



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	DPLUS026
Project Title	British Virgin Islands MPA and hydrographic survey capacity building
Country(ies)	British Virgin Islands
Lead Organisation	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)
Collaborator(s)	United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPT)
Project Leader	Koen Vanstaen (Cefas)
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	31 st October 2014 HYR1
Project website	n/a; updates available on Twitter: @KVS1979

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).

In line with the project plan presented with the project application, the first 6 months of this project has seen a large amount of activity. Below progress is discussed in relation to the activities listed in our application form:

1. Project Steering Group and collaboration group established

The project leader and collaborators met in the British Virgin Islands during the first week of June. A project kick off meeting was held with over 20 marine stakeholders attending the event. One of the primary aims of the meeting was to identify the area to be surveyed during the summer. A large number of areas were proposed, including areas around Anegada as mentioned in the application form. After lots of discussion the group unanimously agreed on a survey area stretching from Road Harbour to Beef Island and across to Salt Island and Dead Chest Island. The area includes the RMS Rhone Marine Park, unsurveyed waters and communities of the Sir Francis Drake Channel, spawning and nursery grounds south of Beef Island, the approach to Paraquite Bay hurricane shelter for sailing yachts as well as the main approach to Road Harbour; thereby meeting interests of all stakeholders.

2. Knowledge transfer on bathymetric survey and post-processing methodology

During the June visit and July survey, NPT and Land Survey Department staff were actively involved in all survey aspects. NPT and Land survey staff assisted and gained knowledge on mobilising a vessel for bathymetric survey. NPT staff joined the survey vessel on a daily basis and gained insights into the acquisition and operation of surveys to international hydrographic standards. The survey was arranged to align with the availability of the NPT BSc student.

3. Data for improved navigational chart

Collecting new high resolution data to modern international standards was a major component of this project. All equipment was shipped from the UK to the BVI. Although there were some issues with shipping, delays were minimised thanks to experience of the project team to fabricate the missing item locally. The survey team arrived in the BVI on Friday 18th July and departed 6th August 2014. Despite Tropical Storm Bertha stopping survey operations for a few days, the team achieved all survey objectives, collecting data from the main priority areas as well as the second and third priority areas. Over 10 navigation warnings have already been issued as a result of the survey, where the new

survey data revealed dangers to mariners not previously shown on charts.

4. Knowledge transfer on analysis of acoustic and ground-truthing data to produce marine habitat maps

A habitat mapping workshop was originally planned at the very beginning of the project. This would have made use of data from UK waters. It was realised that it would be more beneficial for knowledge transfer purposes that local data are used. The workshop is therefore planned for early 2015 during a follow up visit.

5. GIS Database with environmental layers and maps of marine benthic habitats in shelf waters

The main activity over the last 6 months has been the completion of a video ground-truthing survey. Data from the hydrographic survey were reviewed and 68 sampling stations were distributed across the area to characterise the substrate and associated biological communities.

6. Knowledge of the distribution marine biodiversity at shelf depths (10 – 40m)

In line with the project plan, there has been no major activity related to this item during the last 6 months.

7. Training materials

To be provided following early 2015 workshop.

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.

1. Our project partner UKHO planned to make a member of staff available for the duration of the hydrographic survey. Unfortunately, between submission of the application and survey start, the member of staff changed role. As a result we sourced an external surveyor to avoid any delays to the project. Project co-lead David Parker (UKHO) oversaw the start of the survey to ensure quality of the setup. Good quality survey results were achieved and this change has had no impact on budget.
2. Shipping of equipment to BVI was delayed. Although DHL confirmed shipment would take just 5 days, one out of seven items only arrived after 13 days. This exceeded the 10 days we had allowed. The delay had knock on effects for the start of the survey. Therefore, we carried out emergency fabrication works locally at additional expense. We do not expect major impacts as cost is likely to be offset by savings elsewhere.
3. Tropical Storm Bertha passed through the Caribbean whilst undertaking the hydrographic survey. Survey operations were stopped for 3 days. Thanks to the long days and commitment of the entire (BVI+UK) survey team, all survey objectives were achieved at no additional cost.
4. During development of the application our BVI project partner assured the use of a BVI Government owned remotely operated vehicle which could be used for our planned video survey. On review of the equipment in June 2014, it proved the equipment was broken and unsuitable for the purpose of the survey. Therefore, equipment was flown in from the UK to avoid any impact on the project.
5. The NPT member of staff identified under Activity 4.3 (research exchange) has started a full time university course and is therefore unavailable for an exchange. We will explore opportunities during year 2 of the project.

None of the problems encountered to date will have an impact on the outputs, timeline or budget of the project.

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?

The project lead has taken on a new role within Cefas. We propose to change the internal project manager from Koen Vanstaen to another member of the project team. The current project leader will continue to oversee delivery of the project, without day-to-day management. A change request form will be requested once this change request is authorised internally in line with our ISO9001 project management procedures.

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.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**