

Darwin Plus:
Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund
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 2023

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

1. Darwin Plus Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS176
Project title	Turning the tide on plastic pollution in St Helena and Ascension
Territory(ies)	Ascension and St Helena
Lead Partner	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Project partner(s)	Ascension Island Government (AIG), St Helena National Trust (SHNT), St Helena Government (SHG), University of Exeter, Cape Town University, Nelson Mandela University, BLUE Marine Foundation
Darwin Plus grant value	£499,234
Start/end dates of project	1/5/2022 to 31/3/2025
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022-Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	Apr 2022-Mar 2023 Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Fiona Llewellyn
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.zsl.org/ @ZSLMarine @OfficialZSL @ZSLconservation https://www.ascension.gov.ac/ @AscensionMPA @AIGConservation http://www.trust.org.sh/ @SHnationaltrust
Report author(s) and date	The content of this report was led by: Shauna Young, Alice Chamberlain, Fiona Llewellyn, Maria Fernandes, Michelle Fletcher, and Tobias Capel with wider input from the project team.

1. Project summary

Plastic pollution is widely recognised as one of the biggest threats to marine biodiversity; over 700 species are negatively impacted¹, including some present in Ascension and St Helena.

¹ 1. Rochman et al. (2016). *The ecological impacts of marine debris: unravelling the demonstrated evidence from what is perceived*. Ecological Society of America. Volume 97, Issue 2. Pp. 302-312. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1890/14-2070.1>

The South Atlantic oceanic islands are geographically isolated and encompass a diverse array of marine life, including many endemics. The UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) of Ascension and St Helena Islands have designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as part of the UK Government's Blue Belt Programme. Ascension Island (7°56'S, 14°22'W) has an area of 98 km² and is located ~ 90 km west of the mid-Atlantic Ridge, while St Helena Island (15°57'S, 5°42'W) is bigger with an area of 120 km² and is located 930 km east of the mid-Atlantic Ridge.

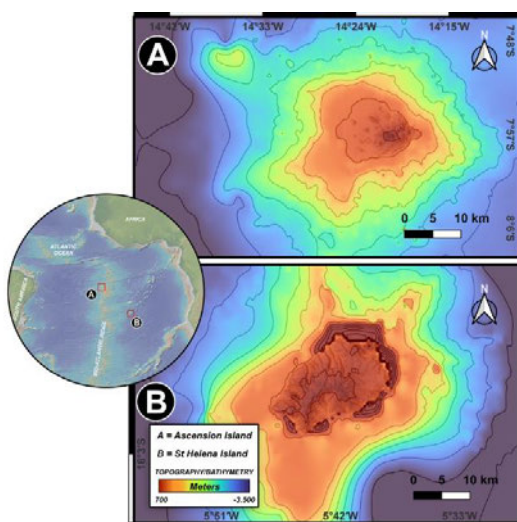


Figure 1. Map of (A) Ascension and (B) St Helena with bathymetry (further maps in Appendix 1)

This project is addressing both extrinsic plastic arriving from elsewhere, and that leaking into the environment from the islands. It aims to trial and implement interventions that will benefit and empower communities to take action to protect their environment, and benefit the ocean and key wildlife species by 2025.

Together we will trial innovative solutions and interventions; and create conditions for islanders to reduce the reliance on single-use plastic (SUP); and build and implement inclusive, locally-developed strategies with communities on both islands to reduce plastic litter and improve associated waste management efficiency.

The results will contribute to numerous local, national, and international conventions, treaties, and agreements. For example, [St Helena Government's Vision and Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) has a focus on "...the preservation of land wildlife, marine and built heritage, and [utilising] renewable power and technology to deliver greener social economic outcomes including better management of waste". [Ascension Island Marine Protected Area Management Plan \(MPA\) 2021-2026](#) identifies litter as a significant threat to the natural features of the MPA; operational objective 1d of the plan states "...monitoring, regulation and management regime effectively tackles all known threats to inshore ecosystems".

The project also aligns with global strategies and commitments to deal with plastic pollution, including the [Honolulu Strategy](#), [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#), [Sustainable Development Goal 14 - Life Under Water](#), and the [United Nations Treaty to End Plastic Pollution](#).

2. Project stakeholders/partners

Project partnerships

A positive project launch meeting was held (online) with all partners in June 2022, whereby initial introductions were carried out, preferred ways of working were agreed, and communication lines established (Appendix 2). A core project management team of Ascension Island Government (AIG), St Helena National Trust (SHNT) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL), was formed and have met weekly via Zoom throughout year 1 to facilitate capacity building and project co-design. In addition, 2 wider 'all-partner' meetings (including ZSL, AIG, SHNT, St Helena Government (SHG), Blue Marine Foundation (Blue), and Exeter, Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Universities) took place in year 1 to invite input into project planning and share updates. Relationships have been further developed with academic partners

(Exeter, Nelson Mandela, and Cape Town Universities), where expertise has been drawn upon in refining methods for assessing the impact of plastic pollution on wildlife.

A project timetable was developed (Appendix 3) together with partners, and research and monitoring methodologies co-designed and piloted in-territory by AIG and SHNT, with ZSL providing technical and scientific direction on the community engagement and systems change approaches, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and policy engagement underpinned by science. Partners worked together to combine previous field and research experience with local knowledge, to develop and trial appropriate methodologies for shoreline and wildlife plastic monitoring in-territory.

Throughout year 1, AIG and SHNT have been responsible for project co-design, management and delivery in-territory, including recruitment, research and monitoring, fieldwork, community engagement and outreach with support from ZSL. AIG and SHNT have also hosted the ZSL team during two month-long expeditions in October 2022 and February 2023, strengthening positive relationships established through remote communications in the first half of project year 1. As we look towards project years 2 and 3, ZSL is committed to strengthening capacity in-territory, with the goal of re-distributing overall management and leadership from the UK over to AIG, SHNT, and the communities of the UKOTs.

Community engagement

The first phase of the project focussed on understanding the current plastics system on each island, looking at importation, generation, usage, and disposal of SUP. The purpose of our community engagement in year 1 was therefore to gather and combine knowledge and insights from a diverse range of islanders, including socio economic challenges faced on-island, and potential opportunities and barriers faced in relation to plastic pollution. During the expeditions to Ascension and St Helena, the team co-developed an inclusive community engagement approach before initiating outreach, recognising this will lay the foundations for sustainable and locally appropriate solutions later in the project. Our approach included:

2. Mapping of islanders based on their interests/occupations/influence in the project, including those involved in government, local NGOs, retailers, businesses, public services, community groups and media outlets.
3. Prioritisation of who to engage with, and when, considering who will be most impacted by/impactful in supporting our work.
4. Conducting face-to-face meetings to introduce the project, gauge interest in participating, and initiate an equitable Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process. During meetings other contact names were often suggested by islanders as key to involve in the project, and those names were subsequently added to our map (i.e. a snowball sampling approach).
5. Conducting other forms of outreach and engagement, including via beach clean events, marine-themed festivals, social media, and local news outlets.

During the Ascension expedition in October 2022, the project team convened 20 meetings in 1 month, including with AIG's Conservation Department and Waste Management Team, Ascension Island's Administrator (the Head of Ascension Island Government) and Deputy Administrator, Two Boats School, Ascension's social worker, and key island retailers. The team also met with contractor staff based at Mitie, Encompass, the Ministry of Defence, and the US Air Base. Following the conclusion of the expedition in November 2022, Ascension-based Project Coordinator, Tobias Capel, (hired for this project in September 2022 and match-funded by the John Ellerman Foundation) has since conducted a further 7 meetings, including with the largest retailer on Ascension and the managers of all 4 bars and clubs on the island.

On St Helena, the expedition team convened 17 meetings across 3 weeks, including with SHG's Legislative Council and Senior Leadership Group, The Equality & Human Rights Commission, Tourism Office, SHG Marine Section, SHG Waste Management Services, key island retailers and importers (Thorpes, Solomons, Queen Mary's and the Rose & Crown), Chamber of Commerce (fishermen, farmers, and representatives from the construction sector), SURE (internet and telecommunications provider) and Connect Ltd (water, energy, and sewage services). In addition, the project team delivered the Scout's Founder Day (40 youth attendees) and exhibited at SHNT's Annual Whale Shark Festival (500 attendees). Following the expedition's conclusion in March 2023, the in-territory project team has participated in St Helena's Marine Week, delivering presentations about the project, marine plastic pollution and its impacts to over 400 students across the island's 3 primary schools and single secondary school. The SHNT project team also took part in Harford School's Staff Awareness Week, where they introduced the plastic pollution issue and explored how teachers would like to contribute to the project. Planning is underway for facilitated workshops in year 2, whereby retailers and teaching staff will be re-engaged to feed into the plastic systems diagnosis and support the team in co-developing solutions and monitoring approaches.

A WhatsApp group called “Dive Against Debris” was created to bring the ‘Dive Club’ and ‘Freediving St Helena’ with St Helena’s dive operators to carry out monthly dive clean-ups. The idea was very well received and the first dive clean-up was led in March 2023 by 8 volunteers. Together they collected ~ 120 kg of litter; 1,561 items in total, 41% of which were clothing, 39% plastic, and 20% other (rubber, shoes, glass, ceramic, and wood - see Appendix 4 for more detail). The second event is being led in April 2023 by 23 volunteers, including people from the government.

In March 2023, SHNT secured an additional \$2,000 (USD) to hold 4 community clean-up events in April 2023. This is an international partnership with the Ocean Conservancy and International Coastal Cleanup as part of the #TeamSeas campaign celebrating Earth Month (Appendix 5).

Please note: as part of the discussions around inclusive conservation, the term 'stakeholder' has been identified as having problematic connotations. ZSL is exploring more inclusive alternatives and will share this thinking with Darwin for consideration.

Particular achievements, lessons, strengths or challenges with the partnership(s)

During the first 12 months of this project, very strong collaborative relationships have been built between all partners. Following 2 successful expeditions, and the completion of 2 valuable MSc theses, all project activities and outputs continue to be co-designed and implemented in-territory with remote support from ZSL, despite challenges with limited and unstable internet connectivity.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1: Systems for quantifying and reducing plastic waste are consolidated with a proposed strategy to trial interventions for SUP reduction in St Helena and Ascension

Activity 1.1: Existing system diagnosis and social insight tools are reviewed, then tailored to context Q2 Yr1

Approaches and methodologies used by ZSL in previous projects were shared with AIG and SHNT during the project design phase, including useful resources such as the [#OneLess Practical Guide](#) and [Sea to Source: Ganges Expedition](#), which provided an introduction to applying systemic and community-driven approaches for reducing plastic waste. Practical techniques such as diagnosing and mapping the plastic system, were revisited in person during the two expeditions. Together the project team adapted methodologies to be locally appropriate for Ascension and St Helena, and co-developed tailored community engagement plans.

Activity 1.2: MSc study to audit SUP usage, consolidating existing strategic reports, materials, and other sources by Q4 Yr1

During summer 2022, Juliette Fraser (an MSc student from the University of Plymouth, co-supervised by ZSL’s Senior Technical Advisor) conducted 16 key informant interviews to gather initial data on behaviour and attitudes towards the importation, distribution, consumption, and disposal of SUP items across both Ascension and St Helena. Starting with project partners, key informants were recruited via snowball sampling. Survey questions were co-designed with AIG, SHNT, and ZSL and tailored to each island to spotlight potential social and/or economical barriers to reducing plastic waste. The interviews were supplemented with desk-based research and insights translated into 2 infographics and the first draft of a digital plastics systems map (Appendix 6). This served as a springboard for the next stage of the system diagnosis on both islands.

Activity 1.3: Using tailored tools, identify and map out islanders (retailers, members of the public and waste management sector) and conduct interviews, surveys, and workshops to analyse procurement, supply, and sale of SUP, and understand contextual, social, and behavioural insights behind the use of and solutions to SUP by Q1 yr2

In October 2022 and February 2023, ZSL team members travelled to Ascension and St Helena respectively for month-long expeditions to work with in-territory teams and engage with key community members via meetings, interviews, workshops, and informal gatherings. Comprehensive community maps were created (Appendix 7) and inclusive engagement approaches co-developed. Information was collated through 37 conversations with a range of people from diverse sectors (see Section 2, ‘Community Engagement’ for

more detail), and outreach bolstered by communications via local media outlets, social media, and in-person events (see Appendices 8 and 9 for detailed accounts of each expedition).

Options for establishing baseline waste data on St Helena are currently being explored with project partner Terri Clingham (SHG Waste Management Services). Meanwhile on Ascension, AIG has trialled a small-scale waste audit with 5 individuals from AIG's Conservation and Fisheries Directorate. Participants segregated a week's worth of waste to identify key plastic items and gauge effort required for scaling this approach on island. Over 1 week, 88 items (weighing 764g) were collected, with food plastic packaging being most prevalent (accounting for 41% of all items - Appendix 10). The team is exploring how to scale this approach across both Ascension and St Helena in year 2, so as to monitor change in plastic waste quantities over time. Baseline data on importation and sale of plastic items is also being established, and appropriate data sharing agreements have been produced.

Activity 1.4: Produce system map of SUP usage in St Helena and Ascension Q1 Yr2

Work towards this activity is captured under activities 1.1 and 1.3. The systems maps for both Ascension and St Helena are each on track to be produced by the end of Q1 Yr2 as scheduled. The team is currently conducting qualitative text analysis of insights gained during activity 1.3.

Activity 1.5: Facilitate inclusive workshops with communities to assess the social acceptability of the system map findings and feed in their response to opportunities for action/intervention Q1 Yr2

Activity scheduled for project year 2.

Activity 1.6: Use workshop outcomes and system diagnosis to select three interventions that complement St Helena's Sustainable Economic Development Plan (including one focusing on SUP water bottles). Assess feasibility of the three interventions and review with islanders through workshops by Q2 Yr2

Activity scheduled for project year 2.

Output 2: Pilot interventions to reduce most problematic/prevalent SUP items and switch to sustainable alternatives are completed, monitored and evaluated with new policy in place for SUP reduction in St Helena

Activity 2.1: Develop campaign materials and run a campaign for SUP water bottle reduction in St Helena, targeting schools, existing community-based organisations and other early adopters identified from the community. Run smaller campaign in Ascension to target school children only (Q2 – Q4) Yr2

Although scheduled for project year 2, community engagement activities on both Ascension and St Helena have indicated that there may be challenges in directing islanders towards drinking tap water to reduce SUP water bottle consumption in-territory. During the expeditions, our team discovered that all water produced on Ascension is created via reverse osmosis. Our community outreach highlighted widespread concerns held by islanders that the water produced is not "healthy" to drink due to deficiencies in vitamins and/or minerals. There is an additional barrier around distaste of tap water, which may result from chlorine. Likewise on St Helena, conflicting opinions surfaced during engagement activities around the taste of the island's chlorinated tap water and differing levels of tap water "drinkability" across the 8 districts. The right for an individual to choose between drinking spring water (e.g untreated water from a groundwater well with limited safety testing), tap water or imported bottled water, has been a key point of discussion within the team, which we will need to consider very carefully in year 2 when co-designing interventions. Given this, we will also be looking at sustainable packaging alternatives to SUP for drinking water; and reviewing whether plastic bottled water is indeed the priority 'flagship' SUP item to focus on.

In February 2023 the SHNT team designed and produced a comic book, 'The invisible threats to whale sharks' (Appendix 11), which aims to introduce the microplastic issue and its potential impacts on St Helena's biodiversity to school children. This was due to be distributed during St Helena's Marine Week in March, but this wasn't possible due to printing problems on the island. Instead the comic book will be printed and distributed in line with World Ocean Day (8 June 2023).

Activity 2.2: Work with CONNECT to install 2 new public refill stations in St Helena Q2 Yr2. Collect data on water refills until Q4 yr 3

This will be reviewed in project year 2, in light of activity 2.1.

Activity 2.3: Distribute refillable water bottles to all school children in St Helena and Ascension by Q2 Yr2

As per activity 2.1, our team will decide whether this is an appropriate intervention to pursue on both Ascension and St Helena when the systems maps are completed in summer 2023. In the meantime, on Ascension in lieu of distributing refillable water bottles to school children, 2 assemblies and an 'ocean plastic' themed lesson were delivered to year groups 7 and 8 during the expedition. Following the expedition, AIG has led 2 beach cleans and 1 plastic sea creature sculpture session with the Marine Protected Area Youth Committee (MPAYC) - a youth group of approximately 20 individuals.

Activity 2.4: Collaborate with islanders to pilot 2 other interventions for reducing SUP, aligned with St Helena's SEDP as identified in output 1 from Q3 Yr2 to Q4 Yr3.

St Helena

Activity scheduled for project year 2.

Ascension

Although this activity solely targeted St Helena, there is progress to report from Ascension. Meetings with AIG's Waste Management team highlighted inappropriate disposal of sanitary items in Georgetown and Two Boats as a key source of island pollution. Flushed items were causing blockages, requiring increased maintenance. Owners of the Two Boats Club and Saint's Cub echoed these concerns, identifying blue roll, wet wipes, sanitary pads and tampons as key problematic items. As this challenge aligned with the project aims to support better waste management practises on island, "Don't Flush" notices were produced by our team and put up in toilet cubicles in Saint's Club, Two Boat's Club and the NAAFI snack bar (Appendix 12).

In February 2023, AIG successfully applied for a Darwin Local Grant (DPLR1\1064 - Appendix 13) to address the issue of cigarette butt litter on Ascension. This was driven by results from our surveys, which identified cigarette butts as the most prevalent (24%; n=2,086 cigarettes) plastic debris item found, particularly around beach huts. Cigarette filters are made of plastic (cellulose acetate) and, due to the chemicals from the cigarette that accumulates in the filter, are also particularly toxic. The grant will fund the installation of cigarette bins around 6 different beach huts at Georgetown Pier, Saint's Club and Two Boat's Club. These locations were selected for their importance as areas where people frequently congregate to socialise. Behaviour change approaches will be implemented to promote the use of the bins by the public and monitoring strategies will measure impact over time.

Activity 2.5: Conduct before and after behaviour change surveys and analyse waste management reports to monitor change Q2 Yr2 and Q3 Yr4

Strong relationships were formed with the waste management teams on both Ascension and St Helena during year 1. Both teams offered a full site tour and breakdown of their services during the ZSL expeditions to each territory, which were extremely informative and valuable. Behaviour change surveys will be designed and delivered in year 2 in St Helena and, together with the activities described under output 1, will serve as baselines against which we will monitor change.

Activity 2.6: Identify and launch 1 sustainable business model with the local community. Provide training session (Q1 Yr2) and monthly monitoring

Activity scheduled for project year 2.

Activity 2.7: Monitor and evaluate all interventions in St Helena and SUP water bottle intervention in Ascension. Consolidate final recommendations made for a plastic waste reduction strategy in St Helena by Q4 Yr4

A draft M&E framework has been created (see Appendix 14). This will be adapted after pilot interventions are co-designed and utilised by all partners throughout years 2 and 3.

Activity 2.8: Develop and consult on policy for reducing SUP in St Helena Q2 yr2 to Q4 yr3

Although scheduled for year 2, both expeditions in year 1 touched on the potential for policy change relating to plastics in Ascension and St Helena. On Ascension, key insights gained from meetings with AIG's Crown

Counsel Lawyer, Administrator and Deputy Administrator, provided a helpful understanding of policy development processes in-territory. On St Helena, the Legislative Council and Senior Leadership Group (responsible for formulating public policies on the island) demonstrated interest in working together to transition towards sustainable packaging alternatives, and policy change surfaced as a potential solution. However, our team explained that before pursuing a pathway of policy change on either island, we need to complete our systems diagnosis and ensure the impacts on communities are fully understood and embedded into decision-making.

Output 3: Characteristics and sources of plastic waste pollution and associated threats to wildlife in St Helena and Ascension shores are understood, with appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented

Activity 3.1: Building on recognised methodologies, and previous beach litter monitoring efforts and data, design a robust sampling strategy for shore litter (Q4 yr1)

Over the past 12 months, AIG, SHNT and ZSL have together co-designed each island's on-going shoreline monitoring strategies, with technical advice from our international academic partners. The expeditions of October 2022 and February 2023 included multiple pilots of several shoreline monitoring methodologies: a) Marine Debris Tracker (MDT) to monitor mesoplastics (>5–25 mm) and macroplastics (>25-1000mm), b) Bottle Identification method (Appendix 15) to record the brand, size, polymer, manufacture date and expiry date of plastic drinks bottles, and c) photo quadrat method, using 100m² plots to monitor microplastics (<5mm)².

On St Helena, Sandy Bay Beach and Rupert's Beach were selected as priority pilot sites due to a combination of oceanographic, biological, and recreational reasons. During the February 2023 expedition, 24 pilot MDT transects/quadrats were conducted in total. In that time, the team counted 1,989 items, among them 1,910 were macroplastics and 1,761 microplastics (351 nurdles and 1,410 microplastic fragments). It was also observed in Sandy Bay Beach that microplastics were more abundant in the low-medium tide compared to the high tide level (see Appendix 8 for more detail).

During the Ascension expedition in October 2022, the team trialled the same 3 methodologies. The team attempted to survey as much of the coastline as possible to test suitability of the methods on different substrates and to identify important areas for ongoing monitoring. During the expedition, 61 transects and 32 photo quadrats were performed over 28 locations around Ascension's coastline. The initial results indicated that belt transects were the most suitable method to employ on Ascension, with transects being performed along the length of the beach, rather than for 50m or 100m, due to the impracticality of using a tape measure in the windy conditions. Beach huts (n=14) located around Ascension's coastline were also identified as significant sources of litter in coastal areas. Consequently, sites selected for ongoing monitoring on Ascension are the 3 beaches and 4 associated beach huts located in the 3 Beach Nature Reserves on Ascension, designated for their importance as green turtle nesting sites and land crab spawning areas. In addition, 3 rocky coves on the south coast located in the Wideawake Fairs Nature Reserves were selected due to their exposure on the windward side of the island to pollution that is being brought in on ocean currents.

Following the pilots, ongoing monitoring plans are now finalised and underway in Ascension (Appendix 16) and due to start in St Helena in May 2023 (see activities 3.3 and 3.4).

Activity 3.2: MSc study to conduct biodiversity threat assessment through an analysis of secondary data to establish the vulnerability of wildlife to plastic pollution. Produce prioritised vulnerability list of species with associated priority list of most damaging plastic type and interaction by Q1 Yr2

In summer 2022, an MSc student from Imperial College London (Constanza Fernandez) completed a biodiversity threat assessment of plastic pollution in Ascension and St Helena using literature available on vulnerability (plastic interaction), hazard risk (plastic concentration according to Global Plastic distribution model) and species exposure risk to plastic (Appendix 17). Constanza presented her findings to partners, offering an understanding of previous work that had taken place across both islands and identifying the species most at risk to inform our wildlife monitoring strategies.

² Kershaw, P.J., Turra, A. and Galgani, F., 2019. Guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of plastic litter and microplastics in the ocean.

Activity 3.3: Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in St Helena (monthly), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites throughout from Q4 Yr1 to Q4 Yr3.

Following pilots in year 1, fortnightly shoreline monitoring in St Helena will be conducted at Sandy Bay Beach and Rupert’s Beach from 1 May 2023 to 1 May 2024. The team will be using MDT transects and the ‘bottle ID methodology’ (see activity 3.7) at both sites, and photo quadrat sampling at Sandy Bay Beach only. This will allow the team to assess the abundance and composition of litter, especially plastic, throughout the year and monitor seasonal variations on both beaches. The team will reassess the timing and frequency of shoreline monitoring in the final year.

Activity 3.4: Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in Ascension (bimonthly for 3 months in Yr2 and Yr3), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites across Q1 & Q2 in Yr 2 & Yr 3

Prior to the October 2022 expedition, a research plan for assessing the impacts of plastic pollution on the marine environment on Ascension was produced (Appendix 18). This was used as the starting point to determine, discuss and trial the monitoring and sampling activities. Similarly to St Helena, going forwards the team on Ascension will use MDT and the bottle identification method (but not photo quadrats as explained in activity 3.1) to conduct on-going shoreline monitoring on Ascension. Transects will be conducted every 3 months at Long Beach, Pan Am and North East Bay (designated Nature Reserves) along the strandline, back of the beach, and the associated beach huts. In addition, transects will be conducted every 3 months at 3 coves in the Waterside Nature Reserve along the strandline only. To date 73 transects have been carried out across 28 beaches/coves and 8 beach huts. 10,844 litter items have been collected of which 55% are plastic. The most common plastic item has been cigarette litter (n=2,086). To date the most common drink bottle brand is “Tingyi” and the most common country of origin is China, which needs further investigation but may come from shipping or imports to other source countries.

Since the expedition, monitoring has been conducted in the beach nature reserves and a cove on the south coast. Cumulatively, the results of the shoreline surveys indicate cigarettes, glass fragments, driftwood, hard plastic fragments and metal fragments are the most prolific marine debris items found (Figure 2).

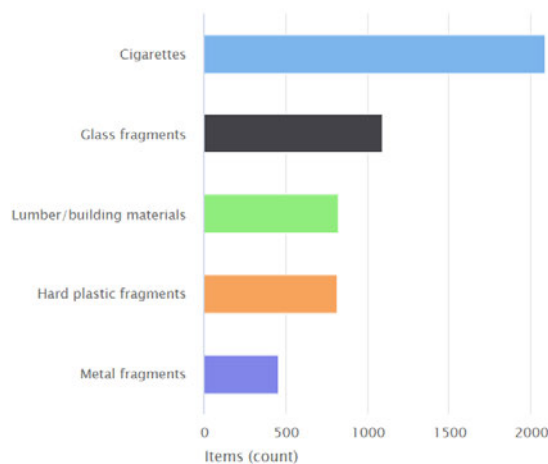


Figure 2. Marine debris items recorded on Ascension (October 2022 - February 2023) using MDT.

Activity 3.5: Based on threat assessment and current wildlife monitoring protocols, conduct wildlife-plastic interaction monitoring of priority species (identified in 3.1) at plastic hotspot sites

Seabirds - St Helena

In parallel to this project, SHNT ecology staff are beginning a pilot project to develop a long-term seabird monitoring program at a mainland Masked Booby colony on St Helena. This would entail bi-monthly visits to the colony and the ecology staff would look for, and record, any physical indications that the birds have been impacted by plastic (signs of current or past entanglement, and plastic presence in nests). If staff note any deceased individuals, a determination will be made whether the carcass is fresh enough to be viable for sampling. If it is, it will be collected and the stomach will be removed for plastic sampling using the protocols provided by AIG staff. However based on conversations with a local seabird expert it is very unlikely that ecology staff will encounter any viable carcasses at the sites where monitoring will occur due a) to it being a very small bird colony that is only subject to natural mortality (i.e. no impact from wind

turbines as in Ascension); and b) staff will only visit the sites once every two weeks and carcasses would need to be collected within a few hours of death for viable sampling (before decay sets in).

Whale sharks feeding grounds - St Helena

10 water column sampling tests were performed on whale shark feeding grounds at Barn Cap, St Helena (Appendix 4). The method consisted of pulling a handheld 300µm neuston net for 2 minutes through the water during whale shark feeding activity. Different types and colours of microfibers were seen under the microscope in all sampling tests, demonstrating future research potential. Ahead of whale shark season 2024, the team will revisit next steps with this method.

Anecdotal data

On Ascension, opportunistic occurrences of plastic and wildlife interactions are being recorded by AIG (Appendix 19). To date 2 galapagos sharks (*Carcharhinus galapagensis*) were observed entangled, 1 in fishing line and another in plastic packaging; 2 Ascension frigatebirds (*Fregata aquila*) have been entangled in fishing line, 1 also had a lure attached; 2 masked boobies (*Sula dactylatra*) and 1 brown booby (*Sula leucogaster*) had braided fishing line caught around their bills. On St Helena, a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) has been seen twice by project staff sleeping on a litter deposit of mixed debris including fishing line/gear on the sea floor in James Bay, which could have posed risk of entanglement or injury.

Activity 3.6: Quantify plastics in bird nests, stomachs of opportunistically collected seabird and turtle carcasses, game fish guts and hermit crab entrapment using comparable methods to Tristan da Cunha, Pitcairn and BIOT. Publish report and MSc thesis by Q4 Yr3

Seabird stomach sampling - Ascension

Planning is underway between the core project management team and academic partners to process stomach samples in year 2 from seabird carcasses that were collected opportunistically (principally from turbine strikes) over the past 4 years and stored on Ascension. To date, AIG has collected 51 samples to be processed: 31 Ascension frigatebirds; 3 sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*), 3 black noddies (*Anous minutus*), 5 brown boobies, 7 masked boobies and 2 yellow-billed tropicbirds (*Phaethon lepturus*) (Appendix 20).

Green turtle stomach sampling - Ascension

One green turtle carcass has been opportunistically collected on Ascension. The team is exploring options for performing FTIR (Fourier transform infrared) spectroscopy on the gastrointestinal tract.

Green turtle nests - Ascension

Green turtles nest from November to June on sandy beaches around Ascension's coastline, the three largest and most important beaches being Long Beach, Pan Am and North East. The significance of these Nature Reserve beaches for wildlife formed part of the justification for their inclusion in standardised shoreline monitoring for this project. 2 methods have been chosen: 1) investigating the prevalence and composition of plastic debris on fresh tracks and cover-ups during routine activity monitoring; and 2) investigating the prevalence and composition of plastic debris within the egg chambers of turtle nests during excavations of nests performed for the 60 nests that are already being studied for climate impacts on temperature-determined sex. Monitoring commenced in March 2023 and will continue until spring 2023 (Appendix 21).

Brown booby nest monitoring - Ascension

Since November 2022, the brown boobies on Ascension have had one breeding season during which sampling for the study was conducted at fortnightly intervals. 127 breeding pairs were included in the study, 65 study nests were sampled for the prevalence and composition of plastics in their nests using both methods, and 62 nests were designated as controls. The results of this round of sampling found that 23% (n=15) of study nests were observed to contain plastic debris. Examining the samples collected (n=14 as one sample was lost) found 27 anthropogenic debris items, of which 26 were plastic. The most prevalent plastic debris items collected by brown boobies for nesting materials by number and weight were plastic rope (n=7) and Netlon tubes (n=5) (see M&E framework Appendix 14).



Figure 2: An example study nest with a brown booby sat upon a nest made with feathers and plastic on Letterbox peninsula, Ascension Island.

Fish stomach sampling - Ascension

Representative species samples (see Appendix 14) will be taken from several locations around Ascension's coastline by AIG and local fishers to investigate the influence that exposure to different currents or proximity to human settlements has on the prevalence of ingested microplastics. All gastrointestinal tracts will be shipped to academic partners in South Africa to identify and quantify microplastics, down to particles of approximately 100µm in size by FTIR spectroscopy.

Fish stomach sampling - St Helena

On St Helena, the team decided not to sample top level fish species consumed by humans due to the politics around the commercial fishery on St Helena at this time. Fish species at lower trophic levels will be sampled to determine if they are directly ingesting plastics. We have been advised that it should be possible to collect samples of this species both in James Bay, which is the area most affected by local plastic/waste, and on the windward side of the island, which is the area assumed to be most impacted by international plastic/waste. The suggested collection frequency for this species is at least twice per year from any site sampled, with at least 20-30 individuals collected at each site during each sampling round. Costs and research parameters to collect and sample will determine whether this sampling will proceed.

Activity 3.7: Use established identification methods to document origins of SUP bottles/lids to determine source countries and routes of shore litter by Q4 yr 2

Information was collected where possible on the origin and source of all plastic drink bottles encountered during the shoreline surveys on both Ascension and St Helena, using the bottle ID method (Appendix 15). This is an ongoing element of the shoreline surveys that aims to inform sources of plastic debris, whether it be from other land masses, or as litter from boats. Methods were adopted from previous work carried out by project partners Peter Ryan and Maelle Conan (Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Universities), and by previous Darwin Plus funded work carried out by ZSL in Chagos between 2019 – 2022 (DPLUS090). Data recorded for each bottle or loose lid encountered includes: brand, parent company, country of origin/manufacture, logo, date of manufacture/best before date, type of drink (water or soft drink), volume, colour of bottle, colour of lid and the degradation state of bottle.

On St Helena, during the expedition the team collected 11 SUP bottles (8 of Asian origin, 3 unidentifiable due to degradation state) and 14 plastic bottle lids (2 of Asian origin, 2 from South Africa and 10 unidentifiable). On Ascension, 625 SUP bottles have been collected to date, including: 466 water bottles, 107 flavoured drinks bottles, 44 unknown bottles, 6 bottle caps and 2 household product bottles. 14 source countries have been identified from 267 of the items for which it was possible to collect identity data from. The most prolific source country is China, responsible for 88% of the bottles identified to date on Ascension's coastline.

Activity 3.8: Create and begin using beach clean best-practice guidelines for organised beach cleans with SHNT and AIG staff and local volunteers Q1 Yr2

Although scheduled for project year 2, some initial learnings have been gathered to inform this activity. For example, on St Helena, the project team has been advised that beach clean activities should be done via the schools to support securing parental permission for participation and the use of children's images in social media. Schools can also help establish health and safety protocols at the beginning of the activity for all volunteers, such as using gloves, first aid kit, etc. For dive clean-ups on St Helena, volunteers have

indicated an opportunity for beach clean guidelines to be integrated into the existing standard pre-dive safety briefings. Meanwhile on Ascension, the project team is investigating the need for best practice guidelines around the use of beach-huts, which were identified as a major source of litter during the expedition.

Activity 3.9: Develop and implement a mitigation strategy for wildlife, based on outcomes of threat assessment, and working with relevant authorities and NGOs to integrate into Conservation Management Plans by Q3 Yr3

This is scheduled towards the end of the project, however the wildlife monitoring methodologies which we have been working on this first year (detailed in activity 3.6) will be feeding into this.

Output 4: Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs

Activity 4.1: Identify people in the UK and other UKOTs and establish a UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group that meets virtually at least 2x per year (first workshop in Q4 Yr1)

While we had planned to hold the first online meeting in March 2023, feedback from participants demonstrated a desire to instead come together in April 2023 following year-end. The first session (to be held on 20 April 2023) will be co-chaired by AIG and SHNT to anchor leadership from within the UKOTs, with ZSL in a supporting role. The meeting will include presentations from representatives across Bermuda, Pitcairn, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Ascension, St Helena and the United Kingdom. We have intentionally avoided pre-defining the goals and structure of the group, and plan to use the first session to surface and explore the needs of the UKOTs to inform the group remit going forwards. 70 invitations have been sent to individuals working across the UKOTs and extended to Crown Dependencies, and we are expecting attendance from across at least 8 UKOTs (Ascension, Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Pitcairn, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and St Helena), as well as CEFAS, MMO, universities and other international NGOs.

Activity 4.2: Review and consolidate existing information (grey literature and peer-reviewed) about best practice plastic-free tourism globally and consolidate into short briefing document

The project team paused this activity until after the first session of the UKOTs steering group in April 2023 (see 4.1). As noted above, we want to avoid pre-empting focus areas (such as plastic-free tourism) and instead empower participants to surface their own goals for this group.

Activity 4.3: Hold workshop with Steering Group and relevant individuals to review plastic free tourism briefing/information and produce workshop report with recommendations Q4 Yr2

'Plastic-free tourism' will be tabled as a potential focus area during the initial meeting, along with other topics, such as policy, waste management, education and outreach etc. Following the meeting we will review feedback and work with the participants to identify priority workstreams.

Activity 4.4 Develop guidelines for UKOTs plastic-free tourism. Create communication materials and distribute across Ascension and St Helena (govts and airports). Share with the UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group by Q3 Yr

Please see activities 4.2 and 4.3 above.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Systems for quantifying and reducing plastic waste are consolidated with a proposed strategy to trial interventions for SUP reduction in St Helena and Ascension

Very good progress has been made on this output. The completion of a remote MSc project, 2 month-long expeditions, community engagement plans, and on-going engagement in-territory has generated significant social, economic, and environmental insights to inform our intersectional plastic systems diagnosis during year 1. Thematic analysis will inform the creation of two plastic systems maps, from which we will identify key opportunities for action and co-design appropriate interventions for SUP reduction. Baseline data are still being established while we pilot and finalise methodologies. This includes monitoring the volume of plastic quantities within the waste stream, importation and sales statistics, shoreline pollution,

and mapping bin-infrastructure. All the above will feed into the final plastic systems diagnoses scheduled for completion in summer 2023.

Output 2: Pilot interventions to reduce most problematic/prevalent SUP items and switch to sustainable alternatives are completed, monitored and evaluated with new policy in place for SUP reduction in St Helena

Very good progress has been made towards this output. While interventions are scheduled in project years 2 and 3 on St Helena, the past 12 months have been hugely insightful in diagnosing the plastic system on both islands and laying the groundwork for co-designing solutions with island communities. The designs and timelines of all project interventions must remain flexible and respond to community needs, whilst not 'overloading' islanders with change. Therefore, we will introduce interventions after we have completed our systems maps. At this stage, insights are demonstrating that an intervention around drinking water fountains may not be locally appropriate on Ascension or St Helena, in which case we will adapt towards other opportunities, such as waste to energy and/or replacing SUP cups and food packaging for bamboo, or cornstarch alternatives.

Although pilot interventions on Ascension were not planned during the lifespan of this project, following initial shoreline sampling, the team recognised that cigarette litter is a particular problem around the beach huts on Ascension. With this information, AIG applied for a Darwin local grant (see section 3.1, activity 2.4) and the application was successful. AIG is currently working on a cigarette litter intervention to be implemented between April 2023 and March 2024. Engagement with school children has also begun in Ascension as discussed in Activity 2.3.

Output 3: Characteristics and sources of plastic waste pollution and associated threats to wildlife in St Helena and Ascension shores are understood, with appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented

Good progress has been made on this output. Data on the presence, composition and source of plastic waste pollution are already being collected and evaluated across both islands. On-going shoreline monitoring strategies have been agreed (Appendix 15 and 16) using a combination of photo quadrat, MDT (open source) and bottle ID methodologies (see Activity 3.1), for which we are exploring open source platform options.

As detailed in Activities 3.5 and 3.6, we have also begun to investigate the interactions between plastic pollution and wildlife across both islands (through seabird and fish stomach FTIR analysis, monitoring of whale shark and green turtle habitats and brown booby nests), with ongoing monitoring and further work scheduled for project years 2 and 3. Establishing the presence / interactions between plastics and wildlife is the important first step in this output, following which we will be able to explore any negative impacts from those interactions and begin to develop any mitigation activities. In the meantime however, the Darwin Local grant secured this year (see section 3.1, activity 2.4) will contribute towards mitigating cigarette butt litter on Ascension.

Output 4: Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs

Good progress has been made on this output. The team is delighted with the interest in the first UKOTs plastic pollution steering group meeting, for which the attendee list currently spans eight of the UKOTs, including environmental NGOs and Blue Belt representatives from MMO and CEFAS. We endeavour to set the bar high in regard to inclusivity, therefore as detailed in section 3.1, we decided to pause some of our pre-planned deliverables in a commitment to centring island needs and prioritising requests that may be surfaced by representatives during the first meeting. Re-assigning leadership to the OTs is an approach we want to champion across all project outputs.

In March 2023, ZSL participated in a workshop then submitted a response to DEFRA's consultation on a new biodiversity strategy for the UKOTs³. The response was developed in consultation with UKOTs partners and noted the need for plastic pollution to be addressed through policy and biodiversity targets (Appendix 22).

³ <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity-in-the-uk-overseas-territories/uk-overseas-territories-biodiversity-strategy/>

ZSL has also begun engagement in the UN Plastics Treaty negotiations. Shauna Young (ZSL) will attend the meeting of the International Negotiating Committee (INC) to the Treaty in Paris in May 2023 as part of a ZSL delegation. The project team is supporting this work to ensure Ascension and St Helena are represented in the negotiations, and funding options are being explored to enable SHNT to participate at INC-3 in Kenya (November 2023). The UN Plastic Treaty negotiations will also be tabled as a potential focus area for the UKOTs plastic pollution steering group in April 2023.

As part of a series GBO is running on equity, diversity and inclusion across the UKOTs, 2 webinars have been hosted. SHNT Director, Helena Bennet, delivered a webinar in September 2022, "Welcome to St Helena" for the project team and all Great Blue Ocean (GBO) coalition members (ZSL, Blue Marine Foundation, Greenpeace UK, Marine Conservation Society, RSPB and Pew Environment). The webinar was extremely well received and encouraged members to seek further opportunities for learning and sharing about the UKOTs history, culture and societies. The second in the series was held in April 2023, "Turks & Caicos: Communities and the Coast", led by Oshin Whyte, Environment Policy Lead at the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Governor's Office.

In October 2022, ZSL partnered with a Bermuda-based NGO in a funding bid to deploy plastic bottle trackers from 5 locations around the Atlantic and build evidence of transboundary plastic pollution. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful on this occasion but are actively pursuing other funding routes.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Project outcome: Islanders drive a decline in SUP, improving waste management efficiency in St Helena and Ascension, contributing to ocean conservation, benefitting the marine environment and key wildlife species by 2025.

Overall progress against the project outcome is good and on track to achieve the project outcome by the end of the project.

Several meetings with retailers and government sectors on both islands indicated positive engagement and enthusiasm to co-create solutions and potential public policies to transition towards more sustainable, plastic-free items and packaging on island.

0.1 Estimated proportion of plastic waste comprising SUP reduced by at least 30% in St Helena and 20% in Ascension by Q4 Yr3 from baseline set in Q4 Yr1 in St Helena and Q3 Yr2 in Ascension

Inclusive community engagement and robust monitoring strategies are now underway on both islands, with baselines being established in order to monitor change over the project's duration (see section 3.1, activity 3 for more detail). Positive feedback from outreach during year 1 suggests that it will indeed be possible to reduce SUP waste on both islands, however we are reviewing whether the indicators set (ie a reduction in plastic waste of 30% and 20% in St Helena and Ascension respectively) are still realistic over the lifetime of this project.

0.2 Negative interactions (entanglement/entrapment/ingestion) between plastic pollution and four priority species identified by Q2 Yr3 with a targeted mitigation plan in place by Q4 Yr3.

Year 1 has already demonstrated interesting results, as described against Activity 3.6. Key target species have been identified in year 1, guided by a combination of local knowledge and findings from Constanza de la Tijera (MSc, Imperial College London). As detailed in activity 3.6, we will focus on monitoring plastic in brown booby and green turtle nests, seabird and fish stomachs, and whale shark feeding zones.

0.3 Plastic pollution pathways and hotspots identified, and possible mitigation actions are published and disseminated to relevant people, including businesses (products, shipping) and countries by Q4 Yr3.

On Ascension, shoreline surveys (see section 3.1) identified beach huts as a principal plastic pollution pathway. Of the plastic items found, plastic cigarette butt filters were the most significant (see section 3.1). As a result, mitigation action is already underway to address littering by focusing on cigarette butt litter as the flagship item. A Darwin Local grant has been successfully applied for (see section 2.4) to install cigarette bins at key coastal areas and a public behaviour change/education campaign is being planned to encourage individual responsibility for ensuring plastic waste is disposed of appropriately and not littered into the coastal/marine environment. In May 2023, SHNT will commence monitoring at Sandy Bay and Rupert's beaches (Activity 3.3), providing a baseline for decision-making regarding mitigation and intervention measures on-island.

0.4 Three locally-led, plastic reduction interventions trialled, informed by the systems diagnosis (including one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism and SUP water bottle reduction campaign), with methods and impact communicated to other UKOTs Q4 Yr3.

Our community engagement and research to date has provided valuable information on usage, attitudes and behaviours in relation to SUP across both islands. This, and the development of our systems maps and consultations with community members, will guide the development of our interventions that will be implemented to achieve the project outcome.

0.5 New policy on SUP reduction in St Helena is developed and adopted/implemented.

Expeditions and on-going conversations, with community members and St Helena and Ascension government representatives, have provided the project team an initial opportunity to explore options for policy development on both islands in line with local agendas. This will be progressed over the coming months and reviewed in light of completing the systems diagnosis in summer 2023.

0.6 Plastic Free UKOTs tourism best practice guidelines implemented in other UKOTs by Q4 Yr3.

As reported in section 3.1 (Output 4), this will be explored via the UKOTs plastic pollution steering group. The project team is keen to ensure the needs of this group are prioritised and that we are not predetermining what the group should focus on. Therefore, this indicator will be reviewed in year 2.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 0.1 Plastic waste reduction among school children and existing community-based organisations significantly drives reduction in wider society, as seen with London #OneLess campaign. In different dialogues and meetings with Saints and schools in St Helena, it was noted that children are multipliers of acquired knowledge, bringing changes in the perception of parents and society regarding SUPs. However, in conversations with teachers it came to light that the narrative of 'children will save the world' is becoming problematic: it applies too much pressure on children and removes accountability from adults who need to change behaviours and engage in environmental initiatives. The team is therefore working to ensure that the project engages as many age groups across both islands in an inclusive way (as detailed in section 3.1), to inform the systems diagnosis and identify the best avenues for driving SUP reduction across wider society. For engagement with school children on Ascension, please refer to section 2.3

Assumption 0.2 SH ministers endorse the plan. As detailed in the St Helena expedition report Appendix 8, St Helena's Ministers received the project positively and are keen to support this work.

Assumption 0.3 Governments /administrations across UKOTs are willing to participate in, and contribute towards, the Plastics Steering Group. The first meeting will be held in April 2023. Invitations went to 70 people, and participants from 8 UKOTs and 2 Crown Dependencies have already confirmed attendance.

Assumption 1.1 Data available from retail outlets, existing reports, and surveyed individuals accurately captures volumes and movement of SUPs. We are continuing to explore the best sources for verifying the quantities of plastics in each island system. As detailed in Activity 1.3, we are investigating importation/sales statistics, and waste management data.

Assumption 1.2 Beyond SUP water bottles, additional priority intervention points and practical alternatives can be identified. Appropriate interventions for St Helena will be identified after completing the diagnosis and mapping for each island in summer 2023. However there are already areas of interest presenting themselves such as waste to energy, and replacing SUP cups and food packaging for bamboo, or cornstarch alternatives. In Ascension, cigarette butts have been identified as an intervention point and Darwin Local funding secured to implement an intervention.

Assumption 1.3 Islanders are willing to engage with feasibility assessment review. Based on the initial community outreach during year 1, all key individuals engaged to date have received the project positively and were interested in regrouping to discuss findings and co-design solutions.

Assumption 2.1 Community is willing to engage. We have already successfully engaged a significant number of the community and are pleased with the levels of interest demonstrated.

Assumption 2.2 Planning process approves installation of public drinking fountains. This is yet to be explored due to reflections detailed in section 3.1 (activity 2.1).

Assumption 2.3 Schools in St Helena and Ascension are willing to partner and engage in the project. All schools on both islands have already been successfully engaged.

Assumption 2.4 Community banking initiatives are an appropriate sustainable business model in the local context, and if not, alternative strategies identified through systems change mapping can be implemented within the available budget. We remain confident that the systems diagnosis will be a fantastic resource to identify locally appropriate interventions in-territory once completed in summer 2023. The details of these solutions, and whether they will include a community banking initiative, will be determined after completing the mapping outputs.

Assumption 2.5 Locally appropriate sustainable business models identified and linked to existing work, or be feasible to engage with on top of current employment. Work is underway on this, through the community engagement on St Helena and systems diagnosis, due to be completed in Q1Y2. We will be able to review this assumption in year 2.

Assumption 2.6 SUP water bottles are an effective flagship item to represent the issue of marine plastic pollution and connect school children to the issue better to the ocean, as has been the case in the London based #OneLess campaign. This is being explored through school engagement activities. Engagement thus far has revealed that most school children across Ascension own and use reusable water bottles at school. Likewise on St Helena, early conversations with teachers in the project planning phase indicated that the schools provide good messaging on reusable water bottles and that most children use them at school.

Assumption 2.7 Current barriers to people drinking tap water due to taste can be overcome, with existing solutions identified through BIOT Darwin and #OneLess London replicable in St Helena. Early indications suggest that barriers to drinking tap water may be challenging to overcome (Activity 2.1). We will continue to explore the best course of action regarding tap water.

Assumption 3.1 Access to beaches is possible. On St Helena only 2 beaches are accessible via 4x4. The others are only accessible via steep 1-2 hour hikes via boat, making them not feasible to monitor regularly as part of this project. On Ascension the coastline has varied accessibility with some stretches readily accessible via 4x4 and others, especially on the south coast, requiring hikes of 20 minutes - 1 hour over rough terrain and/or up and down a steep gradient.

Assumption 3.2 Beach clean volunteers have access to Internet/mobile data for data uploads. At this time, on St Helena most volunteers would not have this access or it would be too expensive for them to use for this activity. This should change with a new service provider within the next year. On Ascension, volunteers would not have access to mobile data for data uploads across most of the coastline, and in the few areas where they may have service sending this data would come at significant cost. Volunteers with access to the internet at home can later upload offline sessions, providing the Apps function correctly and they are willing to accept the cost.

Assumption 4.1 People are willing to participate in workshops. On St Helena, two workshops have been planned: a retailers workshop, 'Rethinking alternatives for single-use plastic in St Helena Island', and another to engage teachers to discuss including plastic pollution within the school agendas. We are pleased to report interest from 30 people. On Ascension however, we have adapted the approach from workshops to one-to-one meetings due to feedback from AIG Conservation and Fisheries Directorate employees who have attempted to hold workshops in the past and had poor attendance/response from the public.

Assumption 4.2 UKOTs are willing to join the Steering Group and participate in 2x yearly meetings/workshops. As detailed in Assumption 0.3, we are delighted with the engagement in the first steering group meeting. We have adapted the frequency of meetings/workshops so that these will instead be driven by the group's needs, rather than fixed to twice per year, to allow individuals to attend topical conversations of relevance and interest to them.

Assumption 4.5 Government and partners in St Helena support the concept of 'plastic free tourism' and it aligns with the Economic Development Plan. This was discussed in the first meeting in April 2023. The remit and topical focus areas of the working group were brainstormed and are currently being reviewed by the project team.

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

Through our ongoing community outreach, many islanders have been engaged in conversations around SUP impacts on human health and biodiversity (detailed in section 3.1). These conversations have been valuable for exploring how the project will contribute towards the following key long-term strategies: [Environmental Protection Ordinance \(2016\)](#), [St Helena Marine Management Plan \(2023-2027\)](#), [National Environmental Management Plan \(2012-2022\)](#), and [Waste Management Implementation Plan \(2020-2027\)](#).

The Ascension Island Beach Nature Reserves Management Plan (2023-2028, in preparation) identifies littering as a medium threat due to entanglement and ingestion, toxicity associated with plastics and how it spoils recreational experiences of those areas. We are feeding in data from our shoreline surveys and subsequent Darwin Local funded work on cigarettes (see Activity 2.4). This project is also proactively working to deliver the primary aims of the AIG Business Plan, which includes the goal of ‘...continued implementation of the Waste Management Strategy and introduction of a ban on certain SUPs, including adoption of appropriate legislation’ (Director of Conservation, AIG). To date we have engaged the AIG Waste Management Team and held meetings with the AIG Administrator to discuss reducing waste in-territory and protecting the environment from its impacts, prioritising education and engagement of the local community. This engagement will inform our interventions, which will be in support of the Business Plan.

Wildlife monitoring data, collected to date (see section 3.1, activity 3.6 and 3.6), are contributing to the development of the Wide Awake Fairs Management Plan (2023-2028, in preparation), encompassing the Mars Bay and Waterside Nature Reserves, which identifies litter as a Medium threat having “*some effect on the health of the ecosystem/species of the reserves*”. Data on the presence of plastic in brown booby nests are also being input to the development of the Letterbox Nature Reserve and Boatswain Bird Island Sanctuary Management Plan (2023-2028, in preparation), which has identified litter as a medium threat, having “*some effect on the health of the ecosystem/species of the reserves*”.

At the broader level, in year 1 the project has proactively contributed to the UKOTs Biodiversity Strategy⁴, with learnings from the project to date included in a ZSL response to DEFRA’s consultation on a new biodiversity strategy for the UKOTs (Appendix 22). In particular, we included comments regarding the need to adopt socially inclusive, participatory, and capacity-building approaches to environmental and biodiversity conservation in the UKOTs. Broad findings (and arising plastic priorities for the UKOTs) are also being incorporated into engagement with the UN Plastic Treaty negotiations (see section 3.2, output 4).

5. Gender equality and social inclusion

The project is progressive towards gender equality. Contributing to reducing gender imbalance in research, the project team is predominantly female, including early-mid career female scientists, technical and coordination/management staff. Together the project team has co-created an inclusive approach to inform all project activities and ways of working, which aims to enable equitable participation - not just for people of different genders, but also race, ethnicity, class, age, educational levels and other frequently excluded characteristics. The team actively considered intersectionality throughout the systems diagnosis phase in year 1 and will ensure multi-dimensional impacts are fully understood before implementing interventions in-territory. Inviting community members to input into and co-design interventions will be key in year 2 to project influence, impact and sustainability.

In parallel, the project team has been reflecting on individual positionalities in the context of engaging island communities in the UKOTs. To support this understanding, we have been participating in a various webinar about the UKOTs (see section 3.2, output 4). In January 2023 a full-day workshop “Parachuting in? Towards more ethical and inclusive conservation practice” was co-delivered by ZSL’s Senior Social Equity and Inclusion Specialist, Surshti Patel. The project team were in attendance (either remotely via Zoom or in-person in London) and gained valuable insights into the issues problematic ‘parachute’ approaches reinforce in the Global South. In addition, ZSL staff have worked together with the GBO to co-develop an [inclusion statement](#), which is embedded within our ways of working as a team.

⁴ <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity-in-the-uk-overseas-territories/uk-overseas-territories-biodiversity-strategy/>

The initial steps in project delivery included reviewing our tools and approaches to ensure they were locally appropriate (see Activity 1.1). Our commitment to social inclusion was noted by multiple islanders in St Helena as ‘refreshing’ and ‘a first’ during the expedition of February 2023. Helena Bennett, Saint and Director of SHNT, commented: *‘Communication is key for ensuring that the Trust engages with a range of people to ensure we capture sufficient data to evidence representation of St Helena’s community. The desired outcomes of DPLUS176 will affect St Helena as a whole. Input into community engagement was given by the wider Trust to ensure the project team planned effectively.’* Juliette Fraser, MSc student, captured optional information on gender and other social characteristics within surveys (see Appendix 6), and the team will continue to do so with future surveys.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board.	Three: Helena Bennett (Director of SHNT), Heather Koldewey (Senior Technical Specialist, ZSL) and Diane Baum (Director of Conservation, AIG).
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.	SHNT has a female director and 100% of the senior leadership team is female. AIG has a female director and 100% of the senior leadership team is female. ZSL’s Senior Leadership team is 62% male and 38% female.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Project year 1 has involved the development of research questions and agreement of sampling methodologies detailed in section 3.1. This year has focused more on diagnosing the plastics system on both islands and establishing data collection techniques (both qualitative and quantitative), which are necessary for informing the systems maps in year 2 and for monitoring the impact of pilot interventions over time. The monitoring and evaluation of the project is shared across the core project management team (AIG, SHNT and ZSL), with each partner focused on their primary project activities. The M&E framework (see Appendix 14) will continue to be a key tool for the project’s duration. With the recognised importance of EDI being integral to the project, we are ensuring this is part of our M&E going forwards, underpinning the delivery of the project outcomes.

Project team meetings are held each week to monitor progress with deliverables, and evaluate the success of on-going project activities. Achievements will be measured by analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, which will be collected throughout the project. Project indicators will be reported against, and if needed additional indicators will be created (e.g. to demonstrate equitable participation in the project (see section 3.3) or to demonstrate a change in the sale of plastic items or an increase in availability of SUP alternatives in retail outlets, if appropriate). Information is stored across a shared Google Drive and Microsoft Teams (MS) site hosted by ZSL.

7. Lessons learnt

Remote communications have at times been challenging. MS Teams (the platform ZSL typically uses for project work) has proved inaccessible for partners; Google Drive and Zoom have sufficed as alternatives, but Wifi connection in-territory continues to be an ongoing challenge.

We had a delayed start to the project due to recruitment timelines and the need to relocate new staff to St Helena. While SHNT had planned to recruit a Project Manager on island, unfortunately the local applicants did not have the transferable skills needed specifically for the role. (To employ from outside of St Helena, businesses must always demonstrate to the Immigration Control Board that we have tested the local market and that the skills required were not available. St Helena carries out annual training analysis to determine the gaps in local skill sets, and the analytical skill set will be highlighted as a need from the Trust in the conservation field). This resulted in Ascension being slightly advanced with project delivery for the first half of year 1, with staff in place from summer 2022 (match-funded by the John Ellerman Foundation). However, following the completion of the St Helena expedition in February 2023, work across both territories has felt less siloed and the core project team much better integrated, with timelines now equivalent ahead of year 2.

The expeditions in October 2022 and February 2023 provided a fantastic opportunity for getting a ‘sense’ of the location and its culture, and what is / isn’t likely to be possible for the project. The team recognised the benefits of conducting these in year 1. In future we would advise allowing even more time in the initial

project year for teams to understand social dynamics, cultural contexts and how best to connect with island communities ahead of piloting interventions.

Logistically, Ascension and St Helena are difficult and costly to access. This has posed challenges with supplying equipment to staff, and transporting wildlife samples to partners in South Africa. There have also been some logistical issues with fieldwork on St Helena due to insurance policies at SHNT requiring a C Licence to drive Land Rovers, and project staff do not hold this qualification. Adjustments have now been made to allow for fieldwork to be undertaken.

The Darwin Local grant secured by AIG (see activity 2.4) was an excellent addition to existing funds. The application process was light-touch and the results announced quickly. This 'add-on' enables us to act quickly on year 1 findings and deliver an intervention on Ascension whilst contracted staff are still in place. This will be a big gain for the project, and we would encourage in-territory partners to harness opportunities via the Darwin Local grant again.

Shipping the bank of seabird stomach samples from Ascension to South Africa has proved more challenging than originally thought due to the complexity of paperwork and permits required to send samples into South Africa, including acquiring a veterinary certificate on an island without a veterinary practice. In addition, the timing of the project has added another layer of logistical issues as the RMS Helena, the ship connecting South Africa to St Helena and Ascension, cancelled operations at the onset of 2023. The team is now attempting to liaise with Meihuizen International, who are running an interim service out of Angola via Namibia to the islands, to explore an alternative route for shipping the samples to South Africa.

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

No report reviews have been received to date. We have addressed feedback from the project application stage as follows:

Feedback: a lot of weight is put on the ZSL London project (#OneLess) but it is not clear how transferable this is or whether it may need to be adapted. The learnings and resources from the #OneLess project have been a useful tool for the project team in designing the activities needed to inform the systems diagnosis, and were used as a starting point to be adapted on both islands to ensure activities and engagement were locally appropriate.

Feedback: the M&E budget appears high. A clearer explanation of what this budget includes and why it is needed would be helpful. This project has a very strong M&E component, involving ongoing monitoring (shorelines, wildlife-plastic interactions, SUP usage, plastic waste, and community engagement and intervention impact tracking) and proactive evaluation to enable a dynamic, adaptive management approach that is locally fit for purpose. Therefore, the indicative M&E budget for the project took into account a proportion of all staff time (10%, and 50% for the Senior Technical Specialist, Social Equity and Inclusion, and Technical Advisor), the MSc projects, and expedition costs for 2 ZSL staff to St Helena in year 2 (this expedition will focus on M&E of progress and interventions). A draft M&E framework has been developed during year 1 (Appendix 14), informed by lessons and insights from 2 expeditions. The framework is informed by the log-frame, and includes a means of verification for each measurable indicator and the data. The framework is a dynamic document and will be adapted as the project progresses.

Feedback: the methodology could have been presented more clearly, explaining what will happen whilst avoiding buzzwords. This has been noted and addressed in this report, and in other project communications. We recognise that the language associated with 'systems change' work is new to many and can include jargon / buzzwords, which we have strived to explain and/or remove from our communications.

Feedback: it would be helpful to see evidence that the key retailers (Solomons & Thorpes on St Helena) will engage with the project. We proactively addressed this and successfully engaged the retailers across both islands, as documented in section 3.2.

Feedback: it is unclear how plastic free tourism will be implemented in other UKOTs (Indicator 0.6). This is being reviewed through the UKOTs steering group work. We are exploring the need for / opportunities around plastic free tourism directly with UKOT representatives to ensure that this is needs-driven by the UKOTs themselves.

Feedback: the logframe is clear, but it may be difficult to measure the considerable amount of Indicators. The project team recognises and agrees with this feedback. Due to the multifaceted nature of this project, the indicators were helpful at the project application stage to ensure we were thoroughly reviewing/justifying the intended activities. This first year report provides the team with the opportunity to review the indicators, and any appropriate reduction/change in indicators will be actioned through a change request.

9. Risk Management

The project was awarded in April 2022, when the risk register was not required. However, ZSL acknowledges the importance of developing a risk management register and will produce one for this project during Q2Y1, which will be shared during the Y2 half year report.

10. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The team is delighted to report all four in-territory staff vacancies were successfully recruited in project year 1, including Matthew Owen (SHNT Project Officer) who is local to St Helena, Tobias Capel (AIG Project Coordinator) who had already been working on Ascension for a number of months, as well as Maria Freitas (SHNT Project Manager) and Michelle Fletcher (SHNT Head of Marine), both whom have relocated from Brazil and Canada respectively for these positions.

11. Sustainability and legacy

On Ascension, government, businesses and community members have been keen to co-deliver aspects of the work (for e.g. “Don’t Flush” posters, see (Appendix 12). The planned installation of cigarette bins in beach huts around the island required the support of AIG Waste Management and Mittie, who own North East Beach Hut, and it was readily given. To support the uptake in use of the cigarette bins, it was also planned to place bins at Saint’s Club and Two Boat’s Club as these are community hubs. Both managers gave their support and will take on the responsibility of the bins.

To optimise the remaining time of the Marine Plastics Coordinator on Ascension, a plan to explore appropriate policy/regulation that will ban specific single-use plastic items will be co-developed by ZSL and AIG. The evidence collection, drafting and starting consultation with AIG’s Policy Officer will be started as soon as this posting is initiated. In addition, it was agreed that the evidence collected from shoreline surveys conducted by this project will be used to create a long-term monitoring plan that will be included into the management of 5 Nature Reserves on Ascension: Long Beach, South West Bay, North East Bay, Mars Bay and Waterside.

The initial visits from the ZSL team to Ascension and St Helena identified the importance of community-led, inclusive approaches to the project that have previously been excluded from on-island initiatives. By investing time, thought, expertise and best practice approaches (e.g. Environmental and Social Management Systems) this project will involve communities in identifying and implementing locally-appropriate solutions that are sustainable beyond the life of the project.

Participatory diagnosis, involving the community in decision-making, has proven to be effective and unprecedented on St Helena. According to the Saints, no other conservation project has sought to hear their opinions and insights. We believe that this participatory approach will be fundamental to establishing sustainable solutions as well as being a case study for projects that aim to consider the needs of the population, as well as socio-environmental scenarios of St Helena. We believe that the inclusive social approach being applied in the project will ensure that impact lasts beyond 2025, permeating change in the mindsets of the population and public policies on both islands.

12. Darwin Plus identity

The Darwin Initiative is acknowledged on project communications and outputs. This includes use of the Darwin logo in presentations and tagging of the Darwin Initiative Twitter account (@BCFs) in all relevant social media posts about the project. Please see some examples in Appendix 23.

Over the past 12 months, ZSL has been undergoing a complete rebranding, which has included an overhaul of its website. Following ZSL’s new branding launch in 2023, the project team are working to develop a new webpage to sit on ZSL’s main website, embedded within ZSL’s marine conservation and science programmes, where Darwin Plus will be publicised.

13. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes, Surshti Patel, [REDACTED]
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	The focal point has expertise in this area and has also undergone ZSL's mandatory safeguarding training. They have also worked extensively with other experts in this field, including in ESMS and other safeguarding-related initiatives, providing on the job training.
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: 63% (5 people) Planned: 27% (3 people)
<p>ZSL has invested heavily in its safeguarding policies and procedures both in the UK and globally. The Council of Trustees and Executive Management Committee have formally recognised safeguarding as a key area of responsibility and are fully committed to strengthening and rolling out the ZSL safeguarding approach. Where necessary these efforts are applicable to staff, partners and other people ZSL works with. To date, all ZSL project staff have completed 'safeguarding children and adults at risk' training. Tobias Capel (AIG) has completed safeguarding training and we are in discussion about training opportunities for 3 team members based at SHNT.</p>	
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.	
<p>The two project expeditions carried out in year 1 (Ascension October 2022 and St Helena 2023) were fundamental in understanding and developing the most appropriate approach to community engagement. The GBO's programme of webinars including Ascension and St Helena provided key insights into the role of colonialism in the histories of these UK Overseas Territories. Through this lens, our project team has worked particularly closely with ZSL's Senior Technical Specialist, Social Equity and Inclusion, Surshti Patel to ensure that a) we understand the histories and associated complexity in each local context, and b) that we are pioneering in our approach by foregrounding island voices and empowering communities - or sectors of these communities - that have historically been excluded. This has required adaptation of some initially planned approaches and considerably more investment into this area than anticipated, with associated learning and development across the project team. However, we strongly believe this effort is vital in delivering a culturally-appropriate and locally-led project that is most likely to be sustainable and will be an important legacy of the project.</p>	
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.	
<p>Further training at ZSL will be undertaken in 2023 through our new Environment and Social Management System (ESMS), and we will be exploring best ways for knowledge exchange with in-territory partners that will help ensure we achieve inclusive community engagement on-island.</p>	

i. Project Expenditure Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2022/23 D+ Grant (£)	2022/23 Total actual D+ Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
TOTAL	£147,376.24	£147,384.89	0.01%	

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

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

6. Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023 – if applicable

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>Improved efficiency in plastic waste management in St Helena and Ascension enabling community action to near-zero SUP use, eliminating the impact of marine plastic pollution on wildlife, increasing ocean resilience and driving broader impact across other UKOTs.</p>		<p>Foundational work has been completed that will contribute to the project impact in years 2-3, including the participatory community approach that will inform our systems diagnosis in an inclusive and equitable way, and subsequent interventions; and plastic shoreline and wildlife monitoring that is feeding into island environmental/biodiversity targets and the implementation of these (see section 4).</p>	
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Islanders drive a decline in SUP, improving waste management efficiency in St Helena and Ascension, contributing to ocean conservation, benefitting the marine environment and key wildlife species by 2025.</p>	<p>0.1 Estimated proportion of plastic waste comprising SUP reduced by at least 30% in St Helena and 20% in Ascension by Q4 Yr3 from baseline set in Q4 Yr1 in St Helena and Q3 Yr2 in Ascension.</p> <p>0.2 Negative interactions (entanglement/entrapment/ingest ion) between plastic pollution and four priority species identified by Q2 Yr3 with a targeted mitigation plan in place by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.3 Plastic pollution pathways and hotspots identified, and possible mitigation actions are published and disseminated to relevant people, including businesses (products, shipping) and countries by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.4 Three locally-led, plastic reduction interventions trialled, informed by the</p>	<p>0.1 Inclusive community engagement (including meetings with key retailers and waste management teams) and robust monitoring strategies are underway on both islands, with baselines being established in order to monitor change over the duration of the project.</p> <p>0.2 Key target species have been identified (see Activity 3.6) and monitoring of plastic interactions has begun for Brown Boobies, Green Turtles, and Whale Sharks.</p> <p>0.3 Plastic hotspots were identified on both islands in year 1, and shoreline monitoring methodologies piloted during 2 expeditions. On-going monitoring strategies have been finalised to understand the presence, composition and potential sources of plastic pollution in the environment.</p>	<p>0.1 Plastic usage and waste measurement options to be finalised and baselines set in Q1Yr2.</p> <p>0.2 In addition to on-going species monitoring, a variety of seabird and fish stomachs from both islands will be sampled by academic partners in project year 2. Results will inform mitigation action plans in year 3.</p> <p>0.3 On-going shoreline monitoring (see Activities 3.3 and 3.4) will be carried out as planned in project year 2. Results will inform recommended mitigation action in year 3.</p> <p>0.4 The systems maps will be finalised in year 2, and three locally-led interventions co-designed through workshops with island communities. Pilots will be launched,</p>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>systems diagnosis (including one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism and SUP water bottle reduction campaign), with methods and impact communicated to other UKOTs Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.5 New policy on SUP reduction in St Helena is developed and adopted/implemented.</p> <p>0.6 Plastic Free UKOTs tourism best practice guidelines implemented in other UKOTs by Q4 Yr3.</p>	<p>0.4 Extensive community engagement activities in year 1 were completed on both islands, to inform the systems diagnosis and surface opportunities and barriers to driving change on island.</p> <p>0.5 Relevant actors across both islands have been engaged (eg AIG Administrator and St Helena Legislative Council) and options are being explored.</p> <p>0.6 Work set for year 3 of the project. However, this is tabled for discussion in the first UKOTs steering group meeting in April 2023.</p>	<p>monitored and evaluated through years 2 and 3.</p> <p>0.5 Systems diagnosis to inform what policy interventions might be appropriate. Further conversations with policy actors to take place in year 2 and any draft policies to be drawn up for consultation.</p> <p>0.6 Hold first UKOTs steering group meeting (20 April 2023), review input from UKOTs on the topic of co-developing guidelines for plastic-free tourism.</p>
<p>Output 1.</p> <p>Systems for quantifying and reducing plastic waste are consolidated with a proposed strategy to trial interventions for SUP reduction in St Helena and Ascension.</p>	<p>1.1 Existing system diagnosis and social insight methods are tailored to context for use in 1.2 Q2 Yr1.</p> <p>1.2 SUP system of retail (procurement, supply, and sale) and usage (purchase and use) in St Helena and Ascension is audited (Q4 Yr1), analysed and mapped using established methods by Q1 Yr2.</p> <p>1.3 A minimum of three potential intervention points for change, including one focusing on the reduction of SUP water bottles (retail, sale, and/or infrastructure) are identified by Q1 Yr2, with feasibility assessment completed</p>	<p>1.1 Resources and existing methods were explored, reviewed and adapted by the team to be locally appropriate. Tailored approaches were then used for community engagement and SUP systems diagnosis research in year 1.</p> <p>1.2 All key retailers on both islands have been positively engaged and are helping to inform baseline statistics on importation and sales of plastic items on island. Islanders have also been engaged through surveys, events and meetings to gather insights on perception and behaviours around plastic pollution. In parallel, the team has been mapping out SUP purchase and disposal points on both islands, trialling waste audit approaches, and constructing plastics systems maps (due to be completed in Q1Yr2).</p> <p>1.3 Upon completion of the systems maps in Q1Yr2, opportunities for co-designing interventions will be identified together with local communities.</p>	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	and reviewed with islanders through workshops by Q2 Yr2.		
Activity 1.1 Existing system diagnosis and social insight tools are reviewed, then tailored to context Q2 Yr1 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG)		Existing approaches and methodologies were reviewed and tailored to context to be locally appropriate.	Tools and approaches will remain flexible in response to on-going monitoring and evaluation.
Activity 1.2 MSc study to audit SUP usage, consolidating existing strategic reports, materials, and other sources by Q4 Yr1 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/Plymouth)		This was a remote MSc project, completed in summer 2022. The findings formed the basis of our community engagement plan during the two expeditions (Oct 22 and Feb 23).	The initial systems map produced as an MSc output will serve as a foundation for the final map, which will be completed in year 2.
Activity 1.3 Using tailored tools, identify and map out islanders (retailers, members of the public and waste management sector) and conduct interviews, surveys, and workshops to analyse procurement, supply, and sale of SUP, and understand contextual, social, and behavioural insights behind the use of and solutions to SUP by Q4 Yr1 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG)		Key islanders on Ascension and St Helena were identified and 'mapped out' in a co-working session with in-territory partners (Appendix 7). First round of priority engagement activities have been completed on both islands.	Insights from the first round of engagement are currently being coded to inform the plastic systems diagnosis. Community engagement activities will be on-going throughout the duration of the project, as each step will be co-designed, delivered and evaluated with islanders.
Activity 1.4 Produce system map of SUP usage in St Helena and Ascension by Q1 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/Plymouth)		An initial system map for each island was produced by an MSc student in year 1, which informed the direction of community engagement during expeditions.	As noted above, insights are being coded and fed into a systems map for each island, due to be completed in Q1yr2.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Activity 1.5 Facilitate inclusive workshops with communities to assess the social acceptability of the system map findings and feed in their response to opportunities for action/intervention Q1 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)		Contacts engaged during the initial community outreach have been notified that future workshops will take place, and their interest in attending in future was recorded.	Completed systems maps will be presented back to communities to check accuracy and adapt/add as required through workshops. An inclusive approach will be adopted, enabling participation from a diverse range of islanders.
Activity 1.6 Use workshop outcomes and system diagnosis to select three interventions that complement St Helena's SEDP (including one focusing on SUP water bottles) by Q1 Yr2. Assess feasibility of the three interventions and review with islanders through workshops by Q2 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)		Due in year 2.	Together with islanders, the team will co-create a selection of criteria to select the most impactful interventions to pilot.
Output 2: Pilot interventions to reduce most problematic/prevalent SUP items and switch to sustainable alternatives are completed, monitored and evaluated with new policy in place for SUP reduction in St Helena.	<p>2.1 Plastic waste reduction campaign targeting schools (Ascension and St Helena) and wider community (St Helena) launched by Q2 Yr2. 80% of school children switch from SUP water bottles to refilling by Q1 Yr3; 30% reduction in other island plastic waste items by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>2.2. Three intervention points in St Helena (including SUP water bottle reduction) are trialled, monitored, and evaluated, with project findings consolidated and final recommendations for plastic waste reduction by Q4 Yr4.</p> <p>2.3 As part of the interventions piloted (2.2) and in line with St Helena's Sustainable Economic Development Plan 2018-2028, a minimum of one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism,</p>	<p>2.1 Although due in year 2, there has been significant engagement with school communities on both islands to date. The direction of a 'Refill' campaign will be reviewed following the systems diagnosis stage and workshopped with communities to determine if it would be a locally-appropriate and impactful activity.</p> <p>2.2 Systems diagnosis work to inform the interventions due to be completed and consulted on with community members by Q2Yr2. Baselines are being established with support from retailers and waste management teams in-territory. Pilots will be initiated, monitored and impact evaluated over the course of years 2 and 3.</p> <p>2.3 Options for a sustainable business model will be explored with islanders during the workshops of summer 2023, following completion of the systems diagnosis.</p> <p>2.4 Expeditions and on-going conversations with community members and St Helena and Ascension government representatives, have provided an initial opportunity for the project team to explore options for policy development on both islands in line with local agendas. Conversations will be progressed over</p>	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>underpinning plastic waste reduction is identified, assessed, and established with communities by Q1 Yr3.</p> <p>2.4 New policy for SUP reduction in St Helena is developed, consulted on, with agreed policy adopted and endorsed by SHG by Q3 Yr3.</p>	the coming months and reviewed in light of the completion of the systems diagnosis.	
Activity 2.1 Develop campaign materials and run a campaign for SUP water bottle reduction in St Helena, targeting schools, existing community-based organisations and other early adopters identified from the community. Run smaller campaign in Ascension to target school children only (Q2 – Q4) Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
Activity 2.2 Work with CONNECT to install 2 new public refill stations in St Helena Q2 Yr2. Collect data on water refills until Q4 yr 3 (ZSL/SHNT)		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
Activity 2.3 Distribute refillable water bottles to all school children in St Helena and Ascension Q2 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/SHG)		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
Activity 2.4 Collaborate with islanders to pilot 2 other interventions for reducing SUP, aligned with St Helena’s SEDP as identified in output 1 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG)		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
Activity 2.5 Conduct before and after behaviour change surveys and analyse waste management reports to monitor change Q2 Yr2 and Q3 Yr4 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG/AIG)		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2. Surveys will then be designed as required.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Activity 2.6 Identify and launch 1 sustainable business model with the local community. Provide training session (Q1 yr2) and monthly monitoring		Due in year 2.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
Activity 2.7 Monitor and evaluate all interventions in St Helena and SUPWB intervention in Ascension. Consolidate final recommendations made for a plastic waste reduction strategy in St Helena by Q4 Yr4 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG).		First draft of an M&E framework created in year 1 (Appendix 14).	Further develop M&E framework (will be a dynamic document) and use for active tracking and monitoring of all project activities going forward.
Activity 2.8 Develop and consult on policy for reducing SUP in St Helena (SHG/SHNT/ZSL) Q2 yr2 to Q4 yr3		Due in years 2 and 3, although scoping conversations were initiated in year 1.	Due to be reviewed following systems diagnosis completion in Q1Y2.
<p>Output 3:</p> <p>Characteristics and sources of plastic waste pollution and associated threats to wildlife on St Helena and Ascension shores are understood, with appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented.</p>	<p>3.1 Beach clean data consolidated (Q2 Yr1) and monitoring strategy developed for 3 key priority sites on each island (Q4 Yr1). Documentation of wildlife/plastic interactions consolidated (Q3 Yr3).</p> <p>3.2 Biodiversity threat assessment conducted to understand the vulnerability of wildlife in St Helena and Ascension to plastic pollution, using empirical data, local knowledge, and from reports and published studies on related species by Q4 Yr1.</p> <p>3.3 Systematic documentation of presence and type of plastics in bird nests through photo documentation, stomachs of bird and turtle carcasses and game fish, and entrapment of hermit crabs on both St Helena and Ascension by Q4 Yr3.</p>	<p>3.1 Existing data consolidated and reviewed in project planning phase (Q1-Q2Yr1), shoreline survey methods trialled (Q3-Q4Yr1), ongoing sampling strategy agreed and initiated on Ascension / scheduled to begin on St Helena in May 2023.</p> <p>3.2 MSc project completed by Imperial College student (September 2022), including biodiversity threat assessment (Appendix 17).</p> <p>3.3 Brown booby and green turtle nest monitoring is underway on Ascension. Planning and logistics for seabird and fish stomach sampling on both Ascension and St Helena is underway with academic partners in South Africa. Sampling of whale shark feeding zones piloted in year 1 and methodologies being refined ahead of next season.</p> <p>3.4 Bottle identification has been piloted on both islands during year one, and is now being carried out during on-going shoreline monitoring activities. Data will be recorded and fed into global databases.</p>	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	<p>3.4 Primary types of SUP bottles in Ascension and St Helena and sources and hotspot locations identified, including from shipping and transiting vessels by Q4 Yr2.</p> <p>3.5 Beach clean best practice guidelines developed (ZSL, SHNT), and being used by SHNT and AIG staff with volunteers by Q1 Yr2, and followed by 100% of volunteer teams conducting organised beach cleans by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>3.6 Mitigation strategy developed for wildlife and integrated into Conservation Management Plans by Q4 Yr3.</p>	<p>3.5 Shoreline monitoring and beach clean activities in year 1 are informing the way forward for beach clean guidelines. On Ascension, the project team is investigating best practice guidelines around the use of beach-huts, which were identified as a major source of litter during the expedition. On St Helena, the team is exploring guidelines for divers as part of underwater clean-up activities.</p> <p>3.6 Wildlife sampling and shoreline monitoring results will be analysed later in the project timeline and findings will inform our recommended mitigation actions.</p>	
Activity 3.1 Building on recognised methodologies, and previous beach litter monitoring efforts and data, design a robust sampling strategy for shore litter (Q4 yr1)		Methodologies were piloted during the two expeditions, and an on-going monitoring strategy agreed going forwards (Appendix 16).	Continue to implement on-going monitoring strategy on both islands.
Activity 3.2 MSc study to conduct biodiversity threat assessment through an analysis of secondary data to establish the vulnerability of wildlife to plastic pollution. Produce prioritised vulnerability list of species with associated priority list of most damaging plastic type and interaction by Q4 Yr1 (ZSL/Exeter/SHNT)		MSc completed (Appendix 17) and vulnerability list used to inform activity 3.5.	On-going wildlife monitoring of key species on both islands.
Activity 3.3 Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in St Helena (monthly), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites (SHNT/ZSL)		Methodologies piloted during the expedition of February 2023, and on-going strategy finalised.	Shoreline monitoring strategy to commence in May 2023 and be continued throughout project year 2.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Activity 3.4 Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in Ascension (bimonthly for 3 months in Yr2 and Yr3), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites (Exeter MSc student/AIG/ZSL)		Methodologies piloted during the expedition of October 2022, and on-going strategy finalised and initiated on Ascension.	Shoreline monitoring strategy to continue throughout project year 2.
Activity 3.5 Based on threat assessment and current wildlife monitoring protocols, conduct wildlife-plastic interaction monitoring of priority species (identified in 3.1) at plastic hotspot sites (SHNT/AIG/Exeter MSc student/ZSL)		Key species have been identified on both Ascension and St Helena. Monitoring of Brown Boobies, Green Turtles, and Whale Sharks has commenced.	Continue monitoring Brown Boobies, Green Turtles and Whale Sharks. Conduct stomach sampling of fish and seabird species with academic partners.
Activity 3.6 Quantify plastics in bird nests, stomachs of opportunistically collected seabird and turtle carcasses, game fish guts and hermit crab entrapment using comparable methods to Tristan da Cunha, Pitcairn and BIOT. Publish report Q4 Yr3 (Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni) and MSc thesis (hermit crabs, Exeter)		Wildlife monitoring commenced in year 1 and will be on-going through years 2-3.	As above.
Activity 3.7 Use established identification methods to document origins of SUP bottles/lids to determine source countries and routes of shore litter (ZSL/SHNT/Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni) by Q4 yr 2		Shoreline monitoring commenced in year 1 and will be on-going through years 2-3.	Continue ongoing monitoring and analysis of results.
Activity 3.8 Create (ZSL/SHNT/AIG) and begin using beach clean best-practice guidelines for organised beach cleans with SHNT and AIG staff and local volunteers (SHNT/SHG/AIG)		Due in year 2.	Project team to review value of beach clean guidelines, following local insights.
Activity 3.9 Develop and implement a mitigation strategy for wildlife, based on outcomes of threat assessment, and working with relevant authorities and NGOs integrate into Conservation Management Plans (SHNT/ZSL/AIG)		Due in year 3.	Continue ongoing monitoring to feed into mitigation trial plans.
Output 4: Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine	4.1. Establish Plastic Pollution Steering Group that sits across UKOTs, shares knowledge and best practice on plastic pollution interventions, and meets twice per year to scale impact across UKOTs	4.1 Group established and first meeting to be held on 20 April 2023. 4.2 First meeting on 20 April 2023; expected participants include representatives from 8 UKOTs, MMO, CEFAS, academics, NGOs.	

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs.	<p>(Q1 Yr1).</p> <p>4.2. Virtual workshop held with relevant individuals and experts from around the world to learn and explore opportunities for developing 'plastic free tourism' across the UKOTs Q4 Yr2.</p> <p>4.3. 'Plastic Free Tourism' best practice materials and guidelines published, targeting visitors to the UKOTs. Shared via UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group for international scaling (Q3 Yr3).</p>	4.3 Plastic-free tourism to be tabled during the first meeting and input/suggestions/need of UKOTs used to drive the goals and remit of the group. This indicator will then be reviewed accordingly.	

Activity 4.1 Identify people in the UK and other UKOTs and establish a UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group that meets virtually at least 2x per year (first workshop in Q1 Yr1)	Planning initiated in year one; first steering group meeting scheduled for April 2023.	Format and focus of future steering group meetings to be determined by needs surfaced in April 2023.
Activity 4.2 Review and consolidate existing information (grey literature and peer-reviewed) about best practice plastic-free tourism globally and consolidate into short briefing document (ZSL)	Paused - to avoid pre-empting focus areas and instead empower representatives to surface their own goals for this group, as explained in section 3.1, activity 4.	We will review the need for this following the first meeting of the UKOTs plastics steering group.
Activity 4.3 Hold workshop with Steering Group and relevant people to review plastic free tourism briefing/information and produce workshop report with recommendations Q4 Yr2	Paused - as above, and due in year 3 (if continued, based on feedback/input from steering group UKOT participants).	We will review the need for this following the first meeting of the UKOTs plastics steering group, and work with UKOT representatives to identify any alternative goals / collaborative initiatives on plastic that can be carried forward if this activity

		is not needed/endorsed by the UKOTs themselves.
Activity 4.4 Develop guidelines for UKOTs plastic-free tourism. Create communication materials and distribute across Ascension and St Helena (govts and airports). Share with the UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group by Q3 Yr3	Paused - as above, and due in year 3 (if continued, as above).	We will review the need for this following the first meeting of the UKOTs plastics steering group.

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

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Impact: Improved efficiency in plastic waste management in St Helena and Ascension enabling community action to near-zero SUP use, eliminating the impact of marine plastic pollution on wildlife, increasing ocean resilience and driving broader impact across other UKOTs.</p> <p>(Max 30 words)</p>			

<p>Outcome: (Max 30 words)</p> <p>Islanders drive a decline in SUP, improving waste management efficiency in St Helena and Ascension, contributing to ocean conservation, benefitting the marine environment and key wildlife species by 2025.</p>	<p>0.1 Estimated proportion of plastic waste comprising SUP reduced by at least 30% in St Helena and 20% in Ascension by Q4 Yr3 from baseline set in Q1 Yr2 in St Helena and Q3 Yr2 in Ascension.</p> <p>0.2 Negative interactions (entanglement/entrapment/ingestion) between plastic pollution and four priority species identified by Q2 Yr3 with a targeted mitigation plan in place by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.3 Plastic pollution pathways and hotspots identified, and possible mitigation actions are published and disseminated to relevant people, including businesses (products, shipping) and countries by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.4 Three locally-led, plastic reduction interventions trialled, informed by the systems diagnosis (including one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism and SUP water bottle reduction campaign), with methods and impact communicated to other UKOTs Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>0.5 New policy on SUP reduction in St Helena is developed and adopted/implemented.</p> <p>0.6 Plastic Free UKOTs tourism best practice guidelines implemented in other UKOTs by Q4 Yr3.</p>	<p>0.1 Volume of SUP through retail, sales and procurement figures for SUP items.</p> <p>0.2 Threat assessment of plastic quantities and types for key species in Ascension and St Helena with a government endorsed mitigation plan in place.</p> <p>0.3 Database of all beach litter, and a list of primary source countries/routes identified for SUP bottles. Summary produced with recommendations for mitigation.</p> <p>0.4 Systems change map produced, M&E reports of pilot interventions, strategy report, behaviour change surveys.</p> <p>0.5 New policy on SUP reduction for St Helena.</p> <p>0.6 UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group is formed and used to share project findings, solutions and best practice recommendations for SUP reduction and mitigation in other UKOTs. Guidelines endorsed and shared by Plastic Steering Group across other UKOTs. Implementation of guidelines in other UKOTs.</p>	<p>Plastic waste reduction among school children and existing community-based organisations significantly drives reduction in wider society, as seen with London #OneLess campaign.</p> <p>SH ministers endorse the plan.</p> <p>Governments /administrations across UKOTs are willing to participate in, and contribute towards, the Plastics Steering Group.</p>
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<p>Outputs:</p> <p>1. Systems for quantifying and reducing plastic waste are consolidated with a proposed strategy to trial interventions for SUP reduction in St Helena and Ascension.</p>	<p>1.1 Existing system diagnosis and social insight methods are tailored to context for use in 1.2 Q2 Yr1.</p> <p>1.2 SUP system of retail (procurement, supply, and sale) and usage (purchase and use) in St Helena and Ascension is audited (Q4 Yr1), analysed and mapped using established methods by Q1 Yr2.</p> <p>1.3 A minimum of three potential intervention points for change, including one focusing on the reduction of SUP water bottles (retail, sale, and/or infrastructure) are identified by Q1 Yr2, with feasibility assessment completed and reviewed with islanders through workshops by Q2 Yr2.</p>	<p>1.1 Methods and tools developed.</p> <p>1.2 Audit of SUP usage undertaken consolidating existing strategic reports, materials and other sources. Community groups identified and interviews conducted. System analysed and 'systems map' produced. MSc thesis produced (Plymouth).</p> <p>1.3. Feasibility assessment of interventions completed that includes input from #OneLess business pioneer network, key suppliers involved in plastic reduction (e.g., Iceland supermarket) and relevant people from other UKOT projects e.g., BIOT. Report and strategy produced for trial interventions.</p>	<p>Data available from retail outlets, existing reports, and surveyed individuals accurately captures volumes and movement of SUPs.</p> <p>Beyond SUP water bottles, additional priority intervention points and practical alternatives can be identified.</p> <p>Communities are willing to engage with feasibility assessment review.</p>
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<p>2. Pilot interventions to reduce most problematic/prevalent SUP items and switch to sustainable alternatives are completed, monitored and evaluated with new policy in place for SUP reduction in St Helena.</p>	<p>2.1 Plastic waste reduction campaign targeting schools (Ascension and St Helena) and wider community (St Helena) launched by Q2 Yr2. 80% of school children switch from SUP water bottles to refilling by Q1 Yr3; 30% reduction in other island plastic waste items by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>2.2. Three intervention points in St Helena (including SUP water bottle reduction) are trialled, monitored, and evaluated, with project findings consolidated and final recommendations for plastic waste reduction by Q4 Yr4.</p> <p>2.3 As part of the interventions piloted (2.2) and in line with St Helena’s Sustainable Economic Development Plan 2018-2028, a minimum of one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism, underpinning plastic waste reduction is identified, assessed, and established with communities by Q1 Yr3.</p> <p>2.4 New policy for SUP reduction in St Helena is developed, consulted on, with agreed policy adopted and endorsed by SHG by Q3 Yr3.</p>	<p>2.1. Campaign materials and outreach plan developed and implemented. School children in St Helena and Ascension pledge to stop using SUP water bottles. Reduction in plastic items sent to island recycling unit. Refill data from water fountain(s)/refill points collected alongside behaviour change surveys, waste management reports and feedback from school outreach sessions.</p> <p>2.2 Intervention trials in St Helena complete, including M&E. A simple report presenting and analysing each intervention for St Helena. Strategy produced that recommends action going forward on SUP reduction activities, with cost benefit analysis.</p> <p>2.3 Attendance sheets, training materials and sustainable business model report.</p> <p>2.4 Draft policy document, consultation responses, consultation report and recommendations, final policy document, statement on policy adoption by SHG.</p>	<p>Community is willing to engage.</p> <p>Planning process approves installation of public drinking fountains.</p> <p>Schools in St Helena and Ascension are willing to partner and engage in the project.</p> <p>Community banking initiatives are an appropriate sustainable business model in the local context, and if not, alternative strategies identified through systems change mapping can be implemented within the available budget.</p> <p>Locally appropriate sustainable business models identified and linked to existing work, or be feasible to engage with on top of current employment.</p> <p>SUP water bottles are an effective flagship item to represent the issue of marine plastic pollution and connect school children to the issue better to the ocean, as has been the case in the London based #OneLess campaign.</p> <p>Current barriers to people drinking tap water due to taste can be overcome, with existing solutions identified through BIOT Darwin and #OneLess London replicable in St Helena.</p>
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<p>3. Characteristics and sources of plastic waste pollution and associated threats to wildlife on St Helena and Ascension shores are understood, with appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented.</p>	<p>3.1 Beach clean data consolidated (Q2 Yr1) and monitoring strategy developed for 3 key priority sites on each island (Q4 Yr1). Documentation of wildlife/plastic interactions consolidated (Q3 Yr3).</p> <p>3.2 Biodiversity threat assessment conducted to understand the vulnerability of wildlife in St Helena and Ascension to plastic pollution, using empirical data, local knowledge, and from reports and published studies on related species by Q1 Yr2.</p> <p>3.3 Systematic documentation of presence and type of plastics in bird nests through photo documentation, stomachs of bird and turtle carcasses and game fish, and entrapment of hermit crabs on both St Helena and Ascension by Q4 Yr3.</p> <p>3.4 Primary types of SUP bottles in Ascension and St Helena and sources and hotspot locations identified, including from shipping and transiting vessels by Q4 Yr2.</p> <p>3.5 Beach clean best practice guidelines developed (ZSL, SHNT), and being used by SHNT and AIG staff with volunteers by Q1 Yr2, and followed by 100% of volunteer teams conducting organised beach cleans by Q4 Yr3</p> <p>3.6 Mitigation strategy developed for wildlife and integrated into Conservation Management Plans by Q4 Yr3.</p>	<p>3.1 Analysis of waste collected during beach cleans (previous and during project) to establish main sources and composition (Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni) i.e., type of item and plastic materials, including numbers of entrapped hermit crabs. MSc thesis published (Exeter). Maps of key sites for species (e.g., nesting, foraging) overlaid onto plastic hotspots. Monitoring data available open source through apps (e.g. Marine Debris Tracker)</p> <p>3.2 Prioritised vulnerability list of species to plastics in St Helena and Ascension with associated priority list of most damaging plastic type and interaction (e.g. ingestion, entanglement). MSc thesis published (Exeter).</p> <p>3.3 List of plastic sizes, colour, types, materials found in bird nests and bird/turtle/game fish stomachs. Report and peer-reviewed publication published (Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni). MSc thesis published (hermit crabs, Exeter).</p> <p>3.4 Database of bottle/bottle lids and source countries. Open access Movebank database.</p> <p>3.5 Beach clean best practice guidelines for St Helena and Ascension published, based on existing BIOT guidelines.</p> <p>3.6 Mitigation strategy actions in Marine Management Plans for St Helena and Ascension.</p>	<p>Access to beaches is possible.</p> <p>Beach clean volunteers have access to Internet/mobile data for data uploads.</p>
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<p>4) Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs.</p>	<p>4.1. Establish Plastic Pollution Steering Group that sits across UKOTS, shares knowledge and best practice on plastic pollution interventions, and meets twice per year to scale impact across UKOTs (Q4 Yr1).</p> <p>4.2. Virtual workshop held with relevant people and experts from around the world to learn and explore opportunities for developing 'plastic free tourism' across the UKOTs Q4 Yr2.</p> <p>4.3. 'Plastic Free Tourism' best practice materials and guidelines published, targeting visitors to the UKOTs. Shared via UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group for international scaling (Q3 Yr3).</p>	<p>4.1. Establishment of UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group with communication system and frequency in place. Workshop report and recommendations for action.</p> <p>4.2. Workshop report and recommendations for action across UKOTs on plastic-free tourism.</p> <p>4.3. Plastic-free UKOT tourism guidelines published distributed amongst UKOTs via Plastic Pollution Steering Group.</p>	<p>People are willing to participate in workshops</p> <p>UKOTs are willing to join Steering Group and participate in 2x yearly meetings/workshops.</p> <p>Government and partners in St Helena support the concept of 'plastic free tourism' and it aligns with the Economic Development Plan.</p>
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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)

Output 1: Systems for quantifying and reducing plastic waste are consolidated with a proposed strategy to trial interventions for SUP reduction in St Helena and Ascension.

- 1.1 Existing system diagnosis and social insight tools are reviewed, then tailored to context Q2 Yr1 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG)
- 1.2 MSc study to audit SUP usage, consolidating existing strategic reports, materials, and other sources by Q4 Yr1 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/Plymouth)
- 1.3 Using tailored tools, identify and map out islanders (retailers, members of the public and waste management sector) and conduct interviews, surveys, and workshops to analyse procurement, supply, and sale of SUP, and understand contextual, social, and behavioural insights behind the use of and solutions to SUP by Q1 yr2 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG)
- 1.4 Produce system map of SUP usage in St Helena and Ascension by Q1 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/Plymouth)
- 1.5 Facilitate inclusive workshops with communities to assess the social acceptability of the system map findings and feed in their response to opportunities for action/intervention Q1 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)
- 1.6 Use workshop outcomes and system diagnosis to select three interventions that complement St Helena's SEDP (including one focusing on SUP water bottles) by Q1 Yr2. Assess feasibility of the three interventions and review with communities through workshops by Q2 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)

Output 2: Pilot interventions to reduce most problematic/prevalent SUP items and switch to sustainable alternatives are completed, monitored and evaluated with new policy in place for SUP reduction in St Helena.

- 2.1 Develop campaign materials and run a campaign for SUP water bottle reduction in St Helena, targeting schools, existing community-based organisations and other early adopters identified from the community. Run smaller campaign in Ascension to target school children only (Q2 – Q4) Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT)
- 2.2 Work with CONNECT to install 2 new public refill stations in St Helena Q2 Yr2. Collect data on water refills until Q4 yr 3 (ZSL/SHNT)
- 2.3 Distribute refillable water bottles to all school children in St Helena and Ascension Q2 Yr2 (ZSL/SHNT/AIG/SHG)
- 2.4 Collaborate with communities to pilot 2 other interventions for reducing SUP, aligned with St Helena's SEDP as identified in output 1 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG)
- 2.5 Conduct before and after behaviour change surveys and analyse waste management reports to monitor change Q2 Yr2 and Q3 Yr4 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG/AIG)
- 2.6 Identify and launch 1 sustainable business model with local community. Provide training session (Q1 yr2) and monthly monitoring
- 2.7 Monitor and evaluate all interventions in St Helena and SUPWB intervention in Ascension. Consolidate final recommendations made for a plastic waste reduction strategy in St Helena by Q4 Yr4 (ZSL/SHNT/SHG).
- 2.8 Develop and consult on policy for reducing SUP in St Helena (SHG/SHNT/ZSL) Q2 yr2 to Q4 yr3

Output 3: Characteristics and sources of plastic waste pollution and associated threats to wildlife on St Helena and Ascension shores are understood, with appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented.

- 3.1 Building on recognised methodologies, and previous beach litter monitoring efforts and data, design a robust sampling strategy for shore litter (Q4 yr1)
- 3.2 MSc study to conduct biodiversity threat assessment through an analysis of secondary data to establish the vulnerability of wildlife to plastic pollution. Produce prioritised vulnerability list of species with associated priority list of most damaging plastic type and interaction by Q1 Yr2(ZSL/Exeter/SHNT)
- 3.3 Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in St Helena (monthly), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites (SHNT/ZSL)

- 3.4 Implement robust sampling strategy for shore litter in Ascension (bimonthly for 3 months in Yr2 and Yr3), and use to characterise litter composition and identify plastic hotspot sites (Exeter MSc student/AIG/ZSL)
- 3.5 Based on threat assessment and current wildlife monitoring protocols, conduct wildlife-plastic interaction monitoring of priority species (identified in 3.1) at plastic hotspot sites (SHNT/AIG/Exeter MSc student/ZSL)
- 3.6 Quantify plastics in bird nests, stomachs of opportunistically collected seabird and turtle carcasses, game fish guts and hermit crab entrapment using comparable methods to Tristan da Cunha, Pitcairn and BIOT. Publish report Q4 Yr3 (Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni) and MSc thesis (hermit crabs, Exeter)
- 3.7 Use established identification methods to document origins of SUP bottles/lids to determine source countries and routes of shore litter (ZSL/SHNT/Uni of Cape Town/Nelson Mandela Uni) by Q4 yr 2
- 3.8 Create (ZSL/SHNT/AIG) and begin using beach clean best-practice guidelines for organised beach cleans with SHNT and AIG staff and local volunteers (SHNT/SHG/AIG)
- 3.9 Develop and implement a mitigation strategy for wildlife, based on outcomes of threat assessment, and working with relevant authorities and NGOs integrate into Conservation Management Plans (SHNT/ZSL/AIG)

Output 4: Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs.

- 4.1 Identify people in the UK and other UKOTs and establish a UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group that meets virtually at least 2x per year (first workshop in Q4 yr1)
- 4.2 Review and consolidate existing information (grey literature and peer-reviewed) about best practice plastic-free tourism globally and consolidate into short briefing document (ZSL)
- 4.3 Hold workshop with Steering Group and relevant people to review plastic free tourism briefing/information and produce workshop report with recommendations Q4 Yr2
- 4.4 Develop guidelines for UKOTs plastic-free tourism. Create communication materials and distribute across Ascension and St Helena (govts and airports). Share with the UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group by Q3 Yr3

i. Annex 3: Standard Indicators - Table 1

Project Standard Indicators

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DPLUS Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DIA03	Establish Plastic Pollution Steering Group that sits across UKOTs, shares knowledge and best practice on plastic pollution interventions, and meets twice per year to scale impact across UKOTs (Q1 Yr1)	Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project.	Organisations						10
DIC05	Opportunities for international action and scaling for reducing marine plastic pollution are explored and developed with other UKOTs.	Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.	Number	None					5
DIA02	<i>Please note: we didn't have a specific indicator about this in our original logframe, however considering international expeditions, and upcoming exchange trips between staff on Ascension and St Helena, we are considering this as a useful indicator. We may be in touch to discuss a change request.</i>	Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group:					2
DIB04	As part of the interventions piloted (2.2) and in line with St Helena's Sustainable Economic Development Plan	Number of new/improved sustainable livelihoods/ poverty reduction management plans available and endorsed*.	Number						1

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DPLUS Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
	2018-2028, a minimum of one inclusive and sustainable business model/financial mechanism, underpinning plastic waste reduction is identified, assessed, and established with communities by Q1 Yr3.								
DIC01	'Plastic Free Tourism' best practice materials and guidelines published, targeting visitors to the UKOTs. Shared via UKOTs Plastic Pollution Steering Group for international scaling by Q3 Yr3.	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.	Number						1
DIB01	Mitigation strategy developed for wildlife and integrated into Conservation Management Plans by Q4 Yr3.	Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	Number						1
DID03	New policy for SUP reduction in St Helena is developed, consulted on, with agreed policy adopted and endorsed by SHG by Q3 Yr3.	Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended .	Number						2

ii.

iii. Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
Turning the tide on plastic pollution: Ascension and St Helena	MSc thesis	Juliette Fraser, 2022 - University of Plymouth	Female			Appendix 6
Biodiversity threat assessment of plastic pollution in Saint Helena and Ascension Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)	MSc thesis	Natalia Constanza de la Tijera Fernandez, 2022 - Imperial College London	Female			Appendix 17

9. 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?	
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	
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.	
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.	
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.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	