
DIR27S2\1066

Resurrection Island: enterprise, conservation and development around the Aral Sea

Following Soviet-era irrigation for cotton, the Aral Sea region is ecologically and economically degraded – yet holds substantial cultural, biodiversity and industrial value. We will lay the foundation for designating Resurrection Island as a Protected Area, while developing sustainable income streams (including tourism) enabling residents to benefit, and ensuring that industrial development results in ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity. We bring government, industry and communities together; turning this area from a symbol of despair into one of hope and regeneration.

Section 1 - Contact Details

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

Title Dr
Name Joseph
Surname Bull
Tel (Work) [REDACTED]
Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	University of Kent
Phone (Work)	[REDACTED]
Email (Work)	[REDACTED]
Website	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Section 2 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q3. Project title:

Resurrection Island: enterprise, conservation and development around the Aral Sea

What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DIR27S1\100123

DIR27S1\1821

Q4. Country(ies)

Which eligible host country(ies) will your project be working in? Where there are more than 4 countries that your project will be working in, please add more boxes using the selection option below.

Country 1	Uzbekistan	Country 2	No Response
Country 3	No Response	Country 4	No Response

Do you require more fields?

No

Q5. Project dates

Start date:

01 July 2021

End date:

30 June 2024

Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):

3 years

Q6. Budget summary

Year:	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total request
Amount:	£75,717.00	£144,737.00	£139,205.00	£39,667.00	£ 399,326.00

Q6a. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

Yes

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

Whitley Fund for Nature: Elena Bykova (Co-I) secured funding independently under a Whitley Award for conservation on Resurrection Island. That project will strengthen regional anti-poaching enforcement, develop environmental education programmes with local schools, and include industrial outreach. It will provide data and networking for the Darwin project, as match-funding (£████████ 2020-2022).

Saiga Conservation Alliance: in-kind staff costs to be provided as match-funding. Approximately ██████ of staff time, amounting to £████████ over three years.

University of Kent: The University will cover internal overhead costs (£████████ over three years), as match-funding, and Open Access fees for journal publications (£████████ for ~2 articles).

Q6b. Proposed (confirmed and unconfirmed) matched funding as % of total project cost (total cost is the Darwin request plus other funding required to run the project). ██████

Section 3 - Project Summary

Q7. Summary of project

Please provide a brief summary of your project, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking. Please note that if you are successful, this wording may be used by Defra in communications e.g. as a short description of the project on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Please write this summary for a non-technical audience.

Following Soviet-era irrigation for cotton, the Aral Sea region is ecologically and economically degraded – yet holds substantial cultural, biodiversity and industrial value. We will lay the foundation for designating Resurrection Island as a Protected Area, while developing sustainable income streams (including tourism) enabling residents to benefit, and ensuring that industrial development results in ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity. We bring government, industry and communities together; turning this area from a symbol of despair into one of hope and regeneration.

Section 4 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q8. Objectives for the Darwin Initiative

Please indicate which of the fund objectives (listed on p.8 of the guidance) you will be addressing.

- To promote the responsible stewardship of natural assets
- To promote the sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biodiversity
- Contributing towards reversing the increase in threats of extinction to the world’s flora and fauna

Q9. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q9a. Your project must support the commitments of one or more of the agreements listed below.

Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported and describe which objectives your project will address.

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Q9b. Biodiversity Conventions

Please detail how your project will contribute to the aims of the agreement(s) your project is targeting. You should refer to Articles or Programmes of Work here.

CBD:

National biodiversity strategy. Uzbekistan’s most recent ‘National Report to the CBD’ (2015) emphasised that conserving and restoring biodiversity in the Aral region – a focal region for expanding oil and gas activity – is a national priority for meeting CBD commitments. Our project thus contributes directly towards Uzbekistan’s national biodiversity strategy.

Aichi Target 2. As indicated by the Karakalpak Council of Ministers LoS, the project is being incorporated into and will closely inform the regional development strategy, contributing directly towards Aichi Target 2 (“biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes”).

Aichi Target 11. By undertaking the groundwork to designate a new ecologically-unique protected area, our

project supports national progress towards CBD Aichi Target 11 (“areas...conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas”).

CBD post-2020 Strategy. The current ‘zero draft’ post-2020 Strategy includes a Goal on ensuring “The area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems increased...”. Our project will meet this Goal by seeking to maintain the area and integrity of critical habitat on Resurrection Island through enhanced protection, improve the permeability of the landscape for wide ranging species like the saiga (thus increasing connectivity to other protected areas), and consequently enabling an increase in the population of threatened flora and fauna.

CITES & CMS:

Though our project activities are designed to conserve the biodiversity of Resurrection Island in general, we use the saiga antelope as both an umbrella species to represent that biodiversity and a charismatic flagship species to draw attention to it. The saiga is a conservation target under both CITES and the CMS.

Saiga antelopes are listed on CITES Appendix II, as illegal international trade in saiga horn represents a threat to their survival. Our project aims to reduce saiga poaching, supporting the CITES aim to “ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival”.

Saigas were the subject of heated debate at CITES CoP18 in 2019, where a zero quota on trade was agreed (although CITES passed numerous other saiga-related resolutions and decisions). Our project will reduce incentives for people to poach saiga antelope for the illegal international trade in saiga horn, also contributing towards increased enforcement (via the new protected area) – directly supporting efforts to meet the zero trade quota.

CMS-CITES MoU. The saiga is the subject of a CMS-CITES MoU between all saiga antelope range states, since 2006. This project supports achievement of several priority actions under the current Medium Term International Work Programme (2016-2020) of the MoU, specifically:

- 1.11 (“all saiga populations have appropriate investment”)
- 2.2 (“Strengthen anti-poaching units, and where needed establish more”)
- 4.1-4.7 (Section 4 “Work with local people”)
- 5.1-5.3 (Section 5 on raising “Awareness”)
- 6.1-6.6 (Section 6 “Habitat and environmental factors”)
- 7.1-7.2 (“Expand and enhance national protected area networks”, particularly “trans-frontier protected areas where appropriate”)
- 8.1-8.3, 8.5 (“Monitoring”)
- 12.1-12.7 (measures focussed on the Ustyurt population).

Q9c. Is any liaison proposed with the CBS / ABS / ITPGRFA / CITES / CMS / Ramsar / UNFCCC focal point in the host country?

Yes

If yes, please give details.

Mr Khalilulla Sherimbetov, who is one of the key project partners via his role at GosComEcology (see below), is also a National Focal Point in Uzbekistan for the CBD.

Mr Sherimbetov is additionally the lead National Focal Point in Uzbekistan for the CMS.

As such, our project will involve active and direct liaison and collaboration with the focal point for both of these conventions.

Q9d. Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Please detail how your project will contribute to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

SDG 1 ("End poverty"). Our project will develop additional livelihood streams for towns in the project region, where unemployment is a key factor driving local poverty.

SDG 3 ("Promote well-being"). Our project will enable more people to meet basic needs and have more livelihood choices. We will support local communities to celebrate and value their cultural and ecological heritage, contributing towards intangible components of well-being.

SDG 8 ("full and productive employment and decent work for all"). Economic opportunities are extremely limited in the Aral region. Our project involves the identification and piloting of employment opportunities, including tourism and associated services and the production and sale of traditional crafts to national and international markets.

SDG 9 ("inclusive and sustainable industrialisation"). We will work with industrial partners to identify and mitigate biodiversity impacts in the Aral region (especially extractive and transport infrastructures). Successful biodiversity impact mitigation is a key component of sustainable industrialization.

SDG 15 ("Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems...halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss"). Our project supports protection and restoration of the Resurrection Island ecosystem, its sustainable use, and prevention of further biodiversity losses.

In 2020, Uzbekistan carried out a National Review of progress towards the SDGs, concluding that Uzbekistan has "a special focus on the Aral Sea region, conservation and the efficient use of water, land and energy resources, as well as biodiversity conservation (SDG 13, 14 and 15)". So, our project directly supports Uzbekistan's own strategic priorities for meeting the SDGs.

Section 5 - Lead Organisation Summary

Q10. Lead organisation summary

Has your organisation been awarded a Darwin Initiative or IWT Challenge Fund award before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

Yes

If yes, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
25003	Robert Smith	Conservation social networking, ecotourism and land-use planning in Maputaland
23033	Matthew Struebig	Marrying community land rights with stakeholder aspirations in Indonesian Borneo


23006	James Groombridge	Translocating conservation success and skills-exchange across four Indian Ocean countries
21014	James Groombridge	Reconnecting poverty-alleviation to biodiversity conservation in Kenya's Eastern Arc Mountains
20016	Douglas MacMillan	Reviving socio-ecological landscapes for biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation
19002	James Groombridge	A cutting-EDGE approach to saving Seychelles' taxonomically unique biodiversity


Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts? If you select "yes" you will be able to upload these. Note that this is not required from Government Agencies.


Yes


Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

 [UoK 2017-18](#)

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 [UoK 2018-19-compressed](#)

 08/02/2021

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Section 6 - Project Partners

Q11. Project partners

Please list all the partners involved (including the Lead Organisation) and explain their roles and responsibilities in the project. Describe the extent of their involvement at all stages, including project development.

This section should illustrate the capacity of partners to be involved in the project. Please provide Letters of Support for the Lead Organisation and each partner or explain why this has not been included.

N.B: There is a file upload button at the bottom of this page for the upload of a cover letter (if applicable) and all letters of support.

Lead Organisation name:

Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, UK
(DICE)

Website address: <https://research.kent.ac.uk/dice/>

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) has led more than 30 successful Darwin Initiative projects. DICE is the lead organisation on the proposed project, and will coordinate the partnership. DICE has experience of research and project work in Central Asia; and the University of Kent has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Uzbek Academy of Sciences to enable formal partnership. PI JW Bull has been working on scientific research projects in Uzbekistan (including the Ustyurt region) for a decade, including many months in the field. Dr Bull has taken on technical roles for both the UNDP and the Asian Development Bank in Uzbekistan, advising on project implementation and delivering capacity-building.

Further, Dr Bull has considerable technical expertise in the relationship between economic development, biodiversity loss and human wellbeing. This includes the ecological and social aspects of implementing 'no net loss' (NNL) biodiversity policy. Consequently, he will provide extensive technical input to the project – including leading on the industry engagement component – as well as taking a coordination and leadership role overall.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

Have you provided a cover letter to address your Stage 1 feedback? Yes

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

Yes

1. Partner Name: Institute of Zoology of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, Tashkent, Uzbekistan (IoZ)

Website address: n/a

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The IoZ has a long history of field expeditions to the Ustyurt and Aral region; communicating those findings widely in scientific, public policy and private sector reports; and developing protected area proposals throughout Uzbekistan including recently in the Ustyurt. The project Co-Is Dr Elena Bykova and Dr Alexander Esipov have extensive experience as field ecologists and conservation scientists, including planning and implementing expeditions to the Aral region.

IoZ will lead on project coordination within Uzbekistan. Dr Bykova will ensure close communication with the other Uzbek project partners, and Dr Esipov will plan the field expeditions to Karakalpakstan. Further, based on many years of experience working with Ustyurt residents to promote biodiversity conservation, they will be technical lead on the development of proposals concerning designating Resurrection Island as a protected area. Bakhtiyor Kholmatov is a legal expert on relevant regulations around protected area designation, and will provide essential advice to the project team concerning the designation of Resurrection Island.

The Co-Is from the IoZ have worked with the PI since 2010, and with the Saiga Conservation Alliance team since the 1990s, sharing a long and reliable working relationship.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

2. Partner Name:

Goscomtourism, Tashkent, Uzbekistan (GCT)

Website address:

<https://uzbektourism.uz/en>

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development (GCT) is the public ministry responsible for tourism at a national level in the country, and is leading Uzbekistan's strategic drive to substantially expand tourism activity.

GCT will support the project's activities in selecting and piloting tourism demonstration projects, training for residents in the Ustyurt region, and promotion of new tourism opportunities both nationally and internationally.

Barno Mammetova represents GCT as a crucial partner on the proposed project, to provide direct technical input and guidance in relation to the feasibility of different proposals on expanding tourism as a key route towards novel livelihoods.

Further, GCT will continue to provide up-to-date information to the project on tourist numbers and activities, ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism, and how closely any proposals made under the project align with national thinking on tourism as it evolves.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

3. Partner Name:

The Pearl Group, Uzbekistan (TPG)

Website address:

n/a

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

In addition to the State Committee for tourism GCT (above) as a partner to provide a national-scale perspective on tourism in Uzbekistan, we include an established tourism operator The Pearl Group (TPG) as a project partner.

TPG is a certified Uzbek training centre in the field of tourism, based in Tashkent, which conducts continuing education and retraining courses in areas such as: Organization of tour operator activities; Administrator of hotels and other accommodation facilities; Service of the hotel room stock; Instructor guide; Organization of excursion services; Organization of guest houses; and, Development and promotion of new tourist routes in Uzbekistan (active and combined types of tourism).

Represented by Nodira Shaabasova, TPG are active in the country as a whole, but are keen to promote (and see the importance of) increased tourism training and opportunities for the Ustyurt region (see Letter of Support). Their input to the project will be invaluable. Not only will TPG be able to provide an informed perspective on the practicalities of different tourism initiatives proposed by the project – also, they will also provide opportunities to pilot these initiatives.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

4. Partner Name: GosComEcology, Tashkent/Nukus, Uzbekistan (GCE)

Website address: n/a

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environmental Protection (GCE) will be an instrumental partner to achieving project aims.

Firstly, GCE are a key government stakeholder in the identification, design and designation of new protected areas. Therefore, GCE will provide detail advice, guidance and support in the process of seeking designation for Resurrection Island.

Secondly, GCE are a mandatory stakeholder for consultation on the biodiversity impacts of major developments, such as those transport and extractive sector developments with which the proposed project will seek to engage in Karakalpakstan. Consequently GCE will provide important input on the project's engagement with industrial partners.

Finally, GCE will be represented on the project by Mr Khalillula Sherimbetov. K Sherimbetov has previously led UNDP projects to establish a protected area elsewhere in the Ustyurt and to work with the oil and gas sector on biodiversity impact mitigation (the latter involved working directly with the PI). K Sherimbetov is also a National Focal Point for both the CBD and the CMS, so will prove an invaluable member of the project team.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

5. Partner Name: UzKorGaz, Nukus, Uzbekistan (UKG)

Website address: <http://www.uz-kor.com/index.php/en/>

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The limited company Uz-Kor Gas Chemical (UKG) was formed through collaboration between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea, via the national Uzbek Gas institution Uzbekneftegaz and a consortium of private Korean companies. The company has a substantial presence in the Ustyurt (including the Ustyurt Gas Chemical Complex, completed in 2015 and served largely by Kyrk-Kyz, which is one of the focal towns for our Darwin project), and continues to invest in infrastructure development in the region.

UKG are the lead corporate partner to the project, with whom we will work to develop industrial biodiversity impact mitigation strategies relevant both to UKG and eventually to other companies operating in Uzbekistan, as well as to incorporate 'no net loss' biodiversity measures into specific development activities.

The primary contact at UKG (Inabat Nametova) is the lead engineer on environmental, health and ecology responsible for environmental policy and health safety implementation. They are intimately involved in environmental impact mitigation procedures for UKG activities in the region (including biodiversity impacts).

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

No

If no, please provide details

Rather than a letter directly from UzKorGaz, we include one from the Academy of Sciences - explaining their formal relationship (and agreement on this project) with UzKorGaz.

Obtaining a formal letter directly from a corporation (without confirmed funding) is challenging in Uzbekistan, but UzKorGaz are fully committed to collaboration.

6. Partner Name:

Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA)

Website address:

<http://saiga-conservation.org/>

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

The SCA is a UK-registered charity which has conserved saigas for >15 years. Although the saiga is our flagship species, the SCA explicitly aims to conserve wider ecosystems throughout the saiga range, taking into account human needs as well as other species of fauna and flora. The SCA works through local partnerships, focusing on sustainable long-term solutions based on sound science.

The SCA team is Olya Esipova, Sasha Bukvareva, and Carlyn Samuel. Working with DICE and the IoZ, the SCA will take a technical lead (through O. Esipova) on project work relating to enterprise and novel livelihoods. O. Esipova has undertaken extensive social survey fieldwork in the Ustyurt, including carrying out the pilot interviews informing this proposal.

S Bukvareva and C Samuel will ensure coordination with other saiga and steppe/desert ecosystem conservation initiatives in Uzbekistan and other range states, both (a) maximising the value of the proposed project for biodiversity conservation, and (b) ensuring that successful project initiatives are replicated elsewhere in saiga range post-project. In addition, the SCA will support project administration based on 15 years experience coordinating conservation projects between the UK and Uzbekistan (including resolving administrative challenges and providing translation services where necessary).

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

If you require more space to enter details regarding Partners involved in the project, please use the text field below.

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative

The landscape-scale Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative, in Kazakhstan, aims to “protect and restore the steppe and semi-desert ecosystems of central Kazakhstan”. They aim to manage the impacts of major infrastructure development on highly mobile species, and so have much in common with our project (in terms of the problems being addressed).


The ADCI is supported by a number of groups, including the Association for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), Frankfurt Zoological Society, Fauna and Flora International, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.


ADCI representatives will participate in project meetings, providing input on infrastructure impact mitigation and capacity building for alternative livelihood initiatives in the Kazakh Ustyurt, and share findings from our project with Kazakh colleagues (see their joint Letter of Support).


ADCI partners will also fund the PI to travel to Kazakhstan and deliver training and capacity-building based on the materials developed for Uzbekistan.

This represents an invaluable opportunity to disseminate and upscale the outcomes of the proposed project, leveraging them for wider impact and laying the groundwork for future conservation efforts on the Kazakh portion of Resurrection Island.

Please provide a cover letter responding to feedback received at Stage 1 if applicable and a combined PDF of all letters of support.

 [LoS combined compressed final](#)

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 [Resurrection Island-Cover Letter](#)

 08/02/2021

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Section 7 - Project Staff

Q12. Project staff

Please identify the core staff on this project, their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project. Further information on who should be classified as core staff can be found in the guidance.

Please provide 1 page CVs for these staff, or a 1 page job description or Terms of Reference for roles yet to be filled. These should match the names and roles in the budget spreadsheet.

If your team is larger than 12 people please review if they are core staff, or whether you can merge roles (e.g. 'admin and finance support') below, but provide a full table based on this template in the pdf of CVs you provide.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Joseph Bull	Project Leader	26	Checked
Elena Bykova	Co-Investigator	20	Checked
Alexander Esipov	Co-Investigator	20	Checked
Full-time postgraduate researcher	Research Assistant	100	Checked

Do you require more fields?

Yes


Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Inabat Nametova	Corporate development partner (UzKorGaz)	5	Checked
Khalillula Sherimbetov	Technical expert (GosComEcology)	10	Checked


Barno Mammetova	Tourism expert (national)	10	Checked
Nodira Shaabasova	Tourism expert (regional)	5	Checked
Olya Esipova	Social science lead	20	Checked
Carlyn Samuel	Administrative support	10	Checked
Alexandra Bukvareva	PR, project documentation and translation	20	Checked
Bakhtiyor Kholmatov	Technical expert on Uzbek legislation	5	Checked

Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the project staff listed above as a combined PDF.

Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

 [CVs combined](#)

 08/02/2021

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Have you attached all project staff CVs?

Yes

Section 8 - Problem statement

Q13. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of biodiversity and its relationship with poverty. For example, what are the drivers of loss of biodiversity that the project will attempt to address? Why are they relevant, for whom? How did you identify these problems?

Please cite the evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem (references can be listed in your additional attached PDF document which can be uploaded at the bottom of the next page).

The virtually-disappeared Aral Sea is synonymous with ecological and socio-economic collapse, but carries the seeds of its own recovery. In the heart of the former Sea, Resurrection Island's unusually pristine biodiversity flourished as the island was cut off for 400 years (>123 vascular plant species and 111 vertebrate species, including ~50 Critically Endangered saiga antelopes, acting as an umbrella species for regional desert ecosystems; Shomuradov & Adilov, 2019; Bykova et al., 2020; Gritsina et al., 2020). The recent drying of the sea and decommissioning of a Cold War-era abandoned military base on the Island allowed access to scientists, poachers and looters, making clear its conservation and cultural value, but also its vulnerability.

The sea is transboundary (Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan), situated in the Ustyurt desert ecosystem and the Autonomous administrative region of Karakalpakstan (with a unique culture and people).

Regional biodiversity is rapidly declining due to environmental change and poaching (particularly of mammals, birds and reptiles; Bykova et al., 2015; GosComEcology). One cause of biodiversity loss is that its non-use potential is not being realised. Unemployment rates are at 40%, incentivising poaching and looting (SCA pilot surveys, 2020; Griysina et al., 2020), but there is enormous untapped potential for adventure, ecological and cultural tourism (ships on the dry seabed, ancient & cold-war ruins, a world-famous art gallery, unique ecosystems). Further, biodiversity is increasingly impacted by largescale industrial activity, but there is limited understanding of, or capacity for, industrial biodiversity impact mitigation, which both regional and national government actors are keen to remedy (Bull, 2014; UNDP, 2015).

Our 2020 pilot surveys of Ustyurt residents – including discussions with civil servants, residents and businesses – demonstrate a strong desire for sustainable livelihoods (particularly tourism-based), responsible development, and biodiversity conservation. Based discussions in 2020/21, these findings align closely with regional and national government priorities (see LoS): dramatic expansion in tourist revenue combined with increased natural resource extraction and transport construction are seen as key to growing Uzbekistan's economy. Our project will support stakeholders in building the skills, market structures and policy environment to realise these ambitions.

We will address the drivers of biodiversity loss mentioned above, focusing on the two key towns with direct access to Resurrection Island: Muynak (potential tourism gateway) and Kyrk-Kyz (poaching and industrial development hotspot).

Our three-pronged approach:

- 1) addresses unemployment and poaching drivers through piloting new tourism-linked income streams (crafts, homestays, guiding) linked to Resurrection Island which can be replicated more widely;
- 2) addresses potential industrial infrastructure damage (Kyr-Kyz) through technical support for effective biodiversity impact mitigation;
- 3) addresses poaching and lays the foundation for tourism through supporting protected area designation for Resurrection Island.

By bringing diverse stakeholders together to develop a shared vision for the Island and local residents, we will create a model for a resurgent Aral Sea region, which will be scaled post-project.

Uzbekistan is too often overlooked for biodiversity funding and support for conservation planning. Given the region's valuable and unique biodiversity, and its growing strategic geo-political importance, it represents a fantastic opportunity for Darwin Initiative investment.

Section 9 - Method, Change Expected, Gender & Exit Strategy

Q14. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and Impact. Provide information on:

- How you have analysed historical and existing initiatives and are building on or taking work already done into account in project design. Please cite evidence where appropriate.
- The rationale for carrying out this work and a justification of your proposed methodology.
- How you will undertake the work (materials and methods).
- How you will manage the work (roles and responsibilities, project management tools, etc.).

Our project has three strands: (1) Using the ecological and cultural assets of Resurrection Island to underpin new livelihood opportunities; (2) Making a substantial contribution towards the Island receiving formal protected status; (3) Extensive capacity-building around industrial biodiversity impact mitigation.

1. Local enterprise

We will carry out resident surveys to detail preferences for novel livelihoods, skills gaps, and biodiversity attitudes. The focus will be Muynak (~13,000 residents; former Aral Sea port with high levels of unemployment) and Kyrk Kyz (~2,000 residents; industrial settlement and known base for wildlife poachers). Surveys (two field trips in Y1, two in Y2, one in Y3) will sample ~5% of residents, enabling the preparation and delivery of skills training linked to new income generation streams, including (but not limited to) tourism, production and sale of traditional handicrafts (e.g. textiles), and protected area implementation.

DICE/IoZ/GCT/SCA will concurrently complete a detailed feasibility study (Y1) into the potential for regional enterprise development; including transport infrastructure, technological needs, and supply chains. This will incorporate market analysis on potential international interest in Aral tourism, homestays, and handicrafts. As our focal towns have strong similarities with many other towns in the region, our detailed survey work can be combined with this broader feasibility study to highlight routes for scaling up initiatives piloted by the project.

Recommendations for alternative livelihood streams (Y1) in Muynak and Kyrk-Kyz – drawn from survey findings and the feasibility study – will enable us to deliver focused skills training, building towards implementation of pilot tourism and craft initiatives with regional partner TPG (Y2). Capacity building will support 25+ tourism operators and guides, 20 small-scale producers of traditional crafts, and 10 new providers of homestay accommodation (increasing accommodation options in Muynak by >50%) – totalling 55 new operators. Promotion, marketing and additional logistical support (e.g. development of IT infrastructure needed to promote and sell products and services to international markets) will be provided to the most promising initiatives in Y3.

2. Protected area proposals

Species monitoring (vertebrate taxa and vascular plants) will be implemented by IoZ/GCE using vehicle surveys and camera trapping on Resurrection Island (Y1-Y2). This will supplement limited data gathered by IoZ in pilot surveys completed in 2016/2020.

The species presence-absence data will be overlaid with habitat layers from satellite data (Y2; 'Landsat' spectral imagery, being of sufficient spatial resolution and timescale). This will enable us to refine estimates of current species and habitat distributions and explore vegetation trends (IoZ/GCE/DICE; Bull et al., 2015). We will overlay a map of infrastructure in the region, with likely forthcoming development scenarios (see (3)). These spatial analyses will estimate key current and future pressures on the biodiversity of Resurrection Island.

Integrating these ecological data with socioeconomic data collected under (1), DICE/IoZ/GCE will develop proposals for where and how to officially protect Resurrection Island (including management resources, budgets and enforcement measures, legal ramifications). The official application for designating the protected area will be made by Y3, guided by project partners with experience of the formal Uzbek process (GCE/IoZ), targeting designation in 2025-26.

3. Industrial partnerships

Detailed regional maps of current infrastructure and proposed development projects will be created through consultation with UKG/GCE, systematic planning documentation review, and direct field observations made during the social/ecological surveys detailed above (Y1-2). Coarse-resolution infrastructure maps will have been created via the independent WFN project (which provides match-funding to our project) during 2021, guiding our more detailed analysis.

DICE/GCE will develop materials for and convene training sessions on biodiversity impact assessment,

mitigation and monitoring ('no net loss') in Y2-3, for industrial employees and environmental professionals operating regionally and nationally. These will be informed by much small pilot sessions organised via the WFN project. The PI has experience delivering industry training sessions in Uzbekistan through his involvement in a previous UNDP project, and has successfully provided similar training during another Darwin Initiative project (Uganda, DI 23-019).

Throughout Y1-3, we will work with 2+ major regional development case studies, providing technical input on good practice 'no net loss' principles, for incorporation by corporate collaborators into biodiversity action plans implemented in Karakalpakstan. Our technical input will draw upon our team expertise working on major development projects elsewhere, alongside global best practice guidance (e.g. developed by the International Finance Corporation). One case study will involve key project partner UKG (for natural gas extraction and processing activities in the Ustyurt); a second will involve the major A380 highway upgrade across the Ustyurt (the PI recently contributed to early A380 proposals on behalf of the lender, the Asian Development Bank).

Q15. Raising awareness of the potential worth of biodiversity

If your project contains an element of communications, knowledge sharing and/or dissemination please provide a description of your intended audience, how you intend to engage them, what the expected products/materials will be and what you expect to achieve as a result.

For example, are you expecting to directly influence policy in your host country or is your project a community advocacy project to support better management of biodiversity?

The project will raise awareness of the value of biodiversity by:

- (i) demonstrating the economic non-use value of biodiversity to Ustyurt residents;
 - (ii) mainstreaming biodiversity into regional planning and strategy;
 - (iii) raising the international profile of ecological adventure tourism opportunities in this part of Uzbekistan;
- and,
- (iv) publishing high-profile research papers on biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan.

In more detail:

(i) We will raise the profile of the biodiversity of the Ustyurt ecosystem and Resurrection Island in particular with Ustyurt residents; not just their unique natural heritage, but also more concretely how biodiversity has economic value. The SCA has for many years worked with residents including school-children to celebrate Ustyurt's biodiversity and the match-funded WFN project will build upon that. Our project will complement these ongoing efforts by exploring the value of biodiversity less from an intrinsic and cultural perspective, and more from the point of view of the finance it might attract (via ecological and adventure tourism, and traditional crafts).

(ii) We will share knowledge with regional and national government to influence their development strategy towards biodiversity conservation. The Karakalpak authorities will incorporate our findings into regional development planning (see Letter of Support), allowing us to share knowledge about effective biodiversity impact mitigation for development projects, and the benefits of biodiversity for regional and national economic development. We will engage with Kazakhstan partners, to transfer lessons to the wider ecoregion.

(iii) Internationally, our project's findings will be disseminated through our project website, the SCA's media channels and via Uzbekistan's Tourism Ambassador (see LoS) to raise public appreciation of the biodiversity of this unique and neglected region.

(iv) A series of open access papers in peer-reviewed journals (paid for through DICE match-funding) will be widely promoted in popular science articles and professional organisations.

Q16. Capacity building

If your project will support capacity building at institutional or individual levels, please provide details of what form this will take and how this capacity will be secured for the future.

The project will support capacity building through: (1) alternative livelihoods and (2) corporate engagement for biodiversity impact mitigation.

(1) we will provide training sessions and coaching for 55+ small-scale operators related to alternative livelihood streams including (but not be limited to) tourism services and handicraft sales. We will train individuals keen to enter these sectors and coach existing operators to improve their offer, thereby catering for international markets. We will assist operators in developing and maintaining the technological infrastructure (e.g. web presence) to sell products and services to both domestic and international clients. All training materials will be shared with project partner GCT and will align with existing national and regional development strategies. Capacity will be retained institutionally by GCT for future implementation.

(2) we will deliver training sessions to 50+ professionals (from industry, government, environmental sectors) on international good practice in biodiversity impact mitigation, in collaboration with our corporate and public-sector partners (UKG, GCE, IOZ). This will enhance and broaden the knowledge base in the country while also increasing institutional capacity within our partners. Through these sessions and the provision of technical input to regional planning, we will enable the creation of Uzbekistan-specific decision-support tools for biodiversity impact mitigation of future development activities.

By working with in-country partners on our capacity-building, outputs will be retained institutionally and consequently secured for the future. Critically, incorporation of our project into the Karakalpakstan regional development strategy will secure a future role for project outputs.

NOTE: our collaboration with ACBK/FZS/FFI will enable us to extend our capacity-building to Kazakhstan; providing training sessions and materials on both these topics will extend our influence and enable a trans-boundary scale-up post-project.

Q17. Gender equality

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender. Explain how your project will collect sex disaggregated data and what impact your project will have in promoting gender equality.

As a post-Soviet country, women are relatively well represented in the professions in Uzbekistan. However in rural areas women's opportunities are much more constrained and gender roles are more traditional.

Livelihoods: the social surveys completed in Y1-2 – on which proposals developed around alternate livelihoods will be based – will capture respondent attribute data, including information on gender. This will enable employment opportunities explored through this project's enterprise piloting component (i.e. tourism, handicrafts, homestays) to be weighted strongly towards providing opportunities for women, contributing towards addressing any current inequities in opportunity in the Ustyurt. The SCA's previous work in the Ustyurt has included empowering women through handicrafts cooperatives; we will learn from their experiences to design and implement our livelihoods interventions.

Industrial development partners: we will seek to ensure that the gender ratio of participants in biodiversity

impact mitigation training is approximately equal (female/male; it is very rare to be openly non-binary in Uzbekistan). We will discuss gender equity with our in-country partners and ensure they select participants from a balanced pool. This will be recorded via attendance records; if the gender ratio is heavily skewed towards men then we will preferentially invite non-male participants for future events.

Furthermore, the training will include modules on integrating gender into plans for biodiversity impact mitigation, informed by the findings of our previous DI project (23-019) in Uganda (e.g. ensuring that women do not disproportionately experience the negative impacts of economic development projects without also benefitting from compensatory biodiversity conservation measures).

Recruitment: in recruiting the full-time researcher to the project, we will actively seek to attract female candidates to interview. Our core team is currently 64% female.

In setting up an advisory board for the project upon project commencement, we will ensure that the board is diverse (including with respect to gender).

Q18. Change expected

Detail the expected changes this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who will benefit a) in the short-term (i.e. during the life of the project) and b) in the long-term (after the project has ended).

Please describe the changes for biodiversity and for people in developing countries, and how they are linked. When talking about people, please remember to give details of who will benefit and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used. If possible, indicate the number of women who will be impacted.

SHORT-TERM

We will generate the scientific and logistical information needed to start designating Resurrection Island as a protected area. The process of formally applying for designation will begin by the end of Y3.

As a result of our research, capacity building, coaching, and technical infrastructure development (e.g. online presence), there will be a material change in the viable livelihood options available to residents of Muynak and Kyrk-Kyz. These options will be founded on a celebration of Resurrection Island's natural and cultural heritage. Tangible changes will include: tourism (25+ individuals trained/coached in delivering tourist services); homestay availability (20+ additional homestays); and traditional craft production (10+ additional households). The majority of participants will be female.

Accompanying this will be a measurable increase in awareness among Muynak and Kyrk-Kyz residents of the global significance and cultural value of their regional biodiversity. Two large regional development case study projects (UKG and the A380) will explicitly incorporate good practice principles for 'no net loss' of biodiversity into project documentation. We will have tangibly contributed towards national capacity-building on 'no net loss' in biodiversity, training at least 50 environmental, business and government professionals.

Acting as a flagship umbrella species for the region's biodiversity, Resurrection Island's saiga antelope population will have stabilised at the currently estimated ~50 individuals. The Island's unique ecosystem will be recovering.

LONG-TERM

We will contribute to a step change in tourism to the Ustyurt; comprising year-on-year increases in visits to

sites of cultural interest and ecological value including Resurrection Island (currently off-limits). UzbekTourism estimates national/foreign tourists to the Ustyurt at 10000/5530 (2019); our project will support GCT's hoped-for >3x increase in these numbers. Our project will help attract more adventure tourists, who typically spend more and create more jobs per dollar spent (UzbekTourism, UNWTO). They will stay locally, including in the homestays we have piloted – leading to a further increase in the number of homestays being offered. A sustainable online and in-person trade in traditional handicrafts will become established, with both domestic and international buyers procuring regionally-produced goods with conservation/local livelihoods messaging.

By 2025-26 Resurrection Island will have received formal protected area status. The Island will celebrate an increasing saiga antelope population (>100 individuals), with saigas recognised locally as a flagship for a newly-resilient ecosystem.

Partly as a result of our findings being incorporated into Karakalpakstan's regional development strategy, the language of 'no net loss' will feature in policy for future development in the region, and in Uzbekistan more widely, improving outcomes for biodiversity and people.

Ecosystem restoration, saiga population recovery and "no net loss" in infrastructure development will have been enhanced through our collaborations with colleagues in Kazakhstan, supporting transboundary conservation at the landscape scale.

These outcomes will be achieved primarily through work with and support to Uzbek partners, from individual residents of the Ustyurt to national institutions – resulting in improved capacity for those partners, leading to long-term sustainability of the expected outcomes.

Q19. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change. This should be an overview of the overall project logic and outline how you expect your Outputs to contribute towards your overall Outcome and, longer term, your expected Impact.

We seek to build resilience back into the Ustyurt social-ecological system, by capitalising on Resurrection Island's unique ecological and cultural heritage.

Through a combination of preparing the groundwork for official protected area status, and raising awareness of the value and status of biodiversity on Resurrection Island and the Ustyurt among local residents, regional and national government, the project will safeguard the Island's biodiversity.

By facilitating new small-scale livelihood opportunities and helping address unemployment, capitalising on Uzbekistan's prioritisation of tourism, Resurrection Island and its surroundings will become a reliable and widely appreciated source of income and pride; producing a clear link between biodiversity and benefits to people.

Together, these activities will induce social pressure to reduce poaching and looting, and galvanise better protection by governmental agencies.

By working with industrial development projects modernising regional infrastructure to commit to 'no net loss' of biodiversity, we will also safeguard regional biodiversity. Karakalpakstan is actively welcoming investors, so now is a critical time to act. National and transboundary capacity-building will enhance this impact and take it to scale; important for long-term sustainability.

The combined impact will be to secure and enhance the biodiversity of the Aral sea region, while

contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Q20. Exit Strategy

State how the project will reach a stable and sustainable end point, and explain how the outcomes will be sustained, either through a continuation of activities, funding and support from other sources or because the activities will be mainstreamed in to “business as usual”.

Where individuals receive advanced training, for example, what will happen should that individual leave?

Official support for our project from multiple public sector agencies, and the commitment to incorporate project outcomes into regional policy, mean outcomes will be sustained post-project. By Y3, designation of Resurrection Island as a protected area will be ongoing. It will be carried forward by partners IoZ and GCE (who together succeeded in redesignating the nearby Saigachy Reserve in 2019).


Our livelihood initiatives will leave >55 small-scale operators with viable businesses. Ongoing support by project partners GCT and TPG will enable them to flourish and align with Uzbekistan’s national priority to actively promote tourism. Project partner SCA will support the expansion of these pilots across the region.


Biodiversity impact mitigation measures will be incorporated into project planning by our corporate partner UKG, and reflected in regional development strategies. They will be sustainable from project end, enforced internally by companies and externally by regional authorities.

Having trained a large pool of professionals and provided materials for future capacity-building, good practice in biodiversity impact mitigation will be effectively disseminated to future development projects elsewhere in Uzbekistan. Project partners will continue to deliver training and support as required. Our goal is to mainstream biodiversity impact mitigation into ‘business as usual’.


If necessary, please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams, references etc., as a PDF using the File Upload below:


 [References](#)


 09/02/2021

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 [Resurrection-Island Project map](#)

 09/02/2021

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Section 10 - Budget and Funding

Q21. Budget


Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet. Note that there are different templates for projects requesting over and under £100,000 from the Darwin budget.


- [Budget form for projects under £100,000](#)
- [Budget form for projects over £100,000](#)


Please refer to the Finance for Darwin/IWT Guidance for more information.

N.B.: Please state all costs by financial year (1 April to 31 March) and in GBP. The Darwin Initiative cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

Please upload your completed Darwin Budget Form Excel spreadsheet using the field below.

 [Bull DarwinBudget Stage2 2021 FINAL](#)

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Q22. Funding

Q22a. Is this a new initiative or a development of existing work (funded through any source)?

New Initiative

Please provide details:

This is a new initiative. Resurrection Island only just opened up (previously being officially off-limits and physically inaccessible), making biodiversity surveys, protected area designation and tourism possible. The idea of building novel livelihood streams around the Island is new.

The project builds on our activities in the region over a decade. These include raising awareness of and pride in Ustyurt biodiversity among residents, through school-based environmental education and traditional handicrafts with local women (SCA).

The project will implement ecological and social survey methods proven effective in the Ustyurt and draw on pilot surveys in 2019/20 assessing the ecological and social situation in the project region (IoZ/SCA). Team members have worked on biodiversity impact mitigation through contracts with UNDP and infrastructure companies in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (DICE/IOZ).

A recently-awarded Whitley Fund for Nature grant (IoZ), running in 2020-22, will complement this project by providing schools-based awareness-raising about the biodiversity of Resurrection Island, and will lay pre-project groundwork (e.g. gathering coarse-scale data on industrial activities, piloting impact mitigation training with a small group of environmental professionals).

Q22b. Are you aware of any other individuals/organisations/projects carrying out or applying for funding for similar work?

Yes

Please give details explaining similarities and differences. Explain how your work will be additional to this work and what attempts have been/will be made to co-operate with and learn lessons from such work for mutual benefits.

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative, ADCI (Kazakhstan):

The Ustyurt plateau extends into Kazakhstan, and the Ustyurt saiga population (to which the Resurrection Island saiga population is presumably linked) is transboundary.

On the Kazakh side of the border, there is an established consortium led by the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan, with Fauna and Flora International, Birdlife and Frankfurt

Zoological Society working on the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative. The purpose is to protect and restore the steppe and semi-desert ecosystems of Kazakhstan in a large network of connected conservation areas, with one focal species being saigas. Recently, ADCI extended from central Kazakhstan to include the Ustyurt Plateau, where FFI and ACBK have been working for a decade (collaborating with SCA/IOZ/DICE). ADCI's activities include supporting anti-poaching, environmental education, alternative livelihoods, protected area support).

As stated previously and in ADCI's Letter of Support for our project, we will work closely together to ensure that the project can scale up and realise synergies. This will include delivering biodiversity impact mitigation training in Kazakhstan during the project; but our long-term vision is to combine forces towards a transboundary approach to ecosystem restoration and a sustainable landscape for people and nature.

Q23. Co-financing

Are you proposing co-financing?

Yes

Q23a. Secured

Provide details of all funding successfully levered (and identified in the Budget) towards the costs of the project, including any income from other public bodies, private sponsorship, donations, trusts, fees or trading activity, as well as any your own organisation(s) will be committing.

Donor Organisation	Amount	Currency code	Comments
Whitley Fund for Nature Continuation Award	██████	GBP	Awarded to Dr Elena Bykova (Co-I on the proposed Darwin Initiative project).
Saiga Conservation Alliance	██████	GBP	Match-funding (in-kind staff costs) to be provided via SCA staff working on the project.
University of Kent	██████	GBP	Match-funding (contribution to project overheads) from the lead organisation.
<i>No Response</i>	0	<i>No Response</i>	<i>No Response</i>

Q23b. Unsecured

Provide details of any co-financing where an application has been submitted, or that you intend applying for during the course of the project. This could include co-financing from the private sector, charitable organisations or other public sector schemes. This should also include any additional funds required where a donor has not yet been identified.

Date applied for	Donor Organisation	Amount	Currency Code	Comments
No Response	University of Kent	████	GBP	Funding from the institutional fund to cover costs for Open Access publication of any research findings (approximate Article Processing Charges for two Open Access papers).
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	0	No Response	No Response

Do you require more fields?

No

Section 11 - Open Access and Financial Risk Management

Q24. Outputs of the project and Open Access

Please describe the project's open access plan and detail any specific funds you are seeking from Darwin to fund this.

Project website. We will set up a designated Resurrection Island project webpage, to widely disseminate our outputs. This will be linked to key partner websites for greater visibility (GCE, IoZ, DICE).

Conferences. Project outcomes will be communicated widely at international conferences – e.g. the International Association for Impact Assessment, the International Congress on Conservation Biology. Attendance will be funded by the project partners.

Publications. Scientific findings will be published in open access journals, with publication fees covered by DICE. We will publish regular updates for the international saiga conservation community in the 6-language Saiga News bulletin published by the SCA, and upload our materials to the Saiga Resource Centre.

Professional networks. The PI is a member of the Impact Mitigation and Ecological Compensation Thematic Group of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management – a leading international community of practice on biodiversity impact mitigation, through which project outputs will be shared.

National/Regional dissemination. All outputs will be produced in English and Russian (the language of official documents in Uzbekistan). Key locally-focussed outputs will be in the Karakalpak language. We will seek support to translate training materials into Kazakh for use by ADCI partners.

We will distribute hard copies at meetings and have regular in-person briefings to the relevant Ministries and the Uzbekistan Ambassador to the UK (see Letter of Support). Via the Uzbek Tourism Ambassador (see Letter of Support), we will disseminate information about our work to a wide international audience.

Q25. Financial Risk Management

This question considers the financial risks to the project. Explain how you have considered the risks and threats that may be relevant to the successful financial delivery of this project. This includes risks such as fraud or bribery, but may also include the risk of fluctuating foreign exchange and internal financial processes such as storage of financial data.

The University of Kent has an Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy drawn up in the context of the UK Bribery Act 2010. The PI will explain this policy to all team members and provide advice based on Transparency International's "Countering Small Bribes" report.

Since becoming untethered from the US dollar in 2017 (as a step towards market liberalisation), the Uzbek currency has undergone sustained inflation. This means that the value of the budget is most likely to increase in Uzbekistan; however, to guard against unexpected reversals of this trend, budget components for Uzbek partners were quoted in GBP.

The only newly-recruited post is the full-time Research Assistant. Recruitment may take time, presenting a potential financial risk, this is mitigated by starting the Research Assistant 6 months into the project timeline.

We do not anticipate high levels of other financial risks, as most of the budget covers staff time, and the other costs are well known to project partners. However, we will ensure that project partners provide justification for costs and claims, and the PI will check costs and receipts. In addition, partners will check the validity of all finance claims and the project will be independently audited in Year 3.

Q26. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin funding, please indicate what you anticipate will happen to the items following project end. If you are requesting more than 10% capital costs, please provide your justification here.

Aside from a laptop for the full time researcher (hosted by DICE), we will not purchase any capital items as part of this project. The laptop will remain the property of DICE at project close, and be used as necessary for future related work.

Q27. Value for Money

Please describe why you consider your application to be good value for money including justification of why the measures you will adopt will secure value for money.

The project represents excellent value for money for several reasons, including the enthusiastic support from government stakeholders; not only project partners (two Ministries, the Academy of Sciences) but the Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan, the Uzbek Embassy to the UK and International Tourism

Ambassador (see Letters of Support). Their support will:

- a) mean the project leverages substantially greater staff time and expertise in-country than is reflected in the budget;
- b) enable and expedite the achievement of project goals;
- c) ensure that multiple stakeholders in Uzbekistan embed and mainstream project activities beyond its lifetime, lengthening and upscaling our outcomes.

There is substantial secured match-funding (provided by the Whitley Award, DICE and the SCA; 33% of the overall project budget). Consequently, the requested Darwin project budget of ~£400k will actually result in ~£600k being spent on ambitious capacity-building and conservation actions in a country that is relatively underfunded for biodiversity conservation; representing excellent value for money to the Darwin Initiative. The complementarity of the Whitley-funded and Darwin projects will allow both to achieve economies of scale – contributing more than either could do in isolation.

Through ADCI, all of our transferable outcomes will be exported directly to a related landscape-scale conservation initiative in the Kazakh Ustyurt, and ADCI will separately fund the PI's expenses to deliver training materials in Kazakhstan developed in this project. Therefore Darwin-funded project work in Uzbekistan will be amplified for transboundary impact – again providing excellent value for money.

Section 12 - Ethics and Safeguarding

Q28. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting Darwin's key principles for ethics as outlined in the guidance note. Additionally, are there any human rights and/or international humanitarian law risks in relation to your project? If there are, have you carried out an assessment of the impact of those risks, and of measures that may be taken in order to mitigate them?

All DICE projects have to go through a rigorous pre-project ethics approval process, addressing issues including "recruitment and informed consent", "confidentiality", "incentives and payments", and "insurance and indemnity".

The project team will ensure an appropriate Health and Safety policy (e.g. DICE) is adhered to by all project staff, regardless of nationality. Strict risk assessments will be conducted to conform to project partner H&S and insurance policies.

The PI will explain the approved protocols to team members and ensure they are closely followed by everyone working on the project, as well as ensuring compliance with national laws and the policies and regulations of partner institutions.

The social survey work in Ustyurt towns will involve the collection of personal and potentially sensitive data (including potentially information on illegal activities such as poaching). Free Prior Informed Consent will be sought from all participants and all data will be anonymised throughout. We will focus on ensuring that the perspectives, interests and well-being of the men and women directly affected by our project are properly addressed. Project staff will be reminded of the need to maintain the independence and integrity of the research process and any sensitive data will be stored securely and only accessed by specified team members. A detailed Data Management Plan will be produced in the first month of the project.

Q29. Corruption

This question specifically considers corruption. Explain how you have considered any risk of corruption

that may affect the success of this project, and how you plan to manage this. This may include financial corruption, but may also deal with gifts or inducements, or other types of dishonesty or deceit.

The lead organisation (University of Kent) has an Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy drawn up in the context of the UK Bribery Act 2010 and designed to prevent: the offering, promising or giving of a bribe; requesting, agreeing to receive, or acceptance of a bribe; bribery of a foreign public official, and failure by an organisation to prevent any persons associated with it from committing bribery.

The PI will explain this policy to everyone on the project and provide advice based on Transparency International's "Countering Small Bribes" report.

Further: the key project partners between them have well-established working relationships, built on previous collaboration and trust – e.g. the PI has worked for nearly 10 years with Co-Is, SCA, and GCE; the Co-Is have similarly worked extensively with GCE and GCT – creating a working team which should be robust to inducements or dishonesty.

Work with both governmental and private sector partners (UKG and TPG) will be covered not only by the aforementioned Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy, but also by good conduct rules developed by the partners themselves during our Inception Meeting.

Q30. Safeguarding

Projects funded through the Darwin Initiative must fully protect vulnerable people all of the time, wherever they work. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place. Please confirm the lead organisation has the following policies in place and that these can be available on request:

We have a safeguarding policy, which includes a statement of our commitment to safeguarding and a zero tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse	Checked
We have attached a copy of our safeguarding policy to this application (file upload below)	Checked
We keep a detailed register of safeguarding issues raised and how they were dealt with	Checked
We have clear investigation and disciplinary procedures to use when allegations and complaints are made, and have clear processes in place for when a disclosure is made	Checked
We share our safeguarding policy with downstream partners	Checked
We have a whistle-blowing policy which protects whistle blowers from reprisals and includes clear processes for dealing with concerns raised	Checked
We have a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers that sets out clear expectations of behaviours - inside and outside the work place - and make clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards	Checked

Please outline how you will implement your policies in practice and ensure that downstream partners apply the same standards as the lead organisation.

During our all-partner project inception meeting, we will set aside two hours to discuss ethical issues associated with the project (including safeguarding). This will set the tone for the rest of the project.

The relevant policy and procedure documents will be shared with all partners, incorporating:





- Safeguarding policy, and Code of Conduct (points 1, 2, 6, 7 above)
- University Ordinance 42, and Statute 7 (point 4 above)





These documents will be available on a shared drive in English and Russian, so team members and their organisations will have unfettered access. The team will be made aware of the register maintained by Kent Human Resources (point 3 above), which will not be shared for reasons of confidentiality.





A standing item on the agenda of all project meetings will discuss any safeguarding issues that have arisen. We will appoint an independent advisory panel to the project. One of the panel's designated roles will be to highlight any potential safeguarding issues during the implementation of project activities.





Any team members (and their assistants) who directly interact with the public – particularly those carrying out social surveys – will be required to undertake training on ethics and safeguarding before fieldwork commences.

Please upload the lead organisation's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF

 [Code-of-Conduct UoK](#)
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 pdf 913.85 KB

 [Reforming Statute 7 - Key features of the new staff ordinances - v1.4 16apr15](#)
 09/02/2021
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 pdf 482.25 KB

 [Ordinance 42 - Grievance Resolution](#)
 09/02/2021
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 pdf 249.49 KB

 [Safeguarding and Duty of Care Policy v12](#)
 09/02/2021
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Section 13 - Logical Framework


Q31. Logical Framework


Darwin Initiative projects will be required to monitor (and report against) their progress towards their expected Outputs and Outcome. This section sets out the expected Outputs and Outcome of your project, how you expect to measure progress against these and how we can verify this.


- [Stage 2 Logframe Template](#)

Please complete your full logframe in the separate Word template and upload as a PDF using the file upload below. Copy your Impact, Outcome and Output statements and your activities below - these should be the same as in your uploaded logframe.

Please upload your logframe as a PDF document.

 [Resurrection-Island Logical-Framework](#)

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Impact:

Sustainable economic development of the Aral region is being realised via collaboration between residents, government, and industry; positively transforming residents' wellbeing, whilst protecting highly threatened Uzbek biodiversity.

Outcome:

Resurrection Island is on the path to protected status. New sustainable livelihood options have been piloted, aligning residents' wellbeing with biodiversity conservation. Regional industrial biodiversity impact mitigation practices have improved.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

New small-scale local operators establish businesses based on regional cultural and ecological values, such that residents place increased value on sites of cultural and natural interest.

Output 2:

Resurrection Island on the way to becoming a fully resourced protected area.

Output 3:

Industry and government ensure wider biodiversity impacts of new development projects are effectively mitigated, as part of a broader sustainable development agenda.

Output 4:

No Response

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

It is advised to have less than 6 Outputs since this level of detail can be provided at the Activity level.

No

Activities

Each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.

Output 1: Local businesses established based on cultural and ecological values

1.1 Social surveys performed to elicit resident livelihood preferences and attitudes to biodiversity, completed for ~5% of the population of Muynak and Kyrk Kyz

1.2a Quantitative market analysis carried out on the economic feasibility of different aspects of tourism

- expansion, accommodation provision, traditional craft, and other alternative livelihoods for the Ustyurt
- 1.2b Develop the technological infrastructure necessary to promote tourism, craft products and homestays (i.e. web presence, online shopping capability)
 - 1.3 Skills training and coaching for at least 25 individuals to work in regional tourism as e.g. guides/operators
 - 1.4 Drawing upon surveys and market analysis, work with at least 10 households to agree a shortlist of traditional craft products that those households can begin to produce. Identify logistical routes for taking those products to market
 - 1.5 Identify and confirm a list of at least 20 Ustyurt households (with contacts) that will provide homestay accommodation to visitors, and provide coaching as part of agreeing the details of the homestay offer
 - 1.6. Social surveys to assess changing attitudes to biodiversity and to sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities

Output 2: Resurrection Island on its way to becoming a fully resourced protected area

- 2.1a Draft the set of documentation (the '7 Appendices' listed in the log frame) legally required for the designation of a protected area in Uzbekistan, for Resurrection Island. Publish through our newly created central Darwin project website
- 2.1b Through project stakeholder consultation, draft a medium-term management plan for a protected area on Resurrection Island and include estimated costings
- 2.2 Submit necessary documentation, and agree timeline plus organogram (with roles and responsibilities) for the process towards designation of the protected area.
- 2.3a Flora and fauna field surveys of Resurrection Island, to map the distribution and abundance of multiple species, including saiga antelope and others (e.g. steppe tortoise)
- 2.3b Satellite imagery analyses to determine habitat and land use trajectories on the Island over the course of the last two decades
- 2.4 Camera trapping surveys of Resurrection Island, to capture presence/absence of any other low density and potentially threatened species (e.g. goitered gazelle)
- 2.5. Field surveys of poaching signs and social surveys on changing attitudes to poaching (amalgamated with activities 1.1, 1.6)

Output 3: Industry ensures wider biodiversity impacts of new development projects are effectively mitigated

- 3.1 Building on the high level (i.e. coarse resolution) mapping exercise performed via the separate Whitley Award project, and via stakeholder consultation (GCE, UKG and A380), create a detailed map and description of current and planned infrastructure development in the Ustyurt and Aral region
- 3.2 Review any current development case study project documentation including action plans relating to environmental impacts, and (drawing upon good international practice and project team technical expertise) propose a set of biodiversity impacts mitigation measures for inclusion – guided by a 'no net loss or better' principle
- 3.3a Identify a community of practice of at least 50 Uzbek environmental consultants, planners and impact assessors (including those who are seeking to enter this field)
- 3.3b Develop and provide training on biodiversity impact mitigation to this community of practice, illustrated using the case studies (see 3.2)
- 3.3c On our Darwin project website, include a page with information on those individuals trained in good practice biodiversity impact mitigation and available to consult on future development projects in Uzbekistan, for dissemination to the projects team's professional network of international consultants advising on Uzbek developments
- 3.4 Technical input on the inclusion of 'no net loss' principles into the Karakalpak regional development strategy (see Letter of Support from the Karakalpak Council of Ministers)
- 3.5a Provide training to biodiversity impact mitigation practitioners in Kazakhstan
- 3.5b Workshop with ADCI collaborators on planning for transboundary scale-up of landscape-level sustainable development plans (including tourism, ecological connectedness, livelihood enhancement for





Section 14 - Implementation Timetable

Q32. Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities

Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the Excel spreadsheet template as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project.

[Implementation Timetable Template](#)

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 fill/shade only the quarters in which an activity will be carried out. The workplan can span multiple pages if necessary.

 [Resurrection Island-Implementation Timetable](#)
 09/02/2021
 14:06:55
 xlsx 16.2 KB

Section 15 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q33. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe, referring to the Indicators above, how the progress of the project will be monitored and evaluated, making reference to who is responsible for the project's M&E.

Darwin Initiative projects are expected to be adaptive and you should detail how the monitoring and evaluation will feed into the delivery of the project including its management. M&E is expected to be built into the project and not an 'add' on. It is as important to measure for negative impacts as it is for positive impact. Additionally, please indicate an approximate budget and level of effort (person days) to be spent on M&E (see [Finance Guidance for Darwin/IWT](#)).

M&E is integrated into project activities via social and ecological surveys carried out in Y1/Y3. Analyses will be published in the grey literature (e.g. Saiga News) and peer-reviewed articles. This is the main process for evaluating social and ecological outcomes (in Y3, against a Y1 baseline). The question is: what has the influence of the project been on Ustyurt residents' perceptions of the value of biodiversity and poaching norms, and what is the status of that biodiversity? Additional M&E activities specific to our three outputs (see logframe) are:

OUTPUT 1:

Monitoring of livelihood pilots will be through regular in-person contact between IOZ/TPG and participating households. We will maintain a written record of these interactions. Quarterly in-person visits will be

supplemented with phone calls. This enables us to evaluate progress, provide ongoing coaching, troubleshoot any problems quickly, and ensure an adaptive approach to implementation is maintained.

OUTPUT 2:

Indicator 2.1 of progress on protected area designation is to have constructed a written timeline with milestones, including an organogram (description of roles and responsibilities). The core team will use this timeline to monitor and evaluate progress; checking whether milestones are being met and taking swift remedial action if not. Post-project, the timeline will continue to be used for monitoring progress by the IoZ and GCE.

OUTPUT 3:

Corporate and governmental engagement on biodiversity impact mitigation will be monitored based on (i) training delivered and (ii) incorporation of biodiversity impact mitigation measures into case study projects and regional government documentation. Training session attendees will complete a short exit survey on the content of the training and usefulness to their role, which will be used to evaluate the efficacy of the training and improve subsequent sessions. Case study project documentation incorporating biodiversity impact mitigation and action planning will be made publicly available by corporate partners, and an independent evaluation of the measures proposed will be requested from the IUCN thematic group on Impact Mitigation and Ecological Compensation (of which the PI is a member). This will be done midway through the project, and any recommendations will feed back into subsequent technical advice provided by the project team. The relevant biodiversity actions plans will – by definition – incorporate their own monitoring plans.

Ongoing progress monitoring will be supported by the development of a Theory of Change in the Inception Meeting, with critical milestones, roles and responsibilities and stakeholders mapped out. Progress against the Theory of Change and milestones will be assessed on a 6-monthly basis by the project team during all-partner meetings.

An independent Advisory Group will meet annually to monitor progress (based on project documentation and in-person discussions) and suggest improvements. This will be chaired by Prof E.J. Milner-Gulland (Chair of SCA Trustees) and include a representative from ADCI, the Uzbek Tourism Ambassador, a corporate biodiversity impact mitigation professional with expertise in the region, and a specialist in the ecology of the region.

Total project budget for M&E in GBP (this may include Staff, Travel and Subsistence costs)	£ [REDACTED]
Number of days planned for M&E	445
Percentage of total project budget set aside for M&E (%)	[REDACTED]

Section 16 - FCDO Notifications

Q34. FCDO Notifications

Please state whether there are sensitivities that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will need to be aware of should they want to publicise the project's success in the Darwin competition in the host country.

No

Please indicate whether you have contacted your Foreign Ministry or the local embassy or High Commission (or equivalent) directly to discuss security issues (see [Guidance Notes](#)) and attach details of any advice you have received from them.

Yes (no written advice)

Please attach details of any advice you have received.

No Response

Section 17 - Certification

Q35. Certification

On behalf of the

Trustees

of

University of Kent

I apply for a grant of





£399,327.00

I certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the statements made by us in this application are true and the information provided is correct. I am aware that this application form will form the basis of the project schedule should this application be successful.

(This form should be signed by an individual authorised by the applicant institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)

- I have enclosed CVs for key project personnel, letters of support, budget and project implementation timetable (uploaded at appropriate points in application).
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report are also enclosed.

Checked

Name	Jane Benstead
Position in the organisation	Grants and Contracts Manager
Signature (please upload e-signature)	 Jane Benstead signature  09/02/2021  16:03:26  pdf 10.77 KB
Date	09 February 2021

Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including "Guidance Notes for Applicants" and "Finance Guidance".	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for this fund.	Checked
I have provided actual start and end dates for the project.	Checked
I have provided my budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that our budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.	Checked
The application been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
I have included a 1 page CV or job description for all the key project personnel identified at Question 12, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a letter of support from the the Lead Organisation and main partner organisation(s) identified at Question 11, or an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a cover letter from the Lead Organisation, outlining how any feedback received at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant.	Checked
I have included a copy of the lead organisation's safeguarding policy, which covers the criteria listed in Question 30.	Checked
I have been in contact with the FCDO in the project country/ies and have included any evidence of this. If not, I have provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts for the Lead Organisation, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
I have checked the Darwin website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on GOV.UK.	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 the Darwin Initiative and our sister grant scheme, the IWT Challenge Fund. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to

biodiversity conservation and share our quarterly project newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in this application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the latest copy of the Privacy Notice for Darwin, Darwin Plus and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund available [here](#). This Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information, but not personal data, may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead organisation, location, and total grant value) on the GOV.UK and other websites.

Information relating to the project or its results may also be released on request, including under the 2004 Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, Defra will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality nor will we act in contravention of our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).