



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

Project reference	DPLUS110
Project title	Recognise, protect, restore: driving sound stewardship of Falklands peat wetlands
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Falkland Islands
Lead organisation	Falkland Conservation
Partner(s)	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), Falkland Islands Government (FIG), Ministry of Defence (MoD) - British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI)
Project leader	<i>Andrew Stanworth</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>falklandsconservation.com</i>

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).

The start to this project has been impacted heavily. This has manifested principally in Falklands Conservation being unable to recruit a Project Officer which has had knock-on effects across the entire project. As a consequence ***there has been no notable progress against the project timetable, despite considerable time having been invested.***

This week we have managed to secure a work permit for the Project Officer, who will travel to the Islands at earliest opportunity, which needs to be established with their current employer. The Project Officer is in the process of arranging the training and purchasing equipment against Output 1.2 and currently the recruitment process is working against Output 4.1. This report is working against Output 4.5.

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 issues seem to be principally attributed to Covid-19; however, the later announcement of the success of the bid in June (which may not have been Covid-19 related), has exacerbated some of the subsequent Covid_19 related issues.

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.

With the later announcement of success with the phase II application for this project, combined with initial more restrictive Covid-19 restrictions in the Islands we were unable to initiate the recruitment process until late July. Interviews took place in August; however the Covid-19 situation led to decision changes in candidates and we were not able to make a successful accepted offer until early September. The accepting candidate had to go through the work permitting process in the Islands, which again was complicated by trying to access medical professionals in the UK for medical checks required and other delays. This process extended beyond the end of September.

Currently FC are hoping to achieve a very compressed start to the project to try to get it back on track, so that fieldwork will still occur. Until we get an arrival date in the Islands (and accommodate the isolation requirements for new arrivals), we will be unable to issue a meaningful change request, but hopefully this will occur soon.

There may be some underspend on Project Officer salary and a certainly a compressing of the Y1 timetable.

The key issue has been the challenges in recruitment during Covid-19. It is difficult to see how we may have dealt with this differently. It may have benefitted to delay the whole project for a year, but financially this would have been difficult given Covid-19 pressures on the organisation generally. In summary:

- The introduction of Covid-19 measures set back the recruitment process and consequently the timetable.
- The uncertainty generated by Covid-19 over transport links, safety, family etc have led to more unpredictable decision making and less certainty over timetables.
- With Covid-19 restrictions and challenges for the UK health service it has taken longer to meet the requirements of customs and immigration here, delaying recruitment.

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
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Formal change request submitted:	No
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
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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.

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

LTSI have been helpful throughout in providing guidance/advice where possible.

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**