

## Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note"  
(<https://dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

### Darwin Plus Project Information

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Project reference  | DPLUS079  |
| Project title  | Improving Sustainability of Marine Management in Montserrat                               |
| Territory(ies)   | Montserrat  |
| Lead partner   | Cefas   |
| Project partner(s)   | Government of Montserrat, Waitt Institute   |
| Darwin Plus grant value  | £ 321,783.48  |
| Start/end dates of project   | 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2023   |
| Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2021-Mar 2022) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2) | April 2021 – March 2022<br>Annual Report 4  |
| Project Leader name  | Rachel Mulholland   |
| Project website/blog/social media  | @CefasGovUK   |
| Report author(s) and date  | Rachel Mulholland, Kerry l'Anson (Cefas)<br>Lavern Rogers-Ryan (Government of Montserrat) |

### 1. Project summary

The project consists of three separate work packages delivering complimentary work streams. These are:

- Training in the assessment of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to help improve management decisions around development projects;
- Producing education materials to contribute to the secondary school syllabus increasing awareness of the marine environment in Montserrat's younger generation;
- Seabed mapping using high resolution data to enable more targeted management of seabed features for sustainable use.

The project will enable the Government of Montserrat (GoM) to improve the management of the marine environment and key marine resources by strengthening the evidence base, local capacity and management tools to inform the sustainable development of Montserrat's marine based economy. Educating the younger generation on marine issues relevant to Montserrat will ensure the future sustainability of their marine environment.

The project duration was initially 3-years, due to complete in March 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and particularly the inability to deliver in-country training, delays were encountered. The project end date has been extended through a change request with Darwin to March 2023 in order to deliver on the remaining project activities and deliverables.

## 2. Project stakeholders/partners

All partners, in particular GoM, have been engaged at all points of project planning and delivery throughout the reporting year. The majority of project deliverables and activities have been on hold during this project year due to ongoing Covid-19 travel and event restrictions. As a result, larger, formal quarterly project planning meetings have not been held, as was the case in previous project years. However, regular informal project meetings have been held between Cefas and GoM where high-level updates are provided on each of the project work streams and project level decisions are taken.

## 3. Project progress

### 3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

The majority of remaining deliverables and activities on this project require aspects of in-country travel. As a result, little progress has been made over the last year. Some aspects of some activities have been able to progress remotely; however, none of the remaining activities can move to be marked as 'completed' during the last year. This was anticipated at the last change request in which a further project extension was granted and is in line with the updated project timetable which is included in Annex 3 for reference.

As travel restrictions were eased in the latter part of the financial year, we were able to undertake an in-country planning and catch-up visit to meet with project partners and plan out the delivery timetable for the remaining activities for year 5. The visit agenda, documents and photos from this visit are included in Annex 4. With the undertaking of this recent visit, and the relaxing of the remaining restrictions around travel to country and the hosting of in-person events, we anticipate being able to progress with the remaining activities and deliverables in year 5 in line with the updated project implementation timetable and, as a result, to be able to successfully complete the project by March 2023.

#### **Output 1: Undertake knowledge transfer and build capacity through workshops and training with a minimum of 10 GoM staff from different departments for the duration of the project.**

Activity 1.1 Project meetings. The project kick-off meeting was completed in year 1 and a mid-project meeting was completed in year 2. The final project handover meeting will be delivered in Q4 of year 5.

Activity 1.2 A 2-day video survey techniques and analysis training course. This has been partially completed, training in video survey techniques was extended throughout the ground-truthing survey undertaken in year 2 whilst training in analysis will be delivered alongside Activity 1.3 in year 5.

Activity 1.3 1-day data interpretation and mapping training course. This now due for completion in year 5.

Activity 1.4 Researcher exchange. This is now due for completion in year 5.

Activity 1.5 EIA workshops. This was completed in year 2 with delivery of the second of two planned EIA training workshops; however, we are in discussions with the GoM to deliver an additional, third training workshop during year 5.

Activity 1.6 EIA evaluation support. This is ongoing with the delivery of guidance documents and training manuals and handouts in conjunction with the EIA workshops under Activity 1.5 and additional desk notes and training documents which will be delivered the end of year 5.

#### **Output 2: Create and provide a GIS Database with environmental layers and maps of marine benthic environments in Western shelf waters by quarter three, 2021.**

Activity 2.1 Review of data and survey design. This was completed in year 1.

Activity 2.2 14-day video characterisation survey. This was completed in year 2.

Activity 2.3 Analysis of the survey data. This was completed in year 2.

Activity 2.4 Combine data with Waitt Institute survey to develop seabed characterisation data layers. This was completed in year 3.

Activity 2.5 Share characterisation layers with local stakeholders. This was completed in year 3. The remaining activities under Output 2 are now due for completion in year 5. (2.6 Publish paper in peer reviewed journal; and 2.7 Make data freely available to data archive centres).

**Output 3: Increase awareness on marine issues affecting Montserrat by creating an educational resource pack to be used within the secondary school. Work closely with the community, providing information and support to current local projects (Aqua Montserrat) and attend community events (St Patricks Day Parade) by March 2021**

Activity 3.1 Project kick-off and planning meeting. This was completed in year 1.

Activity 3.2 Preparation ahead of consultation. This was completed in year 1.

Activity 3.3 First consultation meeting in Montserrat. This was completed in year 1.

Activity 3.4 Creation of draft resource pack. This was completed in year 2.

The remaining activities under Output 3 are now due for completion in year 5 (3.5 Second consultation meeting; 3.6 Amending and finalising resource pack; and 3.7 Third and final meeting in Montserrat).

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

**Output 1: Undertake knowledge transfer and build capacity through workshops and training with a minimum of 10 GoM staff from different departments for the duration of the project.**

Progress has been made towards this output, primarily during the early years of the project with the delivery of training in years 1 and 2. During year 4, no new training workshops were delivered; however, additional resources were delivered to GoM during the year which contribute to the progression of the output.

With regards to seabed imagery analysis and habitat mapping capacity building, the decision has been taken with GoM staff to postpone delivery of Activities 1.2 and 1.3 until both workshops can be held in person. This is due to the complexity of the material to be covered, and the difficulty of sharing and working with large environmental datasets (MBES and backscatter) in GIS remotely. Some initial training did however take place earlier on in the project (during years 1 and 2 as part of the video survey).

On the EIA aspect of the project, work has been on hold during year 3 and 4 of the project due to an inability to hold the planned in-country training workshops. All activity under this work area has been moved into project Year 5. The EIA team has, however, maintained communication with partners in GoM and highlighted that project staff are available for discussion or questions on EIA matters throughout the year if needed.

The researcher exchange visit to Cefas in the UK for the nominated GoM staff has been on hold during year 3 and 4; however, this is planned to take place in summer of year 5 and discussions are already happening to arrange dates and confirm the staff members to participate.

Work has been progressing on the creation of the EIA training pack. This is being designed based on feedback from workshop and training participants on areas where they would appreciate additional guidance. Several EIA guidance documents, and other resources have been provided to GoM in previous years and a number of EIA books were delivered to Montserrat during the March 2022 in-country visit (evidence provided in Annex 4). Additional resources have already been prepared for distribution to participants in the researcher exchange visit when this is able to proceed.

We consider that output 1 is on track in terms of deliverables and project timetable against the new 5-Year project timetable. We consider that it is likely to be achieved by the end of the project as long as planned workshops and training visits are able to proceed without hindrance from extended Covid-19 travel restrictions in year 5.

**Output 2: Create and provide a GIS Database with environmental layers and maps of marine benthic environments in Western shelf waters by quarter three, 2021.**

The progress made under this output was primarily during years 1-3 with the completion of the ground-truthing survey and provision of initial data layers. Some progress has been made remotely during year 4 on updating data layers; however, this work has mainly been on hold and will be picked up for completion in year 5 alongside the related training under output 1.

**Output 3: Increase awareness on marine issues affecting Montserrat by creating an educational resource pack to be used within the secondary school. Work closely with the community, providing information and support to current local projects (Aqua Montserrat) and attend community events (St Patricks Day Parade) by March 2021**

Progress has been made towards this output, primarily during project years 1-3 with the production of the full draft version of the resource pack and an initial consultation. This work has been on hold during year 4; however, discussions and planning restarted in March 2022 during the Cefas in-country project visit. A new Montserrat Secondary School representative has joined the project team as of March 2022 to work with the Cefas team to progress this work to completion during year 5.

A number of outreach events and activities took place early on in the project; however, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions we were unable to continue these in year 3 and 4. Some progress has restarted under this area with the March 2022 in-country visit during which, the project team was able to meet with a representative of AquaMontserrat to plan future project activities, and visited the Montserrat Secondary School 4<sup>th</sup> form geography class and presented on marine planning and held a question and answer session with the class (a copy of the school presentation is provided in Annex 4).

### **3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome**

Progress to towards the outcome is underway.

The draft west coast database (Indicator 0.1) has been built (seabed characterisation and associated environmental layers and derivatives) and shared with GoM for comment. A final database will be refined in consultation with GoM prior to final delivery in Q3 of year 5 and subsequent public availability from data archive centres.

The EIA training pack (Indicator 0.2) is in progress and some resources have already been delivered to Montserrat (see section 3.1 and 3.2). This aspect is on track for completion and delivery before the end of the project with the potential to deliver additional training above the initial project plan.

Training in survey techniques (linked to Indicator 0.3) was delivered during year 2. Additional training is planned for Year 5. The use of the equipment already provided as part of this project by multiple staff across multiple departments will increase both the capability and ability to monitor Montserrat's marine resources effectively.

The education resource pack to implement ocean literacy topics within the school curriculum (linked to Indicator 0.4) is in progress (see section 3.1 and 3.2). A draft pack has been produced and discussions on the finalisation of this pack will be carried out in year 5 now that a new representative from Montserrat Secondary School has been confirmed.

It is considered that these four indicators are still adequate for measuring achievement of the intended outcome. It is considered that we are on track currently to complete all of the activities and outputs detailed within the project logical framework by the end of the project and, therefore, we consider it likely that the overall project outcome will be achieved. This presumption is, however, based on the assumption that travel and working restrictions from Covid-19 will not be extended to a point where year 5 visits are not able to proceed as planned. We currently anticipate that restrictions on travel and large events will continue to ease over the summer and we will be able to pick up and deliver the remaining project activities in line with the updated implementation timetable.

### **3.4 Monitoring of assumptions**

Several original project assumptions have continued to be tested this year:

- *“Local staff are able to participate in knowledge exchange events.”; “Local staff are able to participate in researcher exchange”*

- *“Local teachers are able to participate in consultation meetings”*

As well as an additional assumption which we added to the project in Annual Report 3:

- *“Travel and working restrictions from Covid-19 will not be extended to a point where year 4 visits are not able to proceed as planned.”*

Covid-19 continues to impact project activities, primarily due to travel restrictions, delays, or complications, as well as restrictions on events and gatherings which have impacted the planning of training events. Towards the end of the year, we were able to start undertaking in-country meetings and travel again and it is hoped that in year 5 all remaining activities will be able to take place as restrictions are further relaxed, in line with our updated project timetable. However, further delays could be encountered and the project timetable for next year may, as a result, be impacted. We will keep this under review in our project meetings between all partners and will discuss with Darwin if this happens.

Due to the unique nature of the Covid-19 situation, we do not believe this could have been anticipated or mitigated for.

All other assumptions listed in the log frame have been reviewed and these remain valid but have not yet been tested within the project. There are risks to the project delivery which are captured in an internal risk register document. These are under constant review and escalated when required. The risk register has not been provided with this report; however, it is available on request.

#### **4. Project support to environmental and/or climate outcomes in the UKOTs**

Provision of EIA training workshops and the EIA training pack will strengthen management tools to inform the sustainable development of Montserrat. This will allow informed decisions to be made on development projects which adequately consider and mitigate for any impacts on Montserrat’s marine biodiversity.

The education resource pack will increase awareness of marine issues affecting Montserrat and Montserrat’s biodiversity. This increased knowledge and awareness will help to highlight the importance of biodiversity conservation. Through targeting this resource pack at secondary school children, this impact will last for years to come and influence future generations.

Provision of the underwater camera system and training in its use will enable GoM to monitor the seabed more effectively than departments are currently able to. The system can be operated at depths which are of higher risk to divers and for longer periods which enables wider monitoring of the marine environment. Two activities which represent areas of environmental concern are the port development in Little Bay and the positioning of fish traps by the island’s fishers, activities that are essential for sustainable development of Montserrat’s economy. Use of the camera equipment will enable greater monitoring capability in areas of concern and provide evidence to initiate mitigation measures where necessary. This evidence-based approach to monitoring and management of the marine environment of Montserrat has been limited until now. This will contribute to biodiversity conservation through sustainable management as well as contributing to human development and wellbeing through aiding in the management of marine uses essential to Montserrat’s economy and individual livelihoods.

Montserrat is developing a Sustainable Oceans Policy and associated evidence data layers to ensure the long-term health of Montserrat’s waters through ocean zoning, establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and fisheries reforms. This project will produce high resolution data layers and marine habitat maps to support the development and management of MPAs. It will also assist in the use of sustainable management practices through EIA review. The creation of MPAs in Montserrat will support the United Nations target to have 30% of the world’s oceans protected by 2030, and the UK Government’s desire to have the rich environmental assets of the Overseas Territories protected for the future. Work towards these ultimate goals is ongoing throughout the project.

#### **5. OPTIONAL: Consideration of gender equality issues**

In 2019, Cefas established an Equality Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Steering Group and gender equality was the first ‘protected’ characteristic defined in the EDI handbook for staff. Cefas’ commitment to gender equality has been exemplified by applying to the Athena SWAN Charter

(receiving accreditation in April 2021). This recognised accreditation scheme advances EDI providing representation, progression, and success for all, although was originally established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths, and medicine.

The Cefas and GoM teams working on this project are of mixed genders. The stakeholders engaged in the various aspects of the project are generally an even mix of men and women. For the project overall, especially within the management authorities and governmental agencies, we expect the distribution of training benefits to be equal across genders.

Active steps are taken by the Cefas team to ensure equal opportunities are available for all genders at advanced training events and workshops. It is recognised that if travel to stakeholder workshops, training events or meetings is required, equal gender attendance may be limited by parental responsibilities. Therefore, the Cefas team give consideration in the organisation of training workshops and meetings to the location, length, and timing of any events to allow stakeholders who may have parental duties the ability to attend more easily.

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, no training workshops were able to take place during year 4. However, after review of all workshops and training events delivered so far over the lifetime of this project, we consider that the project has managed to maintain and promote a gender balance at events and workshops. Over the three training workshops delivered so far, the attendance has been 53% female and 47% male (see Annual Report 1 and 2 for attendee lists from individual workshop events).

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

The logical framework is used to assess project milestones. Overall, progress towards the outcome is being made and the overall aims of the project are on course to be achieved by the end of year 5.

Regular meetings are held with project partners where progress against the project tasks, activities and the implementation timetable are discussed. Each work package deliverable is reviewed by the Cefas Principal Investigator and the Project Manager before distribution to project partners for comment. Each work package also holds regular meetings with Kerry l'Anson, Cefas project manager, to go through a checklist of project progress and risk assessment. The systems in place enable proactive management of the project.

## **7. Lessons learnt**

The lessons taken from year 4 of the project were mainly related to communication between project partners. Due to the Covid-19 travel restrictions, all meetings and communication with partners has taken place online. This was more challenging than in-person, in-country meetings for project planning as it is harder to collaborate and brainstorm as well as develop and build on relationships with project partners when not able to meet face-to-face. Communication can also be restricted by time differences, availability, and issues with unreliable technology or internet connections. All partners have worked hard throughout the year to facilitate project communication and build working relationships remotely.

## **8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)**

*Q1 Please submit evidence as separate files.*

A1 Noted. We have provided evidence documents to this report as separate files rather than embedded in the document.

*Q2 Please remember to remove the blue guidance text in the template before submitting reports to avoid confusion.*

A2 Noted. We have double checked that all blue guidance text has been removed from the report prior to submission.

## **9. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

N/A

## **10. Sustainability and legacy**

As an Executive Agency of Defra, Cefas complies with UK Government requirements to make all data available for re-use. Cefas has an internal data management system which publishes data directly on its Open Access Cefas Data Hub (<https://www.cefas.co.uk/cefas-data-hub>). From there the data are distributed to UK Data Archive Centres (DAC) for marine data by the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN). Cefas itself is a DAC for fisheries data. All data supplied to DACs is often picked up by global data centres such as GBIF, thereby increasing the visibility of the data. All data from this project will be shared with the GoM, the education packs will be shared with schools, and the EIA resource packs will be handed over to GoM. This will allow for the data collected and the knowledge gained during the project to be maintained after the end of the project and resource packs will also allow for new GoM staff to have access to training materials in the future.

Working closely with local stakeholders, we will also ensure personal and professional relationships will be maintained beyond the end of the project. The outputs will provide a basis for sustainable management and the education of future generations beyond the duration of the project itself. In all project areas it is considered that a strong foundation has been set to provide lasting change over the final project year and beyond.

## **11. Darwin identity**

Project activities, especially those planned for in-country, have been reduced during year 4 due to ongoing travel restrictions. There have been no external publications during this year. However, the project team has publicised the Darwin Initiative as funders for the project at every opportunity. All presentation slides and shared documents include the Darwin logo. All paperwork and resources distributed to project partners also includes the Darwin Initiative logo. All online publication of the project and its activities have included links to the Darwin and Defra social media and/or web pages and acknowledgement of the project funding. For example, see Annex 4 for project social media posts.

## **12. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery**

The main impact Covid-19 on the project has been the ongoing travel restrictions. Nearly all project activities, including in-country visits and stakeholder engagement and events, have been unable to proceed this year as planned. Work has been undertaken remotely where possible (for example some online engagement on the draft educational resource pack and discussions on habitat map layers). A change request was submitted, and approved, to extend the project duration by 1 year and move all remaining in-country visits into year 5.

Towards the end of the year, we were able to start undertaking in-country meetings and travel again and it is hoped that we can now pick up and organise the remaining activities in year 5 as restrictions are further relaxed. We are unsure yet when restriction-free travel and large gatherings may be able to resume and are continuing to monitor the situation closely and update our activity planning accordingly.

Currently, we estimate that we may be able to resume in-country visits and stakeholder engagement events in year 5 as planned in the updated project implementation timetable. If this is the case, we should be able to complete all remaining activities as planned by the end of the year. However, further delays could be encountered and the project timetable for next year may, as a result, be impacted. We will keep this under review in our project meetings between all partners and will discuss with Darwin if this happens

Cefas has updated its health and safety and travel plans due to Covid-19 to include additional risk assessments and sign off levels. Additionally, individual travel plan documents are produced for every overseas visit, and these include emergency protocols, first aid plans, key contacts, etc. (the travel plan document for the March 2022 in-country visit can be provided on request). Before any in-country visits take place, these are fully discussed with the Principal Investigator and Project Manager and travel plans are agreed and signed off. Any in person meetings and/or stakeholder events are planned in full alignment with the Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions of the relevant country and all participating organisations, including the number of attendees, sanitisation of materials and equipment, and any social distancing or mask wearing required.

### 13. Safeguarding

Please tick this box if any safeguarding violations have occurred during this financial year.

If you have ticked the box, please ensure these are reported to [ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk) as indicated in the T&Cs.

Cefas has in place, and maintains, all of the following:

- a safeguarding policy, which includes a statement of our commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse
- a detailed register of safeguarding issues raised and how they were dealt with
- clear investigation and disciplinary procedures to use when allegations and complaints are made, and have clear processes in place for when a disclosure is made
- a whistle-blowing policy which protects whistle blowers from reprisals and includes clear processes for dealing with concerns raised
- a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers that sets out clear expectations of behaviours - inside and outside the workplace - and make clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards

Cefas also shares its safeguarding policy with downstream partners. Copies of any of the above policies can be provided on request.

### 14. Project expenditure

**Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022)**

| Project spend (indicative) in this financial year | 2021/22 D+ Grant (£) | 2021/22 Total actual D+ Costs (£) | Variance % | Comments (please explain significant variances)                                |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--|
| Staff costs                                       | ████████             | ████████                          | ██         |  |
| Consultancy costs                                 |                      |                                   |            |  |
| Overhead Costs                                    | ████████             | ████████                          | ██         |  |
| Travel and subsistence                            | ████████             | ████████                          | ██         | Refunded air fare due to workshop being cancelled and charged in previous year |
| Operating Costs                                   |                      |                                   |            |  |
| Capital items                                     |                      |                                   |            |  |
| Others (Please specify)                           | ████████             | ████████                          | ██         |  |
| Mobile data costs, storage and consumables        |                      |                                   |            |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | ████████████████     | ████████████████                  | ██         |  |

### 15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

N/A