



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

Project Ref No	DPLUS059
Project Title	Establishment of the national framework for invasive plant management
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	St. Helena, South Atlantic Ocean
Lead Organisation	Environment and Natural Resources Directorate, St Helena Government
Partner(s)	St Helena National Trust
Project Leader	Derek Henry and Darren Duncan
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	30/10/16 HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram 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 progressed slower than anticipated. Two major affecting factors have been the delay in the commencement of the project due to Invasive Plant Specialist (IPS) only arriving on-Island at end of June and difficulties in recruiting a local qualified Invasive Plant Officer (IPO).

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

- Liaising with stakeholders on key issues and priority species.
- Site visits with Biosecurity, Forestry, Agriculture, Environmental Management (Conservation areas & Waste Management) and Roads sectors.
- Identified key species and areas to conduct control test trials.
- Consulted National Trust regarding the potential impact endemic Wire Bird populations in selected trial areas.
- Reviewing of existing data, control trial results and previous control methods.
- Presented short overview of project to the Farmers Association Committee.
- Consulted DPLU052 project leader regarding data sharing and potential future collaboration.
- Developed IPO job profile and advertised IPO post, shortlisted and interview candidates.
- Appointment of Invasive Plant Officer who remained in post for a short period (11/09/2017 to 21/09/2017).
- Assessed alternative options for Invasive Plant Officer following resignation of successful candidate and little local interest in the role.
- Assisted in the clearing of identified IP species along the Airport Development Area.
- Planning control trails for selected IP species.

- Creating risk assessment protocols.
- Started conversations about potential biological control options for wild mango with researchers.
- Investigating alternative control methods using existing available equipment (i.e. quad bike fitted with herbicide spraying equipment for use on rush species in pasture).
- Preparation of service provision tender document with St Helena National Trust for Weed Buster and Invasive Plant Support Officer services.

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 issues have been the delay in starting the project and difficulties in the recruitment of an IPO and Weed Busters.

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: £ 43,000.

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.

Yes there will be a significant underspend particularly on staffing (Staff Costs- £29,584) and transport costs (Travel & Subsistence - £10,416) as the IPS arrived later than project start and delayed recruitment of the IPO and Weed Busters; and not having to pay a relocation cost for the IPS (Other Costs - £3,000). A Rebudget Change Request Form will follow shortly.

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**