



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	DPLUS006
Project Title	Seed Conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories
Country(ies)	Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands
Lead Organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Collaborator(s)	Turks and Caicos Department of Environment and Maritime Affairs, National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands, Anguilla Department of Environment, Montserrat Department of Environment, Cayman Islands Department of Environment
Project Leader	<i>Thomas Heller</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website	<i>n/a</i>

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1:

Equipping for seed banking: freezers are now in place in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Montserrat, with only partners in the Turks and Caicos Islands yet to obtain one. This freezer and heat-sealers for four partners are the only items still to be bought. Though all equipment was timetabled to be in place by the end of the first year, this output should be completed within the next two months.

Species targeting data: Data has been compiled, and sent to partners in BVI, Montserrat, Anguilla, where existing capacity for species targeting has been the lowest. Data includes coordinates of priority species that have been observed in recent years, along with links to online resources for identification, such as photographs of target plants. This is in addition to the data available via the Kew UKOTs Online Herbarium, as previously reported.

Repatriation of seed collections: 19 collections with duplicate portions stored at the MSB have been repatriated to the Cayman Islands and banked at the Department of Environment there. With freezers now in place in BVI, Montserrat and Anguilla, repatriation of seed collections can continue, though this may be delayed a little further in the case of the Turks and Caicos Islands, until a freezer is in place.

Output 2:

Seed collecting and banking: The seed collecting programme has continued in partner countries, with about 58 seed collections having been made in the last six months: 20 collections from Montserrat, with 75% from priority species, including c.16 of species not previously represented in MSBP seed banks; 13 collections from Anguilla, mostly from priority species; 3 collections from BVI, awaiting identification; and 22 collections from Cayman. September saw a joint collecting expedition between Kew and staff of the Montserrat Department of Environment, which led to a good number of collections being made, including several high priority species and some new species records for Montserrat. Populations of

species for future collecting work were also identified.

August and September also saw preparations made for joint collecting work in BVI and Anguilla to take place in October 2014.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Space issues have led to a small delay in getting freezers in place with some partners, which has resulted in a delay in repatriating existing seed collections from the MSB. This has largely been resolved now, and it should be possible to resume repatriating collections. This will not have any impact on other project activities as it is independent of them.

Collecting in the Turks and Caicos Islands has been hindered by a hurricane and flooding as well as vehicle difficulties. These have now been resolved, and it is expected that collecting will now be able to take advantage of the expected peak in fruiting caused by the wet weather.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Kew is currently undergoing a full restructuring of the Science Directorate. Posts directly involved in the Darwin Plus funded project may be impacted. Senior management have stated that all project commitments will be honoured. If significant impacts are foreseen, LTS will be notified by Kew.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**