

Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note"
(<https://dplus.darwininitiative.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 2022

Note from grantee: As instructed, we are using the Darwin Plus form to report on our first six months of activity despite it being in the end-of-year report format.

Darwin Plus Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS155
Project title	Securing Montserrat's threatened endemic species and natural capital through community-action
Territory(ies)	Montserrat
Lead partner	UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
Project partner(s)	Montserrat National Trust
Darwin Plus grant value	£293,447
Start/end dates of project	October 2021- September 2024
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2021-Mar 2022) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	1 st October 2021 to 31 st March 2022, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Dr Mike Pienkowski & Catherine Wensink
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife/ Twitter: @ukotcf; Facebook: @ukotcf
Report author(s) and date	Catherine Wensink & Dr Mike Pienkowski (March 2022)

1. Project summary

The project takes place on Montserrat, a UK Overseas Territory and one of the Leeward Islands in the eastern Caribbean. It lies 43 km SW of Antigua and 64 km NW of Guadeloupe at 16°45'N, 62°12'W. The volcanic island, about 17 km by 11 km, is mountainous, with streams (locally termed the English-based "ghauts") and waterfalls amongst dense tropical forest and a rugged coastline. Its pyroclastic volcano erupted from 1995 to 2010, meaning that about 2/3 of the island cannot be used and causing great damage to the remainder. However, the world biodiversity importance remains immense.

The project enables Montserratians to undertake informed decisions and actions on land they manage, via training and advice, so Montserrat's unique wildlife and ecosystems thrive. Known locally as *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* (AHW), it demonstrates and promotes livelihoods, based on sustainable-use of natural resources (e.g. food-security, low-impact ecotourism). Across the island, it is building a network of community-led managed conservation areas. It aims to establish at least 10 sites in the project period. As sites are established, they are surveyed using robust, but non-technical survey methods. This ensures that they can be replicated by persons with only limited training.

Figure 1: Location of Montserrat within the Caribbean region (© Google Earth; accessed April 2022)



A management plan is developed between the local partner, the land-owner (if different), the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) and UKOTCF. It is then implemented jointly. In order to document changes for biodiversity on the land over time, surveys are repeated. The initiative both safeguards biodiversity by addressing some of the most pressing issues which threaten it (e.g. invasive plants displacing native species), but also stimulates action and engagement among the Montserratian community in the long-term so that resource capacity issues are also addressed.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

Main Partnerships

MNT, the face of the project on Montserrat, was established by statute in 1970. It leads on preserving and conserving natural, cultural, historic and archaeological heritage. Its objectives are to: conserve/enhance Montserrat's beauty; preserve/rehabilitate historical sites, including buildings, monuments, documents etc; preserve Montserrat's wildlife; make the public aware of the value and beauty of Montserrat's heritage; pursue a policy of preservation and act as advisor; acquire property for the benefit of Montserrat; attract funds for effective carrying-out of objectives; to compile photographic and architectural records of the above.

Members of MNT include the local community, the vibrant Montserrat population now living overseas and friends of MNT making their home on Montserrat. This means it is well-placed to encourage and engage with the community.

The capacity of MNT has been raised with the appointment of Project Officers within the Project Team. We outline some interesting developments on this below.

MNT and UKOTCF are, and have been for several decades, in constant dialogue about priority needs for conservation on the island. Since a pilot study in 2016-2017, which first developed and then tested the *Adopt a Home* initiative, MNT and UKOTCF have planned to roll this out operationally in order to work directly with the community on empowering their conservation action. MNT's partnership with UKOTCF through DPLUS155, has enabled it to spend most of its

time engaging directly with the community, whereas the role it asks UKOTCF to do is to focus on technical aspects, including designing surveys and the conservation approach, training, organising outside technical support for this (mainly voluntary) and financial and administrative tasks, as well as some high-level interactions.

UKOTCF itself is a UK charity, which has had, for over 30 years, a close and continuing relationship with UKOTs, including Montserrat. It is the only organisation solely devoted to conservation, sustainability and related education across all UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and Crown Dependencies (CDs). It does not have a separate agenda, other than that determined in consultation with the territories, with which it always works in partnership. This and other projects developed out of this relationship. Meetings between the core project team, consisting of MNT and UKOTCF take place every two weeks, via Zoom. This is where central decisions on the project take place. It is necessary for these to be regular at present as we build up the relationship with new personnel. It is envisaged these will become less frequent as the project progresses. Attendees vary, but typically can include: all PLs and POs, UKOTCF Honorary Environmental Education Coordinator, specialist partners or volunteers included to meet needs identified in Montserrat, M&E officer, Communications Officer and our representative for young persons. A record of discussions and action points is made and circulated soon after the meeting takes place. Sub-meetings take place when necessary, e.g. finance, communications.

Partnerships with Adopters

Adopters are those local people or groups who volunteer and are accepted to manage an area of land (*Wildlife Home*) within the project. This way of working is going very well. The level of engagement of POs with existing, new and prospective *Adopters* has been a major strength in this first reporting period. This continuous dialogue has meant that the number of sites needed to meet the project objectives overall has almost been reached, and will be exceeded. This does present a challenge, but one the Project Team is working hard to address (see lessons learned).

The list of sites is shown in Annex 3.2. It demonstrates that the Wildlife Homes (given codes WH01, WH02 etc... *NB: sites under offer and investigation are given temporary codes (WHP...)* until accepted) are found in a mixture of habitats and locations. This is important, as the network of sites aims to be a model for others particularly those with complex mosaics and a variety of habitats. Google forms collect basic data on the proposed site until more detailed site visits are undertaken with the Project Officers. The Project team has undertaken at least 30 site visits during in this period; a mixture of initial site visits, dialogue and preliminary surveys. These are documented in survey recording forms, monthly reports and images captured during visits.

The strong relationships which are being built between the *Adopters* and POs has meant that the survey methods could be tested and refined on land where the *Adopters* were happy for extended testing to take place to ensure they are fit for purpose and could be replicated by others. This is important as the time spent on land owned by individuals, community groups *etc.*, must be carefully planned and permissions granted. POs are very sensitive to this, and so are able to spend less time on land where limited access is appropriate (e.g. private gardens). Baseline surveys have been collected during period Feb-March – see example vegetation surveys in Annex 3.3 with fixed point photography at Annex 3.4.

Partnerships with others

During the project design phase, MNT and UKOTCF engaged with Government of Montserrat and the Governor, resulting in strong letters of support from both. At the start of the project in October 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Governor, the Minister, MNT and UKOTCF. MNT's idea that the full-time Project Officer role would be divided so that several well-qualified local persons would carry out the role, each part-time in collaboration was agreed enthusiastically by UKOTCF. This was because it would mean that the skills would be built up in several local people, with consequential benefits to continuity beyond the project. It did mean that several extra training needs emerged, but UKOTCF has been able to source skilled volunteer effort to meet these. The partnership with the Government of Montserrat went further as a result of this. As a result of a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing & Environment, it was agreed that two of the part-time Project Officer roles would be filled by one officer each from the Agriculture and Environment Departments, working in their own time, but with timing flexibility by the Departments. This has strengthened the links. In addition, the Director of Environment identified a suitable work-experience senior student to work full-time (outside

college lessons) on the project. The cost of this could be accommodated within the budget, but recognised this valuable contribution. The benefit of this is that the officers widen their skill-set and have greater connection to the community. It is not without challenges to coordinate several part-time roles, but this has been overcome in several ways, including by increasing management experience of a third project officer and project team meetings. These take place after the working day in Montserrat (to fit in with the part-time nature of the PO roles, leading to some late-night work in UK, 5 hours ahead). These are complemented by informal written reports being produced every month by the field POs, on their activities, again serving the dual purpose of widening their experience (reports for November, December, January, February and March received). Much survey work takes place at weekends, convenient for both project officers and many *Adopters*.

The team recognised during the design phase that some technical advice would be needed to inform survey methods, provide some training opportunities and help develop management plans. Vicky Wilkins (now of the Species Recovery Trust) has provided aspects of this, alongside UKOTCF personnel, as well as leading on M&E. This extends a role she has had in developing the capacity of the St Helena National Trust to integrate their rich invertebrate fauna into their conservation programmes. There are some similarities with Montserrat in this regard, and so the project aims to use lessons learned on St Helena to build capacity on Montserrat beyond the project end. Since some previous work led by Montana State University (MSU) with MNT and UKOTCF, there has been a keen interest locally in developing this aspect of the Trust's work and is the reason for exploring this further, both with Vicky and MSU.

As noted above, during the first quarter of the project, MNT recognised that the capacity of the Trust could be boosted by the assistance of a volunteer botanist. An announcement was made on UKOTCF's website and through its network, which was seen by some suitable candidates. These were interviewed online jointly by MNT and UKOTCF and a strong appointment made. Arrangements were made for them to take unpaid leave of absence, fulfil anti-Covid immigration requirements, and start the placement in early January, running until mid-February at little cost to all parties. This proved to be a very successful mission and enabled advancement in many areas, surveys, documenting plant species, and developing plans. This person is now hoping to revisit Montserrat, continue to help the project and perhaps start a PhD study based on some of the activities they started. In the meantime, they are making major voluntary contributions remotely from UK.

As alluded to above, since soon after the start of the project, MNT welcomed a recently graduated high-school student, to be employed on work-experience. Antwone Sinclair has been working on several projects to provide a rich experience, but mainly *on Adopt a Home for Wildlife*. His role is to provide input into the project as a representative on young persons across the island and support for the native plant nursery; ensuring that the plants needed for the project are propagated and cared for. He maintains a list and records of the plants and provides these to the POs, as well as helping in their fieldwork.

Montana State University is a key knowledge partner as it provides the best source of biological records on Montserrat's invertebrate fauna, resulting partly from an earlier project with UKOTCF/MNT and others. Taking the opportunity of them being present in the region on work on other projects, UKOTCF is arranging for them to provide some training and forward planning. They will also be involved in gathering oral histories and documenting the knowledge on island. This will be linked with enthusiasm of Montserratians in order to inform future work with the Species Recovery Trust. An entomologist, David Clements, working with Vicky Wilkins (with the SRT) has secured a grant within the UK for travel to Montana State University where he will provide a bridge between the knowledge there, on Montserrat, and building future programmes.

In addition, the team is making best use of both Vernaire Bass of 664 Connect as an enthusiastic member of the communications group and will be working much more closely with Veta Wade in the next phase to engage with the wider community on impact of the project beyond the *Adopters*.

Overall, with a building team, which differs slightly from that originally envisaged, but in very positive ways, it was necessary to spend some time at the project outset, October to November working on work programmes and some other human resource administration (signed contracts and policy agreements, access to Dropbox accounts for sharing information). This was to

ensure that the activities undertaken by the team were carefully planned out and ensured that these fit with the project logframe, outcomes etc.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

In reporting progress, it is important to note that targets relate to planning years. However, because of the unexpected long delays in UK Government approving this round of project applications for UKOTs eligible for ODA (and temporarily transferred to Darwin Main from Darwin Plus, before being restored to Darwin Plus after decision), the project started about 6 months after originally envisaged and 3 months later than later revised. Accordingly, only 6 months of the project have taken place before this “annual” report required under Darwin procedures. Although we cannot report against the first full year of the project, we are able nonetheless to demonstrate below major progress in the first 6 months.

UNDER OUTPUT 1

1.1 Project Officer recruited at Montserrat National Trust, and any supplementary training needed arranged, and other project team members have an introductory meeting via Zoom. Project Officer role split into several: allows for maximum capacity development with a view to project legacy, flexible working of MNT officers and cross-departmental working. Full time role split into: 1 existing MNT staff member, Delmaude Ryan (see

[REDACTED] being employed for time not already bought by MNT, Government Environment Officer, Ajhermae White ([REDACTED]), and Government Agricultural Officer, Elvis Gerald, working in time additional to their Government jobs, with supporting staff and one high-school intern. Communications are key to this working because there are several personnel working on the same tasks.

1.2 Adverts for Adopt a Home for Wildlife designed and distributed on-island, outlining project and welcoming new sites and ‘Adopters,’ as well as reinstating advice to those in the pilot; PO and local partners use also word of mouth, radio and social media.

We have found that interest in the programme in the first few months, without extensive promotion, has enabled us to reach targets we could not have imagined. We are very pleased about the level of engagement, but it does throw up one challenge we had not quite anticipated. There has been more interest than we currently have the capacity to accept, so we are looking for ways to engage with those interested in partnering but managing their expectations. This has taken the form of a phase document drafted to ensure expectations are met. The project team discussed at length the need to ensure that *Adopters* or those interested in taking part do not have their expectations raised and then are disappointed that they do not receive the support they are promised. We envisage DPLUS155 is phase 1 of the project and we hope to add further *Adopters* in Phase 2, 3 etc. The limiting factor is the help that is required by an *Adopter* to join the initiative and the resources the MNT have. We are exploring the possibility of seeing modest additional funding elsewhere.

1.3 PO and other members gather contacts and begin working with ‘Adopters,’ both in person and via remote means (depending on any Covid restrictions), to formulate site-plans, assistance required, joint management agreements and plan for action.

Adopters are consulted at all stages. Management plans are in development at several sites now including WH01 and WH02. The first step at these and other sites was to survey vegetation and invertebrates. Management plans are then developed informed by the results of these. The first of these is now in development and will form the basis of the others.

1.4 PO site-visits to record information and to survey Wildlife-Homes in areas already pre-identified as areas for action to provide baselines

Ongoing, as of March 2022; 5 sites have complete invertebrate surveys; the same 5 sites have three completed plant surveys with 2 partially completed. This is because at 2 sites some of the survey points could not be completed due to physical access issues- these are being resolved.

1.5 PO continues to visit Wildlife-Homes at times convenient to ‘Adopters,’ to facilitate activities and carry on continuous monitoring of the Wildlife- Homes.

This is a continuous activity, undertaken by POs, Delmaude Ryan, Ajhermae White, Elvis Gerard, which began in October 2021, by UKOTCF personnel while on Montserrat, facilitating a hand-over to newly recruited MNT personnel. With support from the volunteer botanist, Madeline Heap, in January 2022 and two other very experienced local naturalists, Philemon

'Mappie' Murrain and James 'Scriber' Daley, visits then began involving preliminary site vegetation and invertebrate surveys. These are continuing but will be completed within Project-Year 1 (October 2021 to September 2022).

1.6 Maps produced to ensure coverage of these community-managed protected areas meet 10% target across the island

The Government of Montserrat (GoM) has a Geographical Information Systems unit with highly qualified staff. In February 2021, training in QGIS was provided to 17 persons on island including MNT PO staff. There is sufficient capacity within UKOTCF and now MNT to produce these maps within the project period. The GoM has recently acquired a drone. They are providing assistance to the project in the form of imagery capture which is being explored.

1.7 Student and traineeship possibilities explored and, where appropriate, undertaken, to facilitate capacity-building and opportunities for young people to be involved with the project and gain experience.

Speaking about his most recent experience, Antwone Sinclair stated:

"My name is Antwone Jeremiah Sinclair; I am 18 years old; I was born in Georgetown, Guyana, and was raised in Montserrat for 17 years. My hobbies are playing cricket and football I play most of the instruments in my church. In the future I would like to become an Environmentalist to protect and make the world a better place. I also want to teach the younger generation the importance about our environment. My future goals are to bring Piper's Pond back to life and make the environment on Montserrat better for both us and nature and hope to leave behind a legacy in the Department of Environment."

The project is including also as one of its *Wildlife Homes* the natural area in MNT's developing EcoPlay project (which UKOTCF is supporting). This will give a good opportunity for children of all ages to participate, as will the project's native plant nursery. Other student opportunities are being explored.

1.8 Communications plan developed and implemented. This includes:

During UKOTCF's set-up visit in October-November, the launch event, attended by the Governor, the Environment Minister, his predecessor in the previous administration and project partners and some *Adopters*, was live-streamed. UKOTCF and MNT staff participated in a half-hour interview on the popular and widely listened-to Saturday morning programme on Radio ZJB (Montserrat's national channel). At the end of the visit, Mike Pienkowski was invited to join the Governor in his weekly press conference, attended by many media outlets and broadcast on TV and radio. This topped the news on the following day.

1.8.1 newsletters (built on wide circulation achieved in pilot-work) published every quarter by UKOTCF, with articles from other team members, and which outline progress & facilitate M&E
A communications plan has been developed in collaboration between POs, PLs and the Communications Officer. It is now being implemented.

The *Save Our Special Nature of Montserrat* newsletter was published online in November 2021- see: <https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SOSnatureNewsletter11d-13.pdf> - following circulation of earlier issues just by email. It also is still circulated to the email list we have for the project which consists of 180 persons who have requested it. However, we know that most of those sent out are read by or forwarded to several others.

It included articles on: the launch, the team, some updates on *Wildlife Homes* (from the pilot), some early activities and some linked initiatives.

Another is in draft to be published in April/May 2022 in accordance with the schedule.

Forum News 55 was published in UKOTCF's website in December 2021. It included a headline article titled: "Project launched to protect through community action Montserrat's animals and plants and the services they provide". It was also circulated via MailChimp to over 300 people across UK, UKOTs and internationally.

1.8.2 Social-media posts produced to outline project; profiles of 'Adopters' produced and published. These will be carried out by a Montserratian marketing group, 664 Connect, to undertake a variety of communications across all sections of society on-island and with Montserratian diaspora in UK, US (and elsewhere).

One very effective way to engage with Montserrat audience is via social media. See Annex 3.5, top 10 social media posts. There have been 37 in total from October 2021 to mid-March 2022. Both UKOTCF's and MNT's websites have been populated with information relating to the project – see ukotcf.org.uk and montserratinationaltrust.ms

1.9 New works begin at the native-plant nursery at the Montserrat National Trust botanic garden. This includes:

1.9.1 Equipment and materials needed for the native plant nursery acquired.

Equipment purchased October 2021 to March 2022 has included: composter, strimmer, chainsaw, potting mix, seed and planting trays, seeds.

Some of these materials were purchased through the Montserrat Farmers' Association, giving a good price for the project and supporting this project partner. Others were purchased from local businesses, which both give a good rate and frequently provide other support to MNT. Those items not available locally were exempted from import taxes, due to MNT's local status.

1.9.2 Labelling system developed

QR codes are very popularly used on Montserrat. Some different systems are being investigated, as indicated in the first year of activities. These aim to have no follow-on costs for the MNT botanic garden after project end.

1.9.3 Facility to record information on plants given to 'Adopters' (and for sale) is set up

This is in development.

1.9.4 Organic fertilisers produced and made available to 'Adopters' (and for sale)

In development; providing to be an attractive proposition to *Adopters* to be part of the project.

1.10 Plans/improvements to demonstration Wildlife-Homes (including native plants, food securing plants and pollinators) developed and implemented.

In development. Discussions are ongoing; 2 potential *Wildlife Homes* have been tentatively put forward and it is likely that 'EcoPlay' (an area next to the Trust which has been acquired as a space for children and visitors to learn and experience the environment in a safe space) will be one demonstration site.

1.11 Quarterly project team meeting to report on progress and any other aspects of M&E.

Project team currently normally meets fortnightly. There were 10 meetings by the end of March. These have included the POs, PLs, intern, volunteer specialists and new partners, e.g. Species Recovery Trust working on invertebrates. See M&E section for detail.

1.12 Annual stakeholder steering group meets at least one month in advance of year-end reporting, with specific updates on M&E and success stories from each year.

In this reporting period an annual stakeholder group meeting has met once as planned. M&E tracker has been developed and is working well. Additionally, M&E officer and PLs are aiming to meet more frequently into the next reporting period to facilitate easy flow of information after the Project team meetings. See further detail in M&E section.

1.13 Half-year, first, second and third year reports produced and finalised by administration team with support from all team members particularly those involved in M&E

On track

UNDER OUTPUT 2

2.1 PO identifies with 'Adopters' if training (conservation and survey techniques and monitoring particularly in changes over time) is required for themselves or for others, based on their experience, either at Wildlife-Homes or as part of workshops organised by the Montserrat National Trust and taking place at their conference centre

Ongoing. One training event took place in February as a basic introduction of the survey work being done at each site. This has been designed using approaches tailored for non-technical specialists and using free online tools where possible.

2.2 Training reports, survey results and feedback produced, circulated to participants, and published online.

In February 2022, the first training session for *Adopters* took place. It was attended by 12 persons. Unfortunately, there were power cuts on this day which limited online involvement and only rudimentary recording of the event was possible. It was targeted at existing and potential *Adopters* as well as some local high school children. It aimed to provide an introduction to the project, aims, methods and some of the preliminary results from the surveys. See

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife/>

2.3 Report cards designed and used by PO annually to document activities at each Wildlife-Home in collaboration with the 'Adopters'. These will be conducted at times appropriate for 'Adopter', as most will have jobs and/or family or other commitments. They will be used to also record enhanced food-security, income and well-being benefits.

Year 2 activity which we are planning for now.

2.4 Technical specialists (part of the wider UKOTCF team) undertake periodically site visits to conduct M&E and facilitate further complementary work (e.g. on native pollinators not within the resources of the project; maintained advice to related conservation projects, to Montserrat National Trust and to the Governor).

Dr & Mrs Pienkowski, from UKOTCF visited in October and November 2021 to work with MNT colleagues to set up the project, liaise with Government, agree MoU, work with Mrs Francis (Director of MNT) to restructure and recruit project officer and related posts, liaise with *Adopters* continuing from the pilot project, starting to recruit new ones, address technical issues and undertake news media interactions. Volunteer Maddie Heap undertook botanical development and training in January-February. Arrangements started for visits by Montana State University and Species Recovery Trust in the first parts of the new financial year (and within the 1st project year). We are making the best use of another project funded by AHRC/NERC to increase knowledge of biodiversity on the Island (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/blue-iguanas-to-blue-vervain/>).

2.5 Materials to facilitate this wider pool of knowledge and evidence developed and produced (including information on endemic and native species, invasive species, crops including cucumber, pumpkin etc)

Guide being developed, and iNaturalist training and use. See also training items above.

2.6 Improvements to both UKOTCF and MNT's website (and other partners as applicable) making best use of information and data and recording systems

Done, and being developed further. The page for UKOTCF is here:

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife/>

For MNT this is here: <http://montserratnationaltrust.ms>

Success of engagement via MNT. Still to focus on engagement with young persons- see EcoPlay Montserrat above.

2.7 As 1.12 & 1.13

UNDER OUTPUT 3

3.1 The reporting system set up in order for 'Adopters' or other members of the community to report or upload sightings and other information on rarely seen species and other key biodiversity information, in their own time, allowing flexibility especially for those unable to participate during fixed hours.

Chosen to use free-to-use facility, iNaturalist, because the project team is making best use of a related project and training could be provided. Two training events have been undertaken for POs and other MNT staff. It is hoped this can be replicated, and made available to *Adopters* in due course. Puts us well beyond target for a system and will enable us to demonstrate its use both in Montserrat (and Cayman, as an example from another UKOT).

3.2 Training events planned and undertaken on habitat restoration and/or natural regeneration at the MNT or on the Wildlife-Homes. Meeting reports/training notes are published online.

This activity relates to Year 2 and 3.

3.3 Plans developed to expand offerings at the botanic garden are developed and initiated, e.g. ecotourism, kids' holiday clubs

Kids Club launched and already meeting. *Monty's Messengers* is named after the local name for the endemic bird, the Montserrat oriole. There is potential cross-over with other DPLUS projects including the Mountain Chicken programme (DPLUS105) and the turtle programme (DPLUS106), and with other projects being utilised to mutual benefit. See also EcoPlay above

3.4 Demonstration Wildlife-Homes showcasing good practice and multiple benefits to nature and livelihoods (e.g. pollinator-friendly) planned and initiated with accessibility to community

3.5 Public event organised and held to celebrate 'Adopters' and to facilitate continuation of the initiative beyond project-end.

3.4 and 3.5 are activities planned for year 2 and 3.

3.6 Other public events organised to highlight project and opportunities (including Rotary and similar groups, kids' clubs, school-visits, online materials, possibly village competitions)

Some of these are ongoing. Kids Club and other school-related activities will be developed further in the next periods, integrating also with the EcoPlay project.

3.7 Project team members (including some facilitated by young persons) undertake online and face-face surveys of local community, across all sections of the community providing a baseline of attitudes towards the projects aims in Year 1, which is then replicated at the end of the project in Y3 in order to confirm whether community protected areas (Wildlife-Homes) have been effective on island. In development and will be launched shortly within the next period.

3.8 Profiles produced of 'Adopter' success stories and published in newsletters

Started and will be expanded.

3.9 Communications plan implemented, with newsletters produced with articles written by

'Adopters' and/or materials gathered from 'Adopters' or from the existing UKOTCF/MNT book and videos on Montserrat wildlife, particularly success stories and shared widely on social-media posts; links with Tourism. Community surveys conducted (as in Activity 3.7) before and after communications strategy is implemented will allow us to demonstrate that Output 3 (Indicator 3.5 has been achieved).

3.10. Radio-interviews, panel-discussions and other broadcasts take place on Montserrat (within project constraints and where possible, podcasts developed), and made available to regional and international media.

3.9 & 3.10 See various updates on communications plan in section 1.8

3.11 Plan for database produced and implemented to store information created as part of the project

Set up Dropbox system to share files and information easily using UKOTCF charity rates which provide greater storage capacity. This has proven quite useful in terms of large files e.g. maps.

3.12 As 1.12 & 1.13

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output	Baseline	Change recorded to date	Source of evidence
1. By 2024, a network of Wildlife-Homes, with a target of 10% (100 ha) increase in protected areas across the island, are being managed actively for conservation while providing human-benefits, with 'Adopters' recruited; community-run restoration and protection of these Wildlife-Homes in place, and baseline plant and invertebrate data gathered and published.	At project start (October 2021) we had two Adopters who were actively working with us from the pilot and one other expressing an interest in partnering with MNT/UKOTCF There were no invertebrate or vegetation data collected or published in these areas. Zero saplings or organic fertilizer available	Since project start (October 2021), including the 3 <i>Adopters</i> from the pilot phase we have recruited 10 <i>Adopters</i> . Surveys for vegetation and insects have been developed and conducted on 5 sites. Management plans for the sites with complete surveys in draft and under development. In period November to March annex 3.10 shows saplings propagated. Shredder ordered in order to produce the organic fertiliser.	Table of records of <i>Adopters</i> , site extent, ownership, GPS coordinates, type of habitat – see Annex 3.5. This document will be updated periodically. Google sheets with Adopters details filled in example here: Annex 3.1 Google sheets used for inputting survey records example here: Annex 3.2 and 3.3 Annex 3.6 complete forms for vegetation surveys Fixed point photography in Annex 3.7 Annex 3.3 complete forms for invertebrate surveys. Annex 3.10 Data table and images of saplings in Project Officer monthly reports.
2. By 2024, ability and confidence of 'Adopters' to experiment and monitor Wildlife-Home quality in relation to the islands' unique and native biodiversity increased and make choices which benefit native plant and pollinator species, leading to good outcomes for biodiversity, but also providing some food-security, as well as contributing towards well-being, and	Little information or advice freely available on how individuals or groups could make improvements	4 data sources so far: -Webpage developed as a source of information. Started inputting in FAQs to provide online knowledge of the project which can be widely accessed and sign-posted. -Social media posts on MNT site visits gaining lots of interest. - For Adopters, first training event held showing them the propagation, survey methods and some preliminary results. Attended by 12 (Covid-19 restrictions still in place.	Training event recorded, presentations available via: See https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/ke-y-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife see Project Updates. See Annex 3.8 for top 10 posts and analytics Training event post on Facebook 15th February 2022. Agenda and meeting participants record. Several training sessions took place in February/March 2022 with Meise Botanic Garden via

protecting and enhancing the wildlife (important also to the economy), despite the increased housing-density close to wildlife habitats due to volcanic displacement of the human population.		Recording of presentation made available to others. -iNaturalist	Zoom (Zoom invite link available upon request).
3. By 2024, opportunities for all sections of Montserrat's community to contribute to, and express, a greater understanding of how a network of community-protected sites leads to both conservation benefits and improved livelihoods – demonstrated particularly by food-security, tourism opportunities, well-being, and safeguarding of, and reducing pressure on, Montserrat's unique biodiversity (including endemic species) and globally threatened habitats (e.g. tropical dry forest and wetlands) within areas of volcano-caused increased human density.	Baseline of records on iNaturalist, the system we are trialling with POs, was 175.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 people (the limit under Covid regulations) attending launch in October 2021, with live streaming to others; - 12 people attended training at MNT in February 2022. -17 attended GIS training -UKOTCF & MNT Project Team attended iNaturalist training -Views regularly exceed 1000+ views on MNT Facebook on sites. -candidate demonstration areas identified and discussions held with Governor on how to support project with events etc. - establishment of community biodiversity-recording system iNaturalist training provided to Project Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestream recording available on MNT's Facebook page February Training event registration list- record available. MNT Facebook page on training event Zoom call training on iNaturalist. Facebook analytics see Annex 3.8 on visits to new sites e.g. Friths plot. Meeting appointment with new Government of Montserrat in London, February 2022. Number of records on iNaturalist 197 as of March 2022 and increase since project start to now of 13% more records since the start of the project as we do some trialling of this.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Overall, the Project Team believes that that the indicators are adequate to achieve the outcome. Project outcomes are being monitored by the following (numbered and italicised):

1. The areas community-managed, number of sites ("Wildlife-Homes"), and number of individual 'Adopters' (or community managers & assistants). The target is 10 sites with 100 individuals involved by 2024.

The Project Team believes this indicator is adequate to reflect the community involvement in the project. The Master list of *Wildlife Homes* as shown in Annex 3.5 is a live document and regularly updated and discussed at Project Team meetings. The number of sites has already been achieved and will be increased. As the work on sites is just starting (after initial survey and plan development), the number of participants is not yet clear but the target will probably be achieved by the first 10 sites. We expect this indicator to be exceeded by project end because the level of interest has been high.

2. The regeneration and growth of native plants occurring over time at Wildlife-Homes. The target is achieved at least 100 ha at a minimum of 10 sites showing biodiversity-improvement. At the 6-month point, (October 2021 to March 2022), we have started to gain a picture of some of the biodiversity present at the *Wildlife Homes* through the site surveys we are conducting. As the sites deliberately vary, this is a mixed picture. As the management plans are implemented

with specific actions relating to invasive species and habitat creation (where appropriate), we will be able to re-survey the same sites to demonstrate progress towards this indicator. It is likely that the simple survey methods we have used will enable us to demonstrate improvement with this indicator and the outcome has been achieved.

3. *Demonstration Wildlife-Homes created; target: two created by 2024.*

The creation of these spaces is expected to have a lasting impact in the community as these spaces will remain accessible beyond the project end. This indicator is adequate and progress towards this outcome is already being demonstrated. It is likely that these sites will be at Montserrat EcoPlay and other sites (with which we are in discussions now).

4. *'Adopt-a-Home-for-Wildlife' increases awareness of the opportunities to engage in restoration/conservation efforts with human-benefits. Target is to increase community-awareness reaching >60% of Montserratian, via activities throughout.*

Talking and listening to Montserratians is a critical component of this project. While the Project team is working hard on starting the project, they began dialogue within the community about the project before it and since the start. There is excitement about the prospect of sites which provide multiple benefits to the community (e.g. Friths plot; we know this by views on MNT's Facebook page) and how to be involved in the project in various ways.

The communications plan drafted sets out the key messages the project will focus on as well as the target audiences and ways in which the project engages with them. It has specific targets and timelines, but is a live document so that can be updated throughout the project.

The research survey methods used to survey the *Wildlife Homes* have been developed so that they can be carried out by non-technical persons. The initial surveys are being conducted by members of the Project Team, but the long-term view is that *Adopters* and/or other members of the community can do them. The methods will be shared online via the website.

Training has been provided on the use online biological recording platform, iNaturalist.

Primarily, this involved members of the of Project Team but also by some others. The medium-term view is to encourage members of the community to use it during summer 2022 as part of some organised recording events at the Botanic Garden. The long-term view is that it will be a way for the local community to identify, but also be part of recording biodiversity on Montserrat.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

The assumptions are listed in the application and logframe in Annex 2, updating comments are:

Assumption 1: No volcanic activity experienced during reporting period to disrupt project. See reports from the Montserrat Volcano Observatory www.mvo.ms for the period.

Assumption 2: It became clear very early on that the interest in *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* was something which had to be carefully fostered. It has become important to manage expectations of the *Adopter* matched to what can also be provided by the project team. This is even without extensive marketing of the project. Already we envisage that the core number of *Adopters* needed to meet expected outcomes has been achieved, although they are at various stages of engagement with the Project Team. We are on track for year 1 and likely to exceed expectations after year 3. Establishing a low-maintenance system, in addition to the core *Adopters* for others that want to be involved in the programme is something the team will work on in the next year. See table of *Adopters*.

Assumption 3: Addressing the feedback we received in our grant letter about the ambition of the number of saplings produced throughout the project, we note this and emphasise that we did not want to over-estimate and under-deliver. We knew that the capacity of the native plant nursery (supported previously by an external grant) would allow us to provide a steady flow of native (and non-invasive vegetation). We knew that there may be some challenges, e.g. periods of drought; however these are being managed with a grant for improvements at the Botanic Garden. An additional opportunity we had through the year was the planting of the endemic pribby trees at the EcoPlay area. A group of children planted the trees in the site obtained by the MNT next to the Botanic Garden. We will monitor and also look for other opportunities, e.g. an *Adopt a Pribby* initiative for children to plant and watch their native plants grow. See records in Table 1 of plants produced this reporting period. Our aim is to double (and go further) each year. Thus, by year 3, we will have records of how many plants we have produced and given to *Adopters* and where applicable the public.

Assumption 4: The pandemic has had a limited impact to date. Waiting times for materials have been experienced, but these were expected given slowing of worldwide transport routes. The MNT has excellent links with the Department of Health as well as good local contacts with accommodation providers of those visiting (in October 2021 and January 2022).

There have been some curfews in place during the early part of 2022 on Montserrat. But these have had little impact, with POs switching to desk-based work when required. Surveys have tended to take place early morning and evening given the optimal conditions for surveying out of the heat, therefore, they have been largely unaffected.

Assumption 5: This aspect of the project has gone very well. At the launch in October, MNT & UKOTCF PLs held meetings with the Government of Montserrat's Minister of Environment. During these, it was decided that two staff from Ministry of Agriculture Land, Housing and Environment would be seconded to the project for an average of over 1 day per week. This meant that the Project Officer role would be split between one person already working part-time for MNT by adding an extra day's employment per week and 2 department staff working extra hours for the project. This has been supplemented by a volunteer recruited for 6-week mission to provide assistance with site surveys, training etc. See above and staff profiles in *SOS Nature of Montserrat* <https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SOSnatureNewsletter11d-13.pdf> Some adjustments in the balance of work between these part-time officers is being explored between MNT and UKOTCF managers for the second financial year, but any such changes will be minor.

Assumption 6: This aspect is working very well with good engagement from all team members able to work at flexible times (including weekends if more convenient). Survey records and timesheets of POs.

Assumption 7: Recruitment going well and beyond target – see above Assumption 2.

Assumption 8: As part of the programme mentioned elsewhere, a PhD student is working with the team on the methodology and data collection elements to the project, mainly site surveys and assessments, but also questionnaires. These surveys are going well. See Annex 2 for some extracts of data tables on site vegetation plot surveys and Fixed point photography. Invertebrate surveys are also being conducted.

Assumption 9: This is going very well. POs are able to speak with *Adopters* regularly. The way in which the project is set-up means they spend less time tracking, reporting, managing finances and more time for POs to interact with local community discussing opportunities, management of land etc.

Assumption 10: The first set of management plans are in development now, so we cannot comment now except to say that the signs remain positive.

Assumption 11: POs are able to visit those who have shown an interest and speak with them directly. They are working with school groups, especially the Montserrat High School and through the Kids Club (now locally *Monty's Messengers*) in order to engage with young people. Radio is also being used in outreach. The team regularly appears on radio programmes, both via the national station, Radio ZJB, and 664 broadcasts online. MNT is visible within the community and programmes and activities are popular– see Annex 3 social media posts.

Assumption 12: As in assumption 2.

Assumption 13: Newsletters are sent to 180 persons (but read by many more, including by forwarding) and are available too on UKOTCF's website.

Assumption 14: One training event has taken place so far introducing some key themes including invasive species, methodology for surveys and conservation aims of the project. Another linked training event also included some of the MNT team. This related to Geographical Information Systems specifically the open resource software, QGIS, and drones. Members of the Project Team benefited from training in iNaturalist from another project in which MNT and UKOTCF are involved in running, and starting to use it to record sightings. See iNaturalist (search for Biodiversity of Montserrat).

Assumption 15: This assumption is holding well.

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

Support to the UKOTs to achieve strategic long-term outcomes for the natural environment.

The project supports the fund objectives in the following ways:

1. *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* aims to protect important habitats across the island. Annex 3.5 lists sites which include freshwater habitats (forest ghauts). By working with *Adopters* to manage these sites, e.g. ensuring clear of rubbish, vegetation which prevents effective flow/drainage, and potentially to expand into additional similar or adjacent sites, multiple pressures which could lead to freshwater habitats decline can be addressed.
2. POs (also Department of Agriculture officials) have knowledge of pest species and methods to remove and deal with them that are not harmful to local wildlife. They are using this knowledge to help *Adopters* understand how food production, livelihoods can be compatible with reducing biodiversity loss and building resilience to climate change.
3. POs working with *Adopters* are promoting the responsible stewardship of natural assets and sharing this information online (via popular social media channels).
4. Communications materials will promote the sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biodiversity.
5. Management of *Wildlife Homes* through the coming year will contribute towards reversing the increase in threats of extinction to the world's flora and fauna – site survey results will demonstrate this.

Meeting Montserrat's obligations under multi-lateral agreements extended to the UKOTs, particularly those on biodiversity and climate change

Montserrat has not yet had the UK' ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity extended to them. However, they do have the Conservation and Environment Management Act, which sets out its aspirations and goals under international convention-objectives:

CBD: (Aichi Targets numbers):

1. *people aware of biodiversity-value and their potential steps to conserve/use it sustainably*: Being achieved through training provided via the first workshop for *Adopters* held in February (see UKOTCF's and MNT's websites) and direct advice provided to *Adopters* on site-management options by the well-qualified Project Team member (see monthly PO officer reports - currently internal documents to record action points and assist M&E) and communication materials developed (as part of the communications plan drafted and adopted) and published online (see MNT/UKOTCF websites and Facebook pages; Annex 3.8);
5. *halving natural-habitat loss-rate; degradation/fragmentation reduced*: by communities restoring natural capital on land they manage - through the *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* initiative. This will be demonstrated via the management plans and results of repeat site surveys. During year 1, initial baseline surveys are being conducted (see Annex 3.6 and 3.7).
7. *agriculture/forestry areas ensuring biodiversity-conservation*: One PO has extensive experience in this as an extension officer of the Agriculture Dept. Working with the other POs and especially the officer from the Environment Dept, providing advice & options for sustainable agriculture developments with local small enterprises (management plans in development);
8. *pollution to non-detrimental levels*: Already working with farmers on-island and surveying to provide information and best-practice. This technical advice and natural-area restoration will show what can be done and how (PO monthly reports);
9. *invasive alien species controlled*: Sites are being surveyed and already identifying invasive species which will be under active community-management when management plans are implemented in years 2-3; the first step in this was to survey the sites which is being done (survey results in Google forms in Annex 3.2 and 3.3);
11. *terrestrial/coastal/marine areas conserved and integrated into wider landscapes*: the network of sites through community protected-areas network is coming together. The table in Annex 3.5 shows this.
12. *threatened-species-extinction prevented*: by this network, and building community-appreciation, including through community information-recording system; endemic and Critically Endangered pribby *Ronaletia buxifolia* planting at EcoPlay and plants already given out to *Adopters* and community (social media post of EcoPlay);
14. *ecosystem-services restored/safeguarded especially for women, local communities, poor and vulnerable*: this includes the site-network itself which is being developed across the island, there are multiple benefits, including soil stability improvements, food-supply with potential net income; these are all to be recorded in management plans (under development);
15. *ecosystem-resilience and carbon-stocks-contribution enhanced*: through degraded-ecosystem restoration via removal and replacement of invasive species (some examples of

sites include those areas left unmanaged since volcanic eruptions) - this will be evidenced in the surveys conducted in year 2 & 3; initial surveys have identified and recorded many invasive species (Google forms Annex 3.2 & 3.3 and 3.6 holding data tables).

19. *knowledge widely shared*: through outreach activities and activities in our communications plan (see social media posts Annex 3.8 for effective information exchange with the community).

Specifically, on CBD Aichi target 11, The 2019 IUCN-published report from World Commission on Protected Areas Task Force on “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs) acknowledges the contribution that many areas not legally designated as protected areas can contribute to effective conservation, and that OECMs are likely to play a significant role post-2020 Aichi targets. Sites managed under this project will act as a model for how potential OECMs can contribute towards target 11, reducing biodiversity-loss as well as contribute towards improved livelihoods.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Montserrat’s only proposed terrestrial Ramsar Site is UK46002 (Centre Hills & forested ghauts). Ghauts, steep stream-valleys linking the hills to other native habitats, are vulnerable because they cut through settlement areas. The local community has already proposed parts of these and the hills as *Wildlife Homes*, achievable only with a local advisory officer supported by UKOTCF’s wider network of voluntary specialists.

The project contributes to SDGs (as noted in our application):

3. Ensure healthy lives and well-being - as areas managed through the project are productive, pleasant and clean areas to live, visit and exercise in, contributing towards Montserratians’ well-being. Livelihoods protected and improved, e.g. reduction in over-reliance on imported food (largely as a result of the major volcanic activity from 1995-2010, currently most goods are imported to the island, despite rich soil and traditions), and improved health with more fresh and nutritious produce; Well-being is being recorded using opportunities of training events (the first held in February 2022 documented these (Survey results yet to be analysed Annex 3.6)

4. Ensure inclusive education and lifelong learning - through training and outreach available online and via the newsletter (*SOS Nature of Montserrat* continues beyond DPLUS049 project, with 11 issues so far; one in this reporting period; see Annex 3.4), Kids Club *Monty’s Messengers* set-up and being run, and community-meetings at MNT.

8. Promote sustainable economic growth - productive work restored through small local enterprises, improvements at MNT’s Botanic Garden and encouraged low-impact tourism, particularly of the Montserratian diaspora.

10. Reduce inequality - by encouraging small enterprises, e.g. low-impact eco-tourism particularly focused on UK diaspora, small-scale food production, medicinal-plant-selling and other products at MNT’s Botanic Garden (social media posts on food available to purchase e.g. locally grown cucumber, carrots etc Annex 3.5);

11. Make human-settlements sustainable - mostly through activities of the community-groups and using them as demonstration sites to create positive change;

15. Promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems - reverse land-degradation and, where appropriate, natural regeneration through the development of site management-plans for the *Wildlife Homes* which are implemented;

17. Strengthen implementation ... for sustainable development - through a grassroots-movement (*Adopt a Home for Wildlife*) encouraging and helping the community to act.

Contribution the project is making to key Government of Montserrat priorities and themes

National biodiversity strategies

The Conservation and Environment Management Act (2014) sets out the intention to produce a National Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity. This is yet to be drafted.

Environmental action plans

Montserrat has several species action plans, including for mountain chicken and galliwasp. The project supports these by creating land management with *Adopters* which encompasses suitable habitat for these species (e.g. tropical dry forest at site in Garibaldi Hill; ghaut habitat at Runaway Ghaut).

Environmental Charters

The Environment Charter signed by John A. Osborne for Montserrat in 2001, set out 10 guiding principles and 11 commitments for Montserrat and for the UK Government.

The project contributes towards meeting all guiding principles in the following ways:

1. The well-being and livelihood opportunities of *Adopters* is being recorded over time via surveys - the first one conducted at a training event in February 2022. In addition to becoming *Adopters*, other ways are being explored in which community members can be involved.
2. The project aims to document how reducing biodiversity loss and protection of natural resources can be achieved with community endeavour. It works with all generations to drive action now and to foster support in the future.
- 3 & 4. Project results are being fed into the physical planning policy development via the MNT team and consultations.
5. Some *Wildlife Homes* are precisely where development is taking place and so the project aims to work with land-owners and developers to put forward solutions to prevent the wrong type of plants being planted in the wrong place.
6. Montserrat has globally important biodiversity. The plant species being propagated in the Botanic Garden include endemic and Critically Endangered species. Invertebrate surveys are uncovering the hidden species which provide important ecosystem services, e.g. *Melipona* bee.
7. The site surveys conducted are identifying invasive species which are being targeted for removal and replacement so that restoration of habitat can be achieved.
8. The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) is being explored to survey and monitor sites and potential sites with the island GIS specialist, to supplement ground surveys in order to build up local capacity.
9. Pollution is being controlled through public messaging and working with *Adopters*. This is likely to be a key activity in Y2 and Y3. Alternatives to traditionally used pesticides are being discussed and plans are being developed to raise this with the local community.
10. *Monty's Messengers* children's club, which will continue beyond project end as part of MNT'S core activities, has been set up deliberately to meet the target of celebrating Montserrat's natural heritage.

5. OPTIONAL: Consideration of gender equality issues

Our original application was considered under Darwin Main guidelines and so our logframe included indicators on gender and livelihoods. We will continue to include these in our project even though these could now be considered optional.

It is our belief that a more equal world will lead to better outcomes for biodiversity and people.

Montserrat is considered an equitable society in terms of gender. Females have, historically and to the present day, held the very highest offices in the country. Our MNT female leading team includes: former Permanent Secretary and Deputy Governor and former Minister of Education.

Our Project Team consists of the following ratio (Mike, Catherine, Ann, Sarita, Delmaude, Ajhermae, Elvis, Antowne, Vernaire, Vicky, Maddie) so 3 males to 8 females. Our *Adopters* so far consist of the following ratio (Tim, Dwayne, Mark & Kathryn, Governor, Cherise, Veta, Javon (4 males to 4 females), with under consideration Carol and Norman (1:1)) – excluding community groups which are mixed (Cork Hill, MNT, Lookout School, and possibly a church group). In wider society, we are making the project as flexible as it can be.

We have two indicators in our logframe relating to gender quality. *2.3 Between 2021-2024, information on Wildlife-Home management shared via well-interpreted information systems made available online in the first instance, but with alternative ways to access it for those that cannot attend training events at certain times.* Linking both websites to social media accounts, with public radio and other news media mentions, will provide a basis for providing information to Adopters. These are set-up and are starting to be used.

Capacity building and Gender equality:

3.1 By 2024, wider public engagement takes place on habitat restoration/ natural regeneration, at Wildlife- Homes. 3 training events held, with >25 members from a range of community-groups attending, supplemented by remote means; plus. 6 community-gatherings, 6 radio interview sessions and 20 social media posts with high engagement rates. Profiles of at least 10 Adopters' published during Y1 & Y2, with updates and results in Y3.

As noted in our logframe under output 3, we are making arrangements for training events to be available online in order for those unable to attend in person can have access. Also they are able to provide feedback and comments via the website.

Kids Club ensuring young people involved and our paid Project Assistant, Antwone Sinclair.

Meeting held with new Governor who (like her predecessor) is very supportive of the project.

Gender equality: 3.3 In Y3, Adopt-a-Home ambassadors selected and celebrated (across all sections of society) through a public event organised, in conjunction with the Governor's Office, by MNT and other partners; with wider promotion (60% or 3,000 of population of Montserrat) of the initiative, to ensure project-legacy and continuation beyond project-end. Qualities in the Ambassador roles include: gender balance, strong advocate of the project and importance of a range of societal benefits.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

A significant amount of time was spent in the first few months of the project in building work programmes to ensure that each member of the Project Team had a detailed outline of the activities they would be involved in during the project. For the Project Officers, these related to the project outputs and outcome. Within this an indication of time spent on each activity was provided. This not only helped with M&E but budgeting also. This was an important first step given that the PO role initially was split between three people plus supporters, not necessarily envisaged during the project design, but a very valuable opportunity, of which full use has been made. Also the fact that several other team members were working remotely for varying levels of time during the project complicated issues. Feedback given by members of the Project Team indicate that this was a useful exercise and an important first step.

A template project tracker spreadsheet, in Excel, has been developed for M&E (see Figure 2) and is now being used to track progress. The spreadsheet contains four tabs. The tabs include: project activities, outputs and the outcome and the original timetable of activities. Each tab contains the indicator, the means of verification and the current status (e.g. active). Colour coding is used to easily see when activities are active or complete. Notes on progress will now be added each month. Our current practice is that our team member responsible for M&E fills out the tracker following each Project Team meeting (currently fortnightly). We are finding that it is possible to fill in some gaps after the Project Team meetings with the meeting records which include all the action points resulting from the discussions.

It is our view that this fulfils the planning we envisaged in our project outline. We found that overall, as envisaged, the co-Project Leaders would be responsible for developing the plan, but in practice our team advisor would formulate the tracker and input information given their experience at doing this previously. The Project Team know that their activities are being documented in this way.

In our application under M&E we aimed to meet quarterly, but in fact, these have been more frequent. Currently, the project team normally meets fortnightly, via Zoom. This has proved to be an effective way to bring together the dispersed team as the project gets underway (as well as being helpful during Covid restrictions). A note of each meeting is taken along with action points. Within each meeting, the action points from the previous meeting are reviewed, as well

as new aspects being discussed, and all Project Team members have an opportunity to provide input, ask questions, seek clarification from other partners.

Figure 2: M&E Project tracker spreadsheet

Activity	Start date	Completion date	Status summary	Notes on progress
Activities (Yellow = Live activities)				Feb-22, Mar-22, Apr-22, May-22, Jun-22, Jul-22
1.1 Project Officer recruited at Montserrat National Trust, and any supplementary training needed arranged, and other team members have an introductory meeting via Zoom.	Oct-21	Mar-22	DONE	A team members are recruited and are active with biweekly meetings
1.2 Adverts for Adopt a Home for Wildlife designed and distributed on-island, outlining project and welcoming new sites and 'Adopters', as well as reinstating advice to those in the pilot. PO and local partners use also word of mouth, radio and social media.	Oct-21	Jun-24	ACTIVE	Sites are already being gathered for the project and 9 have been identified so far
1.3 PO and other members gather contacts and begin working with 'Adopters', both in person and via remote means (depending on any Covid restrictions), to formulate site-plans, assistance required, joint management agreements and plan for action.	Jan-22	Jun-24	ACTIVE	Work has started with initial group of adopters
1.4 PO site-visits to record information and to survey Wildlife-Homes in areas already pre-identified as areas for action to provide baselines, e.g. at Cork Hill, other small enterprises identified with an interest, e.g. Tina Barana.	Oct-21	Jun-22	ACTIVE	A number of baselines have started for plants and insects

These take place after the working day (4:30pm) on Montserrat (8:30 or 9:30pm in UK, GMT or BST periods) to enable all to attend. This is because most staff are contracted on other work. We envisage these being less regular as we go ahead and establish good lines of communication and working relationships.

The steering group, or Project Stakeholder group, as we are calling it, has met once in the reporting period. We expect this to be a model used as we go forward, but in practice we may meet more frequently than this as need arises.

We are finding that these meetings will be necessary to inform stakeholders and exchange views/ideas outside of the Project Team, but not necessarily to drive progress in meeting the project targets. This is because the large Project Team is doing this successfully, has mechanisms in place and is meeting its targets, in some ways exceeding them.

The Project Stakeholder group as set out in the application included *Adopters*, a young person, MNT and UKOTCF. We have found that continuous dialogue with *Adopters* informally and formally (in our training session) and the make-up of the Project Team covers the role of the Stakeholder group. MNT has a dual role because it also now represents both a partner and an *Adopter*. [In October 2021, the MNT was donated a parcel of land, now a *Wildlife Home*.] MNT also recruited a young person paid as an intern by MNT. The Project Team also include two representatives from UKOTCF and MNT. In addition, the Project Team includes also two persons from the Government of Montserrat working within the Trust, but closely tied to the Department of Environment and Department of Agriculture. We did not know that this would be possible in project planning, but is a very pleasing development. It allows them to gain experience in a different sector and because a lot of the work is in the field and speaking with *Adopters* it allows them to interact with the community directly.

We think this set-up is facilitating accurate annual reporting and means we are able to highlight and address rapidly any problems in achieving outputs and the outcomes. We think also it allows for adaptive management, inclusion and voices to be heard.

7. Lessons learnt

The following aspects worked particularly well in the first 6 months of the project, falling into this reporting year:

- Direct input from Government of Montserrat with two officers joining the Project Team
- Governor and Ministerial support from outset including visits to sites to discuss work
- Effective local Project Officer role as a small team rather than one person, so that gaps could be covered, knowledge and experience pooled and capacity building maximised.
- Active public support is essential
- Using additional and complementary projects to full advantage
- Major contributions of time by main partners and making use of a pool of supportive organisations and institutions
- Commitment of partners and enthusiasm for learning

- Best use of training opportunities which link with the project
- Methods developed for non-technical persons but adapted to local situation
- Use of free-online tools used elsewhere which can contribute to legacy of the project
- Commitment from MNT and UKOTCF to continue beyond the project end
- Consultation with local community is the key to this sort of project; MNT is very well respected and trusted on Montserrat (as is UKOTCF) and as such is the key to driving the success of the project. Any similar project would need this kind of leader.

The following aspects worked less well:

- Addressing *Adopt a Home* being over-subscribed, but overcome by managing expectations
- Some periods of drought impacting plant propagation being managed; overcome with improvements to irrigation systems in Botanic Garden
- Some damage by rats during one month of propagation. The damage was limited to two species and resulted from necessary disruption while the nursery was upgraded. These conditions are not expected to recur.

Similar projects would benefit from the following recommendations:

- Hiring qualified persons can be difficult as the population in Montserrat (and several other UKOTs) is limited and cost of living high; so alternatives, such as splitting roles, can be explored.
- Volunteer opportunities can supplement and drive projects forward and should be encouraged.
- Training offered to local students as part of the second year of the project will allow the Trust and others to identify suitable future environment officers.

8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews

In this section, we aim to address the letter received on the 12th August 2021 from Darwin Applications c/o LTS international. Passing on some comments from the Darwin Expert Committee (DEC) it identified some areas in which the application could have been stronger. It stated that, although the comments were not requirements for funding, they may help strengthen the project and they recommended that we consider them for the project and report back in the first half-yearly report (which this is, despite it being in annual report format). These are outlined here together with our response and how we have addressed these.

Comment 1 from DEC: it would be good to see a clearer explanation of how the project actions will benefit threatened species at project sites and what the expected degree of contribution there will be to the conservation of these species - please address in your first half year report (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: This comment is difficult to reply to in a project of this type. It is not the project of some external body coming in with a plan to impose on the local community (which the populations of UKOTs complain is all too common). Instead, the idea was to work with the local partners and the local community to work out between us which sites (on an island rich in biodiversity but much threatened by invasive species, particularly plants) would be most appropriate. We want (and are achieving) a range of site-types, but the specific sites depended on the individual members of the local community who were keen to participate and cooperate. The project had piloted the work and could call on a range of experience and contacts (including many skilled volunteers) then to tailor the prescriptions to maximise the benefit. Some of the species which the project aims to benefit will be clear in the report above (e.g. endemic plant pribby), but we are working with others on the sites being set up at present (including the several endemic reptiles, the endemic bird species and the vast number of endemic invertebrate species).

Comment 2 from DEC: it would be good to know more about the project's potential to influence national development policy, specifically with respect to the other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) mentioned (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: We understand that there is a growing interest in other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), particularly from IUCN who developed

some guidelines on this in 2019 (in part as there had been no movement on this since signing the 2020 Aichi targets). We recognised this early on as one way the piloted work on Montserrat could contribute towards a global conversation on the future of conservation. *Wildlife Homes* are potentially candidate local-community OECMs given they meet criteria for these.

The PhD study being developed, as part of the project, will relate project activities to the current understanding of how OECMs can be recognised and included in reporting on international biodiversity targets. This has been designed to produce interim results so that within the project there will be useful information made available.

In addition, one of the co-PLs sits on the IUCN-NCUK Executive Committee and its Protected Areas Working Group, which (with encouragement of UK Government) is specifically looking at OECMs and the contribution they can make.

The project is aware of, but is by no means attempting to use, the indicators developed on OECM by JNCC during the period when the project was designed and awaited funding approval (summer 2021). However, it can provide some insight, as the requisites for OECMs (as set out by IUCN in 2019) as part of *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* are highly relevant and applicable. Montserrat has not had the CBD extended to it, but, as always, aims to contribute towards international targets and moving conservation forward.

Comment 3 from DEC: while gender elements are adequately considered in the narrative, this does not translate to the logframe (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: Since the acceptance of the grant, the DEC made the decision to reinstate ODA-eligible UKOTs, of which Montserrat is one, as eligible for the Darwin Plus fund, rather than the Darwin Main fund. The original application had to include gender equality and livelihood indicators as per the guidelines of the Darwin Main fund. We explained that gender balance was a particular strength in Montserratian society, but put forward some indicators in our logframe and narrative. We recognised the need to provide opportunities to improve livelihoods, however difficult this was to do in a project which mainly concerned biodiversity conservation (and more appropriate for Darwin Plus funding).

Our main foci on gender equality are set out above, in Section 5 above.

Comment 4 from DEC: it would be good to have a bit more information about which local communities would benefit from the action (i.e. where the ten sites for the actions were situated) (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: Each site is different. They represent the main habitat sites on Montserrat. This is important as we want to build a network of sites. Please see also our response to Comment 1 above. It would have been quite improper for the Project Team to impose sites on the local community. Having the community themselves propose suitable sites (which the Team then explore with them, rather than simply accept) is much more likely to result in an effective long-term conservation legacy.

Comment 5 from DEC: the value for money elements need to be better developed, as does the exit strategy as it is not clear how the project actions might be sustained post-project (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: clear commitment from MNT that this will be an ongoing programme beyond project end. The slitting of the PO role with training being given to at least 4 persons is helping to provide capacity for this. The value for money is evident from the huge amount of donated work, which is likely to exceed targets.

Comment 6 from DEC: the exact nature of 'Wildlife-homes' is not made clear (HYR);

Response from DPLUS155 team: *Adopters* are “a person, group or business that has agreed (with the project and the landholders, if the latter are not themselves) responsibility for land-management and, together with the Project, will undertake this in a way which protects Montserrat’s unique nature for generations to come”. *Wildlife Homes* are the sites they are responsible for. While they fall under the IUCN requirements for OECMs, we are not defining them as such here. Instead, we are focussing on direct community action. If at some time in future, the MNT or Government of Montserrat wishes to explore this route with designation, the project results and outcomes will support this and provide proof of concept.

Comment 7 from DEC: the logframe would benefit from more concise wording throughout and more specific activities. As a general rule, each Indicator should seek to measure one metric only.

Response from DPLUS155 team: One of the PLs used to train others internationally in the use of log-frames (as well as run conservation projects), and is surprised at this recommendation. Their experience is that a one-size-fits-all-projects approach to the use of log-frames is unhelpful and unnecessarily rigid. They are tools, not gospels. Our project involves a complex coordination of many parties, so that setting matters out clearly is more helpful than subediting to more concise wording. We do not see functional benefit in re-writing the log-frame. Especially given that the whole team would need to be involved in such an exercise, time and effort to do this would be time and effort not spent delivering this ambitious project. On balance, as conservation charities, we cannot recommend doing this – and would also question whether it might constitute misuse of public funds as well as the organisations' own limited resources.

9. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

10. Sustainability and legacy

This will become much easier to outline in later years as we have more results to share and the project becomes more embedded within the Trust.

Particularly within Montserrat, the project is using a project newsletter *Saving Our Special Nature of Montserrat*, radio interviews, social media and the efforts of local project partners, reports and word of mouth, to raise the profile of this project. In addition, there was strong support throughout of Ministers (and the Governor), and the indication by other Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Education) that they wish to work jointly with MNT to ensure benefits of AHW are expanded and continued beyond the project end.

There are complementary projects being developed for this purpose, e.g. *Monty's Messengers* and *EcoPlay*, an area next to the Trust for children and visitors to learn about the islands' biodiversity and get involved in activities.

The involvement for the first time in practical projects by Antwone and Project Officers from DoE and DoA will be a lasting legacy.

The use of iNaturalist and information provided by the website will be available beyond project end including the infographics created etc.

The Project Team hopes to build on the knowledge gained on plants and invertebrates to build up conservation programmes which can be continued by MNT.

Already, there is more enthusiasm for local people to become *Adopters* on their potential *Wildlife Homes* than the Project Team can cope with, and we are exploring whether there are ways that we can find resources to expand further.

11. Darwin identity

All dissemination of the project activities/results, as noted above, acknowledges the support of the Darwin Initiative.

This is in addition to the general publicity, and advice to potential applicants, that UKOTCF has provided *gratis* to the Darwin Initiative since the latter started, and which continues in its publications, web-site, meetings, advice to its network and in its conferences for conservation practitioners (held every three years, subject to funding), where the Darwin Initiative features heavily as the only UK Government dedicated fund for conservation work in the UKOTs.

All copies of the project newsletter carry the logos of the Darwin Initiative and of project partners. This applies also to all main articles on the project in *Forum News*, all project workshops, illustrated talks on the project (whether in Montserrat, UK or elsewhere), and any other opportunities.

12. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

In the reporting period there have been some local restrictions on Montserrat such as evening curfews. These have not impacted the project dramatically as flexible ways of working have been embedded into the project since outset.

The travel restrictions up until March 2022 (and a few continuing) meant that several trips to Montserrat from the UK had to be carefully managed, including paperwork, permissions and planning for at least 5 days of quarantine on arrival. This was all part of the planning and was dealt with accordingly. There is no doubt that it has presented more work, but it has been handled efficiently and effectively by extra donations of time.

The flow of information possible through online working by a variety of means has enabled the Project Team to connect and meet all challenges (e.g. Dropbox, emails, Zoom conversations). Socially distanced physical meetings have taken place (as appropriate) and fieldwork has been undertaken in accordance with local restrictions (in between curfews where they were in place).

13. Safeguarding

Please tick this box if any safeguarding violations have occurred during this financial year.

If you have ticked the box, please ensure these are reported to ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk as indicated in the T&Cs.

No

14. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022)

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2021/22 D+ Grant (£)	2021/22 Total actual D+ Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Consultancy costs	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Overhead Costs	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Travel and subsistence	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Operating Costs	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Capital items	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Others (Please specify)	██████████	██████████	██████████	
TOTAL	██████████	██████████		

15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

We aim to provide an article for Darwin's newsletter in the forthcoming year and will complete this section in our year 2 end-of-year report.

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 Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
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
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
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.	