

[From Dumfries to Sub-Saharan Africa – environmental challenges faced in studying cow fertility](#)

SRUC PhD student, Bridgit Muasa, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has swapped Dumfries for Nairobi as she continues her studies into the fertility of dairy cows.

[Research and analysis: Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2017](#)

We provide three sets of conversion factors:

- Condensed set: Most frequently requested by users. An abridged version of the full set of factors, designed to reduce the volume of information users have to navigate through to find the factors they want. Recommended for most, and new, users of conversion factors
- Full set: This set of factors contains all of the available factors for the selected year, and is recommended for advanced users only due to the volume of information presented.
- Flat file set: contains same information as the full set, but arranged for automated processes – available from 2014 onwards. Not recommended for most users.
- The methodology paper explains how the conversion factors are derived.

For new users of the conversion factors, we recommend you download the condensed set of conversion factors from the latest available year and read the guidance in the document's introductory sheet. Then follow the informative text at the top of each conversion factor tab in the output files.

For repeat users of the conversion factors we suggest that you download your preferred factor set and read the 'what's new' sheet before using the conversion factors. This sheet highlights the most significant changes to the conversion factors made in this update. Following the 'what's new' guidance will ensure that reporting is consistent and comparable year-on-year.

[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 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

[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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