



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	DPLUS052
Project Title	Mapping St Helena's Biodiversity and Natural Environment
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	St. Helena, South Atlantic Ocean
Lead Organisation	Environment and Natural Resources Directorate, St Helena Government
Partner(s)	Environment Systems, Aberystwyth University, South Atlantic Environment Research Institute
Project Leader	Derek Henry & Samantha Cherrett
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	28/10/16 HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	n/a
Funder (DFID/Defra)	Defra

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).

Since 1st April 2016, the project has progressed slower than anticipated; one major affecting factor has been the delay in the opening of the St Helena Airport for commercial flights; details of its affects are highlighted throughout this report. On 4th April, LTSI approved a 'slow start' change request to the project, followed later by a second change request (including amended budget) approved on 24th August; these were submitted because of the airport issues.

Some of the key activities over the first six months include;

- SHG IT procured two laptops (one new, one used) and installed relevant software. They additionally provided scanning hardware and software.
- The legal department dealt with the project team contracts and other MOUs .To date, only Environment Systems and Aberystwyth University have signed contracts as we are still awaiting a response from SAERI as the contract is with their legal department. The legal department also approved a formal letter to be sent to request access to private land during the ground truthing and soil sampling phases of the project.
- Procurement acquired various equipment, including the plate balance (arrived c. 18/09/16), 350 plastic sample bags and three soils sieves (arrived 18/10/16). These were later than planned but linked to the travel/freight issues.
- HR assisted with contracts of on-island staff and more recently, with travel arrangements for the project team.
- Finance assisted with regular finance reports on actual expenditure; an initial meeting with corporate finance resulted in mutual understanding of both SHG and Defra requirements and how to apply them to the projects.
- Connect St Helena procured a Yuma 2 GPS tablet for DPLUS052 as their in-kinds support; originally they pledged £2000 worth of equipment but the final kit was nearer £3500 (and even bought themselves one). The change in GPS kit was the result of the training provided by Ascension Island in November 2015 for DPLUS038. On advice from Environment

Systems, we also investigated an app called Fulcrum (which they had previously used), however, expensive internet means that this is unlikely to be a viable option for field work but will be investigated. The Yuma 2 was received on 10/09/16.

The on-island project staff main work streams so far are outlined below;

Samantha Cherrett;

- Project management and setup including;
 - Creation of Project Management Plan, Communication Logs, and other project management documents including a draft data management plan. Liaising with IT, Legal, HR, Procurement and Finance on the above mentioned matters. Reassessment of budgets and timescales for change requests.
 - Investigation and purchase of suitable kit.
 - Writing of job specifications and field staff activities; recruitment of a fixed-term contract Darwin Project Assistant (Elizabeth Cairns-Wicks) and part time casual Project Support Field Worker (Cynthia Llas).
 - Liaising with stakeholder organisations on data collection: Scanning numerous sections of twenty-four historical reports with information on soils and soil samples and gathering weather data. (Output 1.3). Provision of data and relevant documentation to Project Partners.
- Writing of a project newsletter for the Environment and Natural Resources Directorate newsletter. Creation of a short information leaflet about the project to be issued to interested parties and the public when requesting access to lands.
- Organisation of travel and accommodation for field work – this has been incredibly difficult due to the air access issues.
- Setup of the Yuma 2 including operating system upgrades, patch installations, installation of QGIS software and basic user guide.
- Scanning of 221 black and white aerial photos from 1996, 24 black and white, 114 colour and 143 infra-red aerial photos from 1989. The process of geo-referencing the infra-red imagery has begun. (Output 1.3).

Elizabeth Cairns-Wicks (started 05/07/16) and Cynthia Llas (started part-time 13/10/16):

- Assisting with the scanning and geo-referencing of the 1989 aerial photos. (E C-W).
- Learning the basics of QGIS. Geo-referencing existing soils map and digitising existing soils data and sample locations. Started on digitising approximate vegetation types to assist Environment Systems as much of our historical data is out of date. (E C-W).
- Yuma 2 tests and habitat classification tests (both).

Most recently, Samantha Cherrett presented a brief overview of the project to the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) which was attended by four of the island councillors. The project was very well received and it was requested that a further presentation was done to all of the councillors at a later date.

Over the past few weeks, we've also been working closely with DPLUS051 and another SHG mapping project, doing data collection tests and user training for the Yuma 2 device.

Due to the travel issues and delays in completing the project team contracts, involvement from the project teams has been minimal in the past six months, but we've had regular skype calls to discuss issues and progress. A summary of each project partners involvement is outlined below:

Environment Systems: Investigation of suitable satellite imagery (Output 1.1); no purchase has been made yet as we are hoping for more recent data to become available. Provision of methodology and items to use in presentations and promotion.

Aberystwyth University: Provision of methodology and items to use in presentations and promotion. Input and advice on kit purchases. Feedback on additional data of interest from

reports provided. They've also shown interest in work being done for DPLUS051.

SAERI: Provision of template for the Data Management Plan.

It should be noted that Environment Systems, Aberystwyth University, SAERI and the Ascension Island Government have all been incredibly understanding and accommodating with regards to project changes due to the air access issues.

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.

The most notable issue has been the delay in air access, affecting field work, freight, budgets and timescales. The shift of the field work dates related in an unplanned invoice for accommodation not used (due to miscommunication), which we have had to deal with.

Some delays in finalising paperwork on St Helena have been down to resourcing within SHG, for example, responses from legal were initially slower than anticipated and contracts signed later than hoped.

Recruitment of a Consultant Ecologist has been more difficult than expected; the first three choices were not able to assist for the new time period and hence we may have to adapt our plans to suit available resources.

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. 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 please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

Not at present but to be reassessed in January depending on the outcomes of some ongoing items (e.g. Consultant Ecologist recruitment)

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

None at present.

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 e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**