

DPLR2\1037

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Jessica Magnus

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00058

Q1. Project Title

Fire Contingency Planning for Offshore Islands

Overseas Territory(ies)

Falkland Islands (FI)

Lead Organisation or Individual

Falklands Conservation

Partner Organisation(s)

Sally Poncet (Conservation Landowner & Island LandCare) Antarctic Research Trust (Conservation landowner & Charity)

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

██████████

Project Start Date

02 October 2023

Project End Date

29 March 2024

Project Leader Name

Glenn Welch

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

No Response

Report Author(s)

Report Date

30 April 2024

Project Summary

The project will aim to put in place a cooperative, land-owner fire contingency plan for the critically important outer islands in the Falkland Islands by purchasing recommended fire fighting equipment and providing training on basic fire fighting for conservation landowners.

Project Outcomes

Checked **Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;**

Checked **Climate Change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;**

Checked **Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment;**

Checked **Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.**

Section 2 - Project Outcomes (Essential)

On a scale of 1 (high – outcome substantially exceeded) to 5 (low – outcome substantially did not meet expectation), how successful do you think your project has been?

3 - Outcome met expectation

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

Prior to the project Falklands Conservation had only very limited capacity to tackle potential wildfires on any of its 25 island reserves. Wildfire in the Falklands can be particularly devastating due to the underlying peat soils which are themselves flammable and can burn underground for many months leading to the total loss of not just the surface vegetation, habitats and biodiversity but also the stores of peatland carbon that have accumulated over 10,000 years. From a healthy habitat sequestering carbon fire can turn an island into significant carbon emission as peatland is turned to carbon dioxide and ash exacerbating global climate change. Mobile hand-deployable fire-fighting equipment has been purchased that will equip and allow two separate 5-person teams to be rapidly deployed around the Islands as required. Working in partnership with other island owners and conservation land-managers this centrally held equipment store will be available to all as required. The project partners alone manage 52 separate island sites. Having equipment ready so that it can be dispatched immediately is critical to effective fire response. Rapid response in the initial stages is essential to

containing any fire across a manageable front before it spreads. This lighter mobile kit is highly flexible and can be deployed by foot, vehicle, plane, boat or landing zodiac to any site as required.

Heavier vehicle-deployable fire-fighting equipment, including a mountable fire-fogging system, has been purchased for New Island that previously had limited fire-fighting equipment. New Island is an Important Bird Area, Key Biodiversity Area and National Nature Reserve, and at 2,400 hectares is the largest island owned by Falklands Conservation as a nature reserve.

The fire-fighting equipment is still in-transit but all liaison and planning has been completed and when it arrives it will immediately change how we are able to tackle small fires on our remote islands.


Six staff and partners were able to receive fire training, over three LANTRA approved vegetation wildfire modules. The newly gained capacity was able to be applied when called upon to respond to a fire on Bird island. Fire response contingency plans have been produced for all of Falkland Conservation's island sites and several additional privately owned islands. These highlight the notable features on the site with respect to fire response, infrastructure & equipment available, and conservation priorities. By having this already considered and available in one place such plans will streamline and fast-track response. They have also identified gaps which will be the focus of future action to improve contingency planning.


Close collaboration between partners, stakeholders and other Darwin and DEFRA funded schemes was conducted. The equipment was sourced in consultation with the Falkland Islands Fire and Rescue Service (FIFRS), UK fire trainers and suppliers in the UK.


Whilst it may still not be possible to tackle all fires the equipment and plans have removed several road-blocks to action and improved the chances of success to protect native habitats and peatlands from loss. Combatting loss is more effective than lengthy and expensive restoration (when this is even possible).

Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload


 [FC Fire Contingency Data Tables Maps App1](#)


 30/04/2024


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 pdf 3.07 MB

 [FC Fire Contingency Plan Draft1](#)

 30/04/2024

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 pdf 719.47 KB

Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

Supporting evidence is limited as most of the equipment is still in transit by sea-freight. Photographic evidence of the equipment as soon as it is deployed on site can be provided at a later date to advertise the increase in capacity.

Project Challenges

This was a one-time opportunity to purchase capital equipment that should last for the next 20 years so it was essential that the correct fire-fighting equipment was obtained. Whilst consultation was anticipated, liaising with different organizations in different countries (FIFRS and several UK suppliers and trainers) to come to an agreed equipment list within budget took longer than anticipated. Furthermore, fire-fighting equipment is often manufactured to order by small specialist companies, thus the delay between order placement and the equipment being ready for dispatched was also longer than expected and added to the extended sea-freight delivery times to the Falkland Islands. The cumulative result is that although all equipment is now in transit none has yet been received at final destination in the Falklands.

In terms of training we had planned that the FIFRS would deliver this locally once they themselves had receive training in how to deliver the LANTRA approved "Vegetation Fire Foundation" and "Vegetation Fire Operator" courses. Unfortunately, their training in how to deliver the courses was not completed last year.

A number of our staff were able to attend training courses during a DEFRA funded visit by Forestry Commission staff but this was not possible for all staff. It is still intended that remaining staff will receive at least informal foundation level training from the Falkland Islands Fire and Rescue Service in due course.

Lessons Learned

Training now overlaps with stand-alone DEFRA and separate Darwin Local funding that has allowed UK trainers to provide LANTRA wildfire-training in the Falklands. The importance and utility of this training cannot be overstated. It is highly useful and has already been put into practice by staff when attending fires on Bird Island and Sea Lion Island. This replaced the plan for local training by the FIFRS although to ensure continued local capacity it is hoped this will be possible in the future once they themselves are trained to deliver this. This does depend upon improved FIFRS training capacity even if it is informal training and not actually certified to LANTRA. Equipment is in transit and will make a real difference to fire response once it arrives. Communicating with multiple organizations for guidance and quotes for firefighting equipment to be ordered and shipped took longer than expected. Since one answer was often dependent upon another's response in a sequential chain there was limited opportunity to fast track this process without appearing unduly pushy to person providing their guidance for free. This is a balance and sufficient time should always be allowed as it is different from contracted or commercial services where greater pressure for timely delivery can be exerted.

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs	██████	██████	0	<i>No Response</i>
Consultancy Costs	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Overhead Costs	██████	██████	0	<i>No Response</i>
Travel and Subsistence	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Operating Costs	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Capital Items	██████	██████	███	<i>No Response</i>
Others	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Total	██████	██████	████	

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

Provisional quotes were received before the Darwin Local application was made to provide an approximate project budget. However, upon more in-depth consultation between partners and stakeholders the final order list was modified, and some additional equipment purchased. Whilst this largely fitted within the original budget the over-spend was met by Falklands Conservation from within core-funds as the project contributes towards improved contingency planning and management of our island reserves (as well as being available for the use of all conservation landowners).

The spend on capital items 2.9% higher than originally expected, the budget over-run of ██████ was been met by Falklands Conservation.

Additional freight charges once cargo is landed are still outstanding and will also require to be paid. Again, this will be met by Falklands Conservation.

Section 4 - Contribution of Project to Darwin Plus Programme Objectives

Please select up to **one** indicator that applies within **each group/indicator list (A, B, C, D)** and report your results for that indicator in the text box underneath. If you do not have relevant results to report for any of the indicators in a particular group, you can leave them blank.

Please also submit some form of evidence (above) to demonstrate any results you list below, where possible.

Group A: Capability and Capacity - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Checked	DPLUS-A01: Number of people from key national and local stakeholder groups completing structured and relevant training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A02: Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders.
Checked	DPLUS-A03: Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.
Checked	DPLUS-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A05: Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.

Group A Indicator Results

2 Organisations, FC (4) and Island LandCare (2) staff have received training in fire fighting. This increased capacity has already been utilised on Bird Island and Sea Lion Island by 2 personnel. Figures overlap with subsequent additional DEFRA & Darwin Local funding projects awarded through the FI Department of Agriculture.

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management- Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Checked	DPLUS-B01: Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed.
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Unchecked	DPLUS-B02: Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B03: Number of new/improved community management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B04: Number of new/improved sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B05: Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement).
Unchecked	DPLUS-B06: Number of Local Stakeholders and Local Communities (people) with strengthened (recognised/clarified) tenure and/or rights.

Group B Indicator Results

Fire contingency plans have been prepared for all FC sites (25) and for Hummock Island (1). These improve management and highlight key conservation habitats for priority action in case of wildfire.

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Checked	DPLUS-C01: Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C03: New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C04: New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C05: Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.

Group C Indicator Results

26 sites covered by fire contingency plans which may provide best practice guidance for other landowners and managers. This is however better considered within Group B management metrics if not to be double-counted.

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-D01 Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices.
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Checked **DPLUS-D02: Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.**

Unchecked **DPLUS-D03: Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended.**

Group D Indicator Results

6 members of staff from partner organisations have received training in fire fighting. Skills put to use when attending fire on Bird Island.

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

As the project partners will be involved in the deployment of equipment in case of fire it was essential that equipment matched everybody's needs. Project partners were involved in a full initial stock-take of resources and extant equipment held. This was to identify any specific gaps and needs between the various groups. Following this, discussions around what fire equipment would be needed, where it would be located/stored and how it would be deployed in the event of a fire were undertaken. Following this and with priorities aligned, agreement was reached quickly with partners on what equipment would be needed and how it should be shared without any real challenges.

FI Government were not directly involved in the project but were consulted. Liaison with the FIFRS occurred to ensure equipment was compatible (especially important in remote locations where spares may be limited and cross-compatibility is desirable) and followed FIFRS recommendations.

Training on fighting fires was put to good effect when FC staff attended a fire on Bird Island. In the future, when the equipment arrives, the firefighting equipment purchased will be used to help with instances such as this to ensure more rapid response, avoiding the delay to locate, collate and get permission to use 3rd party equipment.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

The project provided equipment and training to the equivalent of a local land-managers wildfire cooperative group that will allow land-mangers to act both independently and also assist national fire response. This, alongside ongoing wildfires that occurred this summer season, has brought wildfire to the forefront of attention.

There are many questions on how FIFRS, FIG and civil society can best respond to an increasing frequency of wildfires as the landscape dries and storm events increase due to climate change and how we should value the environment alongside life and property. The training has improved knowledge and equipped FC not only to better respond but also to better communicate with FIFRS and others using the correct terminology and understanding the risks, capacities and limitations of wildfire response. This allows FC to act as a more integrated stakeholder in lobbying for improved fire response in a system that better recognises the environmental importance of sites.

The training (whilst shared between projects) also brought together various stakeholders with FIG officers from FIFRS, Environment and Agriculture with better communication pathways and understanding in the process. This is will be valuable going forward as wildfire events are likely to increase.

Whilst difficult to place exact figures on this improved communication and capacity the improved communal working is a definite tangible benefit that will have an enduring impact.

Sustainability and Legacy

The main element of the project was the purchase of capital equipment to help fight island fires. The equipment purchased will be retained and used to combat island fires for many years to come. A plan for servicing, upkeep and storage in a climate controlled location is in place to ensure a long service life. This is incorporated within reserve management.

3 core staff with permanent residence (+1 project officer) have been trained in firefighting and this knowledge will therefore be retained and be used in years to come to assist in wildfire control.

Wildfire contingency plans have been prepared and will be reviewed and updated on a 5-year cycle to ensure all information and contacts contained are up-to-date. The project has allowed this main body of work to gather and collate information, make joint decisions and decide on strategy to be made such that review can now be fitted into core organisational activities of reserve management.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity

Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements

The Darwin Plus Local project has for the first time provided an independent wildfire capacity to conservation land-managers in the Falkland Islands. The project provided both equipment and training in its use to improve the opportunities for wildfire response in order to better protect the important peatland habitats and critical carbon stores that characterise the remaining ungrazed outer islands of the Falkland Islands.


The central depot of hand-portable equipment will be available for rapid deployment to where ever needed and can act both independently and in unison with national response.


The provision of equipment has gone hand in hand with training and the formulation of island fire contingency plans to increase the level of wildfire preparedness amongst conservation land-managers.


Photographic materials can be provided once the all the equipment arrives and is stacked upon its labelled storage shelving and / or deployed in the field.


Photo, video or graphic to be used for publicity and communications.

Please upload at least one relevant and engaging image, video or graphic that you consent to be used alongside the above text in Defra, JNCC or NIRAS communications material.

 [DPL00058-Fire-Contingency_Bird-Island-FireIMG_3698](#)

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Photo, video, and/or graphic captions and credits.

I think this would be best once the equipment is actually here and we can provide publicity with a picture of the equipment store arranged on metal shelving for rapid deployment and of equipment deployed in the field.

DPL00058-Fire-Contingency_Bird-Island-FireIMG_3698: A team of volunteers creating a fire break on Bird Island, an internationally recognised Important Bird Area, Key Biodiversity Area and National Nature Reserve, to prevent the spread of a peatland tussock fire around a mixed colony of Black-browed Albatrosses and Rockhopper Penguins included 2 team members that had received fire-training through the Darwin Plus Local "Fire Contingency Planning for Offshore Islands" project fund and using the same hand-tools that will be retained in a central store for future rapid deployment.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat, Administrator, and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Yes, I agree for the BCFs Secretariat and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Please list any accounts that you would like tagged in online posts here. This can include project pages, partners' pages or individuals' accounts for any of the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

It is not required to tag on any post, however Falklands Conservation are active on the following social media platforms.

<https://www.facebook.com/FalklandsConservation/>

https://twitter.com/FI_Conservation

<https://www.instagram.com/falklandsconservation/>

Section 7 - Darwin Plus Contacts

Please tick here to confirm that you have read and acknowledge the BCF's Privacy Notice on how contact details will be used and stored and that you have sought agreement from anyone that you are sharing personal details with us on their behalf.

I confirm I have read the Privacy Notice and have consent to share the following contact details

Project Contact Details

Project Contact Name	Glenn Welch
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Leader
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

Additional Project Contact Details

Project Contact Name	Grant Munro
Role within Darwin Project	Project Oversight
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
