Darwin Plus Main: Annual Report

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

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

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2024

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line

Darwin Plus Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS154
Project title	Sustainable management planning for St Helena's National Conservation Areas
Territory(ies)	St Helena
Lead Partner	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Project partner(s)	St Helena Government (SHG), SAERI (Falklands) Ltd (SFL)
Darwin Plus grant value	£344,345
Start/end dates of project	December 2021 / December 2024
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2023-Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	April 2023 – March 2024, Annual Report 3 (AR3).
Project Leader name	Dr Megan ████
Project website/blog/social media	Project website is currently under development. Social Media handles: @JNCC_UK, @StHelenaGovt, @SAERI_FI
Report author(s) and date	Dr Megan ████ and Ms Eve ██████, May 2024

1. Project summary

St Helena Island (STH) is one of the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) that lies in the South Atlantic Ocean. Its iconic, and highly endemic, biodiversity is of international importance. The Island's unique flora and fauna is now under pressure from the impacts of climate change, invasive species, introduced pests and diseases and land-use pressures associated with economic development. In recent years, the island has experienced significant loss of biodiversity resulting in an environment that is less resilient to pests and diseases and more prone to impacts from drought and other climate-related pressures. The water shortages, experienced during periods of drought, have caused food shortages, increasing the whole population's reliance on food imports. Further to this, the Covid-19 health crisis led to a cessation in some tourism-related income. This has highlighted the need to find more locally based solutions to support sustainable livelihoods.

The Island has 14 'nature' National Conservation Areas (NCA; Figure 1). These cover 38% of the island, helping to protect the 502 endemic and 38 globally threatened native species. However, the demands for development and land use change within the NCAs is increasing, exerting yet more pressure on the Island's biodiversity.

To fulfil the protected status conditions of the STH Land Development Control Plan (2012-22[1]), and gain legal protection, each NCA is required to have a Management Plan. Without the necessary Management Plans, the NCA's legal status can be challenged, potentially placing more pressures on land-use change within the protected areas. Currently, only one of the fourteen NCAs – The Peaks (including Diana's Peak National Park) – has a Management Plan.

The '*Sustainable management planning for St Helena's National Conservation Areas*' (DPLUS154) project is an international collaboration lead by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and St Helena Government (SHG), in partnership with SAERI (Falklands) Limited (SFL). The project was awarded Darwin Plus (DPLUS) funding in 2021 to undertake a 2.75-year project (now extended to 3-years) in STH to address these issues. JNCC, SHG and SFL will work in collaboration to develop sustainable-use NCA Management Plans for the remaining 13 NCAs of STH. Alongside these, analytical tools and a monitoring framework for the NCAs to help conserve and restore biodiversity will also be developed. Further, through active engagement with local communities, businesses, and landowners, in and around the NCAs, the partnership will develop management options for sustainable land-use and identify opportunities for alternative livelihoods created within the NCAs and within the legal conditions.

This will be achieved through activities under the following four integrated Work Packages:

- **Work Package (WP1):** Reviewing and gathering evidence for Management Plan development (including criteria, data collection and methodology for NCA assessment).
- **Work Package (WP2):** Training for SHG and St Helena National Trust (SHNT) on data collection and management plan effectiveness tools.
- **Work Package (WP3):** Modelling and assessment of Management Plans, including framework for monitoring effectiveness.
- **Work Package (WP4):** Stakeholder engagement, including public consultation on NCA Management Plan options.

As well as supporting SHG to ensure legal adoption and local buy-in of the NCA's, the project will lay the foundation for effective governance of STH's NCAs and identify options for sustainable alternative livelihoods. This will serve to help protect and enhance the Island's unique biodiversity and improve resilience to future pressures.

2.   Project stakeholders/partners

Background to development of project partnerships and project conception

JNCC is the public body that advises UK Government, the devolved administrations and UKOTs on nature conservation. More specifically, JNCC has been working with SHG over a number of years on a range of environmental conservation and management projects. In 2019, SHG opened dialogue with JNCC to support the development of Management Plans to protect the legal status of STH's NCA's. The DPLUS154 project is the result of discussions held between JNCC and SHG Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Directorate (ENRPD), Infrastructure and Transport Directorate and Information and Technology Department, as well as with SFL, the latter also having worked closely with JNCC and SHG on environmental data management. The project will enable the legal protection of the NCA's, and the associated species found within them.

DPLUS154 is led by JNCC and SHG, in partnership with SFL. All three partners have extensive project management experience within the context of UKOTs, and each bring unique expertise, covering terrestrial protected area management, environmental research, evidence-based decision making and leading public consultations. The Project Partners were involved with all aspects of project design, and

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[1] Currently being reviewed by SHG, but there is no set timeline for when this will be completed. However, no substantial changes to the NCAs are expected to be made. As such it is anticipated that each NCA will still require a Management Plan to gain legal protection.

together with relevant stakeholders have engaged and/or been kept informed of project progress during the reporting period as follows:
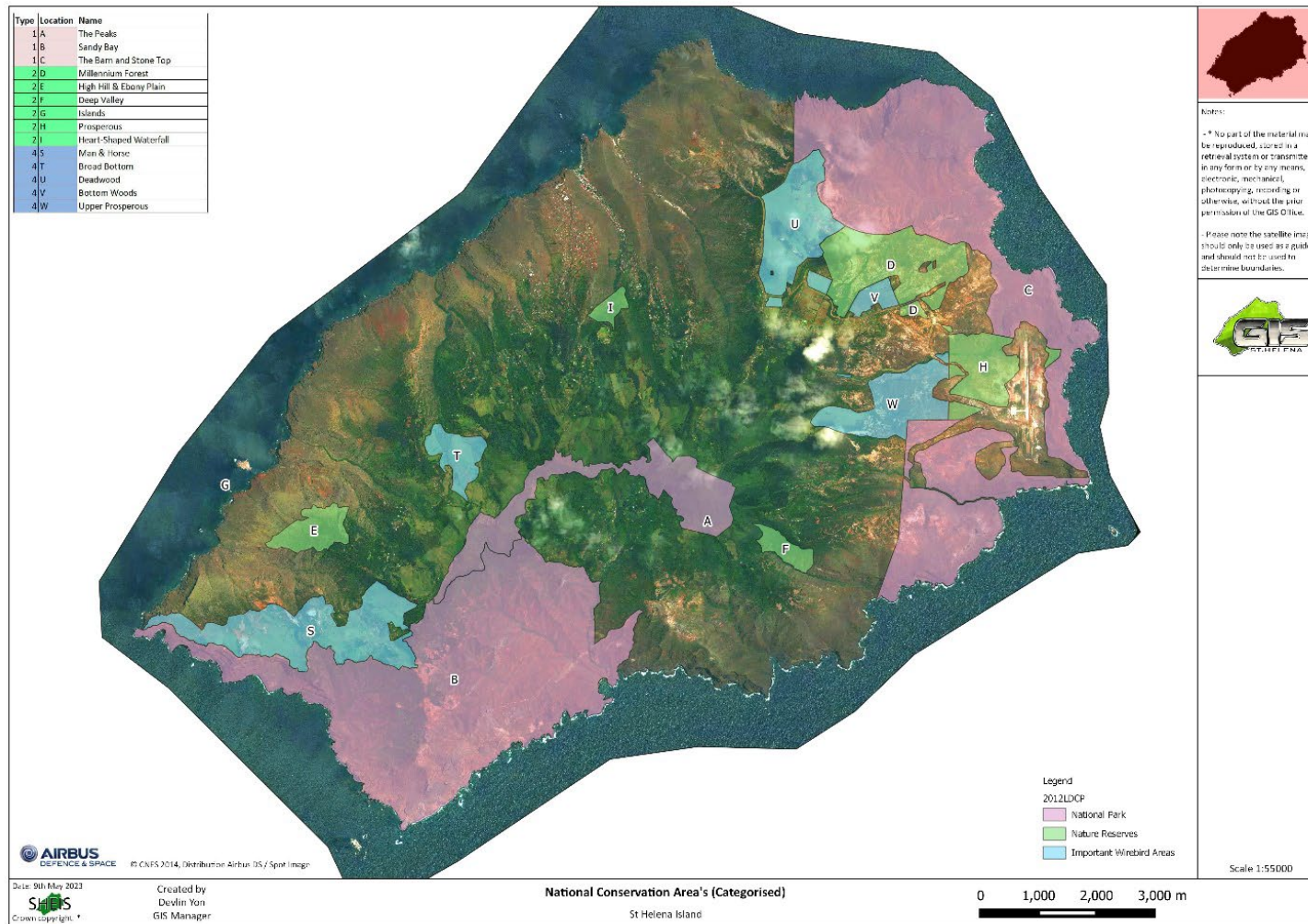
Type	Location	Name
1	A	The Peaks
1	B	Sandy Bay
1	C	The Barn and Stone Top
2	D	Millennium Forest
2	E	High Hill & Ebony Plain
2	F	Deep Valley
2	G	Islands
2	H	Prosperous
2	I	Heart-Shaped Waterfall
4	S	Man & Horse
4	T	Broad Bottom
4	U	Deadwood
4	V	Bottom Woods
4	W	Upper Prosperous

National Conservation Area's (Categorised)
St Helena Island

Legend
2012LDCP
National Park
Nature Reserves
Important Wirebird Areas

Scale 1:55000

0   1,000   2,000   3,000 m

Date: 9th May 2023
Created by
Devlin Yon
GIS Manager

Figure 1. Nature-based National Conservation Areas in Saint Helena. Source: St Helena Government GIS Department. Note, The Peaks is not covered through this project, as a management plan is already in place.

Project Partners

The Project Management Group (PMG), continues to monitor and steer the project, ensuring it aligns with the project proposal, and that the project is delivered on time and within budget. The PMG also consider and advise on the overall project management plan, including supporting documents such as the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Risk Register, and Issues Log (**Annex 5**), and review and approve all primary project outputs prior to external release. The PMG will also continue to highlight synergies between this project and other, related projects which they may be involved with to align and maximise outputs of each.

The PMG continue to meet every second week to discuss project progress, identify new linkages within the project and to review project outputs, including the updated baseline reports and the draft Management Plans which have been produced in Year 3 (Y3) of the project for each of the five Important Wirebird Area (IWA) NCAs (**see Section 3.1**). Team members from both JNCC and SFL were able to visit STH in February and March 2024, respectively, following a postponed trip for JNCC in October 2023. (Flights to STH from South Africa were cancelled during the planned period of travel due to adverse weather conditions). During these visits, JNCC and SFL worked with the Project Officer (PO) and SHG to conduct a range of stakeholder consultations and youth engagement sessions on the IWA NCA Management Plans.

Core Delivery Group

To support project delivery, a wider Core Delivery Group (CDG) was established during Year 1 (Y1) of the project. This consisted of PMG representatives, additional staff members from Project Partner organisations, and key specialists from the SHNT, although regular meetings did not take place during Year 2 (Y2) of the project. With the onboarding of the PO in Y2, the CDG was reinstated and now also includes representatives from the SHG Planning Section and the Chamber of Commerce. The CDG meet monthly to help steer the project.

Project Stakeholders

A key objective of the project is to raise stakeholder and public awareness about the need for sustainably managed NCAs in order to maximise stakeholder buy-in for the Management Plans. This has been continued in a multitude of ways during this reporting period. Firstly, the PO and SHG Chief Environmental Officer held an engagement session in Jamestown in October 2023, to raise awareness of the project, engage people in conversation about the NCAs and to complete community surveys to establish stakeholder understanding in relation to the NCAs and their management (**see Section 3.1**). Secondly, a range of individual meetings have been held with key stakeholders that were identified through the Stakeholder Communication & Engagement Plan developed in Y2 of the project. These were led by the PO, with additional support from SHG, as well as JNCC and SFL during their respective on-island visits in February and March 2024. And finally, two workshops and a youth engagement session were also held during February and March 2024 to provide key stakeholders and the youth of STH an opportunity to feed into the development of the IWA NCA Management Plans.

3.   Project progress

3.1   Progress in carrying out project Activities

Following the Change Request (CR23-095) submitted in Y3Q3 and subsequently approved in Y3Q4 the activities listed below have been amended since the previous Annual Report, and we report on the progress of each here.

Output 1: Up to 13 NCA Management Plans, which include governance arrangements, submitted to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement.

Summary: Activity 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 have been completed on scheduled but it is noted there will be ongoing additions to these products throughout the life of the project. There have been some delays to Activity 1.3 which was due to commence in this reporting period. The remaining activities are progressing to schedule.

Activity 1.1: Data on the NCAs has been collated throughout the drafting of the baseline reports (Activity 1.4), as well as through the stakeholder consultation workshops for the IWA NCA Management Plans which were conducted in this reporting period (see Activity 4.5). As the stakeholder consultation process will continue throughout the life of the project, any additional data that becomes available or is identified will be collated.

Activity 1.2: The pressures and threats of each of the NCAs were included in the baseline reports (Activity 1.4). As the stakeholder consultation process will continue throughout the life of the project, any additional data on pressures and threats that becomes available or is identified will be collated.

Activity 1.3: Due to delays in recruitment and onboarding of new JNCC staff who will assist the project team with this activity, it was not possible to commence the initial steps of this activity which had been planned for the end of Y3Q4. However, at the time of preparing this report, JNCC staff are now in place, and it is anticipated that the task will still be completed according to schedule (i.e. delivery by Y4Q1).

Activity 1.4: As reported in Annual Report 2 (AR2), the 13 NCA baseline reports are complete but will remain as 'living' documents, to be updated throughout the life of the project, as additional existing data is identified or can be accessed; or as new data is collected (e.g. under Activity 1.5); therefore, this activity is ongoing.

Activity 1.5: A contract has been drafted for the SHNT to oversee this piece of work (**Annex 4a**), which is anticipated to commence in Y4Q1.

Activity 1.6: As reported in AR2, the 13 NCA baseline reports are complete but will remain as 'living' documents, to be updated throughout the life of the project. During this reporting round, additional information has been collated for the IWA NCAs via the stakeholder consultation process that took place in Y3Q4. Where relevant, this will be incorporated into the IWA baseline reports prior to the draft Management Plans going out to public consultation in Y4Q1. The process will be repeated for the remaining Nature Reserves and National Parks NCAs during the next reporting period.

Activity 1.7: There was no planned work against this activity in this reporting period.

Activity 1.8: Management Plans for the five IWA NCAs have been drafted in this reporting round (**Annex 4b**). Management Plans for the remaining eight NCAs will be developed in the next reporting round.

Activity 1.9: Targeted stakeholder consultations on the draft IWA NCA Management Plans have been conducted via both 1:1 meetings and group workshops. Feedback is currently being collated (**Annex 4c**) and will be used to update the Management Plans prior to submission for public consultation.

Activity 1.10: There was no planned work against this activity in this reporting period.

Output 2: Trained SHG/National Trust Officers able to manage, monitor, assess, report, intervene and undertake future reviews of Management Plans and determine the effectiveness of NCA sites (capacity, guidance and tools)

Summary: There was no planned work against these activities in this reporting period. (NB: Activity 2.1 was reported upon in Y1).

Output 3: NCA boundaries are reviewed to ensure they align with up-to-date ecological data, and methods for monitoring effectiveness and sustainability of the NCA Management Plans in order to achieve desired nature conservation and socio-economic outcomes are adopted.

Summary: Good progress on all activities scheduled to take place during this reporting period.

Activity 3.1: A review of environmental data storage and management in STH was undertaken in Y2 by SFL, in consultation with SHG. Data has continued to be compiled during Y3 as the baseline reports and Management Plans have been developed. Further population of the database with products from this project will continue in Year 4 (Y4) of the project.

Activity 3.2: There was no planned work against this activity in this reporting period.

Activity 3.3: The desk-based review of potential land-management tools has commenced (**Annex 5a**), led by JNCC. This piece of work is being refined through engagement with the CDG to identify criteria relating to the tools to enable maximum relevance to STH. This piece of work will continue in Y4.

Activity 3.4 – 3.7: A Boundary Revision Working Group (BRWG), consisting of members from the Project Partners and all relevant stakeholders, was established in Y3Q4 in order to discuss, agree and, in the first instance, trial the process by which the boundaries of the NCAs could be reviewed (initial stage of Activity 3.4) (**Annex 5b**). Following the steps of the proposed process, the ground-truthing exercise was trialled by conducting a site visit at the Bottomwoods IWA NCA by the BRWG. Initial feedback from this exercise was that the process, with some refinements, would meet the objectives of the boundary revision work, and that it would be essential to undertake site visits and ground truthing at all of the NCAs to confirm if the boundaries needed to be revised or not (initial stage of Activity 3.6). Therefore, the process will be formally agreed with the CDG in early Y4Q1 (Activity 3.5; second stage of Activity 3.6), and then rolled out to the remaining NCAs during Y4 (second stage of Activity 3.4). As each site visit is conducted, NCA boundary maps will be updated as required (Activity 3.7) and then presented to SHG for their onward consideration and endorsement via the SHG LDCP review process. Note, the BRWG concluded that no updates were needed for the Bottomwoods IWA NCA.

Output 4: Stakeholder awareness and understanding of the benefits of sustainably managed NCAs to maximise stakeholder buy-in and engagement during the development of the Management Plans.

Summary: Good progress on all activities scheduled to take place during this reporting period.

Activity 4.1: This activity was completed and reported upon in Y2. However, the stakeholder list and communications and engagement plan are considered 'living' documents, and, due to the importance of adapting stakeholder engagement based on feedback and lessons learnt, both will be reviewed/updated as necessary throughout the life of the project.

Activity 4.2: Using the stakeholder engagement and communications plan developed under Activity 4.1, a number of stakeholder events have been delivered in Y3 of the project – see details summarised under Activities 4.3 – 4.5.

Activity 4.3: In October 2023, a short survey was delivered both in person (through a stakeholder engagement session held at Jamestown, led by the PO and SHG) and online (**Annex 6a**). This provided an opportunity for the wider community of STH to engage with the project. The survey received 53 responses and explored community awareness of the NCAs, as well as use and benefits of the NCAs (**Annex 6b**). The survey will be repeated towards the end of the project to assess any changes in stakeholder awareness.

Activity 4.4 and 4.5: Two targeted stakeholder workshops were held in March 2024 to review both the information included in the baseline reports (Activity 4.4) and the draft IWA NCA Management Plans (Activity 4.5). Specific 1:1 stakeholder meetings were held alongside these to further enable key stakeholders to provide input into both documents. This process will be repeated in Y4 for development of the Nature Reserves and National Parks NCA Management Plans. A youth engagement session was also held with the New Horizons youth group in March 2024 to introduce the concept of the NCA Management Plans, and to provide an opportunity for the younger generation of STH to input into the process. A draft summary of the consultation and engagement sessions are provided in **Annex 6c,d,e**) – reports will be finalised in Y4Q1.

Activity 4.6: There was no planned work against this activity in this reporting period; however initial discussions have taken place within the PMG to understand the process that governs how formal public consultations need to be conducted on STH. These considerations will be taken into account during the planning of the NCA Management Plan public consultations.

Activity 4.7: The gender balance at stakeholder workshops has been monitored and will continue to be considered to ensure equitable engagement. A breakdown of the gender balance for the workshops held in Y3 is provided in Section 3.2, Output 4.

Output 5: Project management, monitoring, and evaluation

Summary: All planned activities for this reporting round have commenced or been completed on schedule.

Activity 5.1: This activity was completed in Y1, and the key Project Partners continue to meet regularly (see Section 2).

Activity 5.2: A CDG was established in Y1, and regular meetings have been reinstated after a hiatus in Y2 (see Section 2).

Activity 5.3: The recruitment process for a PO was undertaken at the end of Y2Q4, with a successful candidate selected and in-post (on STH) by June 2023. The PO carried out their duties effectively, however, in January 2024, they notified the PMG of their intention to resign from the project at the end of March 2024. (Note, PO contract was due to run until project end). Therefore, the Project Partners have been working to identify solutions to ensure that project delivery is not impacted in the long term. It is anticipated that a Change Request will be submitted in Y4Q1 to account for any adjustments to activities or timelines that will need to be made given this development (see further details in Section 14).

Activity 5.4: A contract has been drafted for the SHNT to oversee the Data Officer who will digitise existing invertebrate data (**Annex 4a**). It is anticipated that the officer will be in post by early Y4Q1.

Activity 5.5: A Monitoring and Evaluation plan, together with a project Risk Register and Issues Log has been developed for the project (**see Section 6 and Annex 7a,b**). These are updated and reviewed regularly by the Project Leader and PMG.

Activity 5.6: The development of the methodology for gender monitoring and evaluation has been developed and is being used.

Activities 5.7: This activity is ongoing throughout the life of the project. All activity and financial reports have been submitted to DPLUS as required.

3.2   Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Up to 13 NCA Management Plans, which include governance arrangements, submitted to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement.

Output 1 is progressing according to schedule and progress against the individual Indicators is outlined fully in the **Annex 1** logframe. At the start of the project, no Management Plans were in place for any of the 13 NCA's included in the project. The Management Plans and associated governance are not due for delivery until the end of the project, but some good progress has been made, including updating the baseline reports for each of the 13 NCAs (**see Section 3.1, Output 1**) based upon further stakeholder consultation, as well as development of a methodology for the boundary revision process (**see Section 3.1, Output 3**), which has been identified as a critical step and incorporated into the project under the Change Request submitted in Y3 (CR23-095). Additionally, five draft Management Plans for the IWA NCAs have been developed, involving significant targeted stakeholder engagement (**see Section 3.1, Output 1 and 4**). Although the resignation of the PO will require some replanning (**see Section 14**), and may delay

immediate progress on some activities, this is not expected to have an overall impact on the ability of the project to meet Output 1 if proposed changes to timelines (which will be submitted through the formal Change Request process) are approved. On this assumption, it is expected that Output 1 will be achieved, and the current Indicators are still considered appropriate.

Output 2: Trained SHG/National Trust Officers able to manage, monitor, assess, report, intervene and undertake future reviews of Management Plans and determine the effectiveness of NCA sites (capacity, guidance and tools).

It is expected that by the end of the project, all relevant SHG and SHNT staff will have the ability to implement and review NCA Management Plans. Most of the work required to meet this Output will occur during Y4, apart from the GIS training that took place during Y1 (**Indicator 2.1**) – see full details of progress against each Indicator outlined in the **Annex 1** logframe. It is expected that Output 2 will be achieved within the project timeframe (if pending Change Request is approved), and the current Indicators are still considered appropriate.

Output 3: NCA boundaries are reviewed to ensure they align with up-to-date ecological data, and methods for monitoring effectiveness and sustainability of the NCA Management Plans in order to achieve desired nature conservation and socio-economic outcomes are adopted (WP3).

Most of the work required to meet this Output will occur during Y4 – see full details of progress against each Indicator outlined in the **Annex 1** logframe. The boundary revision process which has been developed and trialled in this reporting round (**see Section 3.1, Output 3**), forms the foundation for continuing this Output in Y4. It is expected that Output 3 will still be achieved within the project timeframe (if pending Change Request is approved), and the current Indicators are still considered appropriate.

Output 4: Stakeholder awareness and understanding of the benefits of sustainably managed NCAs to maximise stakeholder buy-in and engagement during the development of the Management Plans.

Significant progress has been made on this output in this reporting round – see full details of progress against each Indicator outlined in the **Annex 1** logframe. The Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan (**Indicator 4.1**), produced during Y2, has provided a strong foundation for engaging key stakeholders (**Indicator 4.2**). Through the survey conducted in Y3, a baseline of community understanding and awareness of the benefits of the NCAs has been established (**Indicator 4.3**).

As part of the IWA NCA Management Plan development process and boundary review, two workshops and one site visit have taken place with key stakeholders. Targeted engagements have been prioritised at this stage to ensure the actions within the Management Plans remain focussed and relevant to support the conservation, social and economic needs of each NCA, prior to the Management Plans undergoing a wider public consultation process. One workshop was held with the Environment, Natural Resources & Planning Portfolio (ENRP), where all Sections were represented. Thirty-one people attended (**Indicator 4.4**), with a 58% male:42% female ratio (**Indicator 4.5**). A second workshop was held with a broad range of stakeholders, consisting of 28 people (**Indicator 4.4**) with a 46% male:54% female gender ratio (**Indicator 4.5**). Including the workshops held in Y2, the project continues to engage stakeholders in workshops with an almost 50:50 gender split average (49% males:51% females) (**Indicator 4.5**). Where appropriate, 1:1 meetings with stakeholders have also taken place alongside the workshops.

The wider STH community have also been engaged during Y3, including through a stakeholder engagement session in Jamestown with the Chief Environmental Officer and the PO, and a youth engagement session through a local youth group, to help raise awareness of the value and benefits that sustainably managed NCAs can bring to St Helena (**Indicator 4.3**).

It is expected that Output 4 will be achieved within the project timeframe (if pending Change Request is approved), and the current Indicators are still considered appropriate.

Output 5: Project management, monitoring, and evaluation

Good progress has been made against Output 5 – see full details of progress against each Indicator outlined in the **Annex 1** logframe. This Output is primarily focussed on project management and monitoring. The PMG is currently meeting every other week, and the CDG monthly, to review project progress (**Indicator 5.1 and 5.2**); regular meetings will continue to occur throughout the project, with frequency changed as required. The PO was recruited (**Indicator 5.3**); however as noted in Section 3, Output 5 due to their resignation at the end of Y3Q4, some replanning will be required. A contract has been drafted to recruit a Data Officer (**Indicator 5.4**) through the SHNT to digitise invertebrate records, and it is anticipated the officer will be in-post by early Y4Q1. Work against **Indicators 5.6** and **5.7** are ongoing with no issues. Overall, it is therefore expected that Output 5 will be achieved within the project timeframe (if pending Change Request is approved), and the current Indicators are still considered appropriate.

3.3   Progress towards the project Outcome

The stated outcome for this project is '*Community supported management plans to support the long-term sustainable improvement of St Helena's 13 National Conservation Areas presented to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement*'.

The project has made good progress towards achieving this outcome in this reporting period. Evidence cited in **Section 3.2 (all Outputs)** as well as **Annexes 4-7** shows progression against this.

During this reporting period, work has focused on refining the Management Plan development process, establishing the boundary revision process, and drafting Management Plans for the five IWA NCAs. This has included significant stakeholder engagement to build their support, which will be shown in Y4 through their agreement/adoption of the Management Plans (**Indicator 0.1 and 0.2**). The baseline reports have continued to be updated as more data has become accessible as a result of the engagement work. Additionally, the boundary review process has been established, which will support in the justification of the NCA boundaries, to be submitted alongside the Management Plans in Y4. These have also provided a strong foundation for achieving the Outcome, providing a structure through which to identify key research gaps (**linked to Indicator 0.3**) and for developing the Management Plans themselves (**Indicator 0.1**). Barring Outcome indicator 0.3 (see further details in Section 8, Comment 2), all other Outcome indicators are still considered appropriate, and, assuming the pending Change Request is approved, we anticipate that the project will be able to achieve the stated Outcome by the end of the project. (Note, current project end-date is December 2024; Change Request will seek approval for an extension to March 2025).

3.4   Monitoring of assumptions

Several important Risks and Assumptions were identified for this project and included in the project logframe (see **Annex 2**). At its inception, the project team developed a Risk Register, as well as an Issues Log, to monitor critical conditions for project success. The register allows monitoring of the original risks and assumptions, as well as the addition of new risks and assumptions. Unless otherwise noted below, all identified risks and assumptions remain true. Also noted are any actions taken to manage assumptions relevant to this reporting period.

Assumption 5.4. A suitable on-island Project Officer, and Data Officer can be appointed within required time-frames

Comments: As noted in previous Annual Reports, the recruitment of the PO did not occur within the original timeframes, but the Project Partners showed considerable innovation and flexibility to progress as many of the scheduled activities until such time as a PO was recruited and was in post (achieved by June 2023). Unfortunately, in January 2024, the PO indicated that they would be resigning from the position and the project at the end of March 2024. Given the remaining project timeline, it is not expected that a new fulltime PO will be recruited. Although this assumption is no longer met w.r.t the PO, the

Project Partners are working to identify new ways of ensuring project activities will be able to continue with the anticipated work programme and timeline (see Section 14).

No issues are currently anticipated w.r.t the recruitment of the Data Officer (via SHNT) who will be digitising invertebrate records. Therefore, the assumption remains true for this part of Assumption 5.4.

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

SHG has a range of policies and strategies in place, or in development, which strive to achieve good environmental management and where their implementation will be enhanced by increased knowledge and tools provided by this project. Of most importance to this project, DPLUS154 will deliver Management Plans for each of the 13 identified NCAs. Provision and adoption of these Management Plans are a mandatory requirement under the STH Land Development Control Plan (2012-22[1]) to complete the full legal designation of an NCA. Legal designation will serve to strengthen the protection of STH's unique flora and fauna, which account for the majority of the UK's endemic species. The project will also contribute to helping SHG meet the ten commitments under the SHG Environment Charter.

Project outcomes will also support UK policy objectives within the UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy (UKOTBS) and the 25 Year Environmental Plan (25YEP). Strategic priorities under the current (2014) UKOTBS[2] include providing UK Government support to: 1) enable data collection on the location and status of biodiversity interests and the human activities affecting biodiversity to inform the preparation of policies and management plans (including baseline survey and subsequent monitoring); and 2) develop tools to value ecosystem services to inform sustainable development policies and practices. By improving knowledge on baseline biodiversity, developing tools that can help assess natural capital, including indicator development, this project will also contribute to the following key policy areas of the 25YEP: Using and managing land sustainably and recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes.

The Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) has been extended to STH and this project will contribute to achieving the following CBD Kunming-Montreal 2030 Global Targets:

- Target 1 (*Ensure that all areas are under participatory integrated biodiversity including spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land and sea use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities*). This will be through identifying the most effective management processes for each of the NCAs as part of the Management Plan development process, and identifying ways to reduce the key threats of habitat loss and disturbance, with stakeholder engagement throughout thereby providing resilience from a healthy natural environment while respecting the rights of the local community.

- Target 3 (*Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation*

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[2] In their capacity as statutory international nature conservation advisors to the UK Government, JNCC is supporting Defra and the UK Overseas Territories to update the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy (2009; Review 2014). The aim of this work is to build collaboration and consensus to deliver both the UK Government and OT Governments priorities for biodiversity and nature conservation. The intention is to develop this Strategy within the next 6 months via consultation with each of the UKOTS, and then support OT Governments with the development of implementation plans during the next 12 months. As the priorities take shape, it will be assessed as to how DPLUS154 aligns with them.

outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories). This will be through confirming management and legal status of STHs 13 terrestrial NCAs that cover 38% of STHs landmass via stakeholder developed and agreed Management Plans for each NCA. Analytical tools to review effectiveness of Management Plans and support alternative management options will also be developed.

In this reporting round, the DPLUS154 project has continued to collate existing data to support the NCA Management Plans and subsequent management/reporting. Additionally, stakeholders have been engaged in exploring the importance of NCAs, and the positive role the Management Plans will play (**see Section 3.1 and 3.2, Output 4 and Annex 6**).

5.   Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[3].	80%
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[4].	100%

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

Gender inclusion data will be collected within every part of the project to establish if there are differences of roles between genders. This will include those working within Government and direct stakeholders and in the wider consultation process. The project will promote gender equality where possible and ensure equal opportunities to participate in consultation. The recruitment, selection and hiring processes of the PO has been guided by gender equality principles.

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[3] A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

[4] Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

So far, all stakeholder workshops have had an almost 50:50 gender split average (49% males:51% females) – see further details in **Section 3.3, Output 4**.

6.   Monitoring and evaluation

Two tools have been developed for the project which are used by the PMG to effectively monitor and govern the project: a Risk Register and Issues Log (**Annex 7**). The PMG (JNCC, SHG, SFL) is jointly responsible for monitoring and steering the project, ensuring it aligns with the project proposal, and that the project is delivered on time and within budget. The PMG will review and approve all primary project outputs prior to external release. There have been no major changes or additions to the Risk Register or Issues Log during the reporting period.

Project Indicators and Outputs are listed within the project logframe (**Annex 2**) and support the monitoring and evaluation of the project. As noted in previous and this Annual Report, timeframes have been amended (through approved Change Requests) for some indicators in the logframe because of delays in project start date and subsequent challenges presented by overlapping commitments by some key staff in SHG, as well as ongoing delays to the recruitment of the PO. Although there have been small amendments to the project Outputs, and activities have been revised and restructured for clarity, it has not changed the overall purpose of the project. Progress towards the stated Outcome and Outputs can be clearly cross-referenced with the relevant Indicators. As most of the indicators relate to specific markers of progress or end products, they are relatively easy to measure – e.g., number of people trained, creation of reports or databases, results from before and after surveys to gauge levels of increased capacity.

7.   Lessons learnt

In this reporting period, the primary aspect that has been of benefit to the project, and would be recommended approaches for other projects where relevant is:

- *Adaptability and flexibility*: Project Partners have shown adaptability and flexibility in the face of some of ongoing challenges; in this reporting period, particularly around news that the PO wished to resign at the end of the Y3Q4, and the recognised importance of undertaking a boundary review process, which was not initially part of the project (see further details in **Section 14**). By working together, formulating alternative options, and the Project Partners taking on additional roles, the majority of tasks that had been scheduled for Y3 were started or completed as planned.

The following points continued to be of benefit to the project, and may also be something other projects wish to consider:

- *In-territory Partner*: Having SHG as a lead partner on the project has proved invaluable for: i) ensuring the direction of the project and the outputs will be of true value and relevance to STH; and ii) identifying and engaging with relevant on-island stakeholders which will be critical for helping to also ensure outputs are relevant and engendering buy-in amongst wider stakeholders.

- *Working with known partners*: The strong, established relationships between all Project Partners (JNCC, SHG, SFL) has resulted in good cooperation and ensured that a high level of enthusiasm for project has been maintained.

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

We received a number of useful comments from the Reviewer on our first Annual Report (AR1) which were to be addressed in Annual Report 3 (AR3):

Comment 1: Provide full (pdf) documents – rather than screenshots for supporting evidence to enable the reviewer to comment on the technical quality of the work undertaken.

- *Action taken*: Full (pdf) documents have been provided, where relevant, as evidence to support details provided in this Annual Report for Y3 of the project.

Comment 2: Indicator 0.3 is not measurable in the Project lifetime: can this be substituted by something which can.

- *Action taken*: Drawing on the report which will be produced as part of Activity 1.10 and delivered as Indicator 1.7, it could be possible to change Outcome Indicator 0.3 to the following: '*At least two concept notes, based on research projects designed to fill gaps in knowledge for the nature NCAs are developed by project end (Y4Q3)*'. The means of verification, which could be delivered within the life of the project could then be two concept notes, which could be used by SHG or partners to apply for funding from relevant sources.

- The project team can capture this in the Change Request which is being prepared for submission in Y4Q1.

Comment 3: Review DEC comments on grant award letter (outlined in Section 8, Annual Report 1 review)

- *Action taken*: see responses in **Annex 8a.**

Comment 4: Comment on the likelihood of SHG providing budgets to fund implementation of the NCA Management Plans developed by the project.

- *Action taken*: It was recognised by the project team that onward success of the Management Plans will depend in part on whether there are sufficient financial and human resources within SHG and on-island partners to implement them. Therefore, an activity (now Activity 1.7) and an indicator (now Indicator 1.5) on exploring Sustainable Financing Mechanisms and assessing their applicability to STH in terms of supporting the implementation of NCAs was added to the programme of work in the Change Request submitted in Y2 (CR22-129). This is seen as a good, and essential first step to determining how implementation of the NCA Management Plans will be supported by SHG.

9. Risk Management

The Risk Register allows monitoring of project risks and is overseen by the PMG. There have been no new risks that have arisen in the last 12 months, but delayed recruitment, followed by notification of the impending resignation of the PO at the end of Y3Q4 will mean some changes to how the remainder of the project will be delivered. To mitigate further impact of this situation, and to prevent significant risk to project delivery, Project Partners have been discussing possible options, and, at the time of writing this report, a Change Request is being prepared. In the meantime, all Project Partners are dedicating additional time to the project to ensure that project activities are able to move forward, and the project timelines are not impacted significantly. This is intended to prevent the need for significant adaptations to project design.

10. Sustainability and legacy

The project has been promoted through the stakeholder engagement events held throughout this reporting period (**Section 3.1, Output 4; Annex 6**). There has been some informal media interest in the project, and it is hoped that the communications plan and expected stakeholder engagement will continue to increase interest and capacity resulting from the project.

There are currently no foreseen changes to the planned exit strategy, and therefore project outcomes will still be sustained in the long term through:

- Trained STH-based personnel (minimum 6), with skills spread across SHG/SHNT, to implement and review management options in all the NCAs, and in sufficient number to build on-island resilience.

- At least two SHG individuals undergoing Train-the-Trainer programmes to enable future on-island training of relevant management tools.

- A continued collaborative partnership working between SHG and key stakeholders, to deliver the management of other NCAs, as determined through the project.

- Continued use, by SHG/Stakeholders of the NCA database and effectiveness framework to support on-going sustainable management of the NCAs.

- Local communities/stakeholders actively adopting sustainable land-use activities driven by their understanding of the role and value of biodiversity.

- SHNT committing to ongoing management of the Heart-Shaped Waterfall and Millennium Forest NCAs, as well as continued partnerships with SHG for the five IWA NCAs.

In addition to this, JNCC's UKOT programme provides long-term support to the Territories. In parallel with the work of DPLUS154, JNCC continues to build GIS capacity in STH. They are also working with the Territories, including STH to develop long-term condition monitoring programmes based on the UK Government's 25YEP framework, as well developing a new UK Overseas Territory Biodiversity Strategy.

11. Darwin Plus identity

There is a good understanding of the Darwin Initiative, including DPLUS, within STH, with a range of projects having been funded by it over the years.

Within the PMG, the project is referred to by the Darwin Project Code (DPLUS154), ensuring that the Darwin identity is always at the forefront when the project is discussed. The DPLUS logo has been included along with all Project Partner logos on all project outputs so far, including all workshop presentations and reports, the stakeholder report, the database report, the baseline reports, and the draft Management Plans (**see Annexes 4-6**). DPLUS was also introduced as the project funder in each of the presentations given at the workshop sessions. It will continue to be highlighted on all stakeholder engagement sessions and project documents during the remainder of the project.

12. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	Yes
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes, the head of HR at JNCC is the Safeguarding lead with support from HR Business Partners. *Email:* ███████████
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No

What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 0% Planned: 60%; training can also be arranged for anyone that requires it.

Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.
The JNCC safeguarding policy has recently (2023) been updated, taking onboard feedback from colleagues. To keep it in line with important priorities as they become clear in safeguarding, the policy is reviewed annually. Any safeguarding issues that are identified will be dealt with in a confidential and speedy manner. An overview of the JNCC policy is also undertaken by the JNCC Audit and Risk Assurance

Committee (ARAC) board regularly and changes are made where necessary to keep it current and at the heart of every project.
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify. No formal developments or activities are planned, however, as the lead partner, JNCC is committed to creating a safe environment for all staff and those with whom we work. For JNCC, safeguarding means protecting its staff and communities from potential harm from encountering anyone working for, or with us, or from our activities/programmes of work. JNCC's primary safeguarding objective is to do no harm, and we take a zero-tolerance approach to anyone who contravenes our policies. Safeguarding is a specific risk in the JNCC organisational risk register. JNCC's safeguarding policy makes clear the JNCC policy applies to all partners and contractors. For this project, the partners MoU: a) incorporate JNCC's Safeguarding Policy or otherwise implement reasonable due diligence and monitoring procedures of its sub-awards consistent with JNCC's Policy; b) include appropriate language requiring contracting entities/individuals, and their employees/volunteers to abide with a Code of Conduct that reflects standards of JNCC's Policy; and c) expressly state that the failure of those entities/individuals to take preventive measures against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child abuse, to investigate and report allegations in a timely manner, or to take corrective actions when breaches have occurred, shall constitute grounds for JNCC to terminate such agreements.
Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants. N/A
Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved. N/A

13.   Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure <u>during the reporting period</u> (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2023/24 D+ Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual D+ Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	███			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				Not as many consumables were required or banking fees incurred as anticipated
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				An expense for ███ listed in this budget line should not have been included, and so was not claimed against, and funds will be surrendered.
TOTAL	91,486	89,335.06		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)	███		JNCC and SHG covering in-kind staff time. JNCC covering T&S costs.
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			N/A

14.   Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

A first step towards developing the Management Plans has been the compilation of baseline reports for each of the target NCAs. The baseline reports have compiled, for the first time, all relevant existing ecological data for each NCA. In a parallel, but separate process to DPLUS154, SHG have commenced a review of the STH 2012-2022 Land Development Control Plan (LDCP). It was identified through this review that the justification for the NCA boundaries, which were designated under the 2012-2022 LDCP, should be reviewed using the most recent ecological data available. As there is new data available since their original designation, it has been highlighted that this could result in the NCA boundaries needing to be revised, and that this may have consequences for the Management Plans being developed as part of DPLUS154. As such, it is seen as critical to review the boundaries before the Management Plans are submitted to public consultation. It is proposed that the initial review of the NCA boundaries is undertaken as part of DPLUS154, with findings presented to SHG for further consideration. Outcomes will be incorporated where relevant into the NCA Management Plans to help ensure their endorsement (primary objective of DPLUS154).

As the boundary review work was not included in the original project scope, it was necessary to submit a Change Request (CR23-095), which was subsequently approved. This request outlined the changes to the planned programme of work and associated budget to incorporate these essential new tasks. Therefore, during Y3, the Project Partners have started to identify how best to undertake this boundary review process, and the progress towards this is detailed in **Section 3.1, Output 3**.

In addition to this, DPLUS154 has continued to face challenges regarding the role of the PO. While there were delays to the recruitment of the PO, (as detailed in previous annual reports), the position was successfully filled in March 2023 and the PO commenced their post, on STH, in June 2023. As the PO was recruited through SFL but based within SHG, both of these Project Partners were able to provide significant direct support to the role, onboarding the PO quickly and significantly supporting project delivery. The PO carried out their duties effectively; unfortunately, however, the PO took the decision (for a number of personal reasons) to resign from the post and finished working on the project at the end of March 2024 – thereby also coinciding with the end of this reporting period.

To reduce the impact of this, Project Partners have been committed to developing a revised project implementation plan that will enable project delivery to continue. As a first step, an Options Paper was prepared by SFL for discussion by the PMG. With both JNCC and SFL team members physically on STH in February and March, this presented a good opportunity for all Project Partners (i.e. JNCC, SHG, SFL) to hold in-person meetings, which has further helped shape options for moving the project forward and limiting impact on project delivery once the PO had left the project. At this stage, due to time restrictions, it has been recognised that replacing the PO directly is unlikely to be the best course of action for the project. Instead, Project Partners are working to reassign some tasks amongst each Project Partner and identify potential additional contracting opportunities to support the ongoing development of the NCA Management Plans. To counter some of the inevitable delays the replanning process will take, and time required to identify and put sub-contracts in place, it is anticipated that the project end-date will need to be revised from the current agreed date of December 2024, to at least March 2025. These changes will be captured in a Change Request that will be formally submitted to DPLUS early in Y4.

15.   OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

We have opted not to complete this section for this reporting round.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2023-2024

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact **The network of 13 'nature' National Conservation Areas are effectively governed, with engaged communities to protect and enhance St Helena's unique biodiversity and improve resilience to future pressures.**	In this reporting period, the primary contribution towards achieving the stated Impact of this project has the development of draft Management Plans for each of the five Important Wirebird Area (IWA) NCAs. Additionally, activities focusing on stakeholder engagement have enabled key stakeholders to feed into the development of these Management Plans, and the project team have refined the process for how each of the remaining NCA Management Plans will be developed. This will help ensure that all NCA Management Plans are relevant and effective, to ensure their long-term success in conserving the biodiversity of STH.	█████████████████
Outcome Community supported management plans to support the long-term sustainable improvement of St Helena's 13 nature National Conservation Areas presented to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 Community members (including landowners) agree Management Plans to support sustainable management of the NCAs (by Y4Q3).	0.1 Community engagement in Y3 has been achieved through a survey and a number of engagement events (meetings, workshops), including a youth session as part of the IWA NCA Management Plan development process.	Community engagement will continue to be a significant aspect of the project, through additional community events held as part of the Management Plan development process, in line with the stakeholder/community engagement and communication strategy.
Outcome indicator 0.2 Management Plans for up to 13 nature NCAs submitted to SHG for adoption (by Y4Q3).	The draft baseline reports have been compiled and are being considered as living documents to support the ongoing Management Plan development process. Management Plans for the five IWA NCAs have been drafted, with significant	Up to eight remaining Management Plans will be developed following the same process that was used for the IWA NCAs, with all draft Management Plans undergoing

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
	stakeholder engagement as part of the development process.	public consultation prior to being submitted to SHG for formal adoption.
Outcome indicator 0.3 At least 2 research projects designed to fill gaps in knowledge for the nature NCAs apply for funding within 3 years of project end.	0.3 Research projects will be informed by the finalised baseline reports and summaries of stakeholder consultation workshops held across Y3 and Y4 for each of the NCA types to support Management Plan development.	Future research recommendations will be identified as part of a report submitted to SHG under Output 1.
Output 1 Up to 13 NCA Management Plans, which include governance arrangements, submitted to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement (WP1).		
Output indicator 1.1 Existing data for each NCA identified (by Y2Q4) and centralised into database (by Y4Q3)	1.1 Ongoing. Data has been identified but will continue to be updated as the project progresses, as it is expected that there will be further data that is identified or becomes accessible. Database report has been produced in the previous reporting period, to form the foundation for database development.	Any additional data identified will be centralised into the database once it is developed (Activity 3.4).
Output indicator 1.2 Baseline assessment reports (including pressures and threats assessment) for up to 13 nature NCAs completed and delivered to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y3Q4)	1.2 Ongoing. Baseline reports have been completed and reviewed by the CDG and PMG, but will remain as living documents in case more data becomes accessible, as well as through the NCA Management Plan development workshops and boundary review work.	Any additional data identified will be added into the baseline reports (Activity 1.1, 1.2).
Output indicator 1.3 Metrics and indicators for monitoring environmental or socio-economic change in the nature NCAs, and for monitoring effectiveness of Management Plans, identified and agreed by Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q2).	1.3 Scheduled for Y4 of the project, however the baseline reports will help to inform this indicator.	Based on the baseline reports (Indicator 1.2), metrics and indicators will be identified (Activity 1.3) through review of existing information and consultation with SHG.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 1.4 Data identified through compilation of baseline reports (Activity 1.1) that needs digitising is processed (by Y4Q1) and centralised into NCA database (by Y4Q2).	1.4 Scheduled for Y4 of the project, however the baseline reports and database report will help to inform this indicator.	Additional invertebrate data will be processed and digitized by SHNT (Activity 1.5) and baseline reports updated as necessary (Activity 1.1, 1.2).
Output indicator 1.5 Desk based literature review on Sustainable Financing Mechanisms (SFMs), and assessment of their applicability to St Helena, presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1).	1.5 Scheduled for Y4 of the project, however Project Partners have initiated the scoping of this piece of work, and drafting of contract.	Contract issued to suitable sub-contractor to undertake this piece of work (Activity 1.7)
Output indicator 1.6 Management Plans (including framework for monitoring effectiveness and SFM options) for up to 13 nature NCAs completed and delivered to SHG (by Y4Q3).	1.6 Scheduled for Y4 of the project, however the Management Plans for the five IWA NCA have been drafted and are undergoing final stakeholder consultation prior to the first formal public consultation.	Following the process used for the IWA NCA Management Plans, the remaining 8 NCA Management Plans will be developed and delivered to SHG (Activity 1.8, 1.9, 4.5).
Output indicator 1.7 Report on future research recommendations to fill gaps to support ongoing implementation of the Management Plans delivered to Project Partners and key stakeholder (by Y4Q2).	1.7 Scheduled for Y4 of the project.	Exploring future areas of priority research will continue to be built into the various stakeholder consultations, as well as analysis of what would be beneficial to help strengthen the NCA Management Plans and tools being developed under the project. These will then be compiled/ranked/assessed in the next reporting period in order to present recommendations to SHG (Activity 1.10)

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Output 2. Trained SHG/National Trust Officers able to manage, monitor, assess, report, intervene and undertake future reviews of Management Plans and determine the effectiveness of NCA sites (capacity, guidance and tools) (WP2).		
Output indicator 2.1. At least three GIS Unit Officers complete training in data preparation, storage, standards and management (by Y1Q4).	2.1 Completed. Initial training provided to SHG and wider stakeholders on mapping/mapping tools/data management by Project Partner SFL during Y1.	N/A
Output indicator 2.2. At least three SHG or SHNT staff complete training in methods for assessing the effectiveness of management plans for the 13 NCA sites (by Y4Q2).	2.2 Scheduled for Y4 of project.	Management Plan effectiveness tools will be agreed by Project Partners and relevant training will be developed (Activity 2.2).
Output indicator 2.3. At least 2 SHG staff (or other key stakeholders) complete external training course that will enhance skills in implementation, monitoring or updating Management Plans (by Y4Q2).	2.3 Scheduled for Y4 of project.	Courses and relevant attendees will be identified (Activity 2.3).
Output indicator 2.4. At least two sessions held with youth groups (e.g. Bug Club) to build knowledge and basic skills in field data collection and species identification, with an initial focus on invertebrates (by Y4Q2).	2.4 Scheduled for Y4 of project. However, additional youth engagement has already been carried out through an engagement session on the IWA NCAs.	Engagement sessions will be designed and delivered (Activity 2.4).
Output indicator 2.5. At least two SHG or SHNT staff complete the Trainer-the-Trainer course in at least one of the project training modules (by Y4Q3).	2.5 Scheduled for Y4 of project.	Training will be designed and delivered (Activity 2.5).
Output 3. NCA boundaries are reviewed to ensure they align with up-to-date ecological data, and methods for monitoring effectiveness and sustainability of the NCA Management Plans in order to achieve desired nature conservation and socio-economic outcomes are adopted (WP3).		
Output indicator 3.1. NCA database created (by Y2Q4), populated with metadata and data, and made available to SHG (by Y4Q3).	3.1 Ongoing. This has started, through the production of a database report and prototype database during Y2.	Additional data from boundary consultations and stakeholder

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
		engagement will be compiled alongside existing data to populate the NCA database (Activity 3.1, 3.2 1.5)
Output indicator 3.2. Desk based literature review of land management tools, and assessment of their applicability to St Helena, presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1).	3.2 In progress. The literature review is underway and a survey identifying key criteria to assess applicability has been distributed across the PMG, CDG and wider stakeholder network.	The completed review will be presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (Activity 3.3)
Output indicator 3.3. Desk based review of NCA boundaries against most up-to-date ecological data undertaken, with options for how boundaries could be updated presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1).	3.3 In progress. Project Partners are agreeing the scope of work, and relevant ecological data has been compiled to inform potential boundary revisions for the IWA NCAs.	Process will be rolled out to the Nature Reserves and National Parks, with all NCA boundary reports submitted to SHG (Activity 3.4, 3.5).
Output indicator 3.4. At least three members of the Core Delivery Group (CDG) participate in consultation to consider boundary revisions options and identify next steps for verification and/or endorsement[†].	3.4 In progress. CDG members are engaged and regularly attend boundary consultation meetings.	Boundary consultation meetings will continue as needed (Activity 3.5, 3.6).
Output indicator 3.5. If required/agreed, revised NCA boundary options verified via ground-truthing.	3.5 Scheduled for Y4 of project. However, one ground-truthing trip for one IWA NCA has been completed to establish scope and process of the ground-truthing process.	Process of ground-truthing will be finalised and rolled out to the remaining 12 NCAs (Activity 3.7).
Output 4. Stakeholder awareness and understanding of the benefits of sustainably managed NCAs to maximise stakeholder buy-in and engagement during development of the Management Plans (WP4).		
Output indicator 4.1. Stakeholder/community engagement and communication strategy developed and agreed by Project Partners (by Y2Q4).	4.1 Completed. The stakeholder communication and engagement strategy was produced in Y2, however it will remain as a living document, being updated as necessary throughout the life of the project.	This strategy will act as a live document and will continue to be updated throughout the project as necessary (Activity 4.1).

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 4.2. At least 10 different communications activities (e.g. news articles, project webpage updates, social media posts, public presentations/interviews) undertaken both on and off-island throughout life of project (by Y4Q3).	4.2 Ongoing. There have been 3 community engagement sessions during Y3: one community engagement session in October 2023 and two workshops in February/March 2024.	There will continue to be a range of stakeholder engagement events following the communications and engagement plan throughout Y4 (Activity 4.2).
Output indicator 4.3. At least 30% increase in stakeholder understanding of the value and benefits that sustainably managed NCAs can bring to St Helena (by Y4Q3).	4.3 Scheduled for Y4 of the project. The baseline survey on stakeholder understanding of NCAs was designed and distributed across the STH community in October 2023.	The survey will be repeated and analysis undertaken during Y4 towards the end of the project (Activity 4.3).
Output indicator 4.4. At least 20 stakeholders regularly attend and engage in consultation meetings over the life of the project (by Y4Q3).	4.4 Ongoing. The February/March workshops engaged 59 participants over the two sessions which focused on the IWA NCAs. Numerous additional 1:1 meetings have also been held with key stakeholders during Y3.	Stakeholder workshops or consultation sessions will be arranged for the Nature Reserves and National Parks NCAs, with feedback being incorporated into the final baseline reports and to inform the development of the management plans (Activity 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6).
Output indicator 4.5. 50:50 gender mix input into the consultation process across the life of the project (by Y4Q3).	Ongoing. The workshops held during Y3 had 53% male and 47% female participant input.	Stakeholder workshops or consultation sessions will be arranged for the Nature Reserves and National Parks NCAs, with feedback being incorporated into the final baseline reports and to inform the development of the management plans (Activity 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
Output 5. Project management, monitoring, and evaluation (WP5).		
Output indicator 5.1. MoU developed and agreed by Project Partners (by Y1Q4) and online meetings of Project Management Group (PMG) held quarterly over life of project.	5.1 Ongoing. MoU is agreed and the PMG meet every second week.	The group will meet according to the schedule agreed throughout Y4 (Activity 5.1).
Output indicator 5.2. ToRs for Project Core Delivery Group (CDG) agreed by members (by Y1Q4); online meetings held quarterly over life of project.	5.2 Ongoing. Membership of the CDG was extended in Y3 to include representatives from the Land Planning and Building Control Division within SHG and the Chamber of Commerce. The CDG meet monthly.	The group will meet according to the schedule agreed throughout Y4 (Activity 5.2).
Output indicator 5.3. On-island Project Officer appointed (by Y2Q4).	5.3. This activity was completed, with the PO appointed and on island by Y3Q1. However, in Y3Q4, the PO notified the PMG of his intention to resign at the end of March 2024.	Conversations with Project Partners are ongoing to establish a plan to mitigate the loss of the on-island PO (see Section 14, Activity 5.3).
Output indicator 5.4. On-island Data Officer appointed (by Y4Q1).	5.4 Ongoing. The contract to digitise invertebrate records is under development in collaboration with SHNT.	The Data Officer to digitise the SHNT invertebrate data will be appointed in Y4Q1 and tasks undertaken according to the agreed scope of work (Activity 5.4).
Output indicator 5.5. Project Monitoring and Evaluation plan, risk assessment and issues log presented to PMG (by Y1Q4). Biannual updates provided to PMG throughout life of project.	5.5 Ongoing. A monitoring and evaluation plan, together with a project Risk Register and Issues Log has been developed for the project and will be maintained and updated throughout the project.	The monitoring and evaluation plan, together with a project Risk Register and Issues Log will continue to be updated regularly (Activity 5.5).
Output indicator 5.6. Methods for gender disaggregation presented to Project Partners (by Y2Q4).	5.6 Ongoing. The methodology has been developed and relevant considerations from Project Partners will continue to be taken into account to enable equal gender participation in stakeholder consultations.	Relevant considerations from Project Partners will continue to be taken into account to enable equal gender participation in

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
		stakeholder consultations. (Activity 5.6).
Output indicator 5.7. DPLUS reports and project finances submitted as required (biannually).	5.7 Ongoing. Reports have been and will continue to be submitted as required.	Activity and financial reports will continue to be prepared and submitted to DPLUS in line with the reporting timetable. (Activity 5.7).

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: The network of 13 'nature' National Conservation Areas are effectively governed, with engaged communities to protect and enhance St Helena's unique biodiversity and improve resilience to future pressures.			
Outcome. **Community supported management plans to support the long-term sustainable improvement of St Helena's 13 nature National Conservation Areas presented to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement.**	0.1 Community members (including landowners) agree Management Plans to support sustainable management of the NCAs (by Y4Q3). 0.2 Management Plans for up to 13 nature NCAs submitted to SHG for adoption (by Y4Q3). 0.3 At least 2 research projects designed to fill gaps in knowledge for the nature NCAs apply for funding within 3 years of project end.	0.1 Management Plans agreed (demonstrated through consultation outcomes/reports) between SHG and community members (including landowners). 0.2 Finalised Management Plans presented to SHG. Documented evidence (e.g. Ministerial meeting minutes) demonstrates intended commitment from SHG to take next steps to adopt and implement plans. 0.3 Applications sent to funders.	Government and local communities remain supportive of the NCA process and fully engage with project to develop Management Plans. St Helena Government remain committed to the adoption and legal endorsement of the 13 Management Plans. St Helena Government remain committed to the identified research priorities and support the submission of relevant project proposals.
Output 1. Up to 13 NCA Management Plans, which include governance arrangements, submitted to SHG for adoption and legal endorsement (WP1).	1.1 Existing data for each NCA identified (by Y2Q4) and centralised into database (by Y4Q3) 1.2 Baseline assessment reports (including pressures and threats assessment) for up to 13 nature NCAs completed and delivered to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y3Q4) 1.3 Metrics and indicators for monitoring environmental or socio-economic change in the nature NCAs, and for monitoring	1.1 Details of available data included in baseline assessment reports; metadata and data uploaded to NCA database. 1.2a Draft versions of baseline assessment reports in project file structure. 1.2b Meeting minutes summarising stakeholder feedback on draft baseline reports in project file structure.	Data can be located and NCA database is developed within project timeframe. Indicators already exist for some sites and are relevant to multiple sites. SHG and key stakeholders can agree format and content of Management Plans for adoption.

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
	effectiveness of Management Plans, identified and agreed by Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q2). 1.4 Data identified through compilation of baseline reports (Activity 1.1) that needs digitising is processed (by Y4Q1) and centralised into NCA database (by Y4Q2). 1.5 Desk based literature review on Sustainable Financing Mechanisms (SFMs), and assessment of their applicability to St Helena, presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1). 1.6 Management Plans (including framework for monitoring effectiveness and SFM options) for up to 13 nature NCAs completed and delivered to SHG (by Y4Q3). 1.7 Report on future research recommendations to fill gaps to support ongoing implementation of the Management Plans delivered to Project Partners and key stakeholder (by Y4Q2).	1.2c Final baseline assessment reports published and available on project webpage. 1.3 Minutes or reports from consultation sessions with Project Partners and key stakeholders confirm details of indicators to be used for monitoring environmental or socio-economic change, and for monitoring management effectiveness of NCA Management Plans. 1.4 Metadata and data uploaded to NCA database. 1.5 SFM summary report and proposed options for St Helena published and available on project webpage. 1.6a Draft versions of Management Plans in project file structure. 1.6b Workshop report(s) summarising stakeholder and public feedback on draft Management Plans published and available on project webpage. 1.6c Final version of Management Plans in project file structure; Email train confirming final version of Management Plans for consideration by SHG for adoption and legal endorsement sent to and received by SHG. 1.7 Report on research recommendations published on project webpage and also	

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
		available from the St Helena Research Institute.	
Output 2. **Trained SHG/National Trust Officers able to manage, monitor, assess, report, intervene and undertake future reviews of Management Plans and determine the effectiveness of NCA sites (capacity, guidance and tools) (WP2).**	2.1 At least three GIS Unit Officers complete training in data preparation, storage, standards and management (by Y1Q4). 2.2 At least three SHG or SHNT staff complete training in methods for assessing the effectiveness of management plans for the 13 NCA sites (by Y4Q2). 2.3 At least 2 SHG staff (or other key stakeholders) complete external training course that will enhance skills in implementation, monitoring or updating Management Plans (by Y4Q2). 2.4 At least two sessions held with youth groups (e.g. Bug Club) to build knowledge and basic skills in field data collection and species identification, with an initial focus on invertebrates (by Y4Q2). 2.5 At least two SHG or SHNT staff complete the Trainer-the-Trainer course in at least one of the project training modules (by Y4Q3).	2.1 Record of training (e.g. course particulars, attendance, assessments) in the various modules (i.e. GIS, management effectiveness monitoring, implementation/updating Management Plans, Train-the-Trainer) undertaken by selected personnel or SHG/SHNT staff, in project file structure; photos/social media of personnel participating in training posted on project webpage/social media channels. 2.2 Guidance documents/materials for relevant training modules published on project webpage.	SHG or SHNT staff have sufficient time available to participate in training modules. Relevant external courses are identified and can be completed online within available timeframes of project, as well as within other commitments of project staff. There is sufficient interest from youth groups to participate in capacity building sessions. Fibre optic cable is live, providing consistent connectivity to St Helena to enable virtual training if required. Training modules can be designed to be effectively delivered by virtual (remote) means if required.
Output 3. **NCA boundaries are reviewed to ensure they align with up-to-date ecological data, and methods for monitoring effectiveness and sustainability of the**	3.1 NCA database created (by Y2Q4), populated with metadata and data, and made available to SHG (by Y4Q3). 3.2 Desk based literature review of land management tools, and assessment of their	3.1a NCA database, together with agreed protocols, is incorporated into SHG data management system and is live and ready to receive data.	SHG GIS Unit continue to be engaged with project.

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
NCA Management Plans in order to achieve desired nature conservation and socio-economic outcomes are adopted (WP3).	applicability to St Helena, presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1). 3.3 Desk based review of NCA boundaries against most up-to-date ecological data undertaken, with options for how boundaries could be updated presented to Project Partners and key stakeholders (by Y4Q1). 3.4 At least three members of the Core Delivery Group (CDG) participate in consultation to consider boundary revisions options and identify next steps for verification and/or endorsement[†]. 3.5 If required/agreed, revised NCA boundary options verified via ground-truthing.	3.1b Minutes/email train between Project Partners and SHG confirm NCA database will be maintained by SHG GIS Unit. 3.2 Literature review of land management tools published on project webpage. Where relevant, land management options included in Management Plans. 3.3 Report outlining NCA boundary revision and recommendations available in project file structure. 3.4 Minutes/email train and/or report from consultation session with CDG outlining agreed next steps for NCA boundary verification and endorsement available in project file structure. 3.5 Report and updated maps with revised NCA boundaries available in project file structure and NCA database.	SHG GIS Unit has suitable infrastructure to support NCA database. Land management tools appropriate for St Helena can be identified. Suitable data is available to review NCA boundaries. SHG and key stakeholders can agree process for boundary review and next steps for their endorsement/adoption.
Output 4. Stakeholder awareness and understanding of the benefits of sustainably managed NCAs to maximise stakeholder buy-in and engagement during development of the Management Plans (WP4).	4.1 Stakeholder/community engagement and communication strategy developed and agreed by Project Partners (by Y2Q4). 4.2 At least 10 different communications activities (e.g. news articles, project webpage updates, social media posts, public presentations/interviews) undertaken both on and off-island throughout life of project (by Y4Q3).	4.1 Stakeholder/community engagement and communications strategy available in project file structure. 4.2 Event materials/resources in project file structure; articles/photos from events, attendance lists, updates published on project webpage/social media etc. 4.3 Survey results from the start and end of project summarised and presented to Project Partners and published on project	Access to resources and media to develop community engagement material. Willingness of stakeholders to engage in activities. In the case of travel or social-mixing restrictions (e.g. for Covid-19), events can be carried out remotely or by virtual means.

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
	4.3 At least 30% increase in stakeholder understanding of the value and benefits that sustainably managed NCAs can bring to St Helena (by Y4Q3). 4.4 At least 20 stakeholders regularly attend and engage in consultation meetings over the life of the project (by Y4Q3). 4.5 50:50 gender mix input into the consultation process across the life of the project (by Y4Q3).	webpage; reported upon in project final report. 4.4 Meeting/consultation event agenda, resources and attendance records available in project file structure. 4.5 Disaggregated gender outputs from the consultation process and meeting records analysed and reported upon in project final report.	
Output 5. Project management, monitoring, and evaluation (WP5).	5.1 MoU developed and agreed by Project Partners (by Y1Q4) and online meetings of Project Management Group (PMG) held quarterly over life of project. 5.2 ToRs for Project Core Delivery Group (CDG) agreed by members (by Y1Q4); online meetings held quarterly over life of project. 5.3 On-island Project Officer appointed (by Y2Q4). 5.4 On-island Data Officer appointed (by Y4Q1). 5.5 Project Monitoring and Evaluation plan, risk assessment and issues log presented to PMG (by Y1Q4). Biannual updates provided to PMG throughout life of project. 5.6 Methods for gender disaggregation presented to Project Partners (by Y2Q4).	5.1 MoU, ToRs and minutes of PMG meetings available in project file structure. 5.2 ToRs and minutes of CDG meetings available in project file structure. 5.3 Project Officer in post on St Helena. Signed contract available in project file structure. 5.4 Data Officer in post on St Helena. Signed contract available in project file structure. 5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation plan, Risk Assessment and Issues Log circulated to PMG and available in project file structure. 5.6 Gender methodology integrated into the Monitoring and Evaluation plan, and minutes from PMG confirm agreement	Continued resource from Project Partners available to engage with the project for its duration. Continuity/availability of staff/capacity is sustained throughout the project duration to enable project delivery. PMG and CDG members continue to engage in project. A suitable on-island Project Officer, and Data Officer can be appointed within required time-frames. Where international travel is required to St Helena by Project Partners or other key contacts, this is possible/permissible w.r.t Covid-19 (or other) restrictions.

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
	5.7 DPLUS reports and project finances submitted as required (biannually).	5.7 Reports held by Darwin Plus and available on project webpage.	

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

Baseline data and development of Management Plans (WP1)

1.1 Collate historic and existing data for each of the 13 nature NCAs to inform the baseline assessment reports (Activity 1.4) and to identify data gaps.

1.2 Conduct a pressures and threats assessment for each of 13 nature NCAs to inform the baseline assessment reports (Activity 1.4).

1.3 Identify metrics and indicators that can be used to monitor change in key environmental and socio-economic parameters of each of the 13 nature NCAs.

1.4 Compile baseline assessment reports for each of the 13 nature NCAs.

1.5 Data cleaning, processing and digitisation of any new data available that will help fill data gaps identified from the baseline assessment reports (Activities 1.1, 1.4), with an initial focus on invertebrate data which has been collected by SHNT; update baseline assessment reports as appropriate.

1.6 Based on feedback from stakeholder consultation (Activity 4.4), revise and finalise each of the 13 nature NCA baseline assessment reports.

1.7 Conduct systematic review of relevant Sustainable Financing Mechanisms (SFMs) and assess which could be applied in St Helena to help support ongoing/long-term implementation of the nature NCA Management Plans.

1. 8 Draft Management Plans for each of the 13 nature NCAs – plans to also include i) a framework (with relevant indicators) to monitor effectiveness of the management plans, ii) SFM options based on recommendations provided by Activity 1.7; and iii) any relevant information on potential boundary revisions (Activities 3.4 – 3.7).

1.9 Based on feedback from targeted stakeholder consultation (Activity 4.5) and the public consultation (Activity 4.6), revise and finalise each of the 13 nature NCA Management Plans and submit to SHG for consideration and onward adoption.

1.10 Based on updated data curation (Activity 1.5) and remaining data gaps identified (Activity 1.1), compile report outlining future research recommendations.

Training and capacity building (WP2)

2.1 SFL design and deliver training in data preparation, storage, standards, management and assessment tools (e.g. SQL and QGIS).

2.2 JNCC design and deliver training to key stakeholders in how to monitor effectiveness of management plans.

2.3 At least two SHG staff (or other key stakeholders) complete external training course(s) that will enhance skills for NCA Management Plan implementation, monitoring or updating.

2.4 SHNT design and deliver knowledge sharing and capacity building exercises in basic field data collection skills, including invertebrate identification, to youth groups.

2.5 Project Partners design a Train-the-Trainer programme for at least one of the identified training modules developed for the project (i.e. data collection and management, development and implementation of Management Plans, monitoring effectiveness) and identify up to two SHG or SHNT staff to participate in programme.

Data management and boundary revisions for development of effective & sustainable Management Plans (WP3)

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions

3.1 Create NCA database and populate with data collated for the NCA baseline reports (Activities 1.1, 1.5), ensuring any historic or new data is cleaned and validated prior to upload to the NCA database.

3.2 Develop and agree guidelines and responsibilities of SHG GIS department for ongoing data submission and maintenance of database.

3.3 Review existing land-management data analysis tools available and assess applicability to St Helena, with view to incorporating into Management Plans where relevant.

3.4 Agree a process for and then undertake a review of the original criteria for NCA boundary designation and assess if boundaries should be revised based on the up-to-date ecological data that has been collated and presented in the NCA baseline reports (Activity 1.4).

3.5 Present options to SHG and key stakeholders on where/how/why NCA boundaries could be revised, based on outputs from Activity 3.4.

3.6 SHG and key stakeholders consider boundary review options and agree next steps for any required ground-truthing, and onward formal endorsement/adoption of revised boundaries.

3.7 If considered necessary (based on outcomes of Activities 3.4 and 3.6), ground truth proposed revised NCA boundaries (through site visits) and update boundary maps as required for onward consideration and endorsement by SHG[†] through the SHG Land Development Control Plan (LDCP) review process.

Stakeholder engagement (WP4)

4.1 Undertake stakeholder mapping exercise, and develop communications and engagement strategy, setting out planned delivery. Aim to avoid stakeholder fatigue through join-up and/or alignment of events with other relevant St Helena-based projects.

4.2 Deliver stakeholder communications and engagement plan – e.g. stakeholder events/meetings/workshops, community information sessions, multimedia information dissemination.

4.3 Conduct surveys to assess level of change between start and end of project in stakeholder and community understanding of how sustainably managed NCAs can provide long-term benefits to St Helena and its community through i) improving biodiversity conservation; ii) improving land-management practises and hence economic return; and iii) providing a range of alternative livelihood opportunities.

4.4 Hold stakeholder consultations to review baseline assessment reports prepared for each of the 13 nature NCAs (Activity 1.4). Likely to be held in tranches to be defined by NCA type or location.

4.5 Hold stakeholder consultation workshop(s) to review the Management Plans prepared for each of the 13 nature NCAs (Activity 1.8 and 3.5). Likely to be held in tranches to be defined by NCA type or location.

4.6 Tranche planning for, and implementation of, the 28-day public consultation on the Management Plans developed for each of the 13 nature NCAs.

4.7 Gender assessment and analysis undertaken from at least three stakeholder or community engagement events.

Project management (WP5)

5.1 Project Management Group membership and TOR established. Maintain regular liaison between key project partners, including regular meetings to monitor project progress and delivery.

| Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
5.2 Project Core Delivery Group membership and TOR established. Maintain regular liaison between members, including regular meetings to help monitor, steer and deliver project. 5.3 Recruitment of on-island Project Officer. 5.4 Recruitment of on-island Data Officer (up to six in total). 5.5 Develop and maintain project M&E Plan, Risk Assessment and Issue Log. 5.6 Methodology for gender monitoring and evaluation process agreed. 5.7 Prepare regular activity and financial reports for Darwin Plus in line with reporting timetable. †While it is considered an essential activity for DPLUS154 to i) revise the current NCA boundaries against ecological data that has been collected since their designation (and incorporated into the baseline reports produced as part of this project), and ii) consider any implications this might have on how the NCA Management Plans are developed, the Project Partners have agreed that coordinating the process to formally endorse/adopt any boundary revisions is considered outside the scope of DPLUS154. SHG will take responsibility for this process as a separate undertaking to DPLUS154 – most likely as part of the SHG LDCP review.			

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

It is our understanding that as an existing project we are not required to complete this section.

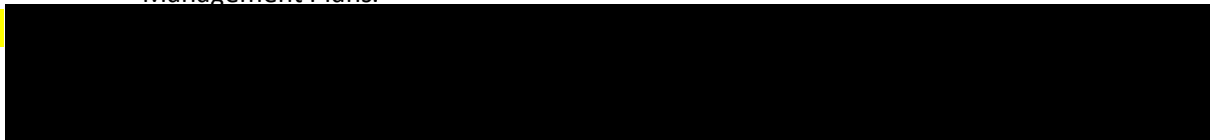## Annex 4: Evidence for progress against Output 1

a) Draft Scope of Work for SHNT to digitise existing invertebrate data.

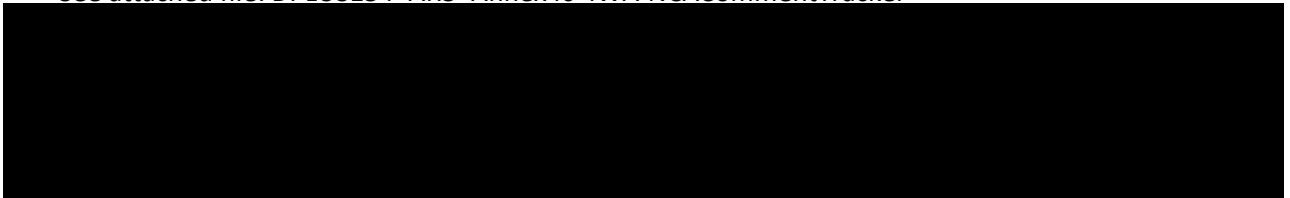- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex4a_SoW-DataDigitisation
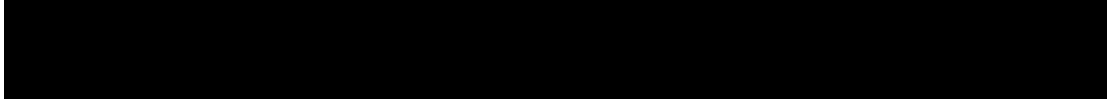
b) Draft Management Plans for the five IWA NCAs.

- See attached folder: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex4b_IWA-NCA_DraftMPs
  - Within this folder are five separate documents, which are the draft IWA-NCA Management Plans.

c) Stakeholder feedback on draft IWA NCA Management Plans - comment and response tracker.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex4c_IWA-NCACommentTracker

Annex 5: Evidence for progress against Output 3

a) Literature review of land-management tools.
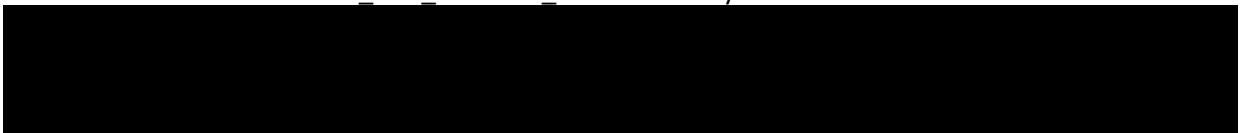
- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex5a_LandMgtToolsReview
-

b) Draft Scope of Work for JNCC to conduct review of NCA boundaries.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex5b_SoW-BoundaryReview
-

Annex 6: Evidence for progress against Output 4

a) Survey (conducted in person and online) to explore and assess community awareness of STH's NCAs.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex6a_Survey-NCAAwareness_Questions

b) Results of survey to explore and assess community awareness of STH's NCAs.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex6b_Survey-NCAAwareness_Results

- [black redacted box]

c) Workshop report – Stakeholder consultation on IWA-NCAs.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex6c_WorkshopReport-IWA-NCAConsultation
- [black redacted box]

d) Presentation given to New Horizons youth group consultation session on IWA-NCAs.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex6d_NewHorizonsPresentation&Quiz

e) Workshop note – New Horizons youth group responses in consultation on IWA-NCAs.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex6c_WorkshopNote-IWA-NCAConsultation
- [black redacted box]

Annex 7: Evidence for progress against Output 5

a) DPLUS154 Risk Register.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex7a_RiskRegister

b) DPLUS154 Issues Log.

- See attached file: DPLUS154_AR3_Annex7b_IssuesLog

Annex 8: Responses to Reviewer Comments

a) Responses to Comment 3 in the DPLUS154 Annual Report 2 Reviewers Report.

The grant award letter (Darwin Initiative/JNCC, dated 12 August 2021) provided some recommendations from the DEC which the Reviewer of the DPLUS154 Annual Reports has asked are addressed. Responses to each DEC comment are as follows:

- *Comment 1:* it is important this this work is tied into the Blue Belt Programme of Work to streamline activities - please address in your first half year report (HYR)

  - *Response:* The DPLUS154 project is primarily focussed on the terrestrial habitats, and so there are limited direct links to the STH Blue Belt Programme of Work. However, where relevant, resources, processes, and lessons learnt are being shared between projects – for example, the DPLUS154 Project Officer had a number of informal meetings with the STH Blue Belt Team to discuss how the MPA management plans were developed, the type/mode/frequency of stakeholder engagement that was employed, and what monitoring effectiveness tools they are implementing. Tips/guidance have been taken on board when progressing the development of the NCA Management Plans.

- *Comment 2:* the pathway to change would benefit from broader consideration of the socio-economic dimension/stakeholder engagement element (HYR)

- o *Response:* since project inception a Stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken and a Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan delivered in Y2 of the project (Indicator 4.1). The Management Plans will also include socio-economic objectives – see draft IWA NCA Management Plans (Annex 4.2).

- *Comment 3:* the data availability plan could benefit from more development and specifics (HYR)

  - o *Response:* this element of the project has progressed since its inception, with a number of activities, indicators and means of verification amended/added through the Change Request process (in particular, see CR22-129 and CR23-095). To date, a prototype of the database which will be used to store/catalogue/manage data specific to the NCAs has been developed (Activity 3.1) and training on data management and GIS has been delivered to SHG staff (Activity 2.1, Indicator 2.1). By project end, all data that has been identified and collated as part of DPLUS154 (Activity 1.1, 1.5; Indicator 1.1) should be uploaded to the NCA database (which will also include metadata detailing accessibility)(Activity 3.1; Indicator 3.1a); the database, together with agreed protocols, should be incorporated into the SHG data management system (Indicator 3.1b); and an agreement should be in place outlining that the NCA database will be maintained by the SHG GIS Unit (Indicator 3.1b).

- *Comment 4:* the post-project sustainability plan would benefit from more detail on what incentives will exist at the end of the project to support further collaborative partnerships, long-term database support and management, and support of the monitoring and implementation of plans by in-country partners (HYR)

  - o *Response:* the project team will consider how this can be met, and if necessary, incorporated into the Change Request which is being prepared.

- *Comment 5:* the modelling plans remain unclear (HYR)

  - o *Response:* since project inception, and due to project evolution, the modelling components of the project have been removed. (Removal approved through the formal Change Request process).

- *Comment 6:* the link between biodiversity and its value to local people is not sufficiently developed (HYR)

  - o *Response:* and initial step to determine how biodiversity is understood and valued by the STH community, and particularly with respect to how the NCAs can benefit biodiversity conservation has been through a survey which was conducted in Y3 of the project (see Section 3.1, Output 4). Responses from this will provide some guidance to the project team as to how to draft the biodiversity objectives of each NCA Management Plan, which will then be presented to stakeholders for further input and feedback.

- *Comment* 7: the community engagement elements would benefit from more detail, including on how stakeholders will be incorporated into the governance and management arrangements, and how they stand to benefit (HYR)

  - o *Response*: as for Comment 2, since project inception a Stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken and a Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan delivered in Y2 of the project (Indicator 4.1).

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the **correct template** (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and **deleted the blue guidance text** before submission?	X
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	X
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	N/A
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	N/A
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	