

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	DPLUS079
Project title	Improving Sustainability of Marine Management in Montserrat
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Montserrat
Lead partner	Cefas
Partner(s)	Government of Montserrat, Waitt Institute
Project leader	Jon Hawes / Rachel Mulholland
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	28.10.2022 HYR5
Project website/blog/social media	Twitter: @CefasGovUK

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1: Knowledge transfer and capacity building

The EIA researcher exchange visit (activity 1.4) took place in August with three researchers from the Government of Montserrat's Environment Department and Physical Planning Unit undertaking a one-week visit to Cefas' laboratory and site in Lowestoft. The visitors enjoyed a tour of the labs and a demonstration of Cefas' drone and ROV capabilities, as well as meeting with many scientific and technical experts. They participated in workshop and presentation sessions on important topics to Montserrat including aquaculture viability, marine renewable energy, marine litter, and sand mining impacts, monitoring and regulation.

The EIA evaluation support (activity 1.6) was also delivered in August with the handover of a resource pack to the Montserrat Environment Department which included a number of books, guidance documents, training slide packs, and EIA desk notes.

The remaining activities under this output are planned for completion in November with delivery of a final in-country training workshop on video survey techniques, data interpretation and mapping.

Output 2: Habitat mapping database

Habitat mapping characterisation layers shared with Gov. Montserrat and reviewed in person, interactive Arc GIS Online map created for remote sharing and interrogation of layers. Online workshop for discussion of characterisation set for 16th November 2022, in line with Montserrat GIS day 2022, to include NGO and Gov. Montserrat personnel. Further stakeholder engagement (fishers and wider population) to take place during final visit (planned w/c 23rd Jan 2023).

Output 3: Education

A new Montserrat education representative for this project was identified at the end of March and the team has been working with this representative to progress this output since then. The

second consultation meeting on the resource pack (activity 3.5) took place in Montserrat in June. The team is currently working on finalising the pack based on the outcome of that meeting. A “fly through” online map of the bathymetry and seabed imagery data has been created and will be shared in due course

2. 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.

Initial (post – COVID-19 revised) plan to hold final meeting, video survey techniques and data interpretation workshops in Nov. 2022 revised in light of personal reasons (Cefas project lead). Date revised to w/c 23/01/2023.

Covid impact on the delivery of last year’s project activities was severe as the core activities revolved around in-country engagement, delivery of final training workshops and sign off and handover of produced project outputs. However, with the project extension to March 2023 and the relaxation of travel restrictions, we have been able to pick work back up this financial year and are on target to deliver all remaining activities before the end of the year (subject to there being no re-tightening of travel restrictions).

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS-LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: Yes

Formal Change Request submitted: No (not needed)

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: £

4b. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response 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 NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**