letter of Support from the Lead Partner is required. Please can you confirm who should write this Letter of Support?**

A. Ideally, we would expect the Letter of Support to come from the organisation rather than the team leading the project to evidence the organisation as a whole supporting the project. However, we understand this may vary depending on the size of the organisation. For smaller organisations the relevant person may perhaps be involved in or leading the project. The main thing the Letter of Support should provide is evidence of support and by-in from the organisation.

**Q. Q32 requests you consider any sensitivities to your project. Please can you explain what sensitivities this is referring to and provide an example?**

A. This question is specifically about being clear about parts of the project FCDO should know about if they plan to publicise your project if succcessful, so should be focused on anything that should not be in the public domain. This question should encourage you to consider any aspects of your project that may require a sensitive approach. Some sensitives you may want to consider include gender and safeguarding or contexts such as countries where the death penalty exists. These sensitivities and risk should all be outlined under this question for awareness and so they can be addressed throughout the project.

**Q. Are the reviewers of the Stage 1 application the same as Stage 2?**

A. Where possible we do try to ensure the reviewers at Stage 2 are the same as Stage 1. However, in order to ensure there is an equal split of reviewers across the applications this may not always be possible. The Stage 2 reviewers will have access to feedback from Stage 1 but you should ensure that your Stage 2 application is a standalone piece. To aid this process, it is helpful for you to restate the feedback points and be specific how you actioned them when responding to feedback in your cover letter.

# General

**Q. Is it possible to change the project site and lead partner within the Stage 2 application**

A. It is possible to make changes to your application between Stage 1 and Stage 2. However, the more significant the changes the more you will be required to justify why you have made these changes. For any change you do make, we ask that you clearly define in your cover letter why you have made these changes so the reviewer can assess what this project is offering and how the changes will benefit the project.

**Q. We have been asked to consider including a demand reduction component in our proposal but the demand reduction would have to be in a non-eligible country. Is this acceptable?**

A. As this question is project specific, we have provided a detailed answer via email.

However, it is worth noting that although demand reduction is a priority for this round, you will not be marked down if your project is not focusing on reducing demand. We would however advise you clearly highlight what objectives your project is working towards. Feedback from reviewers is included as guidance on ways to make your project stronger. However, if you do not feel the feedback provided is relevant or appropriate for your project, you should clearly explain this within your cover letter. We recommend that you acknowledge all feedback even if you are not responding to it, to ensure there are no unanswered questions from the Advisory Group.

**Q. Please can you provide further information on the "Value for Money" question and what this means?**

A. The IWT Challenge Fund views "Value for Money" simply as the balance between the expected benefits and the cost of the project and ensuring these make sense. Therefore, it is not simply the lowest cost. The Advisory Group members have managed projects across the world so have an idea of how much things should cost so may raise questions if things don't align with their understanding. You should therefore consider things like seeking three quotations when purchasing large items of equipment. In addition, if you are working within a specific context where things are difficult to precure or have high costs, it would be helpful to explain this within your application.

Further information on "Value for Money" can be found within both the guidance for applications and financial guidance found on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

# Summarised Webinar Feedback

### How useful did you find the webinar?

Of the 39 people who attended the webinar, 21 attendees provided feedback. 17 attendees reported finding the webinar **very useful** with 4 stating it was **moderately useful**.

### How did you find the pace of the webinar?

Out of the 39 attendees a total of 35 provided feedback during the session on the pace of the webinar. 32 found the pace of the webinar **just right**, 1 found the pace **a bit too fast** and 2 stated it was **a bit slow**.

### Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- Strong pointers given to how we should present our ideas.
- The amount of detail provided within the presentations. Hearing some of the background behind IWT Challenge Fund priorities and hearing answers to a wide range of questions.
- The presentations which focused specifically on changes to the application since previous rounds and the ability to ask questions.
- Live Q&A possibility and the fact that the webinar is recorded, for future reference.
- Good overall introduction.
- Clear step-by-step process outlining the requirements of each section. It was particularly useful to benefit from other applicant's questions - as many of these we had not considered.
- Some of the details on the administrative issues and the budget.
- Aspects that would strengthen the proposal, especially the changes this year and the pointers on gender and safeguarding.
- Some answers that were not easily found on the documentation provided were answered on the webinar.
- Very concrete and to the point presentations and answers.
- It was well organised with ample time for questions.
- The direction of being explicit on the HOW not just the WHAT in each question of the application.

### Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- It would perhaps be useful to go through the application form together.
- More clarity on limits/acceptable amounts (e.g. proportion of funds that could cover salary). These may not have specific limits but are quite vague.
- Some more examples of real projects situations.

### Other comments submitted as feedback

- The fact that I did not tick "very useful" is not because of the webinar, but because of myself. If I had studied the application form better before, I would have benefitted more.
- There is an overarching requirement to "do no harm", i.e. projects must have no negative impact. However, the whole idea of this fund is to reduce illegal wildlife trafficking and by its nature will have negative impacts on some people, and result in arrests, and fines, and reduced income, for those people. So there cannot be a total "do no harm" approach. It is not clear how this will be addressed.

## M&E Virtual Workshop session: Project design tools and importance of good evidence and indicators

## Agenda

| Agenda Item |
|---|
| **Introduction to the Workshop** |
| **Project Design Tools**<br>*A short presentation followed by an interactive group exercise*<br>- Why use project design tools<br>- Articulating your "pathway to change"<br>- Group Exercise: Introducing effective logframe development |
| Break |
| **The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators**<br>*A short presentation followed by an interactive group exercise*<br>- Identifying SMART indicators<br>- Collecting and reporting evidence<br>- Group Exercise: SMART indicators and means of verification |
| **Workshop Close** |

A total of 50 people registered, and 50 people were able to attend.

## Key points or common issues arising from the virtual workshop:

### Project Design Tools

This exercise asked participants to identify and sort a series of statements from an imaginary IWT Challenge Fund project into the problem for project design, project activities, outputs and outcome onto the template provided. Participants worked in groups and were asked to think critically about the statements provided.

Key observations from participants in the logframe and theory of change exercises included:

- It was challenging to differentiate between the Output statements and the project's activities. The statements were vague and not very specific, this made it difficult to decide.
- The importance of the project's activities clearly demonstrating what the project will actually do was noted as crucial in making a comparison between the Outputs and outlined activities.

- It was challenging to differentiate between the Impact and Outcome statement and there was some uncertainty between the difference in what each statement added to the logframe.
- Generally, more context and information was needed within the statement and there were significant gaps of logic.
- The importance of consistency of language throughout the logframe and ensuring the logic makes sense.

## The Importance of Good Evidence and Appropriate Indicators

This exercise asked particpants to sort out Indicators from the Means of Verification (for the same imaginary IWT Challenge Fund project used in the first exercise) and to map these onto the relevant part of the logframe template provided. Participants were also encouraged to consider if the Indicators provided were SMART and how they could be improved.

Key observations from participants in the indicators and evidence exercise included:

- It was challenging to align which Outcome or Output each Indicator and Means of Verification linked to within the exercise.
- The importance of including baselines and ensuring Indicators are SMART.
- It was difficult to differentiate between the Indicators and Means of Verification presented within the exercise. As the Indicators were not SMART or particularly strong, it was unclear where they sat within the wider logframe.
- Ensuring Indicators are as specific as possible and to consider and define context the project is operating within.
- If an Indicator cannot be found for the Outcome chosen, you may need to revise the Outcome so it is achievable within the project timeframe and change can be measured.
- With the recent changes to IWT Challenge Fund, we do still expect to see some form of indicator to measure change – for smaller projects, such as Evidence, this may be in the form of proxy indicators.

## Summarised Feedback

### Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- Great workflow and exercises.
- Ability to discuss in small groups.
- Useful tips and engaging exercises.
- IWT staff attending the small groups and opportunity for direct Q&A.

### Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- Present one of the group exercises in the plenary and discuss what has been done right and/or wrong.
- Return to in-person workshops instead of delivery via an online platform.

# ‘What Makes a Good Application?’ – Illegal Wildlife Trade Advisory Group Presentation

A total of 56 people registered, and 38 people were able to attend.

## Q&A

**Q. Could you please explain what do you mean by an unjust and unethical goal when talking about enforcement goals?**

A. When considering a law enforcement approach, projects often include a specific number of arrests by the end of the project as a key indicator to measure success. There are many assumptions around this, and a number of associated risks, for example creating perverse incentives to reach a specific target number of arrests. When designing your project, you should consider the wider country context, other interventions, and ethics surrounding arrests. You should also consider if focusing on arrests will help create change or if there is another approach that would be more appropriate to measuring your objective.

**Q. Could you please give an example of good indicators to measure livelihood benefits?**

A. The details of Indicators are very much specific and dependent to the project. However, you should ensure all Indicators are SMART while being clear and concise. If you would like some further examples and guidance on logframes, you can access the recording, slides and handout from our Stage 2 M&E Workshop on the IWT website. The website also has some examples of previous and current project logframes.

**Q. If there is no existing baseline how could we strengthen the approach on gender equality?**

A. If no baseline exists you should consider building in time and resources to gather that information within the project. Recognising that you do not have all the information needed and outlining how you aim to get this information should be included clearly within the application form. This is relevant for all areas of the project, not just gender equality.

**Q. I really agree that acknowledgement of previous work is essential and useful, however in my experience with the tight word limit in Flexi-Grant there is only so much that can be cited. Is it possible to add a superscript number and attach a separate reference list?**

A. Yes, you can certainly add references as additional material but please be mindful that there is a strict 5 page limit for all additional materials added. Flexi-Grant does not allow you to add superscript, but you can make reference to your reference list in other ways, for example by adding a square bracket and numbering. Please also note that not all materials require referencing and often things can be acknowledged in a summarised way.

**Q. I have a couple of clarification questions about writing good indicators: can we combine related indicators into one indicator - and in relation to that, how would one write an indicator for holding a series of workshops? Can you give us an example?**

A. There can be value in combining related Indicators but, it becomes harder to make the Indicator SMART when you do this, and risks making Indicators overcomplicated. Indicators should only measure one thing and be clear and concise. There is no specific limit on how many indicators you can include, so you may wish to split indicators if they are overcomplicated, but do consider your overall number of indicators and the potential burden of reporting!

**Q. Is the Pathway to Change the same as the logframe?**

A. The Pathway to Change and the logframe are quite similar. The logframe breaks down how you are going to achieve the outcome and change you have outlined while the Pathway to Change highlights how what you have outlined will achieve your impact. Importantly, the Pathway to Change should not just be a repeat of the Outputs and Activities in your logframe but should articulate *how* you expect them to combine to achieve your overall project Outcome.

**Q. I just wonder if demand reduction is our secondary aim, should we really just tick our main pillar in the application, e.g. Law enforcement?**

A. You should tick all boxes that relate to your project. Make sure to check the activities you have outlined clearly align with the objectivise you have ticked. If you are unsure, the IWT Challenge Fund Guidance document has some further information on what we consider “demand reduction” projects, and can be found on the IWT Challenge Fund website.

**Q. Is there a minimum/maximum amount of outputs for the logframe?**

A. The IWT Challenge Fund Guidance outlines 5 Outputs as the maximum for projects, and we would typically recommend between 2-5 Outputs. However, you should consider what Outputs are necessary for promoting the change you have outlined. For some projects (particularly smaller ones), fewer Outputs may be more appropriate, so consider what is appropriate and relevant for achieving your objectives.

# Summarised Presentation Feedback

## How useful did you find the presentation?

Of the 38 people who attended the webinar, 13 attendees provided feedback. 10 attendees reported finding the webinar **very useful** with 3 stating it was **moderately useful**.

## Please share your thoughts on what you found useful

- It was insightful to see points highlighted that weakened previous applications. The Q&A session is great.
- The tips and the examples from the practice of the project reviewers.
- The great insight and perspective from one of the application reviewers.
- The detail given on how to prepare a good application.
- The advice on what reviewers look for - and highlighting that it is OK to be open that "we don't have certain expertise" or "we are trialling something that may or may not work" etc. Better than making promises that may not be kept.
- The importance of starting with why the project is being undertaken and acknowledging the work of others.
- When Naomi explained how she, as a reviewer, evaluates each of the section by using questions.
- Honest, clear advice.
- A few bits of information of the qualitative kind.

## Do you have any recommendations for how we can improve?

- Some hints on how to include all necessary information within the strict word limits would be handy, including what can be omitted.
- Could be useful to share examples of concrete projects with well formulated poverty alleviation and gender indicators.
- The inclusion of an interactive exercise may be useful.
- Showcasing a good proposal and providing examples of stronger/weaker applications may be very useful.
- It would maybe be beneficial to have a couple of panellists from the group to add different perspectives.
- At times felt repetitive

## Other comments submitted as feedback

- Thank you for making the time to organise the workshops!
- Thank you so much for all the advices!
- Overall a great session.

## Annex 1 – FAQ and Common Issues webinar attendee summary