

DIR30S2\1058

Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry

Nicaraguan biodiversity and rural livelihoods are threatened by climate change, poverty, and landscape fragmentation. Based on previous research, on-the-ground pilots, and aligned with (inter)national policy, our project will:

Use big-data modeling methodology, reproducible throughout Latin America, to provide spatially explicit and time-sensitive guidance on biodiversity status.

Open opportunities for smallholder farmers to access, establish, and maintain coffee agroforestry systems through a self-sustaining credit scheme and capacity building.

Harness financial resources to promote development and conservation.

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Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry

Section 1 - Contact Details

CONTACT DETAILS

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GMS ORGANISATION

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Section 2 - Title, Ecosystems, Approaches & Summary

Q3. Title:

Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry

Please upload a cover letter as a PDF document.

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What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DIR29S1\1123

DIR30S1\1296

Q4. Key Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Select up to 3 biomes that are of focus, up to 3 conservation actions that characterise your approach, and up to 3 threats to biodiversity you intend to address, from dropdown lists.

Biome 1

Tropical-subtropical forests

Biome 2

Intensive land-use systems

Biome 3

Freshwater Realm (Rivers and streams)

Conservation Action 1

Land / Water Management

Conservation Action2

Livelihood, Economic & Moral Incentives

Conservation Action 3

Education & Training

Threat 1

Climate change & severe weather

Threat 2

Biological resource use (hunting, gathering, logging, fishing)

Threat 3

Agriculture & aquaculture (incl. plantations)

Q5. Summary of project

Please provide a brief non-technical summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking.

Nicaraguan biodiversity and rural livelihoods are threatened by climate change, poverty, and landscape fragmentation. Based on previous research, on-the-ground pilots, and aligned with (inter)national policy, our project will:

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Section 3 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q6. Country(ies)

Which eligible host country(ies) will your project be working in?

Country 1	Nicaragua	Country 2	No Response
Country 3	No Response	Country 4	No Response

Do you require more fields?

No

Q7. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
01 April 2024	31 March 2027	3 years

Q8. Budget summary

Year:	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
Amount:	£243,561.00	£294,359.00	£62,080.00	£ 600,000.00

Q9. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

Yes

Please ensure you clearly outline your matched funding arrangement in the budget.

Q10. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how you will deliver the project if you don't manage to secure this?

In case matching funding from other value chain actors (e.g. Starbucks, Nespresso) cannot be secured, we will seek funding through other commercial funding opportunities interested in matching Darwin's investment, which our collaboration has direct contact with (e.g. Moringa and Mirova).

However, the delivery of the project does not depend solely on those matching funds, outputs can still be achieved:

Outputs 1 and 2 will be achieved 100%

Output 3-5 would be achieved in 100% of the area and smallholders proposed, but would require more direct investment of the farmers in term of labour and inputs.

Q11. Have you received, applied for or plan to apply for any other UK Government funding for the proposed project or similar?

No

Section 4 - Problem statement

Q12. 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 multi-dimensional poverty.

Nicaragua is ranked 21st on the World Risk Index, indicating higher vulnerability compared to other Central American nations. This vulnerability is most pronounced among the rural population, with 41% being smallholder farmers (van der Zee et al., 2023). These smallholders have limited adaptive capacity, making them particularly susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss (Quiroga et al., 2020). Nicaragua has also experienced an alarming rate of deforestation – a 22% reduction in tree cover since 2000 (Forest Watch, 2023) – with significant implications for the country's biodiversity and one of Mesoamerica's biodiversity hotspots, the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve. This loss disrupts connections between forested areas, heightening challenges for biodiversity and increasing the risk of local extinctions (Ayram et al., 2016). The impact of climate change further intensifies these challenges, underscoring the importance of improving landscape connectivity (Schloss et al., 2022).

Biodiversity loss has far-reaching consequences, impacting ecosystem services crucial for crops, including pollination, soil health, and microclimatic regulation. This, in turn, affects food security, clean water access, and public health (Álvarez-Álvarez et al., 2022; Jagger et al., 2022). Additionally, the depletion of natural resources reduces livelihood opportunities, especially among indigenous and rural communities. Forests and agroforestry systems have potential to alleviate poverty depending on specific conditions, such as the availability and marketability of high-value products or the monetization of ecosystem services for individuals living in or near forested areas (Jagger, et al., 2022).

Coffee, a primary cash crop for most smallholders, holds significant potential for sustainable growth due to its high market demand. Enriching agrobiodiversity through coffee agroforestry has been effective in reducing

poverty by providing alternative income sources throughout the year, ensuring a stable food supply for domestic consumption, and enhancing resilience to climate change (Jha et al., 2014). Moreover, agroforestry significantly increases tree cover across the landscape, improving habitat quality and landscape connectivity (Alvarez-Alvarez, et al., 2022).

Previous surveys in Nicaragua have shown strong interest among smallholders in establishing agroforestry for coffee production (e.g., research mentioned in Q14), offering a significant opportunity to enhance both Nicaraguan biodiversity and farmers' well-being. However, the vulnerable status of these smallholders often categorizes them as "high-risk" actors, restricting their access to financial support and hindering their ability to implement agroforestry practices due to limited access to information and knowledge.

To address these issues, we propose a practical and scalable model, offering smallholders credits for establishing coffee agroforestry systems, access to climate-ready coffee varieties, preferential market access with better and more stable prices, and opportunities for capacity building. Our approach prioritizes the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women-headed households. By including agroforestry establishment, forest conservation, regeneration, and corridor creation along waterways, connecting smaller patches to larger "core" forests, the project will enhance biodiversity and biodiversity mediated ecosystem services, along with smallholders' well-being and the overall quality of their habitats.

Section 5 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q13. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q13a. Your project must support the commitments of one or more of the agreements listed below. Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported.

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- 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)

Q13b. National and International Policy Alignment

Using evidence where available, please detail how your project will contribute to national policy (including NBSAPs, NDCs, NAP etc.) and in turn international biodiversity and development conventions, treaties and agreements that the country is a signatory of.

Engagement with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Environment (MARENA) has been established through our project partner, ECOM. Previous development initiatives led by ECOM in Nicaragua have demonstrated their ability to collaborate effectively with the Nicaraguan government and align with national policies, and this collaboration will persist throughout the project's duration. (e.g., in Q14).

Nicaragua has had the National Environmental and Climate Change Strategy (ENACC) in place since 2010. In its fourth national communication on climate change, the government reports that approximately 1,000 coffee and cocoa production and processing facilities now adhere to practices that promote increased water efficiency in agricultural crops. The Nicaraguan government has been supporting projects aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of cocoa and coffee farmers increasing productivity and implementing sustainable management practices.

Furthermore, Nicaragua's commitment to its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) has led to the approval of the Forest Carbon Cooperative Fund. This initiative, conducted through MARENA's ENDE-REDD+ program in collaboration with the World Bank, seeks to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. This effort will particularly benefit rural communities and indigenous peoples living in forested areas, including the Caribbean Coast, Bosawás, and Indio Maíz.

The "resilience and climate change plan" (Nicaraguan Presidential Secretariat, 2015) underscores the government's primary goal of lifting its population out of poverty aid by improved resilience against climate change, the promotion of economic growth in rural areas, and the prevention of further expansion of the agricultural frontier. To address these objectives simultaneously, the plan recommends agroforestry as the primary environmental restoration technique to be promoted. The Nicaraguan government has committed to restoring 2.7 million hectares as part of the Bonn Challenge in 2016, of which 555,361 hectares are designated for restoration through agroforestry practices. In the 20x20 initiative, the government has pledged an additional 1 million hectares in areas bordering and including the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, which is particularly suitable for coffee agroforestry. Given the presence of ECOM trading in this region, our project is likely to be established in the buffer zone of this reserve.

The National Plan for Human Development (PNDH, 2018-2022) integrates policies for social development and environmental conservation. In this framework, our project aligns with goals of poverty reduction, climate adaptation, and biodiversity preservation. Drawing from the government's previous initiatives, we strive to foster "conservation, mitigation, adaptation, and risk management" for coffee farmers and biodiverse forest-agriculture landscapes.

Additionally, our project directly contributes to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Through landscape restoration, tree planting, forest conservation, enhanced connectivity, capacity building, and sustainable agriculture, we align with Nicaragua's policies and international commitments, bolstering the resilience of rural communities and safeguarding critical ecosystems.

This comprehensive approach aligns with Nicaragua's national policies and international commitments and aims to drive sustainable development and environmental conservation in the region.

Section 6 - Method, Change Expected, Gender & Exit Strategy

Q14. Methodology

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

- how you have reflected on and incorporated **evidence and lessons learnt** from past and present similar activities and projects in the design of this project.
- the specific approach you are using, supported by **evidence** that it will be effective, and **justifying why you expect it will be successful** in this context.
- how you will undertake the work (activities, materials and methods)
- what will be the **main activities** and where will these take place.
- how you will **manage the work** (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

Based on Cornell and ECOM experience, we learned that financing institutions are interested in supporting smallholders, but are not prepared to accept the accompanying risk, making field implementation impossible.

We intend to use funds from Darwin initiative to generate impact for “high-risk” smallholders, who would not receive support otherwise.

Cornell and ECOM, led a project titled "Market-based instruments and incentives for sustainability and conservation in rural working landscapes" which used Nicaragua as a case study to implement such incentives. This project identified: Deforestation trends by municipalities, farmers' interest and capacity to participate in restoration techniques, existing barriers, and the impact of coffee agroforestry on livelihoods and on-farm conservation. We developed a “Blueprint for Public-Private Partnerships for Landscape Restoration through Agroforestry in Nicaragua and Costa Rica”, which serves as a guide for ensuring policy fitness, opportunities, challenges, work done, and building on promising partnership models.

We approach current and previous objectives based on trust and mutual respect between partners and the coffee-producing communities. ECOM's commitment to sustainability will assure that the new agroforestry farms have the support to adapt to Rainforest Alliance certification and improve habitat quality and connectivity within the area of action. Cornell's experience creating and maintaining successful conservation projects have led to positive outcomes for biodiversity and local communities in Latin America, including sustainable coffee production (Ruiz-Gutierrez et al., 2010; Wall, 2016).

We will build upon a novel modeling framework developed by Cornell in which data from eBird – the world's largest biodiversity database with >1.5 billion bird observations submitted by >900K users globally (and over 35,000 high-quality species checklists in Nicaragua) – are paired with globally available environmental datasets and analysed through deep learning algorithms (Davis et al., 2023). This approach allows for the estimation of monthly species-level occurrence and abundance, as well as community-level biodiversity metrics, including species richness and community completeness (Noreika et al., 2020), that account for the seasonal dynamics of birds across the full annual cycle. Due to the broad spatial and taxonomic coverage and high spatial and temporal resolution provided by eBird data, we can estimate species- and community-level metrics for the vast majority of resident and migratory bird species present in Nicaragua. Completeness –the proportion of existing diversity of the total diversity that should be present- will be presented for all bird diversity plus a subset of species of conservation concern (IUCN red list). Using birds as indicators, we will use the species- and community-level outputs, to develop a guide for decision-makers on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration that can be used to define the most important areas for overall biodiversity, the most urgent areas for species of conservation concern, and the areas with the expected best value for money.

ECOM and Cornell operate as equal partners in the inception, engagement, and execution of this project. Cornell shall assume the primary responsibility for scientific research, biodiversity impact assessment, and monitoring. ECOM will lead project execution and the creation of a revolving fund for long-term credits as well as all necessary subcontracts and financial management.

Landscape-level activities:

- Select a focal landscape in an area where there is a high potential return on investment for biodiversity and where ECOM is currently working or determine it is feasible (See Additional supporting evidence).
- Set up a bird monitoring system following Proalás guidelines (Ruiz-Gutiérrez et al., 2020).
- Set up a revolving fund for long-term credits for 50 smallholders (with Darwin's Initiative, and expected third-party financing) to provide credits to establish 150ha of sustainable coffee agroforestry.
- Guide agroforestry design within coffee farms to maximize forest connectivity, conservation, and regeneration.

Consultation, Outreach, and Capacity Building activities:

- Scoping study to understand local context and barriers faced by marginalized groups such as women-headed households (Cornell).
- Capacity building with 50 smallholders on sustainable coffee production, climate-smart agriculture, and financial literacy (ECOM and Cornell).
- Capacity building with 50 smallholders on on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services (Cornell).
- Gender equality training with 50 smallholder farmers (Cornell).

Systemic activities:

- Use the revolving fund to leverage other finance sources and maximize impact for farmers and biodiversity.

- Organise outreach webinars to share our methodology with (inter)national stakeholders.
- Use monitoring and periodic evaluation to ensure effectiveness and inform decision-making over the life of the project.

For effective collaboration and transparency, we will maintain an open line of communication between project partners, the community, and the government (i.e., MARENA), regularly update a project website, and have local project personnel available for interested parties to schedule in-person meetings.

Q15. Capability and Capacity

How will the project support the strengthening of capability and capacity of identified local and national partners, and stakeholders during its lifetime at organisational or individual levels? Please provide details of what form this will take, who will benefit (noting GESI considerations), and the post-project value to the country.

We include four main types of capacity building activities that will endure past the lifetime of the project:

1. Technical/agronomic assistance and training.

ECOM's sustainability management services (SMS) have a proven track record of reaching smallholder farmers with high-quality, pragmatic assistance and trainings related to agronomic management. Assistance and training cover subjects such as proper and sustainable input management, shade tree management, and harvest. Farmers also receive training and advice to ensure they meet the Rainforest Alliance Certification standards.

2. Financial literacy

The project will provide farmers with training on financial literacy to improve finance management of smallholder farms, not only for the administration of the proposed credits, but for their day-to-day activities during and after the project.

3. Gender equality

The project will strengthen current ECOM efforts regarding gender equality through interactive sessions, case studies, and group discussions to elucidate real-world challenges and opportunities for change.

The project will facilitate peer-to-peer learning where farmers can learn from each other's experiences, including the importance of equal participation and provide a safe space for female farmers to share their own lived experiences.

4. Nature conservation

Cornell will lead workshops on biodiversity-mediated ecosystem services and best practices to conserve and increase biodiversity for both ECOM SMS technicians and coffee farmers.

Smallholder farmers participating in the project will be included in all capacity-building activities. As explained in Q16, we are committed to ensuring equal access regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or any other demographic. Therefore, we will use our rapid rural appraisal (Q14) to select a group of smallholders that are representative of the region's population.

Q16. Gender equality and social inclusion

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social characteristics. Explain your understanding of how individuals may be excluded from equal participation within the context of your project, and how you seek to address this. You should consider how your project will proactively contribute to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and how you will engage participants in a meaningful way.

In Nicaragua, women-headed households lack access to land tenure rights and were shown to have smaller farm sizes than men-headed households (1.8 ha on average) (Bacon et al., 2023). As a result, women-headed households are seen as a “risky” investment and are less likely to receive financial credit to invest in sustainable practices than other smallholders. Lack of access to technical training and decision-making power are major barriers faced by women farmers in Nicaragua. Our project will ensure that the proportion of women-headed households receiving credit is no less than the proportion of women-headed households in the study area (~25% to 40% of households based on previous research), with a goal of allocating 50% of all credits to women-headed households. This equal access to credit would only be possible through funding from the Darwin Initiative.

Gender equality training has been proven effective in decreasing gender inequality and increasing women's empowerment (Pelletier, 2017; Bacon et al., 2023). Our project aims to raise awareness for gender equality and facilitate growth opportunities for all smallholder farmers, while also ensuring a safe space for women to participate. Activities to support this endeavor will at least include:

1. Interactive workshops that include group discussions, role-playing, and hands-on activities.
2. A safe, regular space to share stories and personal experiences of successful female farmers and their contributions to agriculture.
3. Practical demonstrations of gender-responsive farming, showing how both men and women can contribute to sustainable productive practices on the farm.

If we find that certain demographic groups are underrepresented in these programs, we will identify possible barriers and then actively work to remove those barriers so that all who want to participate are able to do so. Finally, we will incorporate gender-sensitive language into all educational materials, manuals, and guidelines affiliated with this project.

Q17. Change expected

Detail the expected changes to both biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty reduction, and links between them, that this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who exactly 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).

When talking about how people will benefit, please remember to give details of who will benefit, differences in benefits by gender or other layers of diversity within stakeholders, and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used.

Short term:

Our project will use Darwin funding at project initiation to seek £200k matching funds from other actors in the value chain to increase the total funds into long-term credits increasing the number of farmers and total area accessing the project.

Capacity-building activities are expected to have an immediate (Y1) and long-lasting (Y2+) effect on financial markets and gender equality of 50 smallholder households.

ECOM will provide financial and technical assistance to new and current smallholder coffee farmers, thereby maintaining or improving livelihoods (Y1-3+).

Young coffee agroforestry systems will enhance forest connectivity (Y2-3+).

Income from coffee harvest is often an order of magnitude higher than annual crops such as grains, and allows for the production of diversified products for self-consumption, significantly increasing income and improving food security of 50 smallholder households (Y3+).

Beyond Y3, farmers working in the project will have access to short-term credits from ECOM for managing their established plantations. Farmers need to comply with the company's credit policy, which the project intends to support.

Long term:

By sharing Cornell's tools on biodiversity completeness, we will provide a reproducible, rapid and cost-effective tool to measure and monitor biodiversity at scales not usually possible. These tools can be used for other landscape restoration and conservation efforts worldwide and will accelerate biodiversity-based decision making. We are striving in this direction independently, but implementation of this proposed project will accelerate this process significantly.

We will develop a guide for decision-makers on biodiversity restoration in Nicaragua that will streamline future biodiversity actions and promote biodiversity interventions where they are most needed.

Improved habitat connectivity via agroforestry, restoration, and regeneration practices will benefit biodiversity and make the surrounding landscapes more resilient to environmental changes (e.g., climate change).

Improved ecosystem services and productivity resulting from coffee agroforestry will also substantially improve farmers' livelihoods through income diversification and will ultimately improve their resilience to climate change. Moreover, by adopting practices that align with Rainforest Alliance Certification, farmers will receive additional monetary incentives to maintain and conserve existing forest patches on their lands. ECOM will continue to assist farmers after the project period, providing technical assistance and above-market coffee prices to enhance farmers' capacity and income.

Gender inequality will be reduced through equal access to training and finance, providing new opportunities for women-headed households to invest in their future.

We aim to continue our project beyond 3 years using funds recovered from the crediting scheme to reinvest in additional agroforestry systems. We will seek out new and additional investors to scale our project to additional regions in Nicaragua. Ultimately, we hope to establish a similar international project in other coffee-producing countries such as Costa Rica.

Q18. Pathway to change

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

We will use the best available data and science to select a focal region that yields a high return on investment for the Darwin Initiative and ECOM with regard to biodiversity and livelihood impacts.

Most smallholders are unable to implement agroforestry due to lack of finance and/or information. Our credit system and capacity-building efforts will remove these barriers, allowing smallholders to implement agroforestry and improve their livelihood. By establishing coffee agroforestry systems and conserving and restoring forests in fragmented landscapes, we expect benefits to biodiversity benefits and enhanced resilience to climate change through habitat creation and improved connectivity.

ECOM will continue to provide capacity building, above-market coffee prices, and access to credits after the project, creating a long-term impact. By providing farmers with the tools and opportunity to achieve Rainforest Alliance Certification (i.e., through the conservation of existing forest patches and restoration of riverine forests), we will provide a strong incentive for natural conservation that would not be present otherwise.

Q19. Sustainable benefits and scaling potential

Q19a. How will the project reach a point where benefits can be sustained post-funding? How will the required knowledge and skills remain available to sustain the benefits? How will you ensure your data and evidence will be accessible to others?

We will promote the accessibility and reproducibility of our work by publishing in open-access journals. A technical guide for scaling our application to other coffee-producing counties will be available to key international stakeholders. Project results, funded by Darwin will be shared with local stakeholders and communities via adapted material, open forums, and workshops.

We aim to establish a revolving fund to provide long-term credits for 50 smallholders, with recovered funds reinvested in new farmers. Potential investor participation after year 3 will be possible by strengthening the financial and technical capabilities of farmers, with plans to replicate the project in other coffee-producing countries like Costa Rica.

ECOM will provide additional and ongoing support after the project period to ensure that smallholders can effectively manage their farms, this is especially important because coffee production will take several years to scale up, with significant quantities of coffee only produced after Y3.

Q19b. If your approach works, what potential is there for scaling the approach further? Refer to Scalable Approaches (Landscape, Replication, System Change, Capacitation) in the guidance. What might prevent scaling, and how could this be addressed?


The decision-making guide will identify areas with the highest return on potential investment for biodiversity can inform future development projects across the country. The methodology used to identify these areas relies on openly and globally available datasets. The application of this method can be replicated in other coffee-producing countries. Project results will be shared with key stakeholders that can use and benefit from them.


In year 4 after planting, a portion of the credits will be recovered and reinvested in new farmers. We anticipate that 100% of the original fund will be re-invested in new farmers by year 8. We plan to seek out additional investors at the end of year 3, using our results to demonstrate the benefits of coffee agroforestry for all smallholder farmers.


Our project model will serve as a template for forthcoming development projects in coffee and other tropical shade crops such as cacao.

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

 [Additional supporting evidence](#)

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Section 7 - Risk Management

Q20. Risk Management

Please outline the 6 key risks to achievement of your Project Outcome and how these risks will be managed and mitigated, referring to the Risk Guidance. This should include at least one Fiduciary, one Safeguarding, and one Delivery Chain Risk.

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation Header	Residual Risk
Fiduciary Deviating funds for non-sustainable farming practices: Households with non-sustainable agricultural practices reinforced by tradition might not maintain any newly adopted sustainable practices out of habit or conviction (e.g. eliminating coverage and weeds, open recovering understory to plant new coffee).	moderate	unlikely	moderate	Farmers will be selected based on their interest and willingness to take part in agroforestry coffee production. All beneficiaries will be well informed on crediting requirements and trained on best practices for coffee agroforestry. Binding contracts and regular monitoring by ECOM.	minor
Safeguarding Project personnel, partners, or beneficiaries incurring sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH): Inequality, gender biases, and a culture of silence continue to negatively impact women, subordinates, and minorities. Project personnel, partners, or beneficiaries exhibiting any SEAH behaviors and are not taken seriously.	minor	possible	moderate	Strengthening capabilities of project personnel and partners to prevent SEAH. Ensure diversity of project staff at all levels. Guarantee safe spaces for sensitive discussions with project beneficiaries. Policies and protocols that ensure confidentiality, disciplinary actions, and legal compliance are executed while fostering a culture of safety and accountability.	minor

Delivery Chain	<p>Staff integration and collaboration challenges: ECOM and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology have successfully collaborated previously, but these organizations have different organizational cultures and different staff turnover rates that may lead to challenges with communication and integration between partners.</p>	minor	likely	minor	<p>Project personnel will have a plan for communication between teams and will promptly address any potential misunderstandings or conflicts. Team leaders will assist in mitigating any cultural or procedural challenges through adaptability and flexibility, such that partners are willing to adjust their processes and practices to accommodate each other's needs.</p>	insignificant
Risk 4	<p>Loan default and liquidity risk: Loan Default: Farmers may fail to repay their loans, leading to financial losses for the revolving fund. Liquidity Risks: If there are delays in loan repayments, the fund may face cash flow problems.</p>	unlikely	major	major	<p>ECOM will provide farm management services tailored to the coffee producers. ECOM agronomists provide a complete package of farm management solutions, including financial and cash flow management, to build capacity and resistance and gain greater market access, so that they can sustain their productions and income.</p>	minor
Risk 5	<p>Teaching minors about a family business is deeply ingrained in small-scale farming in Central America (e.g., teaching children how to pick mature coffee is part of the culture), however, this may lead to child labor when boundaries are blurred, especially if farmers are venturing into new business models and</p>	possible	moderate	major	<p>ECOM will enforce its policies that align with international standards, including The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The International Labour Organisation core labor standards, conventions 182 (worst forms of child labor) and 138 (minimum age); Applicable laws governing child labor, slavery, forced or compulsory labor, and human trafficking.</p>	minor

Risk 6

Even when decisions are made to comply with agroforestry standards, information asymmetry between, or about, the project's beneficiaries can lead to poor investment decisions (e.g. a farmer that decided to overexpand, a technician recommending a reforestation design that align with the project interests but will not benefit a particular farmer)

unlikely moderate moderate

To prevent this, we will develop a rapid rural appraisal along with a selection of beneficiaries that will allow us to transmit the necessities of farmers to the project team. We will dedicate personalized attention to each farmer and ensure equal access to training.

minor

Q21. Project sensitivities

Please indicate whether there are sensitivities associated with this project that need to be considered if details are published (detailed species location data that would increase threats, political sensitivities, prosecutions for illegal activities, security of staff etc.).

Yes

Please provide brief details.


The personal information of all beneficiaries must remain confidential and cannot be shared publicly. Darwin Initiative can always approach the farmers directly through the project's partners.


Section 8 - Workplan


Q22. Workplan

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

 [BCF Workplan Template 2023-24 FINAL](#)

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Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q23. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe 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.

The project management aims to be efficient and adaptable, to achieve this, we have set up key indicators through the live time of the project. Evaluation, reporting, and recommendations will be part of the regular project communications ensuring transparency, and allowing for feedback from project partners and stakeholders. By acting on feedback promptly the project manager and on-field coordinators will be able to make improvements and share lessons learned.

Our monitoring and evaluation plan will combine quantitative and qualitative data to provide a complete perspective on the project's achievements.

Cornell:

-Will use big-data modeling methodology, to provide spatially explicit and time-sensitive guidance on biodiversity status, applicable at Y1 and Y3+ of the project.

-Will analyze the data from the Proalas point counts to assess biodiversity status at a baseline Y1 and the project's impact at Y3.

Will track the implementation of activities relying on indicators and personnel reports.

ECOM:

-Will monitor new coffee agroforestry plots and sustainability in farms, management, and effectiveness of credits.





-Will evaluate and respond to smallholders' needs and production challenges in a timely manner.

Total project budget for M&E (£) (this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	£ [REDACTED]
Total project budget for M&E (%) (this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	[REDACTED]
Number of days planned for M&E	120

Section 10 - Logical Framework

Q24. Logical Framework (logframe)

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

 [BCF St2 and Single Stage Logical Framework Template Apr23](#)
 25/11/2023
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 pdf 90.92 KB

Impact:

Improved biodiversity, landscape connectivity, farmers' livelihoods and resilience to climate change in Nicaraguan highlands through sustainable coffee production; Nicaragua is used as an example for other coffee-producing countries.

Outcome:

A restored multifunctional landscape in an area with a high potential return on investment for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods through the establishment of 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

Developed a highly reproducible methodology for providing spatially-explicit guidance on biodiversity and expected impacts of interventions at region-specific and country levels, based on a big-data analysis to estimate species "completeness" and abundance.

Output 2:

Developed a guide for practitioners and decision-makers on biodiversity restoration and conservation in Nicaragua that includes: areas for intervention with highest potential for impact, and plot to landscape-level implementation recommendations. The Guide is presented to key national and international stakeholders.

Output 3:

Increased biodiversity through habitat restoration and landscape connectivity due to the establishment of coffee agroforestry near a key forest area.

Output 4:

Adoption of coffee agroforestry improves livelihoods by increasing income, food security, and climate change resilience.

Output 5:

Developed local capacity to implement, improve, and manage sustainable agriculture and forest conservation.

Do you require more Output fields?

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 Model development and methodology refinement
- 1.2 Submit methodological manual for publication
- 1.3 Feedback workshop hosted with key (national and international) stakeholders working on the topic
- 2.1 Create biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity
- 2.2 Design and approval of the guide for decision-makers
- 2.3 Presentation and webinars on the guide (for stakeholders, NGOs, and public offices involved in landscape restoration)
- 3.1 In-situ recognition and selection of restoration priority areas
- 3.2 Establishment of Rainforest Alliance Certification process
- 3.3 First reforestation cycle
- 3.4 Monitoring of tree conditions and survival
- 3.5 Second reforestation cycle
- 3.6 Evaluation of species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern
- 4.1 Establish credit guidelines, evaluation and beneficiaries' eligibility
- 4.2 Workshops and training for financial literacy
- 4.3 Credit disbursements process
- 4.4 Agroforestry coffee crop establishment
- 4.5 Periodical technical improvement and monitoring visits to farmers
- 5.1 Socialization and consulting process and rapid rural appraisal
- 5.2 Training session to reinforce and communicate policies of gender equality for technicians
- 5.3 Design and run workshops on gender equality and human rights for beneficiaries
- 5.4 Design and run workshops on best practices for sustainable coffee production
- 5.5 Design and run workshops on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services


Section 11 - Budget and Funding


Q25. Budget

Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application and ensure the Summary page is fully completed. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet.

 [BCF Budget over 100k MASTER Aug23](#)

 24/11/2023

 23:39:34

 xlsx 106.89 KB

Q26. Alignment with other funding and activities

This question aims to help us understand how familiar you are with other work in the geographic/thematic area, and how this proposed project will build on or align with this to avoid any risks of duplicating or conflicting activities.

Q26a. Is this new work or does it build on existing/past activities (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)?

- Development of existing/past activities

Please provide details:

Cornell, together with ECOM, led a research project titled "Market-based instruments and incentives for sustainability and conservation in rural working landscapes" which used Nicaragua as a case study to implement such incentives. This project identified deforestation trends by municipalities, explored farmers' interest and capacity to participate in different restoration techniques, described existing barriers to sustainable production, and studied the impact of coffee agroforestry on livelihoods and biodiversity. Following up, we developed a "Blueprint for Public-Private Partnerships for Landscape Restoration through Agroforestry in Nicaragua and Costa Rica" that serves as a guide for ensuring policy fitness, identifying opportunities and challenges, and building on the most promising partnership models. The proposed work builds on this blueprint and our previous research.

Q26b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for work in the geographic/thematic area to the proposed project that may duplicate or cut across this proposed project?

No

Q27. Value for Money

Please demonstrate why your project is good value for money in terms of impact and cost-effectiveness of each pound spend (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity). Why is it the best feasible project for the amount of money to be spent?

ECOM and Cornell will procure that funding from the Darwin Initiative be matched by £200,000 from value chain partners, to provide smallholder farmers in Nicaragua with an opportunity to grow and improve their livelihood in a way that was virtually inaccessible for them. ECOM will provide ██████████ in matching funds as described above.

This project brings together stakeholders that work in the region and that can ensure that coffee production of new farmers is sustainable and reaches better markets. Bosawas forest has lost 378,000 hectares since 2000 due to illegal deforestation, mostly for cattle ranching (Global Forest Watch, 2023). We trust that our project will show that coffee is a profitable and sustainable alternative to cattle ranching, while having a direct, positive impact on biodiversity and habitat connectivity via agroforestry, this will open certification and market opportunities which translate into safer and higher income for smallholders. We anticipate that more farmers will join the revolving fund after Y3, thereby heightening any initial investments to ensure long-lasting impacts. Methods and guidelines developed for biodiversity can be used in other countries and even in other agroforestry schemes. A robust cost-effective tool for assessing land management impacts on biodiversity has not yet been widely adopted. The application of such a tool with the support from a private partner as ECOM that has the capability of incorporating it to their practices and replicate it in other countries, is a big and necessary step for scaling our project's work.

Q28. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin Initiative 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.

no

Section 12 - Safeguarding and Ethics

Q29. Safeguarding

All projects funded under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds must ensure proactive action is taken to promote the welfare and protect all individuals involved in the project (staff, implementing partners, the public and beneficiaries) from harm. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have specific procedures and policies in place.

Please upload the following required policies:

- **Safeguarding Policy:** including a statement of commitment to safeguarding and a zero tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** which details a clear process for dealing with concerns raised and protects whistle blowers from reprisals.
- **Code of Conduct:** which sets out clear expectations of behaviours – inside and outside the workplace – for all involved in the project and makes clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards, including compliance with IASC 6 Principles.

If any of these policies are integrated into a broader policy document or handbook, please upload just the relevant or equivalent sub-sections to the above policies, with (unofficial) English translations where needed.

Please outline how (a) beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff are made aware of your safeguarding commitment and how to confidentially raise a concern, (b) safeguarding issues are investigated, recorded and what disciplinary procedures are in place when allegations and complaints are upheld, (c) you will ensure project partners uphold these policies.

If your approach is currently limited or in the early stages of development, please clearly set out your plans address this.

a) Safeguarding commitment:

Staff: regular staff of both partners will be reminded of the ethics and safeguarding policies.

Beneficiaries: will be briefed on policies and how to raise concerns, during capacitation sessions previous to the credit disbursements process.

The public: all communications during project inception with stakeholders, private entities and public offices will have a statement of safeguarding commitment.

(b) safeguarding issues will be investigated, and recorded and disciplinary procedures will take place when allegations and complaints are upheld, following the policies and guidelines of the respective project partners shown in the attached documents.

(c) ECOM Trading and Cornell will hold each other accountable as partners in this project since one partner actions will have repercussions for the other.

Finally, the project commits to following all Darwin Initiative Safeguarding guidelines, emphasizing in the event that the project manager and/or team leaders become aware of suspicions or complaints of SEAH, “they will take swift and appropriate action to stop harm occurring, investigate and report to relevant authorities (for criminal matters) when safe to do so and after considering the wishes of the survivor.” We will also promptly contact the Department at ODA.

Q30. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting the key principles of good ethical practice, as outlined in the guidance.

This project approach is based on 4 core values: responsibility, honesty, respect, and fairness. ECOM is committed to helping farmers achieve financial empowerment and profitability, and eliminating human rights infractions through proper risk identification and remediation. We believe that farmers can and should be given the support to uphold globally recognized practices and policies, including safe and fair workplaces.

In terms of ethical project management, we aim to ensure that this project aligns with best practices, safeguards the rights and well-being of all stakeholders, and upholds the credibility and integrity of the project's activities and outcomes. During the socialization and consulting process of the project, we will identify community and government entities that can act as external observers.

By actively applying our safeguard policies outlined in Q29, we will guarantee that the rights, privacy, and safety of people who are directly or indirectly impacted by our project's activities is respected. This includes the use of Prior Informed Consent (PIC) principles with communities and the protection of the health and safety of all project staff. We will uphold the credibility of evidence, research and other findings.

Section 13 - British embassy or high commission engagement

Q31. British embassy or high commission engagement


It is important for UK Government representatives to understand if UK funding might be spent in the project country/ies.


Please indicate if you have contacted the relevant British embassy or high commission to discuss the project.


Yes

Please attach evidence of request or advice if received.

 [Communication UK embassy](#)

 24/11/2023

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Section 14 - Project Staff

Q32. Project staff

Please identify the core staff (identified in the budget), their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Edgardo Alpizar	Project Leader	20	Checked
Jorge Rivera	Project coordinator	50	Checked
Viviana Ruiz-Gutierrez	Research lead	10	Checked

Courtney Davis

Biodiversity monitoring lead

20


Checked


Do you require more fields?


No

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

 [CVs Project Key Staff](#)

 24/11/2023

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Have you attached all project staff CVs?

Yes

Section 15 - Project Partners

Q33. Project Partners

Please list all the Project Partners (including the Lead Partner who will administer the grant and coordinate delivery of the project), clearly setting out their roles and responsibilities in the project including the extent of their engagement so far.

This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included. The order of the letters must be the same as the order they are presented in below.

Lead partner name: ECOM Agroindustrial Corp. Limited

Website address: <https://www.ecomtrading.com/>

ECOM Coffee is one of the largest and most successful service companies in coffee globally, sourcing, selling and delivering across six continents. Ecom has a local subsidiary in each country where they work, and through our Sustainable Management Solutions team we provide farmers with capacity building, technical and financial support with focus on long-term relations, benefit to farmers and sustainability.

Why is this organisation the Lead Partner, and what value to they bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

Farmers benefit from the access to affordable agro-inputs, premium prices and the expertise of the technicians and agronomists who provide assistance and sustainable management solutions, such as monitoring, financial and cash flow management and soil analysis, to farm owners that are willing to compromise towards sustainability.

ECOM Trading will be responsible for the on-the-field part of the project:
-Agroforestry coffee systems development
-farmers' selection and credit management (due diligence, contracts, goods and finance delivery, repayments)
-capacity building (sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation)

International/In-country Partner: In-country

Allocated budget (proportion or value): £ [REDACTED]

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure): Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from the Lead Partner? Yes

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

Yes

1. Partner Name: The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Website address: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/>

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a renowned institution with a century-long legacy of excellence in ornithology and environmental research. Academic team is composed of world-class experts, scientists, educators, and researchers dedicated to advancing avian ecology, population dynamics and conservation. The Lab has a proven track record in successful conservation projects, citizen science initiatives, and educational outreach programs.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology will be responsible for

- 1) Designing a highly reproducible methodology for providing spatially-explicit guidance on biodiversity status and expected impacts of interventions at region and country levels, based on big-data modelling of birds.
- 2) providing such documents and related materials (maps, list of key areas for intervention) for Nicaragua;
- 3) designing and optimizing a pragmatic landscape restoration strategy in the area of action

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

International/In-country Partner: International

Allocated budget: £ ██████████

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure): Yes

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

2. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity): *No Response*

International/In-country Partner: International
 In-country

Allocated budget: *No Response*

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure): Yes
 No

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

3. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity): *No Response*

International/In-country Partner: International
 In-country

Allocated budget: *No Response*

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure) Yes
 No

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

4. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity): *No Response*

International/In-country Partner: International
 In-country

Allocated budget: *No Response*

**Representation on the Project Board
(or other management structure):** Yes
 No

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

5. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

What value does this Partner bring to
the project? (including roles,
responsibilities and capabilities and
capacity): *No Response*

International/In-country Partner: International
 In-country

Allocated budget: *No Response*

**Representation on the Project Board
(or other management structure):** Yes
 No

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

6. Partner Name: *No Response*

Website address: *No Response*

What value does this Partner bring to
the project? (including roles,
responsibilities and capabilities and
capacity): *No Response*

International/In-country Partner: International
 In-country

Allocated budget: *No Response*

**Representation on the Project Board
(or other management structure):** Yes
 No


Have you included a Letter of Support
from this partner? 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 **combined PDF** of all letters of support.

 [Support letters](#)

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Section 16 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Q34. Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund) funding before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

No

If no, please provide the below information on the lead partner.

What year was your organisation established/ incorporated/ registered? 01 January 1849

What is the legal status of your organisation? Other (if selected, please explain below)

Other explained ECOM is a world-leading sustainable coffee trading company, based in Switzerland. They have a legal local representation in Nicaragua, which works directly with farmers.

How is your organisation currently funded? ECOM is a private company, therefore its capital comes from the trade of agricultural products, mainly coffee, cotton and cacao, and providing sustainability and risk management services.

Describe briefly the aims, activities and achievements of your organisation. Large organisations please note that this should describe your unit or department.

Aims Aims: ECOM-Sustainability Management Services implements several models to reach smallholder farmers with training and certification, and to deliver value-added services with the goal of effective management. ECOM SMS builds long-lasting capacities and relationships for ongoing farmer training through multi-stakeholder partnerships with development agencies, NGOs, our clients and our banks.

Activities:

-Carry out comprehensive programs customised to farmers' needs.

-Support farmers' productivity by enabling them to access affordable and high-quality agricultural inputs

Activities

-Provide farm-management solutions (e.g. weather monitoring, financial and soil analysis).

-Develop micro-finance programs with inclusive, affordable and reliable financial services for the continuous improvement of sustainability solutions.

Achievements:

Achievements ECOM SMS reaches 500k+ farmers in its programs worldwide. Our partnerships have led us to achieve 150+ projects of sustainability worldwide and trade over 625k MT of sustainably produced raw products.

Provide details of 3 contracts/projects held by the lead partner that demonstrate your credibility as an organisation and provide track record relevant to the project proposed.

These contracts/awards should have been held in the last 5 years and be of a similar size to the grant requested in your Darwin application.

Contract/Project 1 Title Ko-LA-09/2020: Coffee, cocoa and climate change in Northern Nicaragua: producing with an Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach.

Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)

[REDACTED]

Duration (e.g. 2 years 3 months)

2 years 10 months

Role of organisation in project

Implementation of plots in the field, guaranteeing technical support to producers, from land preparation to post-harvest management.

Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project

The objective was to provide technical assistance to producers in input management tools and environmental protection, as well as the measurement of carbon capture of the different plots, guaranteeing it through the georeferencing of individual farm maps. The project achieved the establishment of 21.5ha of coffee between 30 producers and 12ha of cocoa between 17 producers.

Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)

GIZ/

Sussane Morales;

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Contract/Project 2 Title	MOU-013-2020-NI: Maximizing opportunities in coffee and cocoa in the Americas
Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)	[REDACTED]
Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months)	3 years
Role of organisation in project	Guarantee a market for producers, through technical assistance in coffee cultivation that will guarantee better yields, cup quality, traceability and certification of the farms.
Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project	According to the objective, technical assistance was guaranteed to 1066 producers, which represented 3028.50 MZ of coffee, guaranteeing a 15% increase in yield and a 10% decrease in production costs. As well as improvement in the marketing knowledge of the leaders of the producer groups and technical advisors.
Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)	MOCCA/ Victor Arana Meza, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Contract/Project 3 Title	S/N Advice on SAF cocoa plots in Nicaragua and generation of evidence on the profitability of the SAF system and resilience of the SAF
Contract Value/Project budget (include currency)	[REDACTED]
Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months)	3 years
Role of organisation in project	Technical advice to plots with cocoa agroforestry systems, as well as the establishment of 3 model plots around the Anclas farms
Brief summary of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project	The indicators of 12 different plots were measured, the sustainability of the plots was improved through technical assistance and the monitoring processes of the different cocoa farms were improved, leaving quantitative evidence of this SAF model implemented on the company's Ancla farm, as well as generation of information allowed the dissemination in forums of the 4 countries where VECO has intervention
Client/independent reference contact details (Name, e-mail)	RIKOLTO Ninoska Hurtado; [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts?

Yes

Section 17 - Certification

Q.35 Certification

If this section is incomplete the entire application will be rejected.

Please note if you do not upload the relevant materials below your application may be made ineligible.

On behalf of the

Company

of

ECOM Agroindustrial Corp. Limited

I apply for a grant of

£600,000.00

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, cover letter, letters of support, a budget, logframe, Safeguarding and associated policies, and project workplan.
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (covering three years) are also enclosed.

Checked


Name Edgardo Alpízar


Position in the organisation SMS Manager


Signature (please upload e-signature)  [Certification of approval Darwin Initiative \(nov-23\)](#)
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Date 24 November 2023


Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.


 [Informe PWC 2022 \(dic-22\)](#)


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 [Financial audit reports letter Darwin Initiative \(nov-23\) signed](#)


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
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
Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct as a PDF


 [ecom ethics concerns policy - WHISTLEBLOWING](#)


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
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 [equality diversity and inclusion policy.SAFEGUARDING](#)


 24/11/2023

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 [ecom code of conduct 2021-1](#)

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Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including the "Darwin Initiative Guidance", "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance", "Standard Indicator Guidance", "Risk Guidance", 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 attached the below documents to my application: • a cover letter from the Lead Partner, outlining how any feedback received at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant, as a single PDF.	Checked
• my completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided and using "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance" and "Standard Indicator Guidance".	Checked

• my budget (which meets the requirements above) using the template provided.	Checked
• a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts (covering three years) for the Lead Partner, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
• my completed workplan as a PDF using the template provided.	Checked
• a copy of the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct (Question 29).	Checked
• 1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff identified at Question 32, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not, combined into a single PDF.	Checked
• a letter of support from the Lead Partner and partner(s) identified at Question 33, or an explanation of why not, as a single PDF.	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
My additional supporting evidence is in line with the requested evidence, amounts to a maximum of 5 sides of A4, and is combined as a single PDF.	Checked
(If copying and pasting into Flexi-Grant) I have checked that all my responses have been successfully copied into the online application form.	Checked
I have checked the Darwin Initiative website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Initiative website.	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 the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the **Privacy Notice**, available from the [Forms and Guidance Portal](#).

This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Project Title: Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Impact: Improved biodiversity, landscape connectivity, farmers' livelihoods and resilience to climate change in Nicaraguan highlands through sustainable coffee production; Nicaragua is used as an example for other coffee-producing countries.</p>			
<p>Outcome: A restored multifunctional landscape in an area with a high potential return on investment for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods through the establishment of 150 hectares of coffee agroforestry.</p>	<p>0.1 50 smallholder farmers, with 50% women-headed households, will be more resilient to climate change impacts by adopting coffee agroforestry practices and/or being trained on sustainable farming practices by Y3 [DI-DO2].</p> <p>0.2 Establishment of 150 hectares of Sustainable Management Practices (SMPs, through agroforestry, forest conservation and forest regeneration) in the focal area during the course of the project by Y3 [DI-DO1].</p> <p>0.3 Establish a baseline of bird species abundance, richness, and completeness in the focal area (Y1). Use PROALAS point count data collected in the field to</p>	<p>0.1 Credit databases, workshop proceedings(source Ecom)</p> <p>0.2 Yearly farm visits, GPS measurements, tree counts.(source Ecom)</p> <p>0.3 Data for Cornell's models: 35K existing eBird checklists and 65+ environmental variables, field data from on-the-ground bird monitoring during the project by specie and community levels.(Source Cornell)</p>	<p>Legal, land tenure, and political situation of Nicaragua is challenging but effective communication and previous experience of stakeholders will allow for the project implementation.</p> <p>Prices of inputs remain relatively stable (after the high rise the last 2 years), maintaining the projected investment costs per hectare.</p> <p>Coffee agroforestry increases smallholder farmers' adaptability to climate change compared to conventional coffee production.</p> <p>Previous studies show a high accuracy of Cornell's model hold true.</p>

Project Title: Coffee for nature: Restoring Nicaraguan biodiversity through coffee agroforestry

	ground-truth model estimates (Y1). Quantify changes to species- and community-level biodiversity metrics between baseline and subsequent evaluations (Y3).		
<p>Outputs:</p> <p>1. Developed a highly reproducible methodology for providing spatially-explicit guidance on biodiversity and expected impacts of interventions at region-specific and country levels, based on a big-data analysis to estimate species “completeness” and abundance.</p>	<p>1.1 Methodological manual targeting practitioners and policy advisers published open access by Cornell in Y2 of the project. [DI-C01].</p> <p>1.2 Feedback workshop hosted with key (international) stakeholders working on the topic coinciding with the publishing of the methodological manual (expected at the end of year 1). Project goal: 30 key decision-makers reached across Central American countries, including government institutions, NGO’s, and private businesses. [DI-C13]</p>	<p>1.1.1 Submission confirmation email and PDF document.</p> <p>1.1.2 Proceedings of publication.</p> <p>1.2.1 Official attendance through Zoom analytics.</p> <p>1.2.2 Workshop proceedings. (Source, Cornell)</p>	<p>The current amount of high-quality eBird checklists (>35k for Nicaragua) will be sufficient to generate robust information for most bird species and especially for species of conservation interest.</p>
<p>2. Developed a guide for practitioners and decision-makers on biodiversity restoration and conservation in Nicaragua that includes: areas for intervention with highest potential for impact, and plot to landscape-level implementation recommendations. The Guide is presented to key national and international stakeholders.</p>	<p>2.1 Creation of biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity improvement created by Cornell in Y2 of the project. [DI-C03]</p> <p>2.2 Presentations and webinars of report delivered to stakeholders at the national (e.g. government, NGO’s, private</p>	<p>2.1 Submission confirmation email and PDF document.</p> <p>2.1.2 Proceedings of publication.</p> <p>2.2.1 Official attendance through Zoom analytics (disaggregated by gender and nationality).</p> <p>2.2.2 Webinar proceedings. (Source, Cornell)</p>	<p>Cornell’s models will continue to provide accurate and meaningful information on biodiversity.</p> <p>Collaboration with the British Embassy, local NGO’s and our professional network will allow us to successfully connect with decision-makers.</p>

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	organisations) and international (ECOM, UICN, WRI, coffee companies) level involved in landscape restoration (Project goal: 30 stakeholders reached by year 3). [DI-C13]		
3. Increased biodiversity through habitat restoration and landscape connectivity due to the establishment of coffee agroforestry near a key forest area.	<p>3.1 100% of forests on farmers' lands actively protected by Y3, with baseline Y1. (Rainforest Alliance certification requirement)</p> <p>3.2 Equivalent Connected Area (ECA¹) will have increased at the end of the project duration.</p> <p>3.3 Positive changes observed in species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern relative to Y1 baseline by Y 3, as a proxy for overall biodiversity [DI-C02]</p> <p>3.4 30,000 native trees planted and alive by year 3 through agroforestry. [DI-D04]</p>	<p>3.1.1 On-farm GPS measurements and remote sensing verification of protected forest area. (Source, Cornell)</p> <p>3.1.2 Rainforest Alliance Certification database. (Source, ECOM)</p> <p>3.2 ECA calculated using GIS spatial data as explained in Saura et al. (2011); see reference document.</p> <p>3.3.1 Reports of modelled estimations, based on field collected data (3.3.2).</p> <p>3.3.2 Bird point counts, following the PROALAS protocol; see reference document.</p> <p>3.4.1 Annual tree counting.</p>	<p>Coffee agroforestry systems provide improved habitat for most species compared to other agricultural land uses in the focal area, resulting in positive biodiversity impacts.</p> <p>Agroforestry systems are used as natural corridors by animals, improving connectivity between forest patches.</p> <p>Bird counts using the PROALAS protocol provide a meaningful proxy to identify overall biodiversity impact in a short time period.</p>
4. Adoption of coffee agroforestry improves livelihoods by increasing income, food	4.1 50 smallholder farmers included in credit schemes by year 3, benefiting directly from	4.1 Credit databases, annual household surveys. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by	Coffee agroforestry provides a higher income to farmers than other activities in the focal area.

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<p>security, and climate change resilience.</p>	<p>Darwin funds, of whom at least 50% are woman-headed households.</p> <p>4.2 37,000 working days of labour created for the local community within 3 years, equalling \$320,000 of the project's funding.</p> <p>4.3: 50 smallholders are certified by Rainforest Alliance by Y 3</p>	<p>gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM).</p> <p>4.2 Pay check database. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM)</p> <p>4.3 Rainforest Alliance Certification database. Descriptive analyses (disaggregated by gender of household lead, number of members, area covered) (Source,ECOM).</p>	<p>Previous studies indicating a high interest of farmers to participate in this type of project holds true in the focal area.</p> <p>Coffee agroforestry creates a high amount of labour for the local community.</p> <p>Rainforest Alliance Certification significantly increases coffee farmers income.</p>
<p>5. Developed local capacity to implement, improve, and manage sustainable agriculture and forest conservation.</p>	<p>5.1 Smallholders learn about sustainable agricultural practices through technical workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmer households reached by year 3. [DI-A01]</p> <p>5.2 Smallholders learn about on-farm biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services through workshops. Project goal: 50 smallholder farmers by year 3. [DI-A01]</p> <p>5.3 Smallholders become aware and understand the value</p>	<p>4.1 Technician records of farm visits. Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations Y1 and Y3. (disaggregated by gender and age)(Source,ECOM)</p> <p>4.2 Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings and official attendance. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations. Y1 and Y3. (disaggregated by gender and age) (Source, Cornell)</p>	<p>All selected smallholder farmers remain interested in increasing their knowledge and capacity.</p> <p>Project partners possess sufficient capacity for providing training.</p>

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	<p>contributed by men and women to agriculture. [DI-A01]</p>	<p>4.2 Training plan documentation. Workshop proceedings and official attendance. Diagnostic and post workshops learning evaluations. Y1, Y2, Y3. (disaggregated by gender and age)) (Source, Cornell)</p>	
<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Model development and methodology refinement 1.2 Sumit methodological manual for publication 1.3 Feedback workshop hosted with key (national and international) stakeholders working on the topic 2.1 Create biodiversity completeness map for Nicaragua, including assessment of areas with the highest potential for biodiversity 2.2 Design and approval of the guide for decision-makers 2.3 Presentation and webinars on the guide (for stakeholders, NGOs, and public offices involved in landscape restoration) 3.1 In-situ recognition and selection of restoration priority areas 3.2 Establishment of Rainforest Alliance Certification process 3.3 First reforestation cycle 3.4 Monitoring of tree conditions and survival 3.5 Second reforestation cycle 3.6 Evaluation of species richness, community completeness and relative abundance of species of concern 4.1 Establish credit guidelines, evaluation and beneficiaries' eligibility 4.2 Workshops and training for financial literacy 4.3 Credit disbursements process 4.4 Agroforestry coffee crop establishment 4.5 Periodical technical improvement and monitoring visits to farmers 5.1 Socialization and consulting process and rapid rural appraisal 5.2 Training session to reinforce and communicate policies of gender equality for technicians 5.3 Design and run workshops on gender equality and human rights for beneficiaries 			

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- 5.4 Design and run workshops on best practices for sustainable coffee production
- 5.5 Design and run workshops on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services