



## Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

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| <b>Project reference</b>                  | DPLUS078  |
| <b>Project title</b>                      | Montserrat Recycling and Waste Reduction Initiative |
| <b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>        | Montserrat  |
| <b>Lead organisation</b>                  | Scuba Montserrat Inc.                               |
| <b>Partner(s)</b>                         | Island Solutions Inc.                               |
| <b>Project leader</b>                     | <i>Andrew Myers</i>                                 |
| <b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)</b> | <i>HYR3</i>   |
| <b>Project website/blog/social media</b>  | <i>www.ecomontserrat.org</i>                        |

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable.

#### Output 1: Glass bottles processed to reusable material.

From April through to June 2020, the recycling facility and glass collection was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions enforced by the Government of Montserrat. This included a complete lockdown period only allowing 'essential' workers to continue with specific functions across the island. However, glass collection and processing continued on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. A total weight of material collected for the 2 quarters was 21,944 kg, approximately 98,000 bottles.

As in previous quarters, the glass cullet was advertised and given away free to anyone who was interested in its use. EcoMontserrat also started producing samples of its use to encourage local businesses and residents of its potential. Samples of paving slabs, flowerpots and counter worktops/tabletops were produced using different ratio mixes of glass sand and glass cullet which replaced a percentage of the aggregate/sand used. Through social media and displaying these samples, as a result, the public interest of using the cullet has increased with enquiries and collections of cullet; including a creation of a boundary wall around a new bar/shop, used as an effective mulch in residential gardens, etc.

Due to the mechanical failure of the crusher during May/June and the extra-long delay in getting replacement parts due to the COVID-19 restrictions of importation of goods onto island, the operatives continued to collect and produce glassware, ashtrays, soap dishes and candle holders from the collected bottles. Through a promotional fund raiser sale during August and September, we have sold 104 glasses which raised a total of XCD for the EcoMontserrat project.

#### Output 2. Use of reusable alternatives replaces use of single use items.

During July, nineteen local businesses were contacted to promote sponsorship for the EcoMontserrat reusable tote shopping bag but unfortunately, due to the lack of visitors/tourists coming to the island, only a couple of interested parties have replied. However, a further promotion was undertaken during September where surveys were carried out at three key supermarkets. The surveys provided valuable data on the general awareness of the project whilst encouraging local shoppers to use the reusable tote bag which was given away upon completion of the survey. Out of the people surveyed, 100% of them understood what was recycled on island, what the fundamental three "R's" of recycling meant and felt that the project

was helping the island. 80% were aware of the alternative products to use instead of single use plastics, 88% knew what we could use the glass cullet for and 91% identified the island's benefits of recycling.

Output 3. Use of compostable or 'green' alternatives replace the use of plastic non-compostable items

Throughout the last quarter several outreach programmes were initiated which included engagement with residents and businesses. These included the use of reusable alternatives such as biodegradable food boxes, reusable shopping bags and alternative cutlery, paper straws and cups, all of which successfully achieved Output 3.

Through these programmes, a total of 49 packages which included biodegradable meal boxes and containers, bamboo cutlery, t-shirts, goat water cups and palm leaf soup spoons, were given out to local restaurants, bars and food outlets during June and July. In addition, 37 packs of reusable vegetable bags of various sizes were given to roadside vendors and farmers during July and August. Each pack contained 12 reusable vegetable bags making a total of 444 bags given out. This also contributes to achieving this output which reduces the amount of clear plastic bags for vegetables and fruit sold on island.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

During May, the crushing machine unexpectedly broke down and therefore there was a delay in receiving the ordered parts. This meant that once operations were permitted, the existing storage facilities were inadequate and had to be expanded. The impact of this was considerable as the temporary facility is deficient with amenities and sufficient space making it difficult to expand the storage area without encroaching on the neighbouring fishing boat dry dock. By using the previously promised site to the north of Little Bay, we were able to build extra units for storing the glass cullet.

Due to the change in key personnel within the Ministry of Agriculture, further correspondence and meetings were necessary to reconfirm the previous agreed lease of the land for the new facility. Also, it was necessary to clarify with the Ministry any other requirements to build the new recycle centre. This has again delayed the process in allowing the land to be used as originally promised by former ministers and government officials. However, since the grading of the site, several meetings with officials have proved positive and recent correspondence has provided evidence that the site and relevant planning requirements are being currently considered by the new ministers and key personnel. In the future, formal written agreements, verbal communications and records of meeting minutes would prove beneficial in taking this project forward in case further personnel change or government changes.

Despite these unexpected developments, the project budget expenditure will remain similar given the increased outreach programmes implemented, labour efforts and associated costs. The necessary infrastructure, maintenance, and operational costs such as storage bins and repairs to machinery will also have little impact on the overall budget for the project.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Due to the restrictions and legal requirements across the island to contain COVID-19, the team was unable to continue glass collection for 11 weeks. When they were permitted to restart the collections on 15<sup>th</sup> June, there was a large backlog of glass bottles to be crushed. Additional storage facilities therefore had to be created for the extra capacity. Prior to lockdown, all the recycling bins were collected from the bars, restaurants and businesses and stored securely at the temporary recycling facility. Therefore, increased labour efforts and associated costs meant there was an increase in infrastructure/maintenance operational costs.

The outreach programme previously planned prior to COVID-19 was part of the St Patrick Festival which is the largest annual event on island. St Patricks was cancelled and therefore prior to lockdown, we adjusted our outreach programme and individually visited all the bars and restaurants who had actively participated in glass recycling within the last year of the project (from March 2019). It was the project's one-year anniversary and as a 'thank you' we gave a selection of Eco-friendly gifts including a flyer stating that we crushed the equivalent of weight as almost two humpback whales. This was received well and appreciated by all stakeholders.

The impact of the lockdown and then Government restrictions on office workers with regards to meetings has also compounded the delay of establishing the permanent and fully functioning recycle centre. However, since the restrictions have been lifted, meetings have been held with the Minister and Permanent Secretary and the process of obtaining relevant permissions has begun.

**2c. 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.

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

It is understood and appreciated that the strict requirements of Darwin's management and monitoring of grant funded projects is required. We would like to suggest you to consider the possibility of streamlining the report requirements through replacing some of them with a number of regular formal presentations and updates on the project to the Governor's Office and Foreign Commonwealth Office on island. This is likely to be beneficial to both parties (project team and grant provider) as it will help reduce the time spent on both writing reports and assessing them. As the GO/FCO are key stakeholders, they already provide letters of support and are keen to be further engaged with this current project and any future projects. An additional benefit is also foreseen through a direct oversight and understanding of how the specific restrictions and unique parameters of island life impacts the project and if necessary, support or direction can be given instantly.