World news story: UK Government Funds to combat illegal wildlife trade and protect biodiversity are open now

The British Embassies Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia are pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for funding as part of the Illegal Wildlife Challenge Trade Challenge Fund and Darwin Initiative run by the UK's Department of Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for International Development (DFID).

Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund helps developing countries to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, by addressing demand reduction, strengthening enforcement and criminal justice, and providing local alternative livelihoods. Further information can be found here.

The priority areas we are looking to fund include:

- Developing sustainable livelihoods and economic development, to benefit people directly affected by IWT
- Strengthening law enforcement
- Ensuring effective legal frameworks
- Reducing demand for IWT products

In addition, our Embassies are particularly looking for projects that have a strong regional element, involving action or collaboration across borders. We are also looking to encourage projects that have strong partnerships with governments in the region.

The deadline for the first phase of the bidding process is 21 September.

Darwin Initiative

The Darwin Initiative helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment in developing countries Further information can be found here.

The objective of the Darwin Initiative is to protect and enhance biodiversity and in doing so, to contribute to sustainable development in developing countries, through projects which address one, or more, of the following themes:

- Protection or enhancement of ecosystems, species or genetic resources through in-situ or ex-situ conservation or remedying environmental damage;
- Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services within host country development objectives and economic decision making, through institution building, capacity development, strengthening regulatory and policy frameworks or research; or
- Assisting host countries' efforts to meet their obligations under at least one of the international conventions/agreements listed above.

In addition, our Embassies are particularly looking for projects that have a strong regional element, involving action or collaboration across borders. We are also looking to encourage projects that have strong partnerships with governments in the region. We also want to encourage projects that identify synergies with priorities and actions promoted by the Illegal Wildlife Challenge Fund.

The deadline for the first phase of the bidding process is 12 September.

What to do now?

Our regional network want to work with prospective bidders to craft and refine bids to these funds and also to understand who we can help support the aims and activities of the projects. Our network has significant insight in to these issues as well as political reach and access. As priority issues of the UK Government, we would intend to work with the project implementers to help ensure the maximum benefits from the projects are secured.

To improve efficiency and coherence, we have appointed a regional coordinator to give you a one-stop-shop for initial contacts. Any inquiries will be dealt with and you can be sure they will be shared with all the Network. It is possible to contact individual Embassies directly but we recommend, particularly for Cambodia and Laos, that you first work with the regional lead.

It is not compulsory to contact the Regional lead person or Embassy or to submit bids in line with the priorities / goals of our Regional Network. However, our Network has much expertise and skills to offer and we would strongly recommend this.

Contact points

Contact points for the regional lead and various Embassies are:

Regional Lead – Nguyen.ThuyLinh@fco.gov.uk

Vietnam – Nguyen.ThuyLinh@fco.gov.uk

Bangkok – Kanyasorn.Tansubhapol@fco.gsi.gov.uk

Cambodia – Phalla.Chea@fco.gov.uk

Laos – Anongly.Phimmasone@fco.gov.uk

Press release: Official opening of £3million North East flood scheme

The multi-million pound Lustrum Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme has been officially opened.

The Environment Agency and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have worked together on the £3million award-winning scheme, which included replacing Londonderry Bridge and building new flood walls along the beck.

The scheme reduces the risk of flooding to over 150 homes in the town.

An official opening event on 26 July marked the completion of the first phase of the project, while residents were invited to a community drop-in event and walking tour of the defences to find out how they are better protected from flooding.

The lifting screen at Primrose Hill

New flood defences

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council replaced Londonderry Bridge, on Durham Road, as part of the project. This was completed in December 2016.

The Environment Agency has built new flood walls along the beck at Bedford Street and Duddon Walk, which tie in with a raised embankment at Newtown. Work to tie in the new defences with the new bridge was completed earlier this year.

The Environment Agency also installed a new lifting screen at the culvert at Primrose Hill and had previously built a new flood wall along Bishopton Road.

Environment Agency Area Director Oliver Harmar said:

> This is a fantastic project with some unique features which has increased flood protection to over 150 properties.
>
> We’ve worked closely with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council throughout which has enabled us to provide Stockton with an excellent scheme with a high level of protection.
>
> And we’re not finished yet. The next phase involves looking at storing flood water further upstream at Coatham Woods, as well as creating new habitat.
>
> This makes Lustrum Beck a great project which will see us combine traditional engineering solutions with natural flood management.

The new Londonderry Bridge

Natural flood management

The Environment Agency is looking at options to store flood water further upstream of Stockton at Coatham Woods, and is working with Newcastle University and the Forestry Commission to explore designs.

And it’s also exploring opportunities to create up to 30 hectares of water dependent habitat, including improved habitat at Sixfields.

Construction of these features is expected to start later this year and will take approximately three years.

Councillor Mike Smith, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, added:

> The replacement of Londonderry Bridge was an essential part of the broader scheme to help reduce the flood risk to homes.
>
> “The old bridge was a major contributor to serious flooding because its arches obstructed the beck’s flow. Replacing it with a new, single span bridge has reduced the risk of the kind of devastating flooding we’ve seen in recent years.
>
> We’d like to thank local people for their patience and understanding throughout this project, and it’s good to give them this opportunity to find out how the new flood protection measures

> all work.

The Lustrum Beck flood scheme has won a number of awards, including the Sustainability award at Constructing Excellence North East 2017, it scooped the top award for Partnership Project of the Year at the Flood and Coast Project Excellence Awards, and was highly commended at the Robert Stephenson Awards run by the Institution of Civil Engineers.

It's important residents understand their flood risk and know what to do during a flood. Find out more about how to prepare for flooding

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Press release: Fish stocks boost for north east rivers

The Environment Agency has released 12,000 young grayling to give fish stocks a boost in north east rivers.

The fish were released this week into the rivers Deerness, Browney, Blyth and Skerne as well as Langley Beck at Staindrop and Aldbrough Beck near Darlington.

It's part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plans to develop and restore rivers in the region, targeting those which have been affected by pollution or where barriers affect fish passage.

The fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, using funding from rod licence sales.

Help the process of natural recovery

Fisheries Officer Paul Frear was out releasing some of the grayling in the south of the region on Tuesday (1 August). He said:

> We're pleased we can provide these fish for restocking as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers and to help the process of natural recovery in waters which have been impacted by pollution or suffered poor water quality.
>
> While it's a really important aspect of our work, it's one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the effects of pollution, improving habitat and removing barriers to fish migration.

Grayling released into Langley Beck

Improved water quality

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways regularly. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity in response to impacts on local rivers and using data from national fish surveys to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online.

Press release: Anglers urged to report pink salmon catches

Recently a non-native pink salmon was caught in the River Tyne at Wylam and around 100 are believed to have been caught in waters off the North East and Yorkshire coast in recent months.

Further afield, anglers have confirmed catches in a number of rivers in Scotland and in western Ireland.

The Environment Agency is collecting vital data about sightings so officers can monitor the situation to determine any impact on the local environment and species. Data collected will help the Environment Agency, fisheries researchers and other organisations with an interest in fisheries management in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia, better understand how to manage the arrival of pink salmon in the UK .

Unusual find

Jonathan Shelley from the Environment said:

> It is quite unusual to find pink salmon in our waters and we're keen anglers know we're aware of the sightings and we're investigating.
>
> I'd urge anglers to contact us if they see any non-native salmon in the waters, with a date, location and if possible a photograph, which would really help us identify them and build up a picture of where they are.
>
> We are monitoring the situation and early indications is that there is no major impact on wild fish stocks at this point in time.

The non-native pink salmon

The native Atlantic salmon

Advice for anglers

Anglers holding a salmon licence who catch pink salmon are asked not to return the fish to the water. Instead they are asked to dispatch of them humanely and, if possible, make the fish available to the Environment Agency for inspection and further analysis.

If this is not possible, they are asked to send a sample of the scales. Trout and coarse anglers are asked to call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60, if unsuccessful please return the salmon.

Pink salmon (Onchorhyncus gorbuscha), also known as humpback salmon, originate from the northern Pacific Ocean.

Millions were stocked in the White Sea region of north Russia from the 1950's until 2003 to develop a net fishery. As a result, some have established self-sustaining populations in rivers in Russia, Finland and northern Norway. This is the most likely origin of the pink salmon recently caught in the UK and Ireland.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the North East environmental monitoring team on 0800 807060 or email jonathan.shelley@environment-agency.gov.uk

How to identify a pink salmon:

- Large black oval spots on the tail
- Bluish back, silver flanks and white belly
- Much smaller scales than an Atlantic salmon of the same size
- Very dark mouth and tongue
- 40-60cm in length
- Breeding males develop a distinctive hump

In contrast, the native Atlantic salmon typically:

- Have no spots on the tail
- Usually larger (up 110cm in length)
- Pale mouth and tongue
- Larger scales
- One or two black spots on the gill cover
- Spots on the back above the lateral line
- Thicker base of tail than a pink salmon

Notice: LN5 0AS, Patrick Dean Limited:

environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Patrick Dean Limited
- Installation name: Boothby Heath Farm
- Permit number: EPR/BT4150IX/V004