

[News story: Plants at the heart of the latest call for Darwin Initiative bids](#)

The UK government is today (22 May) celebrating [United Nations International Day of Biological Diversity](#) by making funding available to protect wildlife across the globe.

The theme for this year is 'our biodiversity, our food, our health'. It comes as the [Darwin Initiative](#) re-opens for new projects to apply for funding in the latest round.

Since 1992, the fund has been putting an emphasis on nature and health, and providing security of food supply to rural communities in some of the most remote parts of the globe – supporting the Sustainable Development Goals on protecting and enhancing nature.

The [Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund](#), which now accepts bids from projects aimed at combating the illegal trade in plants in addition to animal-focused projects, is also looking to back new schemes. This fund has received the support of [£6 million of UK Aid over the next five years](#) to make sure that more vital projects can go ahead.

Recent reports on international nature have put the issue of species loss high on the nation's agenda. The [UN's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) report showed nearly a million species are in danger of extinction and the Darwin Initiative is part of the UK government's response to this emerging issue.

The latest round of funding comes during the government's [Year of Green Action](#), a year-long drive to help people to connect with, protect and enhance nature.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

UN International Day for Biological Diversity celebrates the wonderful diversity of nature and wildlife around our planet.

Nature delivers many environmental benefits including clean air and water, sustainable food supplies, and recovery and resilience to natural disasters.

The Darwin Initiative delivers support for international nature conservation projects and many economic activities depend on nature, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism.

At the start of May, [32 new projects shared £8.2million in the 25th round of funding from the Darwin Initiative](#).

There has been continuous progress made by ongoing schemes backed by the Darwin Initiative, with two highlights in Guinea and the Philippines.

Tropical Important Plant Areas in Guinea

Following three years of research, [European and Guinean scientists, NGOs and staff of the Guinean Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, have evidenced 22 Tropical Important Plant Areas in Guinea](#). These are the first Tropical Important Plant Areas (TIPAs) that have been identified in Africa.

This designation of the 22 TIPAs, which cover 3.5% of Guinea's surface area and include more than 60% of 273 threatened species identified in the country, mean those plants will now stand a far greater chance of protection.

[Darwin Initiative support of nearly £300,000 over three years](#) has helped to make sure this work takes place.

Dr Martin Cheek, Senior Research Leader at the [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#), said:

This official status is vital in Guinea. Habitat loss has been devastating with calculations that 96% of the country's original forest has already been cleared, and that which remains is under severe pressure. It looks like as many as 35 species have gone extinct in Guinea, from trees to minute herbs, daisies, peas and clematis, all due to human pressures. Twenty-five of these are globally unique to Guinea. So these are likely global extinctions.

Fisheries protection in the Philippines

The [Darwin Initiative has supported two projects with a total of nearly £800,000](#) both aimed at better protecting important coastal habitats in the Philippines and making sure that local communities have access to sustainable fisheries.

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are a key tool for sustaining marine biodiversity and fish stocks. Twenty-five per cent of the world's MPAs are in the Philippines, 95% of which are community based.

However, the average size of the critical no-take "replenishment" zones within these MPAs is only 12 hectares, which is inadequate to fulfil conservation objectives, and only 12% were rated as sustained at the last assessment, owing to an overdependence on philanthropic funding.

Small and unsustainable MPAs are driven by a lack of adequate business models underpinning these conservation measures. As a result, marginalised fishing communities faced with the need to feed their families today cannot afford to set aside large enough areas in the hope that they will generate increased fish catches in the future. Additionally, MPAs have traditionally focused on coral reefs and have failed to incorporate other critical habitats.

ZSL's (Zoological Society of London) Net-Works initiative has been pioneering the iMPA – which describes the “ideal MPA”, but also interpreted as innovative, inclusive, improved. These are bigger in size, better managed and enforced and sustainably financed using the Net-Works business model.

Dr Nick Hill, Senior Technical Specialist at [ZSL](#), said:

Darwin Initiative funding for the first two iMPAs has gained the support of local government. These two MPAs are nearly 50 times the average size of MPAs in the Philippines, with no-take replenishment zones 16 times bigger.

This is a key milestone for ZSL's project and proves that in the Philippines larger community-based MPAs make a meaningful contribution towards the Philippines' nationally-mandated target of protecting 15% of municipal waters.

Projects supported by the Darwin Initiative are illustrative of a 'win-win' approach, encouraging sustainable livelihoods whilst conserving some of the world's iconic and endangered species and landscapes, which benefits us all.

[Press release: \(A38 Derby Junctions\) highway improvement scheme application](#)

Today, Tuesday 21 May 2019, The Planning Inspectorate accepted for examination, an application by Highways England for proposed highway improvements to three existing roundabout junctions on the A38/A5111 Derby (Kingsway Junction).

The application was submitted on 23 April 2019 and the decision to accept the application was made in accordance with section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The legislation allows 28 days from the day after the date of receipt of an application for the Planning Inspectorate to decide whether or not to accept it.

The decision and a copy of the application documents can be viewed at the A30 Derby Junctions project page on the Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning website;

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/East%20Midlands/A38-Derby-Junctions/>

The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) sets high standards for applications and places a strong duty upon developers to involve the local community, local authorities and other stakeholders in the development of their proposal,

ahead of submission.

Sarah Richards, Chief Executive of The Planning Inspectorate said: “We have considered very carefully the application submitted by Highways England and decided that it meets the required tests set out in the legislation to be accepted for examination.

“Of course, this does not mean that consent has been given for the project to go ahead – acceptance of the application simply means that the Examining Authority can begin to make arrangements for the formal examination of the application”.

It is now for Highways Agency A38 Derby Junction project team to publicise the fact that its application has been accepted to proceed to examination and invite people who are interested in the proposal to register with the Planning Inspectorate as an Interested Party by making a Relevant Representation.

Interested Parties in an application can:

- Say what they agree or disagree with in the application and why
- Comment on what other people have said in their representations
- Attend the preliminary meeting and say how they think the application should be examined
- Request that an open floor hearing is held
- Attend an open floor or issue-specific hearing
- Request to speak at a hearing.

Sarah Richards said. “Shortly, the public will be invited to register as interested parties in this proposal, giving them their first opportunity to make formal representations to the Inspectorate whether they object to or support the project. Everyone who registers in the correct way can be sure that their evidence will be considered by the independent Examining Authority who will be appointed to examine the case. “

Sarah added: “A major priority for us over the next few weeks is to continue our work with communities who are affected by this proposal, to ensure that the process is understood, and people know how and when to register as an Interested Party.”

Ends

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate’s Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: press.office@planninginspctorate.gov.uk

More information on this application, including details of the developer’s website, is available in National Infrastructure’s Programme of Projects. Visit: the Projects page at

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate is an agency of the Ministry for Housing, communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and operates within the policy framework prescribed in the Planning Act 2008, secondary legislation and the National Policy Statements.

[Press release: Export milestone for espresso machine manufacturer](#)

Birmingham espresso coffee machine manufacturer Fracino is poised to further expand its global reach after securing UL certification to meet stringent requirements for exporting to the US and Canada.

The milestone coincides with an additional 4,500 sq ft expansion of the company's 45,000 sq ft world-class production facility, which has undergone a multi-million-pound investment programme, and where the majority of components are fabricated in-house.

The business exports to over 70 countries, and supplies customers including Subway® PizzaExpress, Living Venture Restaurant Group, AMT Coffee and Pathfinder pub chains.

Fracino's 40-strong network includes long-standing distributors from Australia, Poland, Dubai, South Korea, New Zealand, Chile, Sweden, Austria, and significantly, Italy. The most recent partnerships entail distributors from Thailand, Hong Kong and South Africa.

Exporting success has seen Fracino post significant growth, with exports now making up 30% of its total turnover and forecast to increase to 50% by 2020.

The team of 62 is the UK's only manufacturer of traditional espresso and cappuccino machines, competing with Italian and Spanish manufacturers.

Launched in 1963 by founder and chairman Frank Maxwell, the business has become a driving force in espresso machine production in the UK and was a key part of the coffee shop boom in the late 80s, importing and supplying coffee machines to retail outlets in the UK.

Adrian Maxwell, Managing Director, Fracino said:

"The US and Canada are key growth markets and important to our strategic plan so we're understandably delighted to have secured our UL certification and already have top-class distributors lined up to sell our products.

"What makes our operation so special is that nearly 90 per cent of all

components in our espresso machines are made in-house, allowing us to have rigorous control over quality, product development and the manufacturing process. This has been instrumental in enabling us to meet different countries' compliance requirements.

"The Department for International Trade and the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce have allowed us to access services such as overseas market introductions, including to one of our distribution partners in India. Our trade advisor has been with us every step of the way, offering insight into the requirements of different countries. There's a big world out there, with a wealth of opportunities to maximise and I encourage other companies to be brave and find new markets."

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports – Midlands Region, DIT said:

"Operating one of the world's most advanced and efficient espresso equipment manufacturing facilities, Fracino demonstrates the scale of UK innovation and manufacturing expertise, and the 'Made in Britain' marque on every machine is a real testament to British craftsmanship and its value around the world.

"I encourage businesses to look for opportunities in other markets. Our network of International Trade Advisors are available to give you insight and practical advice on your next steps to global growth."

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for North America, Antony Phillipson said:

"The US and Canada's thriving coffee market make it an ideal region for Fracino to grow their brand, and achieving their UL certification is an essential first step. The demand for British goods and craftsmanship is particularly strong here, and Fracino's machines are wonderful example of the excellent quality and design of British-made products.

"I wish them great success as they expand their international presence in North America, and our trade and investment teams stand ready to help them in any way we can."

[Press release: App sees rise in fitness and increase in exports](#)

With health and wellbeing taking centre stage around the world, digital health technologies and fitness apps are multiplying. Nottingham-based Boditrax, a body composition software and hardware designer, is running with this rising demand with its most recent export to six countries across Asia in a project worth up to £1.5m.

Following a trade mission organised by the Department for International Trade

to Arab Health 2019, the company has signed two further agreements, sold six more systems and have a further four in negotiation. Significantly, it is also in discussions with a government in the region to develop a public health pilot.

And exporting has been a significant factor in the company's growth. The business saw an additional £470,000 to turnover in 2018 with overseas sales, and is closing in on a further export contract which will add another £850,000 in 2019/20, so this is set to increase.

The company has the world's largest body composition database with over five million users on more than 700 systems, delivered by a team of just 22. Turnover in the last financial year was £1.3million and this year is on target to reach £2.5 million.

Founded in December 2011, the businesses' core product is a cloud hosted professional health application built around a medical grade body composition device, providing a clinically validated understanding of a person's physical composition and many other health metrics such as mental wellbeing.

The app allows users to test and track body and mind change as well as other areas such as choose a personal trainer; review, discuss and set goals; and to create nutrition and training plans.

The software is developed, designed and the hardware assembled by hand in Nottingham and then distributed across six continents. Health club operators such as David Lloyd Leisure, Virgin Active, Fitness First and Pure Gym use the technology along with the NHS, HM Government and leading universities. A recent expansion into corporate healthcare has seen Rolls-Royce, Cadbury, Kellogg's, Renault F1, Airbus and Sky TV added to the Boditrax client roster.

The business now exports to markets around the world including the EU, UAE, USA, South Africa, Australia and India.

Nick Stillman, Co-founder at Boditrax said:

"There is often a perception of risk when large organisations engage with small firms from overseas. Whilst we accept that appearing on UK DIT stands and at events is not an endorsement as such, there can be a real halo effect and credibility upgrade from the company you keep and this really affects how other parties then view you. "We initially learned the hard way in areas like customs clearance and getting the 'door to door' experience working effectively in different countries. Time zones and documentation have required careful management. And different markets pose different challenges, including connectivity issues in areas such as China and also power and infrastructure issues in India.

"My advice would be talk to the DIT team, we have had heaps of support with signposting on so many things yet at no time has anyone there said, 'sorry, you are on your own'. It has been a source of great professional pride for our small company to work with the department and it has made us feel part of something really great."

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports for the Midlands added:

“Health and fitness are such important issues in our busy modern lives, and it’s great to see a company like Boditrax making such a mark in the industry both at home and in overseas markets.

“The demand is high for new and innovative products in this space, and it’s great to see that Midlands companies are in the right place to take advantage of this demand. I highly encourage companies looking to enter international markets to get in contact with their local International Trade Advisor.”

Press release: Northamptonshire business boosting health abroad

The company, which exports internationally, has also recently secured two export contracts with Sweden and Kenya, and sights are now set on Portugal.

Established in 1999, the Daventry-based company produces a range of more than 200 ethical speciality health supplements including vitamins, minerals, herbs and more. The business exports to countries from Iceland and South Africa, to Ireland and Kuwait, and is now exporting to more than 26 countries in all.

And the results are substantial, with 35% of the business’s turnover in 2018 attributed to exports. Demand is particularly high in markets where there is no free national health service and where the demand for nutritional supplements in preventative care is so important, such as Ireland, Italy and South Africa.

Manufacturing standards in the United Kingdom are recognised and respected worldwide, and with overall exports of vitamins from the UK to non-EU countries totalling £28.79 million in 2018, a 4.3% rise from £27.61 million in 2017, the scope for demand is set to increase.

Initially exporting directly to Ireland and South Africa, the company’s Managing Director Cheryl Thallon was approached by countless enthusiasts with shared ethical values who wished to help distribute the range, but she soon realised the need to refocus on appointing expert distribution partners that were able to operate with a more structured approach.

Thallon recruited Sally Ann Marsh into the company, and she enlisted the help of DIT, which provided OMIS reports and took the company to various training opportunities and events. These included Gateway to Global Growth and Passport to Export. DIT was also able to help draw up contracts, offer information and expertise in key administrative areas, and introduce Viridian to useful contacts in different markets.

Some of the considerations Marsh found particularly important included trademark registration, setting brand guidelines and formalising the procedures for appointing the most appropriate distribution partner.

Sally Ann Marsh, International Business Manager, said:

“In the UK, our primary distribution is through specialist health food stores, where we provide extensive training programmes to support guided purchase in-store. Overseas, the market is a mix of health stores, pharmacies and doctors – finding the right distributor who understands the local requirements is essential.

“The Department for International Trade has the resources to help you succeed with a huge network of trade advisors around the world. Our specialist advisor continues to be a key part of our exporting success, keeping us fully informed of trade priorities that might affect our business as well reducing any anxieties over trading with specific countries.”

Managing Director Cheryl Thallon, Viridian Nutrition said:

“My advice to others considering exporting is to be bold. It’s important to have a plan, but don’t think you’ll ever be prepared for all eventualities. You often learn more from mistakes than from successes.”

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports – Midlands Regions at the Department for International Trade, said:

“Viridian Nutrition is an example of a business that has maintained its values and found customers in a hugely diverse range of countries. Joining our Export Champion community is a testament to the work the company has put in to share their success story and show other small businesses in the health industry that the demand is out there.

“At DIT, we have around 20 International Trade Advisers in the East Midlands to support businesses like Viridian Nutrition to start or to increase exports. We provide advice, workshops and seminars, and can also help businesses put together a comprehensive exporting strategy and introduce them to international contacts.”