

DIR27S2\1064

Protecting Mongolia's Gobi Desert for wild camels and herder communities

The Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area encompasses 44,630km² of globally significant desert and is home to the last population of Critically Endangered wild camel. Herders here face socio-ecological issues, including overgrazing; rangeland degradation and waterhole loss, exacerbated by climate change. Government and communities lack mechanisms and resources to collaboratively tackle these threats. This project seeks to institutionalise robust evidence-based environmental management, implement scalable waterhole habitat management, strengthen collaborative governance, enable community-led awareness-raising, improve sustainable rangeland management and herder livelihoods.

Section 1 - Contact Details

PRIMARY APPLICANT DETAILS

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GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	Zoological Society of London
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Section 2 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q3. Project title:

Protecting Mongolia's Gobi Desert for wild camels and herder communities

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

DIR17S1\1618

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	Mongolia	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:	£153,023.00	£167,326.00	£143,445.00	£33,252.00	£ 497,046.00

Q6a. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

Yes

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

We proposed a total of £ [REDACTED] matching funds, including £ [REDACTED] secured from ZSL UK, GGASPA, CMC, and UNDP ENSURE project, and not yet formally confirmed funds of £ [REDACTED] from the NGS. Secured funds mostly include staff costs allocated by partners for camera-trap studies, and buffer-zone management, training of rangers, Eco-Clubs, and herders, and sharing venues and equipment for these activities. Unsecured funds include a new proposal to NGS building on the current project and WCPF input results into the ongoing camera-trap study.

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). [REDACTED]

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.

Please write this summary for a non-technical audience.

The Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area encompasses 44,630km² of globally significant desert and is home to the last population of Critically Endangered wild camel. Herders here face socio-ecological issues, including overgrazing; rangeland degradation and waterhole loss, exacerbated by climate change. Government and communities lack mechanisms and resources to collaboratively tackle these threats. This project seeks to institutionalise robust evidence-based environmental management, implement scalable waterhole habitat management, strengthen collaborative governance, enable community-led awareness-raising, improve sustainable rangeland management and herder livelihoods.

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 understand and support action to address linkages between biodiversity and human health
- To understand and tackle impacts of agriculture practices on biodiversity, livelihoods and climate
- 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 the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- 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.

The project has been discussed with the CBD/CMS national authorities and key government partners to support Mongolia's commitments to UN conventions.

1.CBD

This project supports CBD and Mongolia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan(NBSAP:2015-2025) through collaborative ecosystem management, enabling sustainable resource use and protecting highly threatened biodiversity while developing ecosystem resilience.

It contributes to Aichi Targets:

- 1: Raising awareness of biodiversity values and conservation through community-led initiatives, e.g. training and Eco-Club empowerment. Supporting Buffer-zone Councils(BZC) to implement the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulations (RRMR), which promote sustainable community buffer-zone pasture management. Community banking will invest in sustainable livelihoods initiatives, incentivising RRMR compliance.
- 2: Integrating biodiversity into multi-stakeholder, landscape-scale planning by capacity building across a hierarchy of institutions to facilitate evidence-based decision-making, underpinned by a systematic, robust environmental monitoring programme. Local research expertise will be built to sustain comprehensive biodiversity gains to inform effective long-term planning and adaptive management.
- 5 and 7: Reducing habitat loss and degradation through sustainable buffer-zone management (e.g. improved enforcement of RRMR).
- 11: Supporting effective, equitable management of GGSPA and its biodiversity. Enabling collaborative governance in the buffer-zone, led by indigenous herders, to develop and implement management strategies that meet the needs of people and wildlife.
- 12: Improving threatened species conservation, particularly Critically Endangered wild camels, which are a national and global priority.
- 13: Maintaining wild camel genetic diversity by enabling range-wide migration and reducing opportunities for crossbreeding with the domestic camel.
- 17: Implementing Mongolia's NBSAP goals:

Goal 1: disseminating sustainable development information via education and mass media - enabling school-based Eco-Clubs and a public awareness campaign;

Goal 2: creating a base of biodiversity data and ensuring its use in decision-making - supported by developing sustainable biodiversity monitoring and local research expertise;

Goal 4: implementing the national programme on conservation of endangered animals – delivering the Wild Camel species action plan;

Goal 5: improving the connection and management of protected areas - supported by building institutional

capacity;

Goal 9: reducing pasture degradation - supported by working with herders to improve livestock productivity, reducing the need for illegal grazing.

- 18: The wild camel long-distance migrations have special cultural significance for Mongolians. The project will integrate local traditional knowledge into conservation efforts to secure this knowledge for future generations, achieved through using existing community-level Eco-Clubs and participatory governance frameworks to engage herders.
- 19: The project addresses critical knowledge gaps identified by the NBSAP (e.g. impacts of the increasingly impermeable Sino-Mongolian border, and human disturbance).

2.CMS

For the highly mobile wild camel (CMS Appendix-I, CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative, designated by Resolution 11.13-COP11, calling for the Range States to implement provisions of the Convention to benefit the conservation of this species). The project will meet the CMS calls for conservation efforts to maintain landscape permeability, and reduce overgrazing/livestock competition.

3. UNFCCC

The project will improve the adaptive capacity of communities and habitats, creating resilience to climate-associated risks, supporting adaptive measures, and reducing their vulnerability to the future impacts of climate change.

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.

ZSL collaborated closely with Ms. Dorjsuren Ariuntuya, CMS National Focal Point (NFP), Senior Officer, Department of Climate Change and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment and Tourism. As the project covers essential habitats for wild camel and other CMS species including Goitered gazelle, the NFP fully supports this proposal and its significant CMS contributions in Mongolia.

Following government change in June 2020, Mr. Batmunkh was appointed CBD NFP in January 2021. During COVID lockdown, communications are limited, but ZSL Mongolia and the NFP have discussed the proposal and agreed to follow-up if successful to ensure synergies during the project inception

Q9d. Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

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

This project contributes to the following SDGs:

- 1, 2 and 8 – VSLAs and small business increase herders' access to financial services(SDG 8.3, 8.10, and 1.4), contribute to improved income(SDG 1.1) and food production (SDG 2.4), promote sustainable rangeland management practices (SDG 8.4), and reduce remote communities' vulnerability to external shocks (SDG 1.5).
- 4 and 5 – By implementing GESI principles in VSLAs, Eco-Clubs, and herder training, it promotes equal opportunities and participation of children, women, and the elderly (SDG 5.5) in community-banking and livelihood development. Buffer-zone herders will increase their understanding of sustainable development through rangeland training, conservation actions, and Eco-Club campaigns(SDG 4.7).
- 10 – By involving herder communities in PA management and aligning management policies to

communities' livelihoods and finance access needs, it contributes towards reducing inequality between communities.

- 13 – Through improved rangeland practices (carbon sinks); supporting livelihood alternatives that reduce risks from climate change; ensuring wider access to environmental information; and helping Gobi wildlife to cope with warming climate (waterhole and oases restoration), adaptive capacity to climate change is improved for communities and habitats.
- 15 - Rangeland management, habitat rehabilitation, and promoting Gobi ecosystems and wildlife recovery will contribute to protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, and halting biodiversity loss. By strengthening the CMC, including GGASPA, enhances national capacity(SDG 16.a).
- 17 – By fostering North-South partnerships, it will increase Mongolia's access to science and knowledge-sharing(SDG 17.6), supporting the implementation of national commitments for CBD and CMS(SDG 17.9).

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
26-006	Zeke Davidson	Conserving Tsavo's wildlife by building community resilience and fostering coexistence
26-012	Hem Baral	Ghodaghodi's Guardians: Communities restoring a Ramsar wetland at watershed scale
25-012	Monica Wrobel	Steppe-up: Community-led recovery of Mongolia's iconic species and forest-steppe ecosystem
25-024	Jeremy Huet	Securing marine biodiversity and fishers' income through sustainable fisheries, Mozambique
IWT062	Andrew Fowler	Disrupting the illegal wildlife trade in grey parrots in Cameroon
IWT051	Monica Wrobel	Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking

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.


 [ZSL Annual Report 2018-19](#)

 09/02/2021


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 pdf 4.99 MB

 [ZSL Annual Report 2019-20](#)

 09/02/2021

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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: Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Website address: www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/mongolia

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

ZSL is a science-based conservation charity founded in 1826. With activities and projects in over 50 countries, ZSL has a wide range of conservation expertise. ZSL has managed over 40 Darwin Initiative grants since 2000 and large bilateral and multi-lateral grants. ZSL supports in-country protected area management effectiveness, rare species monitoring, and successful community conservation interventions across Asia including in Mongolia, Russia, India, and other countries.

ZSL has worked with stakeholders in Mongolia for over 16 years, including with a long history with wild camels, conducting GGASPA camera-trap surveys in 2010 and a camel population census in 2014, whilst contributing to the camel species action plan. ZSL is currently undertaking a two-year National Geographic Society-funded project on camel monitoring, threat identification, and intervention planning. ZSL is completing successful Darwin Initiative/IWT Challenge Fund projects on community protected area management and livelihood development, community banking (DI-498), and strengthening government institutional capacity to combat the illegal wildlife trade (IWT-017).

ZSL will lead the project, including financial management of the project and liaison with partners. ZSL will contribute technical expertise needed for the project and support the Collaborative Management Council (CMC) and GGASPA management in monitoring and evaluation

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: Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area (GGASPA) Administration

Website address: <https://www.mne.mn/>

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

The GGASPA Administration was established in 1975 under the Protected Area Department of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Designated as a World Biosphere Reserve in 1991 by the United Nations, the 44,630 km² GGASPA is Mongolia's largest contiguous protected area and preserves Mongolia's most intact 'true desert' ecoregion.

The GGASPA contains Mongolia's last known population of Critically Endangered wild camels, also the largest camel sub-population globally. It is also home to globally and regionally important flora and fauna and protects significant populations of wildlife including snow leopard, wild ass, goitered gazelle, Argali sheep, Ibex, and the endemic Gobi bear. The GGASPA has a 3,300 km² buffer-zone, belonging to five districts in the territory of two provinces, namely, Gobi-Altai and Bayankhongor. The buffer-zone and a limited use zone of the GGASPA are seeing increasing human impact, requiring management responses.

The GGASPA Administration has 34 employees, including 21 rangers and 9 officers based in Bayantooroi, Gobi-Altai, 1300 km from the capital city.

The GGASPA will support all aspects of the project, managing camel research and conservation components (Output-1 and 2), whilst participating in buffer-zone management as a member of the CMC (Output-3) and in community outreach with Eco-Clubs (Output-4)

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

2. Partner Name: Collaborative Management Council (CMC)

Website address: *No Response*

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

The Collaborative Management Council (CMC) is a new institution established in May 2019 to bring together stakeholders of the GGASPA buffer-zone. As part of ZSL's existing project, a stakeholder workshop in April identified threats to camel conservation and sought to approve and implement the GGASPA Camel Conservation Action Plan.

The council includes representatives from the GGASPA Administration, the governors of the five soum (district) Buffer-Zone Councils (BZCs), two Border Defense Units, the Environment Department of Bayankhongor, and Gobi-Altai Aimag, and ZSL's representative office in Mongolia. The CMC and its constituent BZCs oversee a population of 3,700 households, including 2,198 herder households across five soums adjacent to the GGASPA. Of these communities, 1272 households in seven bags (counties) within the buffer-zone boundaries will be the target for public awareness, camel conservation, and buffer-zone management activities. In this project, the CMC will meet, coordinate and oversee five soum (district) CRKs/BZCs to implement their respective Soum Buffer-zone Management Plans. With ZSL oversight, the CMC will support Eco-Clubs to raise environmental awareness, implement Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation (RRMR), and establish a community banking fund in each BZC. The CMC will collaborate closely with the GGASPA on conservation management of the buffer-zone.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

3. Partner Name:

National University of Mongolia (NUM)

Website address:

www.num.edu/mn/en

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

The National University of Mongolia (NUM), established in 1942, is the oldest university in Mongolia. NUM has played a fundamental role in creating, promoting, and strengthening Mongolian capacity in contemporary scientific research. It is a member of the International Association of Universities (IAU), University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), and the Eurasia Pacific University Network and maintains partnership agreements with more than 180 international universities and research organisations.

The collaboration between NUM and ZSL began in 2003 through the Darwin Initiative-funded Steppe Forward programme. This encompassed a summer field course, which has since taught over 360 international and Mongolian students. ZSL's collaborations with NUM include successful initiatives for the development of Mongolia's first comprehensive IUCN Regional Red List; extensive, ground-breaking biological monitoring, such as camera trapping at Gobi oases; and wild camel population surveys.

NUM will support the project's research and conservation outputs (1 and 2) in collaboration with the Institute of Zoology (IoZ) and Wild Camel Protection Foundation (WCPF), contributing expertise to biodiversity and rangeland monitoring, and methodological design for GGASPA's habitat restoration work. NUM will oversee data analysis sourced from camera-traps and SMART patrolling, and rangeland survey to inform conservation decisions of GGASPA and CMC.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

4. Partner Name:

National Authority for Convention of Migratory Species (CMS)

Website address:

No Response

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

The National Focal Point (NFP) for CMS is a senior officer of the Department of Climate Change and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The NFP is assigned to (a) receive and disseminate Convention information; (b) ensure that Mongolia is represented at CMS meetings; (c) identify experts to participate in technical expert groups and assessment processes under the Convention; (d) respond to other requests for input by Parties from the Conference of the Parties and the Secretariat; (e) monitor and promote the national implementation of the Convention; and (f) collaborate and coordinate with NFPs for other related Conventions to facilitate the implementation of the Convention. The NFP has supported the proposal and will contribute to the project's implementation by representing the CMS at project events, coordinating with NFPs for CBD and UNFCCC, liaising with other national CBD and CMS projects, briefing the MET and CMS Secretariat on the project's progress, and incorporating the project results into their national report.

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

5. Partner Name: United Nations Development Programme, Mongolia Representative Office

Website address: undp.mn

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): The UNDP Mongolia Representative Office is based in Ulaanbaatar and has an Environment, Energy, and Disaster Risk Reduction portfolio with a focus on enhancing Mongolia's ability to conserve and protect its environment for resource-efficient development, and to empower local communities, and enhance institutional capacity for sustained environmental management, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Within this program, UNDP implements the GEF-funded "Ensuring Sustainability and Resilience of Green Landscapes in Mongolia" or ENSURE project (USD 7,5 million), which targets Sayan, Khangai Gobi landscapes with overlaps in four of the Gobi soums (districts) proposed for this project. ENSURE will run from 2019-2025 with the objectives of conserving rangeland, forest, and wildlife in the target sites by improving the legal environment, empowering local communities, increasing their awareness, and supporting livelihoods. ZSL Mongolia had several communications with the UNDP Program Officer on the proposed activities to avoid overlaps and coordinate efforts. These communications resulted in USD 12,0000 in co-funding from UNDP for herder environmental education through Eco-Clubs in the GGASPA buffer-zone. The project agreed to coordinate other relevant activities in the four Gobi soums with ENSURE through regular communication and knowledge-sharing.

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? No

If no, please provide details On 21 January 2021, Mongolia's Prime Minister resigned due to COVID patients' mistreatment. A new Prime Minister was appointed on January 27. Although the Project National Director expressed verbal support for ZSL's application, obtaining the signed letter has been delayed due to the uncertainty of changes within the MET.

6. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*


Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project): *No Response*


Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes No


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

No Response


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


 [DIR27S2 1064 Cover Letter](#)


 09/02/2021


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 [DIR27S2 1064 Support Letters Final](#)

 09/02/2021

 13:49:32

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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?
Dr.Tungalag Ulambayar	Project Leader	30	Checked
Munkhjargal Myagmar	Biodiversity Program Officer (ZSL)	100	Checked
Dr. Munkhzul Tserendorj	Conservation Biologist (ZSL)	40	Checked
Khaliun Tsog	Finance Officer (ZSL)	40	Checked





Do you require more fields?

Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Myagmarsuren Shagdarjav	HR & Admin Officer (ZSL)	40	Checked
Munkhtuvshin Nergui	VSLA & Community Officer	40	Checked
Dr. Markus Rowcliffe	Conservation Biologist (IoZ)	5	Checked
Dr. Antony Dancer	SMART expert (ZSL)	5	Checked
Bayarbat Choijin	Director of GGASPA	20	Checked
Davaanyam Enkhtur	Chair of CMC	20	Checked
Dr. Ariuntsetseg Lkhagvaa	NUM team leader	15	Checked
Dr Lkhagvasuren Davaa.	NUM mammal researcher	15	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.

 [DIR27S2 1064 StaffCV](#)
 09/02/2021
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 pdf 1.33 MB

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 Critically Endangered Wild Camel is the last true wild camel species in the world, numbering <1,500 individuals divided between China and Mongolia(1). This population is highly vulnerable and in decline(2), with ZSL's 2014 Gobi survey estimating <600 individuals(3).

The GGASPA protects the fragile Gobi desert ecosystem and its globally-significant ungulate migrations. Its

3,300 km² buffer-zone spans seven bags(counties) across five soums' (districts') territories and two aimags (provinces). These soums are isolated from the capital city(1000 - 1500 km), with distances to the nearest provincial centers and services from 190-370km away. The buffer-zone provides grazing to approximately 403,000 livestock for 1,272 indigenous herder households(4). The Inner-Altai Gobi is home to the elite cashmere goat breed representing 78% of the buffer-zone herds, and contributing to 30-75% of herder household income(4).

Mongolia's National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (2015-2025) identified climate change and human disturbance as key drivers of biodiversity and ecosystem loss. ZSL-led participatory stakeholder consultations (April 2019, August 2020)(5) identified the key problems facing camel conservation:

- Unregulated grazing in the buffer-zone and illegal grazing in the core zone, degrading rangelands, decreasing forage availability
- Waterhole degradation along migration routes through desiccation, infilling, resulting in browsing species die-off
- Increased camel concentration around remaining waterholes exacerbating vulnerability to wolf predation
- Climate change exacerbating habitat degradation and waterhole dry-out
- Cross-breeding with domestic camels risking genetic integrity and male infertility, and introducing disease(6)
- Limited access for mobile herders' in a remote rural context to social services (education, finance, health), environmental education, and livelihood opportunities

A recent UNDP-funded assessment of GGASPA management effectiveness(7) highlighted challenges including weak collaboration with buffer-zone soums and limited understanding among buffer-zone communities about PA work and the value of biodiversity conservation. Nomadic herders in the buffer-zone are highly vulnerable to water scarcity and rangeland degradation. Therefore, some households are forced into the PA during harsh winters or drought years, claiming their traditional grazing areas, and in turn, disturbing Gobi wildlife such as wild camels(5,7). This has been verified by ZSL's camera-trap study with WCPF detecting livestock incursion in the GGASPA. Customary grazing rights are only informally recognized, limiting participatory mechanisms to influence rangeland management. In 2019, the provincial government endorsed the RRMR, which introduced grazing fees on livestock. Communities express concerns about young herders losing traditional knowledge, with limited environmental education opportunities due to remoteness. The current WCPF's awareness work with Eco-Clubs needs support to reach wider communities. Ongoing COVID-related restrictions have hit household livelihoods, forcing them into illegal, dangerous resource extraction activities. Since October 2020, incidences of artisanal mining have been increasing in the GGASPA, where rangers stopped six violations, mostly by local residents(8).

This project responds to these challenges by building the capacity of GGASPA to gather and utilize conservation data and effectively manage habitat and waterholes in the core and buffer-zones; facilitating landscape-level collaboration and participatory management planning in the buffer-zone; supporting grassroots conservation through revitalizing Eco-Clubs and community access to knowledge; and introducing innovative community banking schemes to enable sustainable rangeland strategies.

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.).**

The design is informed by ZSL's National Geographic Society (NGS) project (01/01/2019-31/05/2021) ending in May 2021. The project objectives include:

1. Implement camera-trap monitoring to understand camel ecology, movement, critical threats to migration, and waterhole use.
2. Initiate conservation interventions to mitigate adverse anthropogenic impacts on camels.
3. Understand herders' rangeland practices and environmental awareness levels.

Since 2019, ZSL has deployed 268 camera-traps jointly with WCPF, conducted two years' monitoring, facilitated three stakeholder workshops, and supported the establishment of CMC to bring together previously-siloed soum buffer-zone councils, GGASPA, and stakeholders(5). Workshops enabled a multi-stakeholder forum, identified threats and challenges to camel conservation, and formulated and approved the first Buffer-zone Camel Conservation Plan 2019-2020 (CCP).

In August 2020, ZSL and GGASPA/CMC jointly undertook a consultation with herders and Eco-Clubs across the five buffer-zone soums (5), evaluating the CCP implementation, assessing future needs, and scaling, and informing project design.

The project builds on the foundations of a UNDP umbrella species project (2003-2007), utilizing Eco-Clubs and BZCs as locally-available tools proven to achieve broader community awareness and improved well-being. Integration of ecological monitoring and buffer-zone management with embedded community-led governance will assist in re-building traditional practices, addressing a weakened conservation culture among herder youth. Reinvigorating Eco-Clubs and BZCs well-known to the Gobi communities and integrating their work to the Soum Citizen Representative Khural (soum-level parliament) will ensure their continued delivery of environmental education for buffer-zone management. Building on ZSL's successful VSLA pilot in Arkhangai (DI-498), the project will introduce this model, well-received by herders, to remote Gobi communities for much-needed wellbeing support. The Arkhangai results informed the logframe baselines and targets and introduced replicable, COVID-safe delivery methods, which this project will apply.

ZSL Mongolia has a professional team equipped with the necessary skills and experiences to deliver the project outputs. Close cooperation with local partners(GGASPA, CMC, BZCs) and national-level collaborators (NUM, CMS/ MET, NUM), and international experts(ZSL UK, IoZ, WCPF) will bring additional technical expertise. The proposed outcome will be achieved through the following outputs:

Output-1 GGASPA Monitoring Programme informing effective conservation management
Develop a systematic monitoring approach (SMART patrols, camera-trapping, rangeland health surveys) to prioritise critical habitats (i.e., waterholes, oases, critical rangelands) and mitigate threats to the PA. With NUM, baseline and project-end rangeland surveys will evaluate the GGASPA ecosystem's status and the effect of management and rehabilitation measures. Through collaboration with UK experts, NUM researchers will acquire the latest scientific knowledge for analyzing camera-trap and SMART data and set up the GGASPA biodiversity database, which will continue informing PA management.

Output-2 Improved habitat for camels and other species
Trial and evaluate habitat interventions prioritized by GGASPA to inform long-term habitat management to address camel decline. Install two solar-powered pumps on existing boreholes in the core camel migratory habitat. Portable fencing (providing value for money) will assist the natural regeneration of poplar trees, restoring three oases. NUM-led monitoring of wildlife abundance, vegetation, and gully erosion in the oases' vicinity will inform the recovery assessment. As novel waterhole/oases habitat management strategies, these pilots will be refined into scalable models for state support and investment.

Output-3 Collaborative buffer-zone management institutions

Effective resource management at the landscape-scale requires a hierarchy of institutions to facilitate collaborative decision-making, including the newly-formed multi-stakeholder CMC (GGASPA Administration, five CRK-chaired soum-level BZCs). By strengthening existing governance, institutional capacity and research-based community engagement will be enhanced to support co-development and co-implementation of sustainable and equitable Buffer-zone Management Plans.

Output-4 Ground-up community environmental outreach and sustainable rangeland management Eco-Clubs in five soums are best-placed to spearhead community-led awareness-raising. Eco-Clubs will be strengthened through training, sustainable financing, and resources, inspiring a new generation of environmental champions to use science and tradition promoting the Gobi's unique nature. Support will be provided for compliance with a recently approved Law on Livestock Tax to control overgrazing for soum BZC pasture management plans under the RRMR and consultations at annual herder forums. ZSL will facilitate training by rangeland and community-finance specialists and increase water access by installing two solar-powered wells to limit livestock entry to PA, with an inclusive approach for marginalized households to improve rangeland practices and reduce grazing competition with camels.

Output-5 Sustainable livelihood and wellbeing supported by community banking. ZSL will help establish community banking funds across five BZCs offering financial access with affordable interest rates to vulnerable, remote herders. This mechanism will include environmental funds to invest in community-initiated rangeland restoration measures (e.g., creating two wells, water-source protection, fencing-off key grazing areas), enabling sustainable livelihoods while supporting RRMR compliance and reducing herder vulnerability

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?

In April 2019, ZSL facilitated a workshop of key GGASPA stakeholders. Factors influencing camel population decline were discussed, including human influence through increased competition with livestock for grazing, hybridization with domestic camels, and disease transmission. To address these threats, the project co-designed several interventions, including raising awareness among 4500 herders and soum inhabitants through BZCs and Eco-Clubs, aiming to encourage positive behaviour and RRMR adoption among 1800 herders.

BZCs under CRKs are the legal institutions that oversee environmental conservation and livelihood development within each soum. To reduce the negative impact of humans on the Inner-Altai ecosystem, the project will strengthen BZCs' governance approach by providing training and supporting evidence-based decision making, utilising data and materials from the project. BZCs will capitalise on regular citizen meetings such as bag and soum Citizen Khurals, and other cultural events, including Naadam and Lunar New Year, as awareness-raising opportunities.

The project will support soum school Eco-Clubs, proven awareness-raising local institutions, currently limited by financial shortages and lack of educational materials. New outreach materials will include the creation of a children's textbook using scientific information on Great Gobi biodiversity and traditional herder knowledge on sustainable resource management. Eco-Clubs and teachers will receive training on public outreach and communication and peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing between clubs. Eco-Clubs will

then design and undertake communication tours reaching herder households in summer camps to raise awareness through plays, folk performances, and other engaging platforms. Additional products will include video content of their campaign with herders, and online media platform promotion involving the best-performing Eco-Clubs.

Annual CMC workshops, joint missions, and Eco-club events (proven effective communication platforms for stakeholder dialogues) will be maintained.

Key findings of scientific peer-reviewed papers will be presented for discussion among stakeholders and partners during various national events and inform decisions of GGASPA, CMC, CRKs locally, and CMS/MET nationally

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.

Capacity building of local (BZC/CRK) and regional (CMC) government, protected area administration (GGASPA), academic institutions (Mongolian university and students), and communities is at the core of this project and the sustainability and legacy of the outcomes it will deliver. By equipping these institutions with the skills to work more effectively together and take more informed actions, the project will futureproof GGASPA conservation and the well-being of surrounding communities.

GGASPA management at an institutional and individual level will be improved through Outputs 1 and 2. Establishing monitoring (camera-trapping and SMART patrol) and research (range survey/data analysis) programme will train staff in rigorous scientific methods to inform research priorities and direct more effective conservation management in the future (e.g. habitat restoration efficacy, Output-2). The online camera-trap/SMART data-analysis training will build the capacity of Mongolian students by engaging them in research design, implementation, and analysis, improving Mongolia's future conservationists and academic capacity.

CMC and BZC/CRK institution building (Output-3) will provide a platform to support more evidence-based and representative governance, benefitting communities and the GGASPA ecosystem. These institutions will be strengthened via improved buffer-zone management plans, institutionalised RRMR, and financial resilience to support livelihood development and sustainable natural resource use (Output-4 and 5). Communities will benefit from more representative, equitable governance (Output-3) and skills to deliver sustainable rangeland management training. Community banking training will benefit the wider community by providing greater financial security and financial flows to support livelihoods, enabling greater natural resource management.

Eco-Clubs (Output-4) will gain improved resources to teach school children, the future custodians of the Altai-Gobi, about the importance of conserving their natural environment. An existing model, they provide wider adult environmental outreach to targeted communities about preserving Mongolia's unique cultural and environmental heritage and climate-resilient rangeland management.

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.

Nomadic herders' access to information and learning is limited due to remoteness and poor

infrastructure/services in rural areas, thought to disproportionately impact women and marginalised groups(4). Women's representation in local decision-making bodies and government leadership positions is low, only 27% nationally(4). The close working relationship with the CRK/BZCs will provide channels to strategically promote gender equality and social inclusion, building on the successful work under the current Darwin Initiative project (35% inclusion rate for women across project activities) to ensure gender equality in the CMC/CRK' decision-making. Specific strategies for improved gender equality will include facilitating increased participation of vulnerable social groups in VSLAs and small business grants and cooperating with local authorities to promote women's roles. Increased female participation in VSLAs (target: 50%) will also support household incomes and wellbeing.

During GGASPA consultation workshops in April 2019, participants independently confirmed community concerns of limited access to information, upper high-school boys' drop-out rates, and low female participation in decision-making. To quantify this, the project will collect sex-disaggregated data from official government BZC statistics and ground-truth these through project activities, including social surveys.

To address these gender inequalities, this project will ensure equal participation of children in Eco-Clubs and achieve a 20-40% female membership in each soum BZCs. ZSL will establish an MOU embedding Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (GESI) principles relevant to local gender status within the CMC to provide entry points for greater female participation in BZCs, rangeland management training, and awareness-raising events (where appropriate, to do no harm, depending on individual household dynamics).

Aimag poverty statistics report that single-parent households are typically female-led. Therefore, the project's socio-economic baseline survey will identify vulnerable households using GESI criteria (ensuring ethical guidelines, Section 21), safeguarding opportunities for female-led families in community-banking initiatives, including accessing small grants for livelihood development.

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.

In the short term, threats to the camel and the broader desert ecosystem will be addressed through empirically-based, inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches to conservation and landscape management, which will inform participatory community-led natural resource management, and financial resilience for pastoral herders, contributing to improved wellbeing.

Short-term change expected:

- Populations of Wild camel species (c. 350) and key ungulates (Asiatic wild ass, goitered gazelle) will stabilise or increase
- The GGASPA Administration will benefit from increased capacity to monitor wild camels (and other threatened species), and conduct research on priority conservation issues to generate robust evidence base to inform adaptive management to deliver effective conservation interventions
- Habitat interventions, including the construction of two waterholes and the rehabilitation of three oases with a poplar habitat, will constitute the regeneration of 20% of all oases. This is expected to significantly benefit wildlife and reduce the degradation of existing water sources.

- Two Mongolian Master's students will benefit from international and local expertise in research and obtain research data to complete degrees while informing conservation management with the research results.
- The CMC and CRKs/BZCs will benefit from an integrated landscape management model engaging buffer-zone stakeholders. Combined with robust monitoring data and conservation planning, this will help put decision-makers in a stronger position to reverse camel population decline.
- 1272 buffer-zone households will be empowered to have a stronger voice in conservation through five CRKs/ BZCs and CMC, with women and vulnerable groups achieving greater representation (20-40%) in BZCs.
- 100 high-school students in five Eco-Clubs will gain knowledge and leadership opportunities and engage in environmental awareness-raising actions with children and herders to generate and own environmental values through the application of scientific information and local cultural traditions.
- 50% of 1,272 remote households will have improved financial resilience and capacity to sustainably manage livestock. Community environmental funds will support rangeland restoration initiatives. These interventions are expected to increase wellbeing by 10% during the project, continuing post-project, driven by local institutions.

In the long term, as project outputs scale-up:

- Growth of wild camel population, and recovery of the broader Altai-Gobi ecosystem through a direct combination of:
 - o Recovery of rangeland through the reduction in livestock over-grazing, encroachment, and the associated impact of habitat degradation, the spread of disease, and hybridisation.
 - o Recovery of important oases and poplar habitat through rehabilitation strategy using moveable fencing to support the regeneration of additional waterholes across the GGASPA.
- Research and management capacity of GGASPA biologists and Mongolian researchers will be improved through ongoing monitoring and data-analysis training. This is designed to continue beyond the project, informing adaptive management of the GGASPA whilst inspiring Mongolia's future conservationists.
- Buffer-Zone institutions' capacity to support households' wellbeing, financial security, and long-term livelihoods, promoting GGASPA conservation to wider audiences, will be improved through enhanced rangeland practices and interest-driven growth of community banking and environmental funds. More broadly, this will promote increased food security and resilience to climate change.

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.

The project will deliver an equitable and inclusive integrated landscape-level conservation approach, breaking down systemic barriers between key stakeholders to attain positive biodiversity and development gains. This will be secured through addressing critical capacity gaps to inform and improve GGASPA conservation management (Output-1); implementing strategic habitat improvements (Output-2) to support the GGASPA's wildlife species and facilitate the migration of wild camels; ensuring sustainability of these efforts through a legally-bound institutional framework to collaboratively manage the surrounding buffer-zone landscape, enabling provision of adequate grazing for livestock and reducing incursions into the PA (Output-3); empowering future generations to become conservation champions, while training and empowering communities to move away from destructive grazing practices and implement sustainable rangeland management aligned to RRMR, thus enabling long-term and sustained support for herders (Output-4); and communities becoming more financially resilient by adopting community banking initiatives, unlocking additional financial support for marginalised herder households to enhance livelihoods while delivering effective rangeland practices and conservation through dedicated funds, ultimately improving

herder wellbeing (Output-5).

This will result in improved PA management of camels and their habitat through collaborative partnerships, supporting the camel population's recovery and the Gobi-Altai ecosystem, securing sustainable herder community livelihoods, and globally important socio-cultural traditions.

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?

ZSL has a permanent presence in Mongolia, enabling ongoing technical advice where needed, ensuring a lasting project legacy.


Working with established institutions ensures support to new collaborative working platforms (CMC) and that support will continue beyond the project.

The biodiversity monitoring (Output-1) will integrate SMART patrolling and camera-trapping into GGASPA work with NUM analysis support (incorporated into its research programme), ensuring robust data flows to inform GGASPA conservation efforts. The MET will scale SMART across all Mongolia's PAs, with the GGASPA becoming an example of best practice and a learning site. Habitat restoration initiatives (Output-2) will have continuous support from NUM and be embedded into the GGASPA management plan for replication across the PA.


The CMC (Output-3) representatives are elected from state institutions (local government, GGASPA) as well as non-state actors (BZCs). BZCs' continued training for targeted herders to implement RRMR (Output-4) is supported by community funds, operated through the community bank (Output-5). RRMR materials will be institutionalised in the BZC.


Eco-Clubs (Output-4) are a long-term institution, with state and VSLA support, providing a sustainable mechanism to effectively raise environmental awareness, supplemented by project-generated materials and technical training. Knowledge and capacity gains will be embedded locally to sustain equitable decision-making.

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

 [DIR27S2 1064 SupportingDocs](#)

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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.

 [DIR27S2 Budget Mongolia](#)
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 xlsx 68.06 KB

Q22. Funding

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

- Development of existing work

Please provide details:

ZSL is currently collaborating with the National Geographic Society to support the recovery of the long-distance transboundary migration of the world's last wild camels through building an ecological evidence base for camels and their key threats posed by the fenced and patrolled China-Mongolia border; the distribution of stopover watering holes, associated water quality and camel usage; and the overall camel migration, the threats to it, and to the individual camels making it.

ZSL also working with the Wild Camel Protection Foundation (WCPF) and its partners on random-grid camera-trap monitoring of wild camel species. The WCPF is operating a wild camel breeding centre adjacent to the GGASPA and has previously conducted community outreach work through Eco-Clubs. ZSL has been in consultation about these mutual areas of work, to share lessons learned and to identify opportunities to continue to work together. Plans have been made to continue joint random-grid camera-trap data collection and analysis, regular progress updates through the camel partnership meeting, and publication of research results. To enable wider scope for community outreach, ZSL is initiating a new collaboration with UNDP ENSURE to strengthen the Eco-Clubs' work and support WCPF's efforts.

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.

ZSL Mongolia is aware that WCPF is raising funds to establish a second breeding center in Tolibulag of Shinejinst, the southeast buffer-zone of the GGASPA border. As the current breeding center run by WCPF has a small area, they plan to expand the work by creating the second center, which will be focused on rehabilitation of lost and threatened baby camels found in the Gobi and will provide feed to weakened individuals during the harsh times such as drought and dzud (severe winter) and undertake veterinary care. Also, WCPF has previously worked with the Eco-Clubs, and it has limited scope due to a shortage of funds.

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
ZSL	██████	GBP	Staff cost
GGASPA	██████	GBP	Partner salary coverage, in-kind contribution of sharing venues, equipment
ENSURE	██████	GBP	Funding towards Eco-club capacity building and public awareness
CMC	██████	GBP	Partner salary coverage, in-kind contribution of sharing venues, equipment

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
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No Response	National Geographic Society	██████	GBP	Funding towards year two and three project costs
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.

Key project outputs will be hosted and reported on ZSL's and partners' websites and disseminated via social media. ZSL web pages have c.326,000 unique users per month. The ZSL social media outlets reach 25,300 Twitter and 11,500 Instagram followers. Where relevant, outputs may also be listed on the ZSL library catalogue (c.6,000 library users annually +c.22,000 digital users) or open access online repositories. Content will be provided to ZSL's and Darwin Initiative's press units for inclusion in newsletters and press releases where relevant. The project will have a dedicated page on the ZSL website under the Mongolia projects section, which will remain beyond the project duration. Any data collected will be freely available in English and Mongolian, and delivered to project partners and associated organisations. Any project publications will be available through open access peer-reviewed journals (e.g. PLOS ONE). Associated costs will be covered by the overhead contributions requested. Official workshops will be held to provide recommendations to government enforcement agencies and associated communities. Project information will be provided including official recommendation reports and executive summaries. For those without access to digital media, we will provide Mongolian language hard copies of updated training materials, recommendation reports, management plans, protocols, and guidelines to project partners, communities, and other stakeholders. Results will also be communicated verbally to community members through workshops, ensuring that everyone, regardless of literacy level, has access to this information. Necessary printing costs have been included in the budget.

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.

ZSL has long-term experience in Mongolia implementing projects complying with government regulations, recognising and responding to financial and other risks to its projects or its stakeholders. ZSL financial policies and procedures are subject to regular review, ensuring they remain appropriate for the projects, as well as internal and external compliance requirements. Also, ZSL undertakes due diligence on prospective partners to ensure their financial policies and procedures are compliant with donor requirements. All partners receive ongoing financial management training and support. ZSL follows strict segregation of duties policies; regular bank and cash reconciliations are prepared, reviewed, and approved; ZSL uses unique codes for all grants, enabling monitoring of income and expenditure at grant level, improving grant management, and reducing financial risks. All funds will be transferred to and between partners through a traceable banking system. ZSL policies and procedures aim to mitigate financial risk, including a Fraud, Corruption, and Anti-Bribery Policy and a Global Whistleblowing Policy, which all staff and partners are made aware of and required to abide by. Training on these is mandatory and accessible via ZSL's online training system. These policies are available for partners to implement or adapt if they do not have their own.

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.

We allocated █ of the budget to capital items, essential to effective project delivery and staff safety for traveling across the GGASPA's harsh terrain. The project's capital equipment will remain the property of the relevant institutions upon project-end to allow ongoing activities beyond the project lifetime. These may include the following:

- Research and monitoring (i.e., SMART Blackberry phones) equipment will be transferred to the GGASPA to support regular biodiversity monitoring.
- Waterhole restoration equipment (solar pump) will be managed and maintained by the GGASPA.
- Technical equipment (i.e., projector, screen, laptop, generator) will be donated to Eco-Clubs/CRKs to continue raising public awareness.

ZSL will manage the 4x4 vehicle to enable staff to safely and effectively work across the vast GGASPA for partnering with CMC member soums.

High quality and appropriate capital goods will be purchased (where possible) in-country complying with ZSL's procurement policy to support project implementation.

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 follows ZSL's value for money principles: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.

Economy

ZSL staff will oversee all project activities to ensure high-quality delivery. The project builds on existing institutions, combining their local expertise with ZSL-facilitated project training and technical assistance to maximise efficacy. Any consultancy fees (for expertise not available within ZSL/partners) will not exceed market average and will be negotiated where possible.

NUM student time supporting data collection, processing, and analysis (i.e. camera-trap and SMART patrol data) will save considerable resources.

Operational costs have been planned to be cost-effective; for example, field visits will be organised to

coordinate delivery of multiple activities (i.e. ranger training, CMC meeting, camera-trap monitoring). No international travel is planned in the COVID context, replaced by online training and communications.

Efficient output delivery

Efficiency will be measured via an adaptive process through an annual work plan with budget delivery targets; six-monthly and annual donor reports; monthly budget briefs; and annual staff performance reviews.

Effective outcome delivery

The project outcome will be effectively delivered, and longevity ensured, through working with established institutions, underpinned by ZSL's strong working relationships. This has supported the design of project outputs for maximum effectiveness, informed by ZSL's global experience of community-based conservation, management of PAs, and species monitoring.

Equity

The requirement for equal sharing of responsibilities and benefits will be mainstreamed in all management documents, including BZC rules, CMC Constitution, work plans, and calls for small grants (selection criteria), for strict enforcement to enable increased participation of vulnerable households.

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?

ZSL has rigorous in-house protocols for ethical approval, adhering to international commitments for human rights and biodiversity. The project will be subject to a full risk assessment to ensure any programmatic risks and negative impacts on communities and biodiversity are mitigated and reported on.

ZSL has an excellent track record for meeting the legal and ethical obligations of the Mongolian and UK Government. From the design phase, this project involved all stakeholders, including representatives of soum and aimag level-government, the GGASPA Administration Office, Border Defence units, herders, and rangers to ensure equal access to information, benefit-sharing, and participation in decisions valuing traditional knowledge and local culture. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in camel conservation requires the adoption of a participatory bottom-up approach, which has been tested in ZSL's Mongolia community-conservation projects and globally as best practice. Project activities will begin with the introduction of the project along with a full explanation of the ethical principles, which will be further reflected in an MOU with the partners. All research will require Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) from the target communities, and explain the aims of the project and data confidentiality. Respondents will be given the opportunity to opt-out of the interview should they desire. The project will ensure FPIC is obtained in all aspects of programming with grievance mechanisms and beneficiary feedback in place. All staff will receive ethics training prior to the fieldwork ensuring there are no adverse effects on any community members, and project interventions are equitable and gender-sensitive.

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.

ZSL maintains a robust anti-corruption culture through its Fraud, Corruption, and Anti-Bribery Policy to which all employees are bound. As such, ZSL in-country staff and newly recruited officers will be responsible not only for their actions but also prevention of corruption among partners and beneficiaries. In addition, all project stakeholders have duties to abide by the Mongolian Anti-corruption Law.

The primary project risk for corruption is associated with the selection and awarding of small grants for livelihood support (Output-5). To reduce such risks, ZSL will implement several measures, including 1) The soum BZC will consist of women and representatives of vulnerable households to ensure equitable and inclusive representation by the government officials during their work; 2) the ZSL Project Officer is included in the CMC and will make the final decision on grants; 3) an MOU will be established with key partners (CMC, BZCs and GGASPA) with a specific section on 'fraud, corruption, and bribery' and related sanctions; 4) the 'Call for Grants' application will prohibit corruption, fraud, and bribes, and invite community reports of any concerns to CMC and ZSL; and 5) the project will actively seek feedback from community members on grant selection during participatory exercises /workshops.

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.

Throughout ZSL's long-term experience implementing projects jointly with Mongolian government organizations, local communities, PAs, and research institutions, the team has developed safeguarding

policies inclusive of vulnerable people. ZSL has several safeguarding policies governing national and international work. As part of due diligence, partners are required to show that they meet the same environmental and social safeguarding requirements. In addition, these policies are incorporated in cooperation agreements such as MOUs and TORs. These policies are also translated into Mongolian and made available for partners to implement or adapt as necessary. ZSL's facilitation for developing beneficiary documents such as the Regulation of Environmental Action Fund, VSLA constitutions, Buffer-zone Management Plans, and herder collaboration agreements, ensures that these policies follow ethical standards and enable participation of vulnerable groups. During the course of cooperation, financial and procurement rules and procedures are introduced and explained as necessary to officers of partner organizations and community members for maintaining ethical standards while maximising value for money. Therefore, many partners and service suppliers are already familiar with ZSL's safeguarding policies and financial/procurement procedures. The project will use Eco-Clubs, as an independent monitoring tool to enable critical views from the community members on the project implementation and decisions.

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

-  [Global Safeguarding Policy_ZSL](#)
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-  14:48:07
-  pdf 1.18 MB

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.

-  [Mongolia DIR27S2_1064 Logframe](#)
-  08/02/2021
-  14:04:13
-  pdf 212.75 KB

Impact:

Globally important wildlife, including the wild camels, thrive in the Mongolian Altai-Gobi with the welfare and socio-cultural traditions of herder communities secured through sustainable use of the fragile desert ecosystem

Outcome:

Conservation of wild camel and desert ecosystem enhanced in Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area through strengthened management and stakeholder collaboration, with communities empowered to improve

rangeland management and herder well-being.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

GGASPA monitoring programme is informing effective GGASPA and CMC management, and future-proofed by building the capacity of Mongolia's future conservationists

Output 2:

Scalable habitat management and waterhole restoration model areas are demonstrating effective conservation interventions to restore the Great Gobi 'A' Strictly Protected Area desert ecosystem, to support the recovery of Wild Camels Species and other biodiversity

Output 3:

Collaborative and inclusive governance institutions are in place and making coordinated, landscape-level management decisions, employing adaptive management approaches informed by robust ecosystem monitoring

Output 4:

Ground-up awareness-raising about Great Gobi uniqueness by environmentally conscious GGASPA communities that are empowered with the skills and knowledge to improve livestock management and comply with the Responsible Rangeland Management Regulation (RRMR)

Output 5:

Remote rural herders have improved wellbeing and financial stability built through a successful and sustainable community banking model that supports sustainable resource use efforts e.g. through rangeland management actions and Eco Clubs

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.

- 1.1 Procure field equipment for ongoing camera-trap surveys and SMART patrols, including necessary office equipment for a research programme (year 1) ZSL
- 1.2 Organise GGASPA and Border Defence Agency annual training on camera-trap and SMART monitoring and co-develop GGASPA monitoring plan. ZSL
- 1.3 Conduct rangeland health survey (aboveground biomass, species richness, soil stability) inside SPA (5 plots) vs Bufferzone areas 5 plots (year 1 and 3) NUM
- 1.4 Create and maintain a database interface for storing data collected by camera-trap surveys and SMART patrol reports integrated with rangeland survey results NUM+ZSL UK
- 1.5 Conduct quarterly monitoring surveys through SMART patrol and feed into the integrated database (year 1 second half, 2 and 3, total 12 quarters) GGASPA
- 1.6 Deploy camera-traps and maintain camera-trap grid (SD cards and batteries), for a total of two field trips each year (6 times) ZSL + WCPF +GGASPA

- 1.7 Feedback results of GGASPA SMART monitoring, rangeland survey and camera trapping into the development of the GGASPA Management Plan (year 2 and 3) NUM+ZSL UK
- 1.8 Two Mongolian MSc students will work on research of rangeland survey and wildlife camera trap study and defend by the end of year 3 NUM
- 1.9 CMC receives Brief on Monitoring results and uses them for AWP
- 1.10 Camera and SMART data analysis training online, data collection design, and data analysis (IZ & ZSL UK)
- 2.1 Map GGASPA camel habitat, waterholes, and oases and prioritise habitat management intervention sites ZSL
- 2.2 Restore two priority waterholes with a small reservoir for wildlife (through a bid)
- 2.3. Support GGASPA Administration Office to implement habitat management interventions at least at three sites; fence poplar patches and natural springs preventing browsing of young trees and protecting water recharge points, and planting native grasses in oases GGASPA+NUM
- 2.4 GGASPA conduct annual, including pre and post-intervention surveys in each habitat intervention site to measure change and efficacy GGASPA
- 2.5 Ensure incorporation of intervention results in GGASPA Management Plan and CMC Plan for possible replication across other threatened camel habitat sites GGASPA+NUM
- 3.1 Support CMC during annual meetings to ensure smooth function of a democratic and representative buffer-zone management institution (6 workshops 3-year plan and 3 reports) to plan (GGASPA MP) and review the progress CMC+GGASPA
- 3.2 Oversee by CMC the formulation, approval, and implementation of Soum Buffer-zone management plans based on GGASPA BMP CMC+GGASPA
- 3.3 Conduct social surveys using representative samples of buffer-zone communities across five buffer-zone soums to collect baseline data in year 1 and at project end in year 3 ZSL
- 4.1 Develop Eco-Club capacity building programme through BZC to awareness-raising implementation plan (including training, exchange workshops, annual Eco-club forum, and development of Gobi biodiversity textbook as part of buffer-zone school curricula) BZC/CRK
- 4.2 Oversee the design of a public awareness package and campaign by each soum Eco-Club to advocate GGASPA biodiversity conservation as part of GGASPA BMP Ecoclub/CRK+CMC
- 4.3 Implement Eco-Club public awareness campaign (i.e. field trips, festivals, SMS/MMS text campaign) to targeted households as part of GGASPA BMP Ecoclub BZC/CRK
- 4.4 Support CMC-level planning and enforcement strategy for RRMR and get approved Soum Pasture management plan by each CRK CMC+ZSL+CRK;
- 4.5 Train BZCs and target herder households on sustainable rangeland management, including basics of ecosystem management, reduction of risks of zoonotic diseases, and household financial management CRK+ZSL;
- 4.6 Support organization of annual buffer-zone Herder forum to enable an exchange of best rangeland practices among five soum herders and inform on the progress of RRMR implementation CMC+ZSL+CRK
- 5.1 Support CRKs to implement RRMR by assessing pasture conditions in buffer-zone bags and mapping grazing areas under RRMR and establishing pasture use contract with herder households NUM+ZSL+CRK
- 5.2 Facilitate formation of VSLAs among herders sharing seasonal pastures to increase herder access to financial services to support long-term livelihood development (i.e. livestock migration and fodder support, and accessing veterinary services) ZSL+BZC+CRK
- 5.3 Support VSLAs for their initiatives for rangeland conservation (water source protection, fencing key grazing areas, supporting natural regeneration and planting of native trees, creating ponds harvesting rainwater) through small grants ZSL+BZC+CRK
- 5.4. Support construction of two wells in buffer-zone areas to limit livestock entry into SPA in search of water ZSL+BZC+CRK





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.

 [DIR27S2_1064 Implementation Timetable](#)
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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](#)).

The project's monitoring and evaluation will be shared among multiple stakeholders, including ZSL and the Mongolian and UK partners. Progress towards targeted outputs and the overall outcome will be tracked via existing annual planning tools, bi-annual and annual reports against the logframe indicators, and monthly and weekly updates. Weekly team meetings, ZSL monthly conservation highlights submitted via ZSL's online system, as well as quarterly Country Directors' Skype and financial catch-ups are proven tools for efficient M&E. Alongside the regular communication within ZSL, the Mongolia office will maintain quarterly contact with key partners, including CMC, GGASPA, and Aimag authorities.

Key project milestones towards the outcome will be monitored against the baseline surveys, population monitoring, and statistical data collected at the project's start and end. For measuring the project outcome, we will use the SMART patrolling and camera-trap monitoring data, habitat and rangeland survey, social-economic survey, GGASPA habitat monitoring report, satellite imagery, ZSL Wellbeing Index, and community

banking repayment records.

Output-1 will be monitored based on reports by GGASPA and CRKs on management actions informed by SMART patrols and camera-trap data. Adaptive management applied by CMC will be measured against the improvement of rangeland health status assessed by NUM survey. The SMART patrolling performance will be measured against a set of criteria (frequency, areas, # records, violations detected, etc.) and quarterly SMART patrolling reports by GGASPA.

Output-2 will be monitored with regular communications with GGASPA Administration, progress reports on pump installation, and oases restoration with photos. The Aimag Specialised Inspection Agency will review waterhole restoration work for quality assurance before handing it over to the beneficiary party. The impact of habitat improvement interventions will be assessed by camera traps at the waterhole, monitoring by GGASPA for change in vegetation cover, species richness, and regeneration of native shrubs and trees in waterhole vicinity, and using satellite imagery.

Output-3 will be monitored through regular communication with CRKs/BZCs, approved BZM plans, quarterly progress briefs by CRKs, CMC decisions, workshop reports, and final socio-economic survey results.

Output-4 will be measured through quarterly Eco-Club reports (# children trained/involved in awareness campaigns, types and # awareness campaigns, # herders/soum residents/school children reached, and social media statistics), quarterly progress briefs of CRKs (# soums with pasture management plans under RRRM, implementation status, # herders received training, undertaking proven practices of seasonal movements, pasture reserve, etc.).

Output-5 will be measured using the socio-economic survey with the ZSL Wellbeing Index and CMC statistics. The impact on herders' financial security will be monitored, checking the # VSLAs, # members (% of women and vulnerable members), loan fund size, environmental fund size, # people trained, and received loans against the baseline established in Y1. The changes in access to loans received bonuses, and actions funded by the environmental funds are essential indicators for measuring Output-5 results. The project's M&E also aligns with the overarching ZSL impact framework, which is in development and utilizes the ZSL Wellbeing Index applied across all programmes.

Total project budget for M&E in GBP (this may include Staff, Travel and Subsistence costs)	£ [REDACTED]
Number of days planned for M&E	90
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, advice attached

Please attach details of any advice you have received.

 [Letter from BritishEmbassy](#)

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Section 17 - Certification

Q35. Certification

On behalf of the

Trustees

of

Zoological Society of London

I apply for a grant of

£497,046.00

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


Andrew Terry


Position in the organisation

Director of Conservation and Policy

Signature (please upload e-signature)

 [ZSL DI R27 Stage 2 Certification Signature](#)

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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

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).