2026 WHITLEY AWARDS - APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The guidance below is intended to help you complete the 2026 Whitley Awards application form. These guidance notes provide information on:

- Project requirements and eligibility criteria
- Completing the application form
- Guidance for Referees
- Glossary

All applications must be made through our online portal. If you are having technical or login issues with your account then please contact the system administrator at wfn@eformsolutions.com

Please read through all the following guidance before contacting us. If you can't find the answer, please contact WFN's grants team at info@whitleyaward.org

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE WHITLEY AWARDS

- Worth £50,000 in project funding
- Projects must start in, or shortly after June 2026
- Projects must last no longer than 12 months
- Whitley Awards are granted in a ceremony in April/May each year
- We usually award 6 grants per year
- Following their Whitley Award, WFN grantees join the Whitley Fund for Nature network, have further funding opportunities through Continuation Funding and access to regional training weeks.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

What projects will WFN fund?

- **Wildlife conservation projects** based in countries that are not defined as a High Income Economy by the World Bank. Exceptions to this criterion include Equatorial Guinea and certain island nations in the Caribbean. If your project is based in a country that has recently been re-classified as having a High-Income Economy, please contact WFN.

- **Nationals with local support**. The Whitley Awards support nationals of the country in which they are working (i.e. were born there or have lived there a long time and achieved national status). If you are not a national but believe you have an exceptional case based on long term residency (15+ years) and a demonstrable commitment to that country/region, then please contact WFN.

- We seek **grassroots conservationists** who are embedded in and/or from the communities where they work. Applicants should work for or lead locally incorporated NGOs in the Global South, rather than be in-country staff employed by NGOs headquartered in the Global North.

- **Good communicators and keen collaborators.** People who will benefit from additional media attention, collaborate with others and share results. Please note applicants must be able to communicate in English.

- **Leadership and teamwork**. Whitley Awards are won by inspiring leaders backed by an appropriate team, not individuals working in isolation.

- Projects that are based on **scientific evidence** and understanding – this can be in the leader, expertise on the team, or via partners/collaboration. Projects need to demonstrate evidence of success. We do not fund pilot projects or work that is at the start-up stage.

- Work involving (and benefitting) the **local community** and stakeholders is essential.

- **Ecosystem / landscape level projects** are preferred. Projects which focus on flagship species are great, but not if results are purely species-specific.

- **Pragmatic, replicable and scalable.** Grassroots, pragmatic work that is realistic, but ambitious too. We look for applicants on the cusp of 'something big' and work that is replicable or scalable.

- Actions that will have clear, **measurable outcomes.** We look for applications that have given careful thought to what indicators can be measured to evidence impact.

- **Cost-effective**. Projects that demonstrate value for money and ability to manage funding at the Whitley Award level (£50,000). Organisations with Audited Accounts are preferred.
- Projects for which an Award will make a **big difference**. Priority will be given to those that can demonstrate need.
- **Sustainable projects.** We want the work to continue into the future, well past the Whitley Award. Successful proposals will demonstrate long-term planning.
- **Work that needs publicity**. Ones that will do well if 'doors can be opened' via the media and enhanced recognition.

What projects will WFN NOT fund?

- **Expatriates** – such leaders do excellent work around the world but are not the focus of this Awards scheme, which aims to champion local leaders.
- **Pure academic research** – winners need to have larger aims than 'research and publish'. Any research should be applied research.
- **MSc / PhD fieldwork** – if students benefit from a project funded that is great, but we will not fund the fieldwork as an end to itself.
- **Expeditions** and international travel/conferences not related to a project.
- **'Start-up' or pilot projects.** Evidence of prior success is very important.
- **Absentee leaders** – especially if the leader is mid-PhD and will be absent from the project for long periods and/or based abroad.
- **'One-person bands'** – people who will not reward emerging leadership on their team, train team members or who are reluctant to collaborate.
- **Joint applications or nominations** for someone else.
- **Pure rural/ economic/ sustainable development** projects where direct conservation benefits are hard to quantify.
- **Land purchase** or projects focused on **construction** of buildings.
- Animal **welfare & rehabilitation** of captive animals.
- **Captive breeding** – we recognise it as useful conservation tool, but at the level of funding we have available, we can't make much impact. Therefore, we would only fund captive breeding where underlying causes of species decline in the wild have been fully addressed prior to breeding species in captivity.
- **Government employees.** However, we are aware that grey areas exist where conservationists will often be affiliated with government institutions in order to operate. If this is the case, please contact WFN.

For more details on who is eligible to apply, what WFN looks for in applicants and what kinds of conservation work WFN funds, please see our extensive eligibility and FAQ sections on our website:

https://whitleyaward.org/eligibility-and-application-faqs/

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

GUIDANCE FOR USING THE PORTAL

You can set up an account/ log in via https://wfn.eformsolutions.com/landing/sign-in. If you have applied for a Whitley Award before, you can sign in with the same credentials, however you will not be able to access previous application forms.

Internet Issues

While working directly on the portal, remember to save your progress regularly using the green 'Save' button at the bottom of the screen. If you have poor internet connection and are worried about losing work you can download a Word document of the application form, which can be found in the **Information** section on the portal. You must have registered on the portal to be able to access this document. You can use this Word document to work offline until you are ready to copy your answers into the portal. We would recommend doing this well in advance of the deadline and when you are somewhere with a more stable internet connection. Note that we do **not** accept applications via email – you must submit your application via the portal.

Saving a PDF Copy

You can save a PDF version of your application (either for reference or to send onto a referee) by clicking the 'Print' button on the bottom right of the screen and selecting 'Save to PDF' from the printer dropdown menu. Once you have submitted your application form or once the deadline has passed, you may not be able to access your application, so we suggest you save a copy, before it is submitted.

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Competition for Whitley Awards is high. Those that follow the guidance below and keep their answers concise and to the point will have an advantage.

Applications must be done in English. However, you will not be penalised for grammatical or spelling errors in your applications.

We advise you keep jargon to a minimum. Your application will be assessed by a number of different people and not all of them will be experts in your specific field of work so keep this in mind when completing the form.

Conservation Standards

WFN, along with some other conservation grant givers, have begun to move towards using Conservation Standards as a way of standardising the terminology that we use and the questions that we ask. You do not have to have formal Conservation Standards training in order to be eligible or to be able to complete the form. However, you may find it useful to become familiar with the terminology they use. You can read the full Conservation Standards here and there is a helpful glossary at the end: CMP-Open-Standards-for-the-Practice-of-Conservation-v4.0.pdf (conservationstandards.org).

Using AI

We understand that AI has become a powerful tool and many are using it in conservation to generate ideas, process data and provide information. However, we strongly advise against using AI to complete parts or all of the application. All answers must be written by yourself, in your own words. Additionally, all the concepts, ideas and activities within the application must be generated by you, your team or stakeholders. Applications that are found to have copied and pasted AI generated answers will not pass the initial screen.

The deadline for applications is midnight GMT on 31ˢᵗ October 2025.

The following sections are numbered based on the section these questions appear in the application portal for ease of navigation. Please read the **Information** in section 1 of the portal in full before starting your application. A glossary is provided at the end of the document for **key terms** used within the application and guidance.

2. APPLICATION SUMMARY

Applicant Name

The applicant is the person applying for the Whitley Award and must be the project leader (joint applications or nominations are not accepted).

Project Title

The application title has a limit of 12 words. e.g. 'Protecting Critically Endangered crowned sifaka lemurs in Madagascar though sustainable forest livelihoods'.

Organisation

You must work for or have a formal agreement with the organisation you list. They will be the organisation the funds are sent too and will be financially responsible for the funds. They must be a registered charity, NGO, not-for-profit or university. See the financial section for further guidance.

Country

List the country where your project is based. While WFN strives to fund projects in every country that meets our eligibility criteria, it is occasionally necessary to restrict support in a particular country. We keep this list under constant review and any changes in policy will be advertised on our website.

If your country does not appear in the application's dropdown list, please email info@whitleyaward.org to check your eligibility before continuing with your application.

Conservation Target

List a single **conservation target**. This can be your focal species, ecosystem, land/sea scape or an issue/threat you are tackling. For example: Brown Spider Monkey, the Somuncurá Plateau, the Eastern Tropical Pacific seascape, or Illegal Wildlife Trade. There is a limit of 10 words.

Project Type

Select whether your project is predominantly a marine, terrestrial or freshwater project.

3. PERSONAL PROFILE

Contact Details

Provide your email address and phone number, including the international and area code. Your email address is our primary means of contact and should belong to the project leader. Provide an alternative email, if available.

Social Media Links

List the social media accounts most relevant to the project. These could belong to the organisation, the project, or the project leader.

Known periods when the applicant will be unavailable

State any long periods when you will not be available between October 2025 and the end of the project (e.g. June 2027). Please bear in mind that if successful, we will need to be in close contact during the months leading up to the ceremony from February to May 2026. Please also bear in mind that you will be required to attend the ceremony week in person in London, UK in April/May 2026 and therefore must be available/able to travel during this time.

Organisation Details

Provide your organisation's name and (head) office address. Note that WFN does not fund government bodies or departments. If your organisation is headquartered in a high-income country then we are unlikely to shortlist your application unless you can clearly demonstrate need for funding and why local NGOs are unable to access funding themselves.

Age of Project

We do not fund start-up projects that cannot evidence previous success and experience managing funds. However, projects may be new (or managed through new NGOs) that build on earlier work or experience if this can clearly be shown.

Personal Summary

Provide your personal details. You must be a **national** of the country where your conservation activities are primarily focused (i.e. you were born there or have lived there a long time and have achieved national status). If you are not a national but think you have an exceptional case based on long term residency (15+ years) and a demonstratable commitment to that country/region then please contact WFN.

List all the languages you speak and write in and your level of fluency. Note that you must be able to communicate in English to be eligible for the grant as, if successful, you will need to make an acceptance speech in English (see the recording of the last Whitley Award ceremony to give you an idea of what this entails), as well as speak to donors and interested media about your project and participate in training while in London.

Under education, please give details of your highest qualifications. Note that we welcome all applicants independent of their level of formal education as long as they are able to demonstrate their experience in the field.

How did you hear applications were open for the Whitley Awards?

Please select all relevant options and provide a concise explanation and/or names of the source. This helps us learn how people find out about WFN and the Whitley Awards.

Have you previously applied to the Whitley Awards?

If you have previously applied, tell us the year of application, project title, brief overview and any feedback from WFN.

Have you previously received funds?

WFN and the listed organisations are entirely separate organisations. However, we do maintain close links with those listed and are therefore interested to know if you have been funded previously by any of these organisations.

4. PERSONAL STATEMENT

Personal Statement

In no **more than 200 words**, provide a personal statement including what winning a Whitley Award would mean to you. Describe how the award would impact your conservation work and career. We are looking for passionate conservation leaders who are embedded within the local community and inspire others. This is your opportunity to provide insight into what distinguishes you as a conservationist and to show your personality.

List the top 4 achievements relating to this project so far

We are looking for the headline news about this project. Using 4 bullet points, summarise the top achievements and project milestones you have achieved to date. Keep your answer concise and to the point. Include in the answer, your role in achieving these and details of any local, national or international bodies you worked with. Do not include achievements that are not relevant to this project or achievements that you were not involved in. Do not include awards or funding here (we ask about this below).

Conservation Leadership Experience

Use 3-5 bullet points and a maximum of 200 works to summarise your experience as a team leader. Include details of teams or projects you have managed in the past. Give examples that are relevant and show you are a suitable leader for your proposed project.

Explain what your leadership style is and how you hope to grow your leadership skills in the future.

Key Publications

List 4 of your most recent or most relevant publications or articles about your project. Include website links where appropriate.

We accept peer-reviewed literature, book chapters, publications such as project strategies or species management plans, and articles that you have published.

We do not want a full copy and paste of your publications list. Do not include pieces that are not relevant to this project.

Notable Awards

If applicable, list any awards given to you in recognition of your work.

Profile Boost

The Whitley Award is both a monetary and a profile prize. In **no more than 200 words**, if you were to receive a Whitley Award, how would you use the associated boost in profile to benefit you and your work?

Detail how you would capitalise on the media surrounding the award, this may be launching a particular behaviour change campaign, getting local media coverage to support your work, gaining access local or national governments or increasing your fundraising by targeting new/existing donors.

Provide the types of communication and media coverage that would be most useful to you and your project. List any publications you'd like to target or social media campaigns WFN could support on if successful.

Having strong ideas here will demonstrate how you plan to fully utilise winning a Whitley Award.

5. PROJECT DETAILS

Executive Summary

In **no more than 300 words**, summarise your project and what you hope to achieve in terms of impact over 1 year. Detail what will change as a result of this project, the threat(s) you are addressing and the key actions you will take to address these.

Location/Site

Give the countries/region and the name of your project site

State the area of influence of your project in hectares or kilometres squared.

Give a brief description of your site, where in the country it is based and any relevant geographical details. Include at least one map depicting the local, regional and national location(s) to illustrate your project area(s).

Project Background

In **no more than 400 words** please cover the following points to set the scene:
   a. The **background** or **context** of the problem you are trying to solve

b. The **threats** the species or landscape is facing. Which ones will be addressed in this project? How did you prioritise threats and why are you addressing these? Which threats fall beyond the scope of this project? Are any threats being tackled by other organisations in the area?

c. Why the proposed work is **urgent** and/or **important**

d. Details of any other **issue(s)** your project is addressing, e.g. social, economic, political

e. **Scope** of your project, who and what the project intends to affect

f. What is the **socio-political context** of your work. Summarise the social and political issues the project needs to navigate and how will you deal with gender specific issues if relevant.

Project Vision

In **no more than 100 words**, what is your **vision** for the project in the longer term?

Your vision statement should encompass all project activities, should be inspirational in the desired change and brief. It should fit within the context of your organisations overall mission.

It is a description of the desired state or ultimate condition that you are working to achieve. Think about where do you see the project in 5-10 years? What will your involvement be? How do you want the work to scale and how will you get there?

Objectives

Use numbered points to state 3-5 **objectives** of the project. Objectives are specific statements set out to achieve the project aims with measurable outcomes.

They should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented and Time-limited). Include information on current baseline data if you have it.

We recommend having no more than 5 objectives and they should be realistic for the size of the project and its duration, i.e. what can you realistically achieve in 1 year.

Copy your objectives into the lograme template (see guidance below)

Some examples of good SMART objectives:

(1) To increase Egyptian vulture breeding in Egypt National Park by 20%, from 25 to 30 pairs in 6 months

(2) To deploy bycatch-safe fishing gear for 200 fishermen in 10 communities in 5 months during the fishing season (January to May)

(3) To reduce human-elephant conflict in the project area by 10%, from 100 reported incidents to 90 in one year

Activities

List the main **activities** linked to each objective in the previous question.

Number each activity so it is linked back to the relevant objective. e.g. activity 1.1. is linked to objective 1, activity 2.1. is linked to objective 2, etc.

Aim for no more than 2-4 activities per objective.

Copy these activities into the logframe template (see guidance below).

Intended Results

In **no more than 250 words**, explain what you hope will be achieved by the end of the project.

What is the desired state of the target species and/or threat/issue you are tackling at the end of the project? What is the change you expect to have caused because of the project (e.g. population trends, change in behaviour, etc.)?

E.*g. if your objective is to increase breeding success, then your intended result may be that the population of this species increases by X%. If you deploy fishing safe gear to fishers, then your intended result will be for fish stocks to remain stable. If you aim to reduce number of human-wildlife conflict incidents, then your intended result may be for retaliatory killings to decrease.*

Also think about the desired state in the long-term. Think about how you will know if your vision has been achieved. Does your project have the potential to scale these results and if so, how?

Conservation Target(s)

a. List your **conservation target** - the focal species/ecosystem for the project. You can list more than one. For species, please give the common and Latin names and their current IUCN Red List status.

b. List any other species benefiting from this work if applicable.

Stakeholders

In no **more than 200 words**, describe your relationship with local stakeholders and beneficiaries with whom you work. Include how local people have been/will be involved at each part of the project design and implementation stage. Please quantify the number of people/groups involved by stakeholder type e.g. 200 fishers, 3 classes of 30 children.

Work involving and benefitting the local community and stakeholders is essential. We seek grassroots conservationists who are embedded in and/or from the communities where they work.

Include steps your project will take to promote gender equality and social inclusion. How will you ensure women, girls and disadvantaged groups have an opportunity to be involved in the project.

Evidence of Success

What makes you confident the proposed activities will succeed in achieving the desired project outcomes? Please provide evidence that the proposed work will be effective, drawing from your experience to date, peer-reviewed publications, grey literature and relevant examples from other projects have been successful in the past (e.g. scientific methods, publications, examples of similar projects).

Before starting a project, we advise you review the available evidence to inform project design and monitoring. We recommend you refer to Conservation Evidence (https://www.conservationevidence.com/) whenever possible to cross check examples of conservation interventions and their effectiveness.

WFN encourages the sharing of results both positive and negative.

Theory of Change

If you have a pre-existing **theory of change** (ToC) you should upload it here. It can be expressed in text or diagrammatic forms. You may also know it as a results chain.

Although this is not a requirement, a theory of change will help assessors see the logical steps from activities to impact and the assumptions that underly the project.

If you do not have a pre-existing ToC, then you will be expected to design one at the start of your project if your application is successful. Support will be provided by WFN if required. For further details, see http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/toc-background/.

Logical Framework

Detail your expected results, objectives and activities over a period of 12 months and how you will monitor progress in a logical framework through set **indicators**. Please copy the vision, intended results, objectives and activities from the main application into the template provided. Then complete your indicators at the activity and results level, followed by the risks and assumptions you've made, and how you will mitigate against these.

There is an example logframe in **Appendix 1** for guidance.

Shall your project be successful, the logframe will be used to monitor your progress.

Timeline

The Whitley Award is a **1 year grant**, usually covering the period June-May. Grants can start later than June if there is likely to be a delay to the start of the project (e.g. due to getting permits). If this is the case, please amend the months as needed. Projects should start no later than 2 months after being awarded.

Provide a concise timeline over 12 months to give an indication of when the outputs and activities outlined in your methodology and logframe will be expected during the year. Successful applicants will receive funding in June following the year of application (i.e. June 2024). All applicants will need to report at both 6 and 12 months.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Please demonstrate an evidence-based approach - what methods and **indicators** will you use to monitor and evaluate the impact of your project as you progress? These could be quantitative or qualitative measures of success. You should reference the indicators in your logical framework.

Project Sustainability

In **no more than 300 words**, please explain what has been done to integrate a long-term plan into project design. How will you ensure future project finance and how will you diversify leadership so that the project does not depend on one person?

Applications which give evidence that there has been work towards or around an exit strategy to enable the project to become self-supporting or sustainable over time will be favoured. We aim to fund projects that will continue after the end of Whitley Award funding, rather than projects which are likely to fail after 1 year. Some examples include

evidence of future funding approaches, work to empower local people to continue the project beyond your organisations involvement or local policy changes for conservation.

What will be the legacy in terms of conservation (i.e. species, habitats, etc.) and the local communities you are working with? How will you ensure any data and results produced are accessible to others including local people and the wider general public? Will leadership be passed to local people? How are you ensuring local people have ownership of the project?

The Rufford Foundation produced the following guidance on how to design sustainable projects and programmes:

ICCB-2023-sustainability-training-report.pdf (conservationleadershipprogramme.org)

6. OPERATIONAL INFORMATION & CONTEXT

Team Members

Using the table, give details of who will be working with you (including name, age, gender, nationality and role) and explain what experience they bring (e.g. qualifications, knowledge, skills). Make it clear who will be full or time-part on this project and how many hours on average across the whole year each team member will spend on this project.

You do not need to provide CVs.

You should **include yourself** on this list and provide details of your own contribution.

Safeguarding Policy

If your organisation has a pre-existing **safeguarding** policy, please upload it.

Safeguarding relates to preventing harm and abuse of human rights of all individuals involved in your work. A safeguarding policy protects the health, well-being and rights of individuals, particularly vulnerable groups and is a separate issue from health & safety of the team. Given that many of you work with communities, park rangers, women, children and vulnerable groups, we expect safeguarding procedures are put in place which your staff are aware of and act in accordance with. These measures cover all forms of harm (physical or mental abuse), neglect and exploitation. WFN acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse, and will work to protect and prevent the abuse of vulnerable individuals.

If you do not have a pre-existing safeguarding policy, then you will be expected to send us a safeguarding policy or develop one prior to your project starting. We can share WFN's policies as a reference and can provide advice on developing one. For more advice on safeguarding including a template you can use, please visit: https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/safeguarding-policy-templates/

Collaborations

List your links with other organisations/NGOs/universities/government departments that will be critical to your project's success and how they are contributing to the project (i.e. specify funding, knowledge sharing, resource sharing etc.). Indicate if the relationship is already active or proposed, formal (with an MOU signed) or informal, giving brief details.

Referee Statements

Three (3) referee statements are required for each application and the deadline for the receipt of all three reference letters is midnight GMT on 31st October 2025.

Who can act as References

- References must be wholly objective and cannot be from team members, members of your organisation, or from those in a position to benefit in any way from your application being successful.

- Two (2) of the references must be from within the country where you are working (ideally one local, one national). The third should be from an international referee who can provide context as to why your project work is important at a wider level.

- At least two (2) of the referees must be able to provide expert opinion on the science, practical and technical aspects of your application.

- No two (2) referees should be based at the same institution.

Completing the Reference Section

Please consult your referees before entering their contact information.

Please enter the contact information for each reference, an institutional email is preferred.

All referees must have been sent a copy of your application so they can make an informed judgement.

Once you enter an email address and you have saved the application, an email will be automatically sent to the recipient with instructions on how to submit their referee statements online.

You will not be able to read the reference letters submitted, but you can follow the process by following the status that is reported underneath each referee names in the table (i.e. when an email to your referee has been sent; when a referee has provided their statement).

If you need to change a referee, enter the new information in the table and a new email will be automatically sent. Note that we are unable to retract emails so please consult your referees before entering their contact details.

We **will not** chase referees. It is your responsibility to ensure referees complete references by the stated deadline.

You may wish to send them this guidance document and point them to the **Guidance for Referees** section (below).

Application Support

All applicants should indicate if they had assistance in developing the proposal and if so, indicate what type of assistance and who was involved. If you used any generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, CoPilot or Claude then please detail what software you used, for what purpose and how you have ensured that any AI generated content has been adapted to your project. Although AI tools can be a helpful tool to conservationists,

caution should be taken when using AI generated ideas or content. Failure to list the support you received constitutes a breach of the application declaration and will result in your application being rejected.

7. MEDIA

Photographs

Please upload 10 high-quality photographs in support of your application (**JPEG** preferred).

The first photo must be a **headshot of yourself** (including head and shoulders) and the others should depict your work, project area/ habitat and if relevant, the species/s your work affects. If possible, photos should be of you and your team active in your natural working environment.

Each photo should be saved using the format "[last name]WA26_[photo #] [caption] [©photo credit, if needed]".

e.g. "SuwalWA26_1 Chicks laying eggs ©Hernandez" or "SuwalWA26_2 Stakeholder Meeting"

Note on additional footage and photos

The Whitley Awards are a media and profile prize in addition to a grant. If you are selected as a finalist, you will be asked to submit high-quality video footage and additional high-quality images for use in producing a short film highlighting you and your work. Please visit the winners section of the WFN website (www.whitleyaward.org/winners/) to view examples of previous finalist films.

If you progress through the initial screen, you will be asked to give brief details of the amount and quality of footage and other media you have available or could access that can be used for these purposes.

8. FINANCE

This section is one of the most vital parts of your application. Please ensure you:

- Provide enough information so that we can fully understand your application whilst keeping it simple.
- All figures in budgets need to be provided in the local currency and in £ (GBP) using a set exchange rate.
- Ensure that supporting documents are clearly titled.
- Word/PDF documents are acceptable.
- Save each file using the format "[last name]WA26-[NGO]_[type of document][year]"
  e.g. "SuwalWA25-IPE_Audit Report 2023" or "SuwalWA25-IPE_Registration Certificate"

Financial Summary

State the last full financial year, local currency and the date of the exchange rate used in the top table. Then state the total income and expenditure of your organisation in the last financial year (FY). This will give us an indication of the size of the organisation. This information should be taken directly from the latest financial statements/accounts (uploaded below).

You need to provide the following attachments as part of your application. If the number of files exceeds the limit, please attach the rest of the documents under Section 9 "Additional Information":

Organisation's founding documents *(e.g. constitution, registration certificate)*

Provide a scanned copy of the founding documents for your organisation as a separate attachment. If these are in another language, please provide an English translation if available.

Registration certificate

This is issued by an authority by which your organisation is regulated.

FCRA Registration (India ONLY)

State your FCRA registration certificate number. Note that your project will not be accepted if you do not already have an FCRA certificate as this hinders our ability to transfer funds.

Financial Governance

a) Latest audited financial statements/accounts

Please submit your organisation's latest audited accounts from the last financial year. It is important that the recipient of a WFN grant can demonstrate that the organisation to which the funds are paid to is financially viable and has appropriate financial controls to ensure that the funds are properly managed. This can be provided in one or multiple documents, but it must include:

    a) Income and expenditure statement

    b) Balance sheet

    c) Audit statement/report signed by an independent external auditor.

You should submit the latest audited accounts available. You must include copies **with values converted to £ GBP**, giving the rate of exchange and date used as well as a translation of the **audit statement in English, if available**.

If you **do not have audited accounts**, you need to include an explanation below (b) of why your accounts are not externally scrutinised.

b) Explanation of Financial Controls

Only complete this question if audited accounts are not available. Provide a description of how the financial affairs of your organisation are managed. In particular,

describe the internal financial controls used to ensure that the grant will be disbursed only for the project to which it applies and in accordance with the project's objectives.

Project Budget

Provide the proposed budget on how you will use the Whitley Award **using the Excel template provided**. Please refer to the Guidance tab in this document.

Provide a budget for the period of 12 months (e.g. June 2026–May 2027), itemised by the objectives and activities as detailed in the application. Show how the Whitley Award of £50,000 would be spent over one year, how much expenditure will be assigned to each objective and explain why the items you have referred to in the budget are necessary to succeed.

Please do not edit the formula in the excel, except to add/remove rows as needed.

The statement should:

- Show WFNs contribution equalling £50,000.

- Identify your total expected project income for the 1 year covered by the Whitley Award period. Show all sources of confirmed income and planned expenditure per donor, indicating where sources of income have been applied for but not yet confirmed. Provide justification of any funding that is unsecured – where will you plan to raise this money and how likely is it to come in.

- Show how much of each type of cost is budgeted for each objective and activity (as defined in the application).

- Identify your planned expenditure with appropriate level of detail, making it clear how much funding is budgeted to be spent on project activities (e.g. equipment, supplies, percentage of salaries, transport, research, training, etc.).

- Provide evidence of value for money. WFN funds practical conservation work, therefore, expensive vehicle expenditure and international travel are only funded if justified and never where they make up the majority of the budget. Salaries should generally not be more than a third of the budget, however we will consider higher proportions with justification and we support the payment of a 'Living Wage' wherever possible. We look for projects for which winning the award would make a substantial difference.

- Show what percentage of the overall project budget Whitley Award funding would be. Matched funding is desirable as it shows that you are not reliant on one funding source.

The budget must be broken down to **no more than £2,000 per line item**. If further breakdown is not possible, please provide an explanatory note in the 'Comments' section of budget. For salaries, please show the weekly/monthly rate as relevant.

Also provide a **historical budget** for this specific project. The assessors want to be able to see how your project has developed over the last year in order to assess your need for funds and to be able to predict how you would cope with increased funds. The historical budget should identify:

- Total project expenditure, with appropriate level of detail (e.g. make it clear how funding was used);

- Links with project activities and outcomes.

An example budget is provided in Appendix 2.

Fundraising

Using the table, give details of other applications for funding you have made recently for this project. Include all secured and pending funding, funding amount and the dates between which the funding will be spent.

All funding listed in this table should be included in the budget if it overlaps the Whitley Award project period.

Include the total secured amount and total pending amount in £ (GBP) sterling.

Do not include funding secured/pending for the organisation if it is not relevant to this project.

Delivery of Funds

Provide details of where funds will be delivered if your application is successful.

Include details of your organisation's **bank, bank address, account number** and **IBAN**.

Any costs that will be incurred in fund delivery needs to be included in your project budget (including overheads, tax and bank charges). Please note that if successful, we cannot make payments to personal bank accounts. We can only make payments to bank accounts in the name of the organisation listed in this application.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide any additional documents that you could not upload in previous sections. Include a brief description of what you have uploaded (e.g. additional financial documents).

10. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please confirm that you have attached all the documents on the checklist. Your application is considered incomplete otherwise.

☐ Logical framework & timeline

☐ Budget

☐ 10 photos (including headshot)

☐ NGO founding documents

☐ NGO registration certificate

☐ Financial statements

11. DECLARATION

Please read the statement and tick the box, if agreeable. Applicants should carefully read and then sign the declaration to complete their application.

GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

The deadline for the receipt of references is **midnight GMT on 31st October 2025**.

- References must be submitted in English on official letter-headed paper, signed by the referee and sent as a PDF file.

- References must be candid and contain honest views about the project (both good and bad). The assessors put great value on these references to provide context to the project.

- Once a referee's details have been entered into the form, they will receive an email request with further information (see sample email below) and a link to directly upload their referee statements.

- The applicant will not be able to read the reference, but they can see the progress by following the status that is reported underneath each referee names in the table (i.e. when an email to your referee has been sent; when a referee has provided their statement).

- We cannot chase referees. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure referees complete references by the stated deadline.

- If you have made changes to the statement after submission or have submitted the wrong document, please contact the WFN grants team at info@whitleyaward.org

- If for any reason you are locked out of the reference form before it is completed, contact the system administrator (wfn@eformsolutions.com) to re-activate your link.

SAMPLE EMAIL TO REFEREE

GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES - WHITLEY AWARDS 2026

The Whitley Fund for Nature's (WFN) Whitley Award is a major international nature conservation award. You have been chosen as a referee by the applicant below:

[applicant name]

It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with you and ensure there is sufficient time to complete the reference before the deadline. The applicant **MUST** provide you a full copy of the completed application form to assist you.

We would be grateful if you could give the judging panel your candid opinion about the applicant and their work, as well as their suitability for the award. Your reference will be one of the key factors the judging panel considers in their assessment.

Conflict of Interest. Please note that references must be wholly objective and cannot be from team members, members of the applicant's NGO/organisation and referees cannot be in a position to benefit in any way from the applicant's proposal being successful.

WFN Background. WFN is a UK-registered charity offering Whitley Awards and ongoing support to outstanding nature conservationists around the developing world. We locate and recognise **dynamic conservation leaders** and support projects founded on science,

community involvement and pragmatism. The charity offers funding, training and recognition to people who bring about change and champions passionate individuals who are committed to enabling long-lasting conservation benefits on the ground. Applicants are not restricted to qualified scientists but must be able to compile a written report to describe and quantify the success of their work with appropriate references. Applicants need to be able to communicate in English. We are looking for dynamic team players who will benefit from not only financial support, but media training and the international recognition associated with the Whitley Award. Undergraduate and school level expeditions are not eligible, nor are projects carried out in support of higher degrees. More information about the WFN and previous award and grant recipients may be found at www.whitleyaward.org.

Reference. Please write a reference giving your opinion about the pragmatic and long-lasting impact of the work in question; how the applicant is known to you; the applicant's ability to lead a team, deliver the project and communicate the results; the strength of the proposed activities and methodology; how the project will make a difference to nature conservation; and any other information that might help the Panel. Should the applicant succeed, they will receive a Whitley Award worth £50,000 GBP in funding. We would therefore also value your candid opinion about the applicant's ability to absorb and spend the level of funding they are seeking, with due responsibility.

Please also copy and complete the table below in your statement:

Applicant Name:	
Project Title:	
Referee Name:	
Referee Position:	

Reference Format. The reference must be sent as a signed letter, on official printed letterhead, in PDF format.

Submission. To submit, please click on the link below to access your reference form:

[*reference form link*]

You will be able to use this link to access your form until it has been completed and submitted. You can save your progress at any time and return at a later date. Upload your referee statement, provide any additional information in the textbox and press 'submit'. **If you have made changes to the statement after submission or have submitted the wrong document, please contact us.** If for any reason you are locked out of the reference form before it is completed, **contact the system administrator (wfn@eformsolutions.com) to re-activate your link**. An automated reminder email will be sent periodically until the form is submitted.

Deadline. Please submit your reference by **midnight GMT, 31st October 2025.** This is very important as the application may not be considered without the receipt of all references before the deadline. Note that the applicant can see your submission status in their application. **The applicant is informed of this deadline, and it is their responsibility to liaise with you to ensure there is sufficient time to complete the reference and it is <u>not</u> the responsibility of the Whitley Fund for Nature to ensure these deadlines are met.**

GLOSSARY

The following terms and definitions have been adapted from the Conservation Standards. For further guidance, visit https://conservationstandards.org/about/

Activity

Specific action(s) or set of tasks undertaken by project staff and/or partners to reach one or more objectives.

Conservation Target

An element of biodiversity (species, habitat, or ecological system) at a project site on which a project has chosen to focus. The target can be used to represent wider biodiversity of concern at the site (i.e. an umbrella or indicator species).

Indicator

A measurable entity related to a specific information need, such as the status of a target, change in a threat, progress toward an objective, or association between one or more variables. They should be:

- Measurable – Able to be recorded and analyzed in quantitative and qualitative terms
- Precise – Defined the same way by all people
- Consistent – Not changing over time so that it always measures the same thing
- Sensitive – Changes proportionately in response to the actual changes in the condition being measured

Objective

A formal statement detailing a desired outcome of a project. Good and objectives should meet the following SMART criteria:

- Specific – Clearly defined so that all people involved in the project have the same understanding of what the terms in the goal or objective mean
- Measurable – Definable in relation to some standard scale (numbers, percentage, fractions, or all/nothing states)
- Achievable – Practical and appropriate within the context of the project site, and in light of the political, social, and financial context (especially relevant to objectives, goals may be more aspirational)
- Results-Oriented – Represents necessary changes in target condition, threat reduction, and/or other key expected results
- Time Limited – Achievable within a specific period of time, generally 1-10 years for an objective and 10-20 years for a goal

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. In the context of your organisation and your project, safeguarding is preventing harm and abuse of human rights of all individuals who come into contact with you, your team or your work. This includes project beneficiaries and the general public. Safeguarding is a separate issue from the health and safety of you and your team.

Scope

What your project intends to affect. There are three common options:
- Place-based: projects with a geographical focus, e.g. ecoregions, ecosystems, priority areas, protected areas, species ranges.
- Target-based: projects which focus on a specific species or ecosystem.
- Thematic-based: projects that focus their efforts to address specific threats, opportunities or enabling conditions.

Theory of Change

A theory of change (ToC) is an explanation of why and how a project or programme can be expected to achieve its results. It illustrates the sequence of change between activities and results. A ToC explains the underlying assumptions for these causal relations, revealing any implicit aspects critical for the project's results achievement. The theory of change should be supported by existing knowledge, such as research, evaluations, previous experience or other documentation. There should be close alignment between the expected results formulated in the results framework and the change process described (i.e. how project outputs will lead to the intended project outcomes).

Threat

A human activity that directly or indirectly degrades one or more targets. Typically tied to one or more stakeholders. Threats can be direct where human actions immediately degrade one or more conservation targets, or can be an indirect factor that is diving direct threats.

Vision

A general statement of the desired state or ultimate condition that a project is working to achieve. Vision statements should be:
- Relatively General – Broadly defined to encompass all project activities
- Visionary – Inspirational in outlining the desired change in the state of the targets toward which the project is working
- Brief – Simple and succinct so that that all project participants can remember it

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLE LOGFRAME AND TIMELINE

Logical Framework

Vision Statement:	*Snow leopard population has recovered across its whole range*		
Intended Results: *To decrease poaching of the snow leopard and update its status through obtaining improved knowledge and protection of the species; awareness raising and training of local communities in the Himalayan National Park.*			
Activities *(what you will do to achieve the objectives)*	**Activity Indicators** *(measurable indicators demonstrating that your activity is impactful)*	**Outcome Indicators** *(measurable indicators demonstrating that the activity results in impactful outcomes)*	**Risks and Assumptions** *(include plans on how you will overcome them)*
Objective 1: *To identify the home range of the snow leopard.*			
1.1 Analyse existing information and collect data on snow leopard movements	1.1.1 Conduct 4 surveys in potential key snow leopard habitats 1.1.2 Range maps produced and 2 priority habitats selected	*Home range identified and used to inform species and land management and protection practices in key sites* *Poaching incidents decrease from XX to XX p.a.*	*Assume the current habitats identified are key snow leopard habitats and that data will be collected in these areas.*
1.2 Map selected habitats	1.2.1 GIS maps developed		
Objective 2: *To create the next generation of conservation leaders by training 10 professionals from all 30 local communities surrounding Himalayan National Park*			
2.1 Develop a selection process	2.1.1 Selection process developed and shared	*Greater capacity for conservation via a cadre of trained nationals actively participating in research and conservation within the Himalayan National Park*	*Lack of suitable candidates: this will be overcome by building relationships with relevant universities. 3 students have already expressed an interest.*
2.2 Identify and hire 10 future leaders	2.2.1 Set up 3 interviews, agreements signed to hire 10 top candidates		
2.3 Conduct training	2.3.1 Conduct 4 training sessions to provide research and community		

| | conservation skills and skills tested after 3 month interval

2.3.2 Future leaders start participating in 5-year conservation programme | IUCN reclassification of the species from Vulnerable to Endangered | |
|---|---|---|---|

Timeline

Activities	Year 1											
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Objective 1: *To identify the home range of the snow leopard.*												
1.1 Analyse existing information and collect data on snow leopard movements	X			X			X			X		
1.2 Map selected habitats											X	X

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE BUDGET

The below is an example budget. All figures are fictional. Do not reproduce.

Name:	**Budget Example**
Project Title:	Recovery of snow leopard population in India
Organisation:	
Local Currency:	Indian Rupees
Exchange rate:	100.92 = 1GBP
Date of exchange rate	01 October 2023

Objectives	Budget Categories	Local Currency						GBP						Detailed Explanation and Justification
		Historical Expenditure (in last FY)	Funding Request					Historical Expenditure (in last FY)	Funding Request					
			WFN	Secured Funding	Applications pending	Funding to be Sourced	Total		WFN	Secured Funding	Applications pending	Funding to be Sourced	Total	
Objective 1: To identify the home range of the snow leopard.														
1.1 Analyse existing information and collect data on snow leopard movements	Programme assistants at headquarters x2	175,000	175,000	175,000	-	-	350,000	1734	1734	1,734	-	-	3,468	145 GBP per month Secured costs for one assistant. Increase to two for duration of project
	Local staff for community	45000	45,000	-	-	-	45,000	445	445	-	-	-	445	1 per site; GBP 45 per month, 10 sites
	Training for staff on data collection and analysis	0	300,000	-	-	-	300,000	0	2,972	-	-	-	2,972	Training with community conservationists at 300 GBP per person (10)
	Field costs	330000	660,000	-	330,000	-	990,000	3269	6,539	-	3,269	-	9,809	Fuel 200 GBP & food 100 GBP per month. Equipment 300 GBP per site. Pending application for 5 sites, WFN to fund field work in 10 sites.
1.2 Map selected habitats	Mapping software	0	120,000	-	60,000.00	-	180,000	0	1,189	-	594	-	1,783	100 GBP per month. Pending application to cover 50%
	Consultant GIS specialist	0	500,000	-	-	-	500,000	0	4,954	-	-	-	4,954	Consultant specialist costs estimated at approx 5,000 GBP to map 15 sites

Activity	Item													Notes
	3 Local and national government workshops	0	400,000	300,000	-	-	700,000	0	3,963	2,972	-	-	6,936	Venue hire 2,000 GBP per workshop and implementation 1,000 GBP. Secured 3,000 GBP
Total Objective 1:			2200000	475,000	390,000	-	3065000	5,449	21,799	4,706	3,864	-	30,370	
Objective 2: To create the next generation of conservation leaders by training 10 professionals from all 30 local communities surrounding Himalayan National Park.														
2.1 Develop a selection process	Prgramme manager	80000	80,500	-	-	-	80,500	792	797	-	-	-	797	200 GBP per month for 4 months
2.2 Identify and hire 10 future leaders	Prgramme manager	160000	160,500	-	-	-	160,500	1585	1,590	-	-	-	1,590	200 GBP per month for 8 months
	Community Officers x5	240000	396,000	240,000.00	-	-	636,000	2378.12 1284	3,923	2,378	-	-	6,302	5 community officers at 100 GBP per month
	Communications materials	0	61,500	-	-	-	61,500	0	609	-	-	-	609	Graphic designer c. 400 GBP, printed materials c. 200 GBP
	Outreach and meetings at 30 communities	0	330,000	-	300,00	-	630,000	0	3,269	-	2,972	-	6,242	50% in pending application. Events are 200 GBP per community (30 communities)
2.3 Conduct training	Workshop trainers x2	0	40,500	-	-	-	40,500	0	401	-	-	-	401	400 GBP per month for 1 month
	Workshop costs	0	300,000	-	-	-	300,000	0	2,972	-	-	-	2,972	Venue hire 2,000 GBP, catering for 15 people for 2 weeks 1,000 GBP
	Production of training materials	0	175,000	-	-	-	175,000	0	1,734	-	-	-	1,734	
	Travel costs	0	82,500.00	-	-	-	82,500	0	817	-	-	-	817.48	50 GBP per attendee.
	Total Objective 2:		1626500	240,000	300,000	-	1609000	4,756	16,116	2,378	2,972	-	15,943	
Sub-total		3826500	715,000	690000	-	4674000	10206	37,916	7084	6837	0	46313		
Contingency		200,000	-	-	-	200,000	0	1981	0	0	0	1981		
	TOTAL		4026500	715,000	690,000	-	4874000	10,206	39,897	7,084	6,837	-	48,295	

WFN as % of Total	83%
Funding to be Secured	14%