



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	DPLUS108
Project title	Caribbean Overseas Territories Natural Capital Accounting Programme
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands
Lead organisation	eftec
Partner(s)	Joint Nature Conservation Committee; New Economic Foundation / NEF Consulting
Project leader	Jake Kuyer
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	Half Year Report 1; October 2020
Project website/blog/social media	

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).

Due to coronavirus, the project start was delayed from April to June 2020. We made the decision to stay as close as possible to the original schedule, as the nature of the project, creating annual accounting procedures, means that we need to keep tasks in line with annual reporting periods. This resulted in much of the project start-up administrative work overlapping with initial engagement and technical activities which created some additional pressure.

Despite this, all 5 of the OTs the project is engaging with have had successful start-up and engagement activities. Kick-off meetings were held with the primary partners in each OT (e.g. the respective environment departments) during which initial tasks were agreed. Following this, project introductory workshops were organised and subsequently held in 4 of the OTs (Anguilla is scheduled to occur in early November). The two hour workshops introduced the team, the Darwin+ project (focusing in particular in how work in the individual OT fit in with the wider cross-OTs programme), an overview of the concepts and practice of natural capital accounting, a more in depth discussion around what data is required and how it is used, and an outline of next steps and expectations.

The workshops were well attended by a range of participants across government departments and some non-governmental organisations. They also included discussions to encourage engagement, cross-departmental sharing, and to initiate data collection activities. The workshops were followed up with data request forms, with current activities focused around collecting the data needed to produce the 2019 natural capital accounts.

Notably the statistics department in each of the OTs have shown enthusiasm and engagement with the project. This is important as year 2 will aim to shift the responsibility for the natural capital account outputs from the environment department to the statistics department, to be incorporated into national statistics over time.

Work has also progressed with recruitment of the coordinator. A job specification has been produced and circulated to key contacts for input. The advert will be posted in Q4 2020.

Although engagement activities beyond government departments have not yet begun, media have already approached the project for comment in Cayman Islands and Montserrat, which is a strong indication of interest. Once the 2019 accounts and reports have been produced, they will be used to promote broader awareness (from Q1 2021).

[Cayman Islands article](#)

We have also engaged with other regional organisations, primarily the Caribbean Development Bank in Barbados and the UN Environment Programme regional office in Jamaica, both of which have expressed a strong desire for further engagement. We will continue to develop these relationships and reach out to other relevant bodies as the project progresses with the hopes of developing strong regional links around natural capital accounting.

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.

The project is challenging by nature, working with numerous stakeholders across 5 OTs, and being dependent on local engagement and support. However, the project team was aware of these challenges when designing the project and has planned accordingly. Flexibility within the project timeline and contingency plans allow for some uncertainty to be mitigated; however, the nature of this does make accurate budget and timetable planning difficult.

While initial engagement activities have been encouraging, data collection activities are highly dependent on local participation and can delay project outputs and the comprehensiveness with which they can be put together. The project team continues to work closely with local departments, and while facing some delays, expects a reasonable amount of data to be provided with which to conduct subsequent project activities. Progress is being monitored and any significant changes from project plans will be noted and communicated appropriately.

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.

Covid-19 initially led to a delay in beginning the project, the implications for this have been discussed in the answer to Question 1.

Restrictions within the OTs have not caused significant issues, but some general delays in responses and data collection activities due to this are expected.

A major issue is in forward delivery of the work; site visits involving engagement activities, training and data collection were initially proposed for Q4 2020 and were subsequently planned for Q1 2021. However, it is looking increasingly prudent to reschedule these until Q4 2021 due to ongoing Covid-19 uncertainty, in particular the status of the pandemic in the UK and implications for travel to and from the OTs.

This can be accommodated within the project and should not interfere with the overall delivery of the project's aims. Intermediate virtual workshops can be held, with in person activities scheduled to coincide appropriately with year 2 activities. However, this would require a significant change to budget across financial years. This has not yet been decided by the project team, nor discussed with the LTS team, as we have been monitoring the situation closely and considering options, but a decision will need to be made, in discussion with LTS, shortly. The project team will reach out to LTS in the coming weeks.

Aside from this, it is expected that Year 2 activities will largely progress as planned.

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.

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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

As stated in question 2b, changes to travel and meeting schedules may require a significant change to the budget across financial years. This has not yet been decided by the project team, but we are monitoring the situation closely and considering options. A decision will need to be made, in discussion with LTS, shortly.

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

Further detail on expectations for yearend reporting would be appreciated.

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 DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**