



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development



Darwin Plus: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2015)

Project Ref No	DPLUS037
Project Title	Conserving the genetic diversity of St Helena's threatened endemic flora
Country(ies)	St Helena
Lead Organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Partner(s)	St Helena Government Environmental Management Division
Project Leader	Thomas Heller
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1 October 2015
Project website	n/a

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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) (max 500 words).

The first six months of the project have progressed well.

Output 1: Data on existing *ex-situ* collections at Kew and St Helena have been assembled in BRAHMS, including MSB accessions, Kew living collections data, EMD seed accessions. Some work to standardise these data remains to be completed, which will allow the gap analysis and collecting plans to be completed in Q3.

Output 2: Staff from St Helena (Vanessa Thomas and Lourens Malan) visited Kew and Wakehurst Place 24th September to 9th October, where they were able to spend time exchanging skills and ideas with Kew staff. This included visiting the Tropical Nursery at Kew, where collections of St Helena plants are cultivated, and the Jodrell Laboratory to discuss population genetics. At Wakehurst Place, Vanessa and Lourens worked with horticultural staff on plant propagation, as well as developing more advanced seed conservation skills at the Millennium Seed Bank. An introductory session on the flying of a DJI Phantom 3 quadcopter was also arranged with the supplier of the project's drone, Build Your Own Drone Ltd.

Arrangements for Kew staff to visit St Helena in early 2016 are underway, with travel bookings made. This will enable the provision of additional seed conservation and horticultural support by Kew staff in-country.

Almost all necessary equipment has been procured, including a seed aspirator, heat sealer and quadcopter drone. An oven is still on order. When this has arrived, the equipment will be shipped to St Helena.

Output 3: Planning seed collecting and field work to collect seeds for this project will begin once the gap analysis is complete (Output 1), though opportunities to make collections in the meantime will be taken where they present themselves.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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 (max 300 words).

The process of compiling collections data has proven to be a little more time consuming than previously anticipated, due to the wide differences in data standards from the different sources. Other than having the gap analysis ready later than previously planned, this should not have any knock-on impacts to the project timetable and budget.

Likewise, procuring equipment has taken a little longer to complete, due to the range of suppliers involved, including overseas suppliers. Again, while this means that equipping partners will be complete a little later than planned, no knock-on impacts are anticipated.

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 (e.g., 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?

None.

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 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g., Subject: DPLUSXXX Darwin Half Year Report**