

DPLR4\1062

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Tiffany Simpson

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00123

Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

☒ St Helena, Ascension, and Tristan de Cunha

Lead Organisation or Individual

Ascension Island Government Conservation and Fisheries Directorate

Partner Organisation(s)

n/a

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

£34,536.00

Project Start Date

01 October 2024

Project End Date

31 March 2025

Project Leader Name

Tiffany Simpson

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

<https://www.ascension.gov.ac/conservation/about-conservation>

Report Author(s)

Report Date

23 April 2025

Project Summary

No Response

Project Outcomes

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

Ⓐ 1 - Outcome substantially exceeded

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

As a direct result of this project, a huge volume of legacy litter has been removed from the Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension Island. This project funded the installation of a temporary road to access nine trucks which had been left to corrode in an area which was later designated to protect Ascension’s wildlife.

Removing this legacy waste will help to protect the wildlife of the Nature Reserve which includes an internationally important population of nesting sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) as well as critically endangered, endemic plants (*Euphorbia organoides*). These species were previously affected by the trucks through pollution of the local water table and from engine parts washing into the reserve, in which tern chicks were found trapped and perished. This will no longer be an issue for these species now the trucks are removed.


This project funded plant hire costs for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and their operators to build a temporary access road. The road was finalised in February 2025, fully achieving the objective of this project. In March 2025, island stakeholders at the United States Space Force (USSF) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) accessed the site


with a crane and other machinery, successfully removing the trucks off-site. The trucks are now in storage to be taken off-island on the next scheduled ship for final disposal in the UK through the MoD.


The completion of this project has facilitated the removal of the legacy litter by island stakeholders- thus achieving an outcome greater than the project itself. This project brought together the community to achieve a positive impact for Ascension's biodiversity. It also demonstrated an example of a successful project within the Sustainability and Environment objective of the Ascension Island One Island Vision strategy.


Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload


 [2025-081 - Road To Recovery.](#)


 23/04/2025


 14:44:03


 pdf 909.33 KB


 [The Road to Recovery final supporting documents](#)

 23/04/2025


 14:39:08

 docx 7.9 MB


 [20250423-AIB AIG Mars](#)


 23/04/2025


 14:38:34

 pdf 397.69 KB

 [MFR - Mars Bay Nature Reserve Cleanup - April 2025](#)

 23/04/2025

 14:38:32

 pdf 184.12 KB

Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

2025-081- Road to Recovery- a public notice issued by the Ascension Island Government to highlight this project, also available on the AIG website: <https://www.ascension.gov.ac/road-to-recovery>

The Road to Recovery final supporting documents- a number of photographs to show the project progress.

AIB_AIG_Mars pdf- a letter of support from the British Forces South Atlantic Islands to confirm they are in possession of the legacy litter and are committed to removing them off island on the next available ship. For internal project use only.

MFR- Mars Bay Nature Reserve Cleanup- a letter of support from the United States Space Force to highlight that they have completed their part of the removal of legacy litter as a result of this project. For internal project use only.

Project Challenges

The project ran very smoothly as all organisations involved had been engaged with for over one year prior to the works being conducted. All stakeholders were therefore prepared to play their role and there were no challenges faced.

The project relied on the skills and expertise of HGV operators who use these machines daily and are trained professionals. Upon completion, the operators were pleased with the works and noted that the project was relatively straight-forward.

Lessons Learned

The key element of the success of this project was engagement between the Ascension Island Government, USSF and MoD to work together to make a positive impact to protect Ascension's biodiversity. Discussions were

undertaken for several years and it was clear that the constraint to conduct the works was financial. The funding from this project therefore created a domino effect with the US and British militaries then contributing the staff time to complete the project.

As this project had been discussed at length, it was clear what steps would need to be taken to ensure its success. The skilled HGV operators made the project effortless and everything went to schedule with no glitches. There is nothing we would have done differently and would encourage others conducting similar projects to engage with all stakeholders to find a solution which includes a contribution from all organisations.

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative)	Total Grant (£)	Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs				
Consultancy Costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and Subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital Items				
Others				
Total	34,536.00	34,536.00	0	

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

The budget for this project was calculated on the hire of 7 specialist HGV operators for 22.5 hours per week for three weeks. These costs did not alter in the time-frame of the project application and project completion which were the same financial year and therefore there were no changes to staff salaries.

In addition, this project budgeted for the plant hire for eight HGVs including fuel costs. Again, the budget and actual expenditure was within the same financial year and consequently there was no fluctuations.

There was no co-financing secured for this project.

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)

Unchecked	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.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A03: Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.
Unchecked	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

n/a

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.
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

This project fulfilled action point 4b of the Wideawake Fairs Management Plan to remove legacy refuse on the Mars Bay Nature Reserve: <https://www.ascension.gov.ac/project/wideawake-fairs-management-plan-2023-2028>

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

Unchecked	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

n/a

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

Checked	DPLUS-D01 Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices.
Unchecked	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

The Mars Bay Nature Reserve is now free of legacy waste which was corroding onsite since the Falklands War, protecting an internationally important population of nesting seabirds and endangered, endemic plants.

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

This project can be split into three elements with three separate project partners contributing to its success:

- The Ascension Island Government (AIG) were responsible for building the access road funded by this project.
- The United States Space Force were responsible for the removal of the trucks off-site, using their crane and other plant equipment.
- The trucks were then placed in a storage facility owned by the Ministry of Defence who accepted responsibility to remove the trucks off-island for disposal.

The project was initiated by AIG Conservation and many discussions with the island stakeholders concluded that the largest expense was building the road and that this was not in the budgets of the local militaries or local government. During the project planning phase, engagement with both militaries involved discussions with a number of personnel at a range of levels to ensure everyone was consulted and in agreement to provide support.

This project was an excellent opportunity for the three organisations to work together, share resources on a small remote island and combined, remove legacy litter to protect Ascension's biodiversity. It provided the platform for discussions about resource sharing which can then be used for future island projects.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

This project drew attention to the legacy litter on Ascension Island and highlighted the environmental responsibilities of the local government and military organisations to make amends. The AIG Conservation department will continue to organise regular beach cleans and litter picks on the nature reserves for local volunteers to contribute to protecting Ascension's wildlife.

Organisations on Ascension are more conscientious about waste management and in recent years there has been significant movements into recycling and reducing the volume of waste generated. Several initiatives between island organisations has seen one party take responsibility for one type of waste disposal while a different organisation takes responsibility for something else which is becoming more common due to its cost effectiveness. This has not been written into policy but has become regular practice.

The AIG, FCDO, MOD and other partners have made a commitment within the Ascension Island One Island Vision strategy to jointly progress projects within four main objectives to secure long-term sustainability of Ascension. The Road to Recovery project was one of the first successful demonstrations of how this strategy can be implemented. This will be used as an example to ensure coordination and efficiency in future decision making.

Sustainability and Legacy

The continued legacy from this project is that the Nature Reserve has been returned to a safe haven for nesting seabirds and endangered plants, free from litter. Project staff will continue to manage the Nature Reserve and monitor the protected species as per the Wideawake Fairs Management Plan.

The temporary road will be left to wear with no long-term repairs now it has served its purpose. The road was made with local materials which will wear into the surrounding lava flows and will have no long-term adverse effect.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity





Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements





A number of large vehicles were placed around remote areas of Ascension Island prior to the Falklands War and used as target practice by the military. Some of these vehicles remain in-situ in an area which was later designated as a Nature Reserve to protect sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) which nest here in internationally important number.





A project was developed by the Ascension Island Government Conservation Directorate to remove this legacy waste in combination with the US and UK militaries. The Road to Recovery facilitated the development of a temporary road to allow a crane and other HGVs to access the legacy vehicles. The vehicles were removed by the US Space Force and the Ministry of Defence has disposed of them safely. This was a combined effort from the main employing organisations on Ascension and highlights the importance of working together to improve the island for the benefit of wildlife.





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.





 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(7\)](#)
 23/04/2025
 16:33:44
 jpg 10.59 MB





 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(8\)](#)
 23/04/2025
 16:33:35
 jpg 12.55 MB





 [Road to Recovery DPL00123 - legacy vehicles needed removed, Ascension - Rodger Shearer](#)
 23/04/2025
 16:33:18
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(2\)](#)
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(6\)](#)
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123 - legacy vehicles needed removed, Ascension -Rodger Shearer](#)
 23/04/2025
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(4\)](#)
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(5\)](#)
 23/04/2025
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(1\)](#)
 23/04/2025
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 [Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles being removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension - AIGCFD \(3\)](#)
 23/04/2025
 16:29:22
 jpg 2.85 MB

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

Filename: Road to Recovery DPL00123 – legacy vehicles needed removed, Ascension – Rodger Shearer (photo credits).

Info: Legacy vehicles rust in site on a Nature Reserve. A project was undertaken to remove the vehicles to make the reserve a safe haven for wildlife.

Filename: Road to Recovery DPL00123- legacy vehicles needed removed, Ascension – AIGCFD (photo credits)

Info: Legacy vehicles removed from the Mars Bay Nature Reserve, Ascension Island to provide a safe nesting site for sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) and to protect the local water table from pollution to allow the Critically Endangered Ascension spurge (*Euphorbia organoides*) to thrive.

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.

Facebook- Ascension Island Conservation, Ascension MPA
Instagram- Ascension MPA

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	Tiffany Simpson
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Lead
Email	
Phone	
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No