Darwin Plus

Standard Indicators Guidance

April 2023

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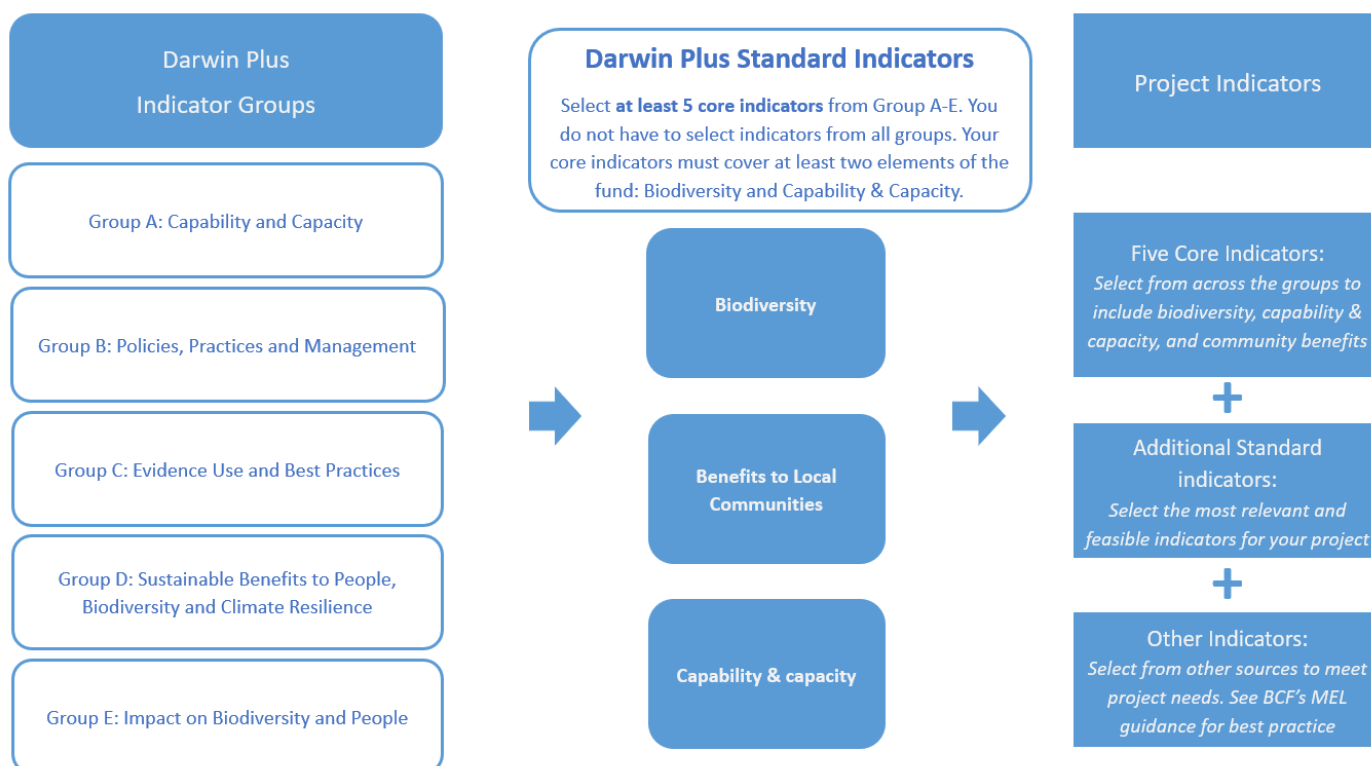
1. Introduction to the Standard Indicators

The Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs)[1] use high quality and accessible Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to enable scaling, replication and increase the impact of the funds and the projects we support.

By asking projects to use Standard Indicators, we aim to **increase our contribution to the global evidence base** for activities that support biodiversity conservation, capability & capacity, and benefits to people.

The Darwin Plus Standard Indicators are linked to the scheme's own fund-level Theory of Change and Logframe. Some of the indicators will be used across the BCFs – this means we will be able to aggregate **the data from across diverse projects and communicate our combined results** to key decision makers to **build the case for continued support** and encourage the actions of others.

Our menu of Darwin Plus Standard Indicators is **designed to help you to monitor your project progress and results, using globally recognised indicators.** The menu also provides guidance on which methodology, units and disaggregation measures to use to **help you plan your monitoring and evaluation** more effectively.

The menu is grouped by topic, so that you can easily navigate to the indicators relevant to your project.

Each Group has a set of Core Indicators. **From Darwin Plus application Round 12, it is mandatory to include a minimum of five Core Indicators in your project logframe.** In addition to these five indicators, we encourage you to use as many other indicators from our menu as is appropriate and feasible in your project.

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[1] The Biodiversity Challenge Funds is the collective name for Defra's Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus.

While **you should tailor the indicators** to meet the specific needs of your project, we recognise that our menu cannot cover all the potential monitoring needs for all projects. Where necessary **you can select indicators from other sources** or develop your own. See our BCF MEL Guidance on best practices for selecting, tailoring and developing indicators.

2. How to select Darwin Plus Standard Indicators

After developing your theory of change, outcome, outputs and activities, you will have a better idea of what indicators you will need to monitor and evaluate your project. We recommend you browse this menu to find the most relevant indicators that you can then tailor to your project needs.

Browse the Menu:

Group A: Capability and Capacity

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate

Group E: Impact on Biodiversity and People

Choose at least five Core Indicators: All projects must select at least five Core Indicators (marked in light green shading) from Groups A to E. You do not have to select indicators from all Groups.

Your selection of Core Indicators must cover at least two of the three elements of the funds - biodiversity, benefits to local communities, and capability and capacity - include at least one Core Indicator related to each element.

If you can report against more than five of the Core Indicators, this is strongly encouraged.

Choose Additional Standard Indicators: Select as many additional Darwin Plus Standard Indicators from the menu as is feasible and useful in your project. Choose the indicators which are most relevant to your project's outputs, outcome and impact. You can use the same Standard Indicator more than once if it is capturing **different and distinct** effects of the project. Remember – **double counting is not allowed**, so make sure you are not capturing the same information twice under similar indicators.

Tailor your indicators: In your logframe, you should tailor the wording of the indicators to your own project context. This means you should add detail to make sure the indicator wording:

- is specific and relevant to the output or outcome you are monitoring;
- includes achievable targets and milestones.

You must still **ensure that the units and methodology align with the Standard Indicator Menu** (see tables and footnotes). You must also provide the corresponding Standard Indicator number in bold square brackets e.g. **[DPLUS-A01].**

Consider indicators from other sources: Projects are not restricted to using only the Darwin Plus Standard Indicators. You can supplement with indicators from other sources, or with indicators you have developed to meet the specific monitoring and reporting needs of your project. Remember to cite the source of these indicators. Please see the BCF MEL Guidance for best practices on indicator design and selection.

3. How to report on Darwin Plus Standard Indicators

Reporting process: You will report your progress against all indicators in your Annual Reports and Final Report. The report templates will include tables for you to report your progress on indicators.

Timeframe: All indicators under Darwin Plus should be reported in line with the standard reporting timeframe of UK financial years (April-March).

Indicator number: Where Darwin Plus Standard Indicators are used, you must always reference the indicator number e.g. **[DPLUS-A12]**. Where indicators from external sources are used, please cite the source.

Units and disaggregation: The menu provides guidance on what units to use when reporting your progress, and disaggregation measures. You do not need to use all disaggregation measures listed, only those that are feasible and relevant within your project. **You must disaggregate by gender** in all relevant indicators.

Core Indicators: All projects must report annually on at least five Darwin Plus Core Indicators. If data is not expected until the end of the project, report '0' against the indicators until there is something to report.

Cumulative results: Annual reporting on indicators should be cumulative, i.e. results from year 2 should be added on to results from year 1, etc. If you are using the same Standard Indicator more than once, e.g. under different outputs, please report only once in the reporting table with the cumulative values and how they are disaggregated.

No double counting: Avoid reporting the same information twice using different indicators. Highlight to us in your reporting where you consider a risk of double counting may occur beyond your control.

4. The Darwin Plus Standard Indicator Menu

Group A: Capability and Capacity

Indicator number		Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
CORE INDICATORS	DPLUS-A01	Number of people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training[2].	People Proportion	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector; Training typology (biodiversity, sustainable development, finance, programme management, safeguarding, gender etc.) Proportion of trained people employed by their host organisation at the end of the project.
	DPLUS-A02	Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders[3].	People Proportion	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector; Host Organisation Type; Training typology (biodiversity, sustainable development, finance, programme management, safeguarding, gender etc.) Proportion of trained people employed by their host organisation at the end of the project.
	DPLUS-A03	Number of local/national organisations[4] with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.	Number of organisations	Organisation Type.
	DPLUS-A04	Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities	People	Gender; Age Group;

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[2] Where possible also show alongside the indicator the number of total training-weeks aggregated across all people trained. A training week is defined as one that involves at least 30 hours of tuition/ training per week. Below 30 hours, training weeks should be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

[3] Minimum of 1 month placement/secondment per person. Please show career level and total placement months aggregated for all people.

[4] Organisations benefiting from DPLUS-A01, A02, A04 & A05, no double counting

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
	(skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.		Stakeholder group: Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector; Training typology (biodiversity, sustainable development, finance, programme management, safeguarding, gender etc.).
DPLUS-A05	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	People; Number trained	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector.
DPLUS-A06	Number of people with improved access to services or infrastructure for improved well-being.	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Local Communities, Nationals;
DPLUS-A07	Number of government institutions/departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated local community issues[5].	Government institutions	Govt. Organisation Type (local, national, treasury, planning, environmental, agricultural, forestry).
DPLUS-A10	Proportion sustainable enterprises established that are functioning at project end (at least a year after establishment).	Proportion	
DPLUS-A11	Number of sustainable enterprises that are profitable (at least a year after establishment).	Number	Gender owner/owners.
DPLUS-A12	Annual turnover of established sustainable enterprises in the project's final year.	GBP Sterling/year	

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[5] A scorecard approach could be used to guide the assessment of this based on pre-defined criteria.

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management

Indicator number		Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
CORE INDICATORS	DPLUS-B01	Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed[6].	Number;	Languages (local/other); Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat; Typology of habitat management plans.
	DPLUS-B02	Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed*.	Number	Languages (local/other); Typology of species management plans; (Harvest, Trade, Invasive species management, recovery, re-introduction, ex-situ).
	DPLUS-B03	Number of new/improved community management plans available and endorsed*.	Number	Languages (local/other); Typology of community management plans.
	DPLUS-B04	Number of new/improved sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans available and endorsed*.	Number	Languages (local/other); Typology of sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans.
	DPLUS-B05	Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement).	People	Gender; Age Group; Typology of community/management organisations.
	DPLUS-B06	Number of Local Stakeholders and Local Communities (people) with strengthened (recognised/clarified) tenure and/or rights.	People/ Households, Total area (Ha)	Gender; Age Group; Typology of tenure/rights: (Extraction/Harvesting, Access/Use, Water, total ownership), Biome/ecosystem/habitat.
DPLUS-B07		Number of people participating in community-based management groups and/or Payment for Ecosystem Service schemes.	People	Gender; Age Group; Scheme type.
DPLUS-B08		Volume of internationally traded products complying with sustainability standards[7].	Tonnes/ Kilograms	Taxa (Flora/Fauna/Fungi); Standard used; Product Type.

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[6] * Endorsed by a third party to demonstrate an independent assessment has been made, and the plan is considered viable and ready for implementation. Implementation or Outcome can be reported under Group D Indicators.
[7] Identify the standard used, and the product.

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-B09	Number of individuals / households reporting a decrease in unsustainable practices as a result of project activities.	People/ Households	Gender; Age Group; Typology of unsustainable practice.
DPLUS-B10	Number of individuals / households reporting an adoption of improved practices as a result of project activities.	People/ Households	Gender; Age Group; Typology of practice.
DPLUS-B11	Area identified as important for biodiversity[8].	Area (hectare)	Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.
DPLUS-B12	Number of policies developed or formally contributed to by projects and being implemented by appropriate authorities.	Number	Typology of policy (Community/sub-national/national/international).

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices

	Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
CORE INDICATORS	DPLUS -C01	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products[9] published and endorsed[10].	Number	Knowledge/practice area, product typology.
	DPLUS -C02	Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published[11].	Number	Taxa (Flora/Fauna/Fungi), RDL Category (global/regional), Assessment method.
	DPLUS -C03	New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.	Number, Area (hectare)	Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat; Assessment method.
	DPLUS -C04	New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.	Number	Assessment method.
	DPLUS -C05	Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.	Number	MEA, Information typology (data, insights, case studies).

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[8] Detail the methodology/standard used to identify area as important. New areas not previously identified.
[9] Technical/programmatic guides, for example: working with marginalised communities, gender best practices, developing enterprises, programme management etc. Can include written and verbal best practices guides, webinars, briefings.
[10] Endorsed by a third party to demonstrate an independent assessment has been made, and the plan is considered viable and ready for implementation.
[11] Avoid double counting.

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-C06	Number of downloads of new peer reviewed publications.	Number	Downloads per year.
DPLUS-C07	Number of projects contributing evidence to biodiversity conservation or associated community benefits to policy/regulation/standards consultations.	Number	Community/sub-national/national/international.
DPLUS-C08	Areas of importance for biodiversity identified[12].	Area (hectare)	Identified/Protected/Identified and Protected; Types/schemes: Key Biodiversity Areas (Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, Important Plant Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites), High Conservation Value Areas, Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem, etc.
DPLUS-C09	Species reference collections made (known to science, new to science).	Number	Taxa (Flora/Fauna/Fungi)[13].
DPLUS-C10	Number of case studies published.	Number	Case study type.
DPLUS-C11	Average monthly number of Website Visitors.	Number	Average time on page, average bounce rate, and average session duration.
DPLUS-C12	Social Media presence[14].	Number (metrics to be defined)	By month/year. Platform (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) Metric (e.g. followers, reach, engagement)
DPLUS-C13	Number of webinar attendees.	Number	Attendee gender balance, national/international[15] balance, number of webinars, live/catch-up views.
DPLUS-C14	Number of decision-makers attending briefing events.	Number	Attendee gender balance, types of decision-makers (govt, senior NGO, private sector, local leaders, resource managers (farmers) etc.), Number of events.
DPLUS-C15	Number of Media related activities.	Number	Internet/Print/Radio/Television, and sub-national/national/international

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[12] Identified (new), protected, identified and protected. Sites or regions that have been identified as important for biodiversity conservation due to their biological uniqueness or the high threat that they face (https://www.biodiversitya-z.org/themes/areas?utf8=%E2%9C%93&category_id=23)

[13] Please note double counting risk around specimen duplication.

[14] Potential metrics could include Impressions/Reach/Engagement/Click-through rate.

[15] International refers to countries that are not on the Darwin Plus eligible country list.

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-C16	Number of records added to accessible databases.	Number	Biodiversity (Species occurrence, Utilisation); Socio-economic (sustainable enterprises, community benefits products), database.
DPLUS-C17	Number of unique papers submitted to peer reviewed journals[16].	Number	
DPLUS-C18	Number of papers published in peer reviewed journals[17].	Number	Annual downloads, Journal.
DPLUS-C19	Number of other publications produced[18].	Number	Annual downloads, publication typology.

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate

Note that some of these indicators are modelled.

Indicator number		Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
CORE INDICATORS	DPLUS-D01	Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices[19].	Area, hectares or km^2	Protected areas/non-protected areas, Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat, community controlled or non-community controlled. Extent of habitat disaggregated by pre-project and post project sustainably managed area, and other.
	DPLUS-D02	Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.	People/ Household	Income, disaster/climate resilience[20], water and food security, health Gender, Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.
	DPLUS-D03	Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended[21].	Number of instruments	Policy typology (Local, National Policy); Typology of biodiversity provisions.

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[16] Note that each peer review paper should only be counted once, the same paper submitted more than once should only count as one.

[17] Note that each peer review paper published should only be counted once, the same paper published more than once should only count as one.

[18] Other publications can include policy briefs and other technical reports however media publications should be captured under DPLUS-C15.

[19] You could draw inspiration from ICF KPI 17 Methodology Note "Hectares of land that have received sustainable land management practices".

[20] See ICF KPI 4 Methodology Note on "Number of people whose resilience has been improved"

[21] With direct attribution to project's evidence or activities.

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-D04	Stabilised/ improved species population (relative abundance/ distribution) within the project area.	% Increase; Area (ha or km^2)	Flora/Fauna/Fungi.
DPLUS-D05	Number of people supported to better adapt to climate change as a result of the project [ICF KPI 1[22]].	People/ Household	Gender; Age Group; Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.
DPLUS-D06	Net change in greenhouse gas emissions – tonnes of GHG emissions reduced or avoided as a result of the project [ICF KPI 6[23]].	Tonnes of CO_2 equivalent	
DPLUS-D07	Carbon Sequestered/Removed.	Tonnes of CO_2	
DPLUS-D08	Value of ecosystem services generated or protected as a result of project support [ICF KPI 10[24]].	GBP Sterling	
DPLUS-D09	Number of hectares where deforestation has been avoided through project support [ICF KPI 8[25]].	Hectares	
DPLUS-D10	Area of improved sustainable agriculture practices benefitting people to be more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends.	Area (hectares)	Typology of sustainable agriculture practices.
DPLUS-D11	Number of people benefitting from improved sustainable agriculture practices and are more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends.	People/ households	Gender; Age Group.
DPLUS-D12	Area of degraded or converted ecosystems that are under active restoration[26].	Area (hectares)	Biome/ecosystem/habitat, Active restoration activity typology (excludes planned/intended restoration).
DPLUS-D15	Net change in incidences of human wildlife conflict.	Number	Conflict typology.

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[22] See ICF KPI 1 Methodology Note on "Number of people supported to better adapt to the effects of climate change as a result of ICF"

[23] See ICF KPI 6 Methodology Note on "Net Change in Greenhouse Gas Emissions (tCO2e) – tonnes of GHG emissions reduced or avoided as a result of ICF"

[24] See ICF KPI 10 Methodology Note on "Value of ecosystem services generated / protected as a result of ICF support"

[25] See ICF KPI 8 Methodology Note on "Number of hectares where deforestation has been avoided through ICF support"

[26] Restoration meaning the area is being actively restored to original habitat (i.e., not converting areas which were natural grassland into forest)

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-D16	Number of households reporting economic or social benefits.	Households	As measured through household surveys, socioeconomic metric (income, education, health etc.).
DPLUS-D17	Income derived by local communities from new/enhanced Payment for Ecosystem Services.	GBP Sterling/ Household/ Year	
DPLUS-D18	Drivers of biodiversity loss assessed to have been reduced or removed[27].	Number of assessments	Drivers: change in land- and sea-use/direct exploitation of organisms and illegal killing of species/climate change/pollution/invasion of alien species. Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat.

Group E: Impact on Biodiversity and People

Note that these indicators (methodologies to be developed) are unlikely to be reported against by projects within their lifetimes; they are more likely to only be reported on at the Darwin Plus fund level.

Indicator number	Darwin Plus Standard Indicator	Units	Disaggregation
DPLUS-E01	Ecosystem Degradation Avoided (ha) (DEFRA / ICF KPI 8)	Area in hectares (ha)	Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat; type of degradation e.g. deforestation avoided; type of pressure removed
DPLUS-E02	Change in benefits to people (Scorecard to be developed)	tbc	GESI typology
DPLUS-E03	Status of Threatened Species (DEFRA KPI)	tbc	Taxa, Biome/Ecosystem/Habitat, Treats reduced

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[27] Needs to be a published assessment

5. Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I use Darwin Plus Standard Indicators?

Our indicators have been designed by experts to help you effectively monitor and report on the progress of your projects. They use globally recognised methodologies, and provide guidance on the most appropriates units and disaggregation measures to use. Not only will this provide you the structure to collect the most relevant information to manage your project, the data you provide to us will feed into the global evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of biodiversity conservation and socioeconomic development interventions.

I cannot find five Core Indicators that are relevant or feasible in my project – what should I do?

Please contact the BCFs team for assistance- you can contact the team at BCF-DPLUS@niras.com.

Why do I need Core Indicators to cover two of the three elements of the funds (biodiversity, benefits to local communities, and capability and capacity)? Which indicators correspond to each element?

We ask for projects to use indicators that cover all three elements so that we can more effectively monitor the performance and achievements of the Darwin Plus fund as a whole. You can use your judgement as to which indicators best capture this for your project - indicators that relate to biodiversity contain key words like 'species', 'habitat', 'conservation', 'sustainable management'; whilst indicators that relate to community benefits contain key words like 'livelihoods', 'resilience', 'participation', 'communities'. Capability and capacity indicators are mostly under Group A, and relate to training, skills development and knowledge transfer.

If you are struggling to find relevant indicators for your project to cover two of the three elements, please contact the BCF team for assistance: BCF-DPLUS@niras.com.

Can I edit the Darwin Plus Standard Indicators to be more tailored to my project context?

Yes, but you must keep the indicator reference number, use the recommended methodology, and report against the relevant disaggregation measures suggested in the menu.

Can I use my own indicator if there is not an appropriate Darwin Plus Standard Indicator?

Yes. We advise to first check other internationally recognised indicators before creating a new one, and following the best practice guide in our BCF MEL Guidance.

Can I use my own disaggregation measure(s) if there is not an appropriate one listed in the Darwin Plus Standard Indicator?

Yes. Please specify them in your reporting.

Can I use a specific Standard Indicator more than once in my logframe (e.g. under different outputs?)

Yes, where appropriate. Be mindful to report cumulative values and make sure not to double count when reporting your figures.

My project includes a component on illegal wildlife trade, can I use the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Standard Indicators?

Yes. Please remember to include the associated indicator reference number.

I plan to use the same indicator and same data across two different BCFs projects. How do I report without double counting?

Consider if the change expected is really attributable to the activities of both projects. It is may not be the right indicator to use for both, or it might differ in how it is disaggregated between the two projects. If the indicator is applicable to both projects, be clear on the proportion of the result that is attributable to each project in your reporting.

I have chosen an indicator where the preferred methodology is not yet described in the indicator menu. How should I proceed?

For some of our indicators, the preferred methodology is still under development. When finalised, we will publish in the latest guidance document updates. Please proceed with your chosen methodology in the meantime, and share details of the methodology in your report (e.g. in means of verification).

My project was developed before the Standard Indicators were introduced. Do I have to change my indicators?

For existing projects it is not mandatory to report against five Core Indicators. We are asking existing projects to review their indicators against the Standard Indicators and report against as many as is feasible to the design of their project. Minor changes to your indicator wording to align with Standard Indicators is allowed, but more significant changes will need to be agreed via change request. If you are not sure, please contact the BCF team for advice.

If you have any questions not covered in this section, please do not hesitate to contact the BCF team at BCF-DPLUS@niras.com.