



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2021)**

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| Project reference | DPLUS138 |
| Project title | Filling knowledge gaps to enable rewilding of the Chagos Archipelago |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | British Indian Ocean Territory |
| Lead organisation | Chagos Conservation Trust |
| Partner(s) | British Indian Ocean Territory Administration Biodiversity Restoration Specialists Limited |
| Project leader | Helen Pitman |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | HYR1 |
| Project website/blog/social media | https://chagos-trust.org/news/healthy-islands-healthy-reefs-programme-manager-announced https://www.instagram.com/p/CUZxHdTqr0o/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link https://twitter.com/ChagosTrust/status/1402962242677755908 https://twitter.com/ChagosTrust/status/1438430050920148992 https://www.facebook.com/protectchagos |

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 activity achieved by end of September was the recruitment of a Healthy Islands, Healthy Reefs Programme Manager. Forty two applications were received and four people were interviewed for the role.

Dr Pete Carr was offered the role and has 25 years' experience working and researching in the Chagos Archipelago including living and working on Diego Garcia, where he was the Environmental Director employed by the US Military for three years after two years as the British Executive Officer on the island.

He has recently completed his PhD on the archipelago's seabirds and how they use the Marine Protected Area. Pete has taken part in over ten science expeditions to the Chagos Archipelago as a terrestrial ecologist and marine ornithologist and has organised the logistics and permits for a number of these.

He designed and led the Darwin Plus funded eradication of rats from Ile Vache Marine, Peros Banhos in 2014, which was the first successful rat eradication in the archipelago and formed the basis of the Healthy Islands, Healthy Reefs programme. He is one of the few people to have landed on every island and is a passionate believer in and advocate for the rewilding of the Chagos Archipelago.

A change request was submitted once the position was filled and accepted.

A new BIOTA environment officer was also seconded by BIOTA and a change request was submitted in regards to this and accepted.

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 Bertarelli Programme in Marine Science agreed in principle to cover the costs of two team members joining their 2022 expedition. Unfortunately, this expedition has been delayed until 2023 therefore this is not possible anymore.

This was identified as a risk in the logframe and the CCT board of trustees have agreed to cover the costs of a charter vessel to enable to team to conduct the research needed to complete this project and therefore there should be no change to the budget or timetable of project activities.

LTS International was advised of the situation and did not see the need for a change request to be submitted for this particular issue.

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.

N/a

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

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

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?

We are wondering when the first payment would be issued for the advanced claim submitted on 2nd August 2021?

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**