

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	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)	30/10/16 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	n/a

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 2017, the project has still progressed at a slower rate than hoped, due to delays caused by travel issues and annual leave, however partner organisations have progressed with data analysis and on island field work has taken place to support this. Regular team skype calls continue to take place.

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

- Ascension soils training and field work, with data input from iLaria. Soils metadata drafted for Ascension.
 - Four full days of sampling were undertaken after a reconnoitre of the island on the day of arrival. The focus of varied between days; the aim was to collect samples from all of the major topographical/habitat combinations on the island with some additional focus on areas with endemic plants. In total, samples were taken from 87 locations. All samples have now been analysed for texture, % C and loss on ignition, moisture, electrical conductivity (EC) and pH, with some additional analysis for base cations was undertaken for high EC samples. All of the data have now been collated and will be entered into the data management system along with some covering notes and comments/conclusions.
- Trip to Aberystwyth; whilst on leave in June 2017, Samantha Cherrett visited Environment Systems and Aberystwyth University in Wales.
 - During the time with Environment Systems we looked at use of radar data (further details later), exchanged large datasets and discussed issues with habitat classification that had arisen. The result of these talks was to target specific habitats in following field work and to create or find subsidiary GIS datasets to help define certain habitats.
 - During the time with Aberystwyth University, we discussed future field work planning and access to proposed sites across the island. We also discussed preliminary results from the Ascension field trip.

- During this Wales trip, the 2017 satellite imagery was passed over (to save on reliance on slow island internet for such large data). Since then, we have been provided with a second draft of the habitat segmentation, which has been used for field work and ground truthing.
- Additional subsidiary datasets developed to support habitat mapping; the first draft had some incorrect classifications so we developed and sourced additional datasets to aid classification. Examples of this include specific habitat locations, pasture, potential residential gardens, dry versus wet valleys.
- Continuation of habitat field work; 33 days in the field and 1206 segments assessed. A first issue of field data was made on the May 5th 2017, and the last was 18th September 2017.
- The habitat classification was finalised early on, some minor tweaks were made as field work progressed, but the habitat classification has been requested by local individuals for use in their own projects.
- We have had enquiries from and begun working with partner organisations and individuals on habitat and soils data;
 - DPLUS040; use of the habitat data to support habitat surveys on this project
 - DPLUS059; use of the habitat and soil data to support this project
 - Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Programme; use of the habitat data to support habitat surveys on this project
 - Private consultancy; use of the habitat classification and data to support habitat surveys for Connect St Helena
 - Enterprise St Helena; use of soil information to support identification of suitable sites for coffee
- An article about the project was published in the June 2017 Darwin Newsletter on the subject of sustainable tourism.
- Ongoing meetings with EMD, SHNT, LEMP, ANRD and others regarding suitable and practical soil sampling locations, as well as identifying areas of key interest.

The Annual Report Review did have some queries for the Project Leader – whilst listed as ‘No response needed’ we have responded at the end of this main reporting document.

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.

Delays in air access continue to cause issues with the timescales and budgets for the project, however, commercial flights to and from St Helena started on October 14th.

For Aberystwyth University, who have tried repeatedly and so far unsuccessfully tried to visit St Helena, they are FINALLY booked onto flights on 2nd November and will be returning to the UK on November 27th. Because of this delay to soils field work there has been a knock-on effect to later planned visits for others. For example, until soil data has been analysed, work on ecosystems services and data management cannot be completed unless draft data is used. It has been deemed sensible to wait until after this trip, and as such a change request has been submitted to extend the project by three months.

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: £ TBC

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.

Change request submitted on 16/10/17

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. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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**