

## Darwin Plus Main & Strategic: 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: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

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### Darwin Plus Project Information

Scheme (Main or Strategic)	Main
Project reference	DPLUS190
Project title	Improving St Helena's grasslands to benefit people and wildlife
Territory(ies)	St Helena
Lead Organisation	St Helena National Trust
Project partner(s)	St Helena Government, RSPB
Darwin Plus grant value	£149,465
Start/end dates of project	April 2023 – March 2026
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024-Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	April 2024 – March 2025, Annual Report 2
Project Leader name	Helena Bennett
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="https://www.trust.org.sh/">https://www.trust.org.sh/</a> X: Shnationaltrust Facebook: Shnationaltrust Instagram: shnationaltrust Linkedin: @st-helena-national-trust
Report author(s) and date	Helena Bennett, Denis Leo, James Fantom, April 2025

### 1. Project summary

The improving grasslands project on St Helena was designed to improve food security i.e quality livestock through tackling a number of biodiversity challenges; climate change, invasive alien species and destruction of habitats. As a result, the habitats of the St Helena plover is also improved to increase their population size.

During year 2, the project continues to monitor and manage 3 high priority management sites with intensive management techniques as well as explored potential low impact management sites with medium intensity management techniques. Of 3 identified low impact management sites, only 2 were implemented during year 2; manual digging of invasive plants and herbicide spraying. The 3 medium intensity management technique is still ongoing in preparation of using free ranging pigs to naturally turn the pastures. Unfortunately, extensive time resource was required to plan and make agreement with the landowner to carry out this management technique that also requires planning authority and agreements from SHG.

The baseline livelihood survey was completed and analysed during year 2. From which 3 livelihood initiatives were identified. Consultation was carried out with the Chamber of Commerce on the suitability of the initiatives from which 2 were chosen and the project board choosing the final initiative for implementation. The initiative chosen is increasing rainwater capture and

storage on the pasturelands, reducing the farmers dependency on metered water resulting in reduced costs. This initiative also addresses climate resiliency through preparation in case of drought (which the island is prone to). By the end of year 2, the project had purchased water tanks. From the knowledge obtained and data collected, from the livelihood survey and management techniques, the project has drafted best practices for pasture management, which will form part of the IWA and NCA management plans. The project continues to provide support to the NCA project by providing representation on the Core Delivery Group and attending the workshops. During year 2, the project also held its workshop to review the Wirebird Species Action Plan inviting key actors (identified through the actors analysis) to participate. The Wirebird Species Action Plan has been revised and have obtained feedback from the actors. It is planned to present the Plan to the ENRP, SHG Advisory Board for endorsement in June 2025 alongside the IWA Management plans.

Monitoring the pasturelands identified for management techniques remains ongoing to provide evidence that the chosen pasture management techniques are effective. Baseline data was gathered on invasive vegetation and invertebrate habitats, alongside of the annual wirebird population census. Whilst we have monitored nesting in the priority sites, overall the population of wirebirds has dropped. However, during year 3 the project will continue monitoring to determine reasoning for the decline.

The project continues to promote the work that is doing through, regular meetings with the farmers, newspaper articles, social media posts and tours. It is essential for the project team to maintain relationship with farmers and to continue trialling ways that would provide effective collaboration to ensure legacy of the project. This will be focused on in the final year of the project. All project staff were training in ZSL's FAIRER programme, which includes GESI and FPIC standards. This training will help develop the project's positionality statement for year 3 and GESI self-assessment to ensure the best possible outcome of the project.

The project team continue to report on a monthly basis to the project board, with progress on the project, methodology and feasibility studies. On a quarterly basis the board is presented with the project tracker and budget tracker. The project held a mid-project review in August 2024, where the project board and team reviewed the progress of the project to date, lessons learnt and what went well, along with ensuring the implementation plan will be complete by end of project.

## **2. Project stakeholders/partners**

The St Helena National Trust's (the Trust) partners are the Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Portfolio, St Helena Government (ENRP SHG), who provides legislation and policy support for agriculture, pasture management and lease agreements, and the RSPB, who provide technical expertise in wildlife survey methods, training in bird flagging and data management. Both partners are very active for the duration of this project. Their representatives sit on the Project Board and have strategic role in overseeing, monitoring and advising the project. All outputs and activities are shared with the Project Board in design stage and review stage, particularly the trials of different interventions. This is apparent from the minutes and documents of the Project Board meetings. *See Section 2, 2.1.*

The project board includes representative from the Chamber of Commerce who represents the interest of farmers, as St Helena does not have a Farmers Association. This ensures strategic input and advice from the project's main local actor – the farmers.

The Project Board meets on a monthly basis (first Tuesday of the month) unless there are large scale activities to be undertaken that requires additional time before being presented. On 22 August 2024, the Project Board and Project team held a mid-project review where the focused on; what is going well, challenges faced and improvements that could be made, review of project outputs and implementation timetable. The outcomes from this review served to improve the progress of the project. *See Section 2, 2.2.*

In September 2024, the project held a Wirebird Species Action Plan (SAP) workshop, inviting all local actors that interacts with wirebirds. The guest list was determined through an actor analysis (previously called stakeholder) which the project team carried out with ZSL in July 2024. *See Section 2, 2.3.* The actor analysis allowed the project team to identify the different

groups on St Helena with high interest in wirebird conservation. The objective of the workshop was to review the outdated Wirebird SAP of 2011-2016 with an outcome to produce an updated version. In attendance (in addition to the Project Board) were the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, ENRP Portfolio Director, Planning Office, Project Division, Livestock Section, Economic Development, Tourism St Helena Research Institute, Connect St Helena, Farmers and Private Tour Operators. See *Section 2, 2.4*.

Throughout the year, the project team continue to meet on site with the various farming syndicates. The project team met with the Man and Horse syndicate 3 times and the Deadwood syndicate 3 times. See *Section 2, 2.5*. Their views are taken onboard where necessary to help with the progress of the project and their pasture management protocols.

### **3. Project progress**

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities**

Output 1 calls for priority grassland areas to be under management by the end of the project. The sites are split into 2 categories, “high priority” and “medium priority”. Management of our 3 high priority sites was initiated at the end of year 1, continued through year 2. Hence, under this Output, the two activities that were addressed this year were 1.4 and 1.5.

Activity 1.4 refers to the management of 3 high priority sites. This was “initiated” at the end of year 1 (see 1<sup>st</sup> Annual report). This year, the management continued at these sites primarily in the first half-year. At Man and Horse, the main invasive plant to be controlled was the rush species *Juncus capillaceus*, and the planned management was to deploy a weed wiper to apply herbicide to it. This involved clearing the site of large woody weeds and debris, which was done in Year 1. In year 2, the rushes were mowed using a topper mower, and left to regenerate so that the weed wiper could apply herbicide to the fresh regrowth. During both the mowing process and the weed wiping process there were mechanical issues which had to be fixed, delaying the completion of the treatment. See *Section 3.1, 1.4, Man and Horse*

At Deadwood, the two sites had been planned to be controlled differently. The first site was due to be ploughed and rotovated, giving useful grass a chance to regenerate on the turned soil. This was completed by May 2025, after some mechanical difficulties delayed the contractor. The other site was to be managed through a period of intensive grazing by sheep owned by the farmers there. An area was enclosed by electric fencing and animals put inside for a period of a month and a half. This area had a considerably higher stocking density than is usual for St Helena (about 10 sheep per acre as opposed to 3 sheep per acre). See *Section 3.1, 1.4, Deadwood*

At Bottomwoods there were 2 different agreed management approaches. One was to be controlled with rotovating and ploughing, which was finished relatively quickly, as the soil was soft and easily turned. The other was to be targeted with herbicide. This was completed in October 2024. See *Section 3.1, 1.4, Bottomwoods*

Under Activity 1.5, we have initiated management techniques on two of our medium priority sites (Middle Point, and Thompson’s Wood). Woody Ridge management has been in planning and discussion with the landowner and farmer since around October. The project has identified an opportunity to implement a trial of free ranging pigs as a tool to enrich pasture land and clear some invasive vegetation. This takes advantage of the landowner’s need to reduce costs associated with pig farming (waste removal and imported feed), as well as clear invasive vegetation. This trial has a lot of implicated risks, which needed to be fully assessed before the actual implementation stage. This also had to be adequately designed, and passed through a number of approvals in the farming industry. This also requires planning authority approval. To date we have completed a small-scale trial of the electric fencing, and are awaiting planning permission approval before we can implement the trial on the ground. While the other two sites were completed agreed timescale, the last site is taking longer for these reasons. We believe that it is still worth pursuing, as if successful this could be a positive outcome in meeting one of the projects aims by working with farmers to implement sustainable methods of pasture management in the future.

Output 2 relates to the enhancement of farmers livelihoods. Under this Output, the activities planned to be addressed this year are 2.7, 2.9, 2.5.

Activity 2.7 calls for the writing of 2 scoping assessments for livelihood initiatives. 3 potential initiatives were identified and presented to the Chamber of Commerce in October 2024. The two that were decided based on this consultation were supporting beekeeping amongst farming syndicates, and increasing and supporting rainwater collection and use by those syndicates. We began writing scoping assessments for these. These were completed in January 2025 and presented to the Project Board in February 2025. We decided on increasing rainwater collection at syndicates to be the most viable option. We will integrate collected rainwater to existing water lines and had started this implementation in March 2025. *See Section 3.1, 2.7 for the feasibility studies and evidence of implementation.*

Project partner ENRP, SHG assisted with Activity 2.9 in identifying heads for a best protocol for pasture management in the Important Wirebird Areas (IWA). These protocols will be included in the IWA Management Plans, as confirmed by the Stakeholder workshop in March 2025. *See Section 3.1, 2.9 for the best practice guidelines.* The finalised pasture management stocking plan under Activity 2.5, which was due to start in quarter 4 of year 2, will start at the beginning of year 3.

Output 3 required the project to review the conservation impacts as a result of management. Here we focused on activities 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, and 3.8.

Activity 3.2 required annual vegetation surveys of all the trial sites and was completed with the exception of Woody Ridge under the less intensive management (activity 1.5) due to the management not yet started. *See Section 3.1, 3.2 for survey data collected on each site.*

Whilst the farming syndicate was supposed to carry out rabbit culling under Activity 3.3 and provide data, collection of this data was more difficult. Farmers are not carrying out culling as was hoped and this is due to gun licenses and cost of ammunition. The project board and team will need to revisit in order to obtain results.

The Trust is diligent in carrying out regular nest monitoring throughout the year (Activity 3.5), which also includes monitoring ring re-sightings (Activity 3.7). The annual population census took place in January 2025 as. *See Section 3.1, 3.5 and Section 3.1, 3.7.* We report any interesting sightings on social media and also provide an annual report for the local newspapers.

Output 4 develops the island's capacity to implement and monitor effective management of the grassland protected areas. The activities undertaken in year 2 of the project were 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.10.

Activity 4.4 and 4.5 required the project to hold a Wirebird SAP. This was completed in September 2024, with 26 key actors in attendance. The objective of the workshop was to revise the Wirebird Species Action Plan 2011-2016. Following the workshop, the Trust has now completed the first revision and obtained feedback from the workshop participants. It is intended for the Wirebird SAP to be presented to the ENRP Advisory Board for SHG endorsement in June 2025 alongside the Important Wirebird Areas Management Plans. *See Section 3.1, 4.4.*

At a Chamber of Commerce meeting in October 2024, there was interest in herbicide usage and knapsack spraying training, with 10 interested persons from different organisations/sectors (Activity 4.6). During the lead-up to the training in December 2024, a few more expressions of interest were received. However, on the actual day of the training, only 2 people attended. One was a private farmer, and the other was a pest control technician from Saint Helena Government.

Interest was also expressed for site visits to discuss management techniques and lessons learned for our high priority sites. We had 9 people submit their interest for this. We will carry this out in year 3, however using lessons learnt from the December's training we will work closely with the different organisations to ensure we are able to deliver training in an effective manner. *See Section 3.1, 4.6*

Under Activity 4.7 a number of newspaper articles were produced that are also posted on the Trust's social media. The project team joined in local radio shows to talk about the progress of the project. The Trust continues to participate in the annual birdwatch initiative that is run by RSPB. This allows the community to contribute to local bird spotting. The project also contributed to the Wader Conservation World Watch 2024. See *Section 3.1, 4.7*. The project team continue to take footage of the project to contribute to the final year project film. The contracted film company, Swimming Head Productions also undertook a visit to the island to gather more footage. Evidence of the footage taken by the project team can be seen throughout the evidence folder, but also See *Section 3.1, 4.8* of a project team member talking to volunteers.

The project team continue to deliver regular wirebird tours to community members and visitors under Activity 4.10. For Year 2 the received 54 visitors. The wirebird tour is a highlight for our SHG Tourist Office when putting together itineraries for visiting Journalists and/or tour operators. See *Section 3.1, 4.10*

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

#### **Output 1. Effective Pasture management is implemented across priority grassland areas**

The project has implemented pasture management across 5 sites of various sizes and importance to the wirebird population. This year, we continued to implement the intensive management at our high priority sites. We continued to manage our three sites according to the agreed management plan. The Bottomwoods rotovating site was finished in April 2024 and the Bottomwoods spraying site was finished in May 2024, with some follow up respraying in January 2025. The Deadwood Rotovating site was finished in June 2024, after the contractor experienced some mechanical failures with their plough. The Deadwood intensive grazing site was finished in June 2024, but is due to restart with amendments to the management design. Both Man and Horse spraying sites were completed in September 2024, with some follow up spraying in March 2025. Many of the sites, particularly the ones managed through rotovating are showing very promising regrowth of useful grass species. The Deadwood intensive grazing site is looking the least promising with the least noticeable change. This has led to the project team re-designing the management which will be implemented again in Year 3.

For our medium priority sites, we went through a round of consultation and designs of trials with the project board and the landowners. We agreed to manually dig out invasive plants (Lantana Camara) at Middle Point, which was completed November 202, and a program of herbicide treatments at Thompsons wood which was initiated in November 2024 and is still ongoing. Woody Ridge management is still developing, as we have identified an opportunity to attempt to use free range pigs to improve pasture and control invasive plants. The landowner has a large pig farm that they are looking to expand into free range farming, to reduce costs. We have been in discussions since October 2024 about how to implement this on Woody Ridge. We have designed the management program, committed resources, conducted market research into profitability of free-range meat, applied for planning permission, conducted tests of our electric fence on live pigs. We await confirmation from the landowner that we are able to go ahead with the management.

This is hoped to be a great lesson in sustainable farming, as this could benefit both the pasture and the pigs, and two separate operations, pig farming and pasture management, could be combined into one. The potential success of this trial could be a great incentive for this landowner and others to practice different grazing methods in the future. It is because of this potential benefit that this option has been explored so fervently.

These sites are likely to get completed by project end, but there is some risk that Woody Ridge does not go as planned if there isn't approval by either the Planning Authority or the landowner leadership team. If that is the case, we can still manage the land in other ways, but the beneficial lessons that could be learned from the pig grazing won't be achieved. It also might be too late to measure any beneficial effects on the land. This output is being monitored primarily thorough photo evidence of change in the sites. The vegetation surveys that are carried out annually should show evidence of definite change of vegetation composition.

We are monitoring closely the regeneration of our sites and have had discussions within the team and steering group about how best to re-plant grass into some sites, notably Man and Horse, Bottomwoods, and Deadwood.

Output 2. Livelihoods of agriculturist communities (through existing farming syndicates) are enhanced through climate resilient initiatives

Output 2 has been marked this year by the design and implementation of a livelihood initiative focused on increasing the available water storage capacity for both farming syndicates. A report on our baseline questionnaire was completed in June 2024. Some notable findings were that most livestock farmers use alternative food sources other than simply pasture grazing, and that most livestock farmers claimed to not make a profit from farming. We identified 3 livelihood initiatives that could benefit farmers either by increasing profits or reducing costs. These 3 were discussed in a Chamber of Commerce meeting in October 2024, and the two identified for further scoping were to a) increase profits by supporting the setup of beekeeping in the two farming syndicates, and b) to reduce costs associated with water usage through increased rainwater collection. Scoping assessments were completed in January 2025, and the rainwater collection option was agreed the most viable for implementation. This should have a measurable impact on the farmer's water bills, which tend to be near £1,500 a year. There was an option explored to give one syndicate a trailered tank with an attached trough. This combined with electric fencing could open more grazing options for farmers. However, the syndicate does not have a suitable vehicle to tow such an item. The Deadwood farming syndicate in particular has been interested in capturing rainwater for a while. Providing a solution for this will notably enhance their operations by reducing their reliance on mains water, the subsidy for which is due to decrease.

The project team has drafted best practice guidelines to build into the National Conservation Area management plans, and it was confirmed through an Important Wirebird Area stakeholder workshop in March 2025 that these would be included therein. The guidelines were written with support from project partner ANRP's agriculture support team.

Output 3. The conservation impacts of the pasture management are monitored and evaluated.

The project continues to monitor the effects of our management through various wildlife surveys and reporting. We completed vegetation surveys of all of our sites, including the medium priority ones throughout the year approximately one year after they were completed in Yr. 1. We also carried out invertebrate surveys on all of our sites, and produced a baseline report with the support of the RSPB and the St Helena National Trust invertebrate team. In some areas this is the first time such data has been recorded, and it will be very useful in future projects in these areas.

The project continues to monitor wirebird nests and carried out the annual Wirebird census in January and reported on the results to the public in February. The census reported 619 total adult birds, which is a slight drop from the previous year. Indicator 3.4 and 3.5 may not be met simply due to natural fluctuations in bird population, and other factors that are outside the scope or control of the activities of this project. However, we have some positive results already in the high priority management sites, where pairs of birds have been found in them making territories, nesting, and hatching chicks.

We have been monitoring resightings of the 59 birds we flagged in Yr. 1, and have 20 occurrences of re-sightings logged. The re-sighting of birds has been greatly aided by a camera that was purchased for the project. The camera also provides a means of verification for the data. In March 2025, another RSPB visit was undertaken to train staff in bird-flagging and to flag more Wirebirds. Whilst a bird ringing exercise occurred in 2008, re-sighting data is not easily obtainable, so the flagging undertaken in year 1 is the first data we have to illustrate any wirebird movement trends.

#### Output 4. Enhanced in-territory capacity to implement and monitor effective management of St Helena's grassland protected areas

We have made great strides this year towards achieving output 4, primarily through the development of the Wirebird Species Action Plan (SAP), and supporting the development of the National Conservation Area management plans.

In September 2025, we held the Wirebird Species Action Plan Stakeholder Workshop, where 26 attendees gathered to discuss the design and content of a new Wirebird SAP. The first plan was written in 2006 and revised in 2011. The workshop was 2 days long and facilitated by the St Helena National Trust. The main goal of discussions was to identify how Wirebird conservation and St Helena as a whole had changed since the first plan was written, and to pinpoint any new outcomes and activities that should be included in the new plan. The new plan has been drafted, discussed with the project board in March 2025, and have obtained feedback from the key actors.

It was committed by ENRP to propose the new action plan to be adopted as national strategy within government, and the plan will be presented alongside of the Important Wirebird Areas management plans. This meets indicators 4.3 and 4.4.

Training was carried out by SHNT for herbicide and spraying usage, as mentioned in section 3.1. This was supported by ENRP in that anyone whom completed the SHNT spraying course would be eligible for subsidized herbicide from ENRP, and would be eligible to bid for SHG contracts which required spraying. Unfortunately, only 2 people attended the training despite strong interest from the public leading up. This takes the total number of people trained under this project 5. To achieve indicator 4.5, 15 people need to be trained in Yr. 3. This could be achieved by carrying out repeat herbicide training, as there was a good amount of interest from the public. There was also interest from 9 persons for site visits to our management sites to discuss lessons learnt and benefits of the different management techniques, which could contribute to the indicator. Project staff have also received a lot of training this year, specifically training in the use of Excel and data management by both IBM (online course) and the RSPB (on-island). The Field and Livelihood Officer continue to receive training in bird ringing and flagging from the RSPB who is on-island currently to assist with the flagging of more plovers.

Communications continue through newspaper articles, social media posts, and radio interviews. Filming for the project film continues, with the contracted film crew visiting again in January. The project team themselves continues to film using the camera bought through the project.

We continue to take tours, incorporating the activities of this project into them. We have surpassed the agreed 30 people by some margin now in indicator 4.7.

### **3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome**

The Outcome of this project is *Effective pasture management implemented to improve St Helena's grassland habitats by sustainably enhancing local livelihoods through increased livestock capacity and quality, which also benefits grassland biodiversity*. The first indicator in for 8 hectares of grassland under improvement management practices by the end of the project. At project start, the priority areas would have seen piecemeal management practices, but priorities of the farmers have primarily been on livestock stewardship and fencing maintenance. This has allowed invasive plant species to take over many parts of the pastures, resulting in reduced grazing availability for the livestock. There was some vegetation management, but it was not often, or targeted as part of a larger management scheme. They also relied on techniques that are labour intensive or require training and repeated follow up to be effective. These factors, combined with an aging farmer demographic (can be seen in the livelihoods survey) led to invasive plants taking over pastures. As a result of this project, a number of carefully planned management techniques have been undertaken which are less labour intensive. Currently, there is 7 hectares under management as a result of the project. The techniques chosen are large scale, and can result in a much higher labour-result ratio, which can teach valuable lessons for vegetation management on St. Helena. If the pig grazing

trial goes ahead at Woody Ridge, this will make up the last hectares to achieve the indicator 0.1.

Indicator 0.2 will be achieved by the replanting of useful grass species in our plots. Originally, much of our plots was covered in either bare ground or invasive species. Through our management techniques, we have increased the cover of useful grass species noticeably in some of the key sites. Whether we achieve the 20% stipulated in this indicator is left to the important assumption that our management is successful, and that success is measurable by the end of the project. It also assumes that 20% is indicative of a site 2 years after management begins.

Indicator 0.3 will be achieved through the livelihood initiative we have begun to implement, plus any increase in grazing and livestock quality that comes as a result. The baseline was assessed in Year 1 through a survey. From this, we know that profit margins of farmers are very low, and many do not make any profit from their farming at all. By increasing the amount of rainwater storage which helps to replace metered water, will reduce their water bills, and will keep their operations resilient to climate change in the future. Also, the management taking place on their pastures should increase the amount of grazing feed available to their livestock as well. The impact will hopefully be measured by the repeat survey questionnaire, but can also be measured by measuring water bills before and after implementation (assuming there aren't other factors that contribute to the change in water bills).

Indicator 0.4 requires annual biodiversity surveys to reveal no loss of native species richness in existing grassland habitat over the course of the project and a significant increase in areas under enhanced management. Before the project we did not have much data on the species richness in these areas, and have created a baseline. We will be able to compare the baseline data to the post trial data and hopefully the results will indicate a stable or increased native species richness.

Indicator 05 ask for pasture management and development mitigation measures built into protected area management plans by the end of the project. We have drafted pasture management plans in IWAs, and have contributed to the NCA project during workshops, site visits, and meetings. The pasture management guidelines will be integrated into the NCA management plans. This will be achieved by end of project.

St Helena Government leases and draft agriculture policies (Agricultural strategy and Estates Management Policy in National Conservation Area) updated to include provisions for improved land management by end of project (Indicator 06). Most of the activities that will contribute to this indicator are set for year 3 of the project, but the data and experience that have been collected in the first two years of the project will contribute to the completion of this outcome in year 3. SHG have sent us their lease agreements already for review.

### **3.4 Monitoring of assumptions**

Assumption 1: Effectiveness of pasture management techniques are detected and measurable.

The project continues to use technical expertise to support the development of pasture management techniques. The project board also provide hands on advice and guidance to the development of the management techniques, which the project team monitors and reports on regularly to ensure that they are effective.

There is a potential that the free grazing management technique using pigs may not yield the desirable results by the end of the project. This is due the rigorous planning that is required. However, it is hoped that some results will be received before close of project, which will provide a break through for St Helena in using animals to help improve pastures, whilst improving quality of livestock.

Assumption 2: Continued positive engagement with farming syndicates and St Helena Government.

SHG is a project partner and the farming syndicates are key actors of the project. SHG has representation on our project board, along with the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, who represents the farmers. However, the project team carried out regular engagement with the

farming community, attending syndicate meetings and working alongside. The Project aims to continue this positive relationship.

Assumption 3: Increased costs and droughts have hindered agriculture sector and helped new invasive species to take hold.

The project recognises the increase in costs, with SHG announcing in January 2025 an 8.2% annual inflation. The highest it has been on island in the last 15 years. St Helena has been fortunate in the last 5 years to not experience any further drought, thanks to the resilience forum and our island's Utilities company. The diversity scheme carried out by the project is intended to help with costs by increasing rainwater collection and storage.

The island no longer has an invasive woody plants programme steering group, and it is found through the project that farmers tend to focus on fence maintenance rather than invasive clearing. This is a priority that the project focus on in year 3 to ensure legacy of the outcomes achieved from the project.

Assumption 4: St Helena agriculturalist communities continue to engage with the project through active face to face communications.

Engagement with the farming syndicates remains positive. The project team regularly carries out visits, attend syndicate meetings and discuss progress of the project. The project board also has the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce as a member, who also represents the farming community, and on periodic basis the project team attends the Chamber of Commerce meetings to provide updates not only to the farming communities but also other private sectors.

Assumption 5: Drought events do not impact livestock stocking

Drought events do impact livestock stocking, with most of the farmers water source running on metered water. However, during year 2 the project has addressed this issue through the livelihood initiative of increasing rainwater capture and storage, reducing the dependency on the island's main water supplies.

Assumption 6: RSPB sabbatical has been successful at providing baseline habitat and livelihood information in relation to the Wirebird.

This remains true, with RSPB as a partner and also provides representation on the project board and technical support. Training in flagging of wirebirds now provides baseline data in wirebird movement around the island.

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

This project whilst committed to maintaining wirebird habitats (biodiversity management, and invasive species management), also supports the management and improvement of pasturelands (agricultural management) as identified in the St Helena Government's (SHG) Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Our contribution spans across all priorities identified in the strategic plan. *See Section 4*

During year 2, the project has drafted pasture management plans that informs the Important Wirebird Areas (IWA) and the Nature Conservation Areas (NCA) management plans that are being completed under the DPLUS154 project. It is aimed to have these plans finalised by the end of the project.

The intensive and medium trial management techniques support the data that has been collected during these first two years to inform SHG's leases and agriculture policies. To date we have received SHG's revised lease agreements for review. This also support the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UKOT Biodiversity Strategy, the South Atlantic Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (2010). As a result of the trials, the project has seen wirebirds making territory in the project's target sites as well as nesting.

Under Article 8 of the CBD and SHG's Sustainable Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033, we provided tours to 54 visitors and continue to engage the local community and schools, which promotes the uniqueness of the wirebird and its health and welfare. *See Section 4*

In September 2024, the project started the process of revising the Wirebird Species Action Plan (SAP). This supports Article 8 of the CBD by ensuring we review and update St Helena's systems and processes for the protection and management of the wirebird. Risks and their mitigation plans were reviewed and revised according to the development of the island since the last SAP. The project also contributed to the DPL00090 (iRecord St Helena: A data driven approach, empowering bird conservation) that will contribute to the development of an overarching Bird Conservation Strategy for St Helena.

## 5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

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

Unfortunately, during the planning phase and year 1 of the project, the project team only had a basic understanding of GESI. It was not applied to the application or the start up process of the project. However, during year 2 SHNT undertook the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) FAIRER Conservation Programme. FAIRER representing, Fair, Accountable, Inclusive, Respectful, Ethical and Reflective. The project team engaged in topics of:

- Positionality, power and privilege
- Inclusive engagement and FPIC
- Organisation safeguarding
- Trust, Accountability and Grievance management
- Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

From this programme, the project team learnt how to carry out an initial GESI Self-Assessment, however this must now be carried out alongside of the project board, for a holistic project analysis. The project team has mapped their "actor" analysis (changing from the use of the word "stakeholder" as a result of the programme). The project implemented these learning outcomes during the Wirebird Species Action Plan workshop. A positionality statement be completed for Year 3 of the project. The SHNT has revised its Safeguarding Policy, updated its Equality Policy to include Gender Equity and Social Inclusion. Whilst the project team have always been conscientious in how they engaged with their local actors, the FAIRER programme has made them more diligent. See *Section 5*

The key partners on the project consist of 83% local residents. Therefore, with local knowledge and cultural upbringing on the island runs strongly through the project. The project is committed and passionate to ensure the best possible outcome benefiting the community (food security)

and the wildlife (wirebirds). The project operates with 7 women and 6 men (13 in total). Whilst the project team has 2 women and 4 men, the project board is 5 women and 2 men, with age ranging from late 20s to late 60s. Volunteers continue to be a mix of men and women. The project team ensures the comfort of women participating in fieldwork, whose main concerns are toilet facilities, by ensuring there are comfort breaks at our Millennium Forest workshop/classroom. Our Education and Outreach Manager undertook a study with female secondary education students to understand their thoughts and feelings on working in conservation for the St Helena Cloud Forest Project (funded through FCDO), and found toilet facilities especially during menstruation is one of their biggest deterrents to working in the field. The information from this study, provides insight as to how the project team can attract more females to participate in the project.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

On a quarterly basis, the project team will complete their project tracker and budget tracker. This is presented to the monthly project board meeting to allow members to scrutinise the progress made. The project board consists of the Trust, SHG and RSPB as well as the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce representing the farmers.

The project tracker provides an update against the outcome and output indicators as well as the activity tracker. Please see section 3 and 4 for the details of each indicator and the progress made to achieve the outcome and outputs.

During year 2 and 18 months into the project, the project board and team also took the opportunity to evaluate the progress made to date, lessons learnt and areas for improvement. The implementation plan was reviewed to ensure the project will be able to deliver its outcomes.

## 7. Lessons learnt

In August 2024, the project undertook a mid-year review to assess progress to date as well as review any lessons learnt and what worked well.

One of the biggest challenges was ensuring the validity of the livelihood questionnaires with the farmers. Farmers and the private sector on St Helena do not like to share financial or personal information, therefore the project team had to provide caveats to the livelihoods assessment. It was during this review workshop that it was agreed that the questions had to be reworded to obtain an understanding of pasture management rather than querying finances. This would have the farmers opening up to discussions. *To carry out this survey again, the project team need to work with the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce to ensure the questions are SMART.*

Procurement and arrival of equipment/goods needed to carry out activities remains a challenge, especially that we rely on a shipping service. However, with the project team having sufficient experience with procurement on a small island, this is a challenge that should be in the project team’s control. *For future procurement, the project team will manage their time more efficiently and order goods/equipment in advance. It is acknowledged that it cannot be helped when equipment breaks, making procurement reactive.*

Going forward, better organisation and time management within the project team will be improved to ensure that we are planning ahead. Liaising with project board representatives to ensure that we are asking the right questions of our key actors will be a priority, especially when we revisit the benefits of the project.

For future projects, as lead partner, organisation and planning will be key to ensure success. End of year project review will be essential, increasing the frequency from one mid-year review to two times in a 3-year project.

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

No.	Comment	Discuss with BCFs Admin	Next half year report	Next Annual Report	No response needed
1		Develop a project monitoring plan, including measures for:		X	

	quality assurance mechanisms for data verification and review; mechanisms for periodic board review of project progress against outcomes.	
2	Review GESI strategy in light of context to identify entry points to strengthen GESI in project activities, outputs, and outcomes.	X
3	Develop a comprehensive exit strategy that outlines how the project's activities and benefits will be maintained and scaled after funding ends.	X
4	Organise safeguarding training and include mitigation measures for HPIA and working alone.	X

1. We use a project tracking spreadsheet that the project board members review at most board meetings (monthly). This year we had a focused monitoring and evaluation workshop in September with the project board, the purpose of which was to evaluate the projects progress against the logframe and implementation table, and identify any difficulties or areas needed for improvement. Data collected and reports produced based on that data are reviewed and produced with the support of RSPB's principal conservation scientist, to ensure that data is being collected in the best manner possible.
2. The project team's first steps to improving its approach to the GESI element is by ensuring all staff participated in the ZSL FAIRER programme. From this, the project team is currently working on producing a positionality statements, and completely the GESI self-assessment as part of the preparation for Year 3 of the project.
3. To be carried out in the year 3 (the final year of the project) to ensure there is a successful legacy of the project.
4. Staff all receive safeguarding training. Those that take tours on behalf of this project also received specific safeguarding training relating to tours and tourism.

## 9. Risk Management

The death or suffering of livestock was not considered a risk during the preparation of the project and during year 1. This risk materialised in year 2 during the set-up of electric fencing around the allocated pastureland. Mitigation is to ensure there are written agreements between the lead partner, St Helena National Trust and the actors (farmers) to understand the risks associated with the trials.

The risk register has been updated to reflect this. *See Section 9*

As part of good governance, the risk register will be reviewed for the start of year 3.

## 10. Scalability and durability

The project continues to have good promotion through utilising the local newspapers, social media, newsletters and social engagement with the key actors and community. It is found that given the type of project, the audience prefers one to one conversation in social settings rather than formal meetings. A type of medium that is also easy for the project team who are confident in their interactions.

The project team with their knowledge, experience and skills also attends other meetings in day-to-day government business, and projects such as the DPLUS154 – NCA management plans. They provide insight into the nature conservation areas and important wirebird areas helping officials to make informed decisions and recommendations. To date there were revisions made to government lease agreements as result of our knowledge and data collected

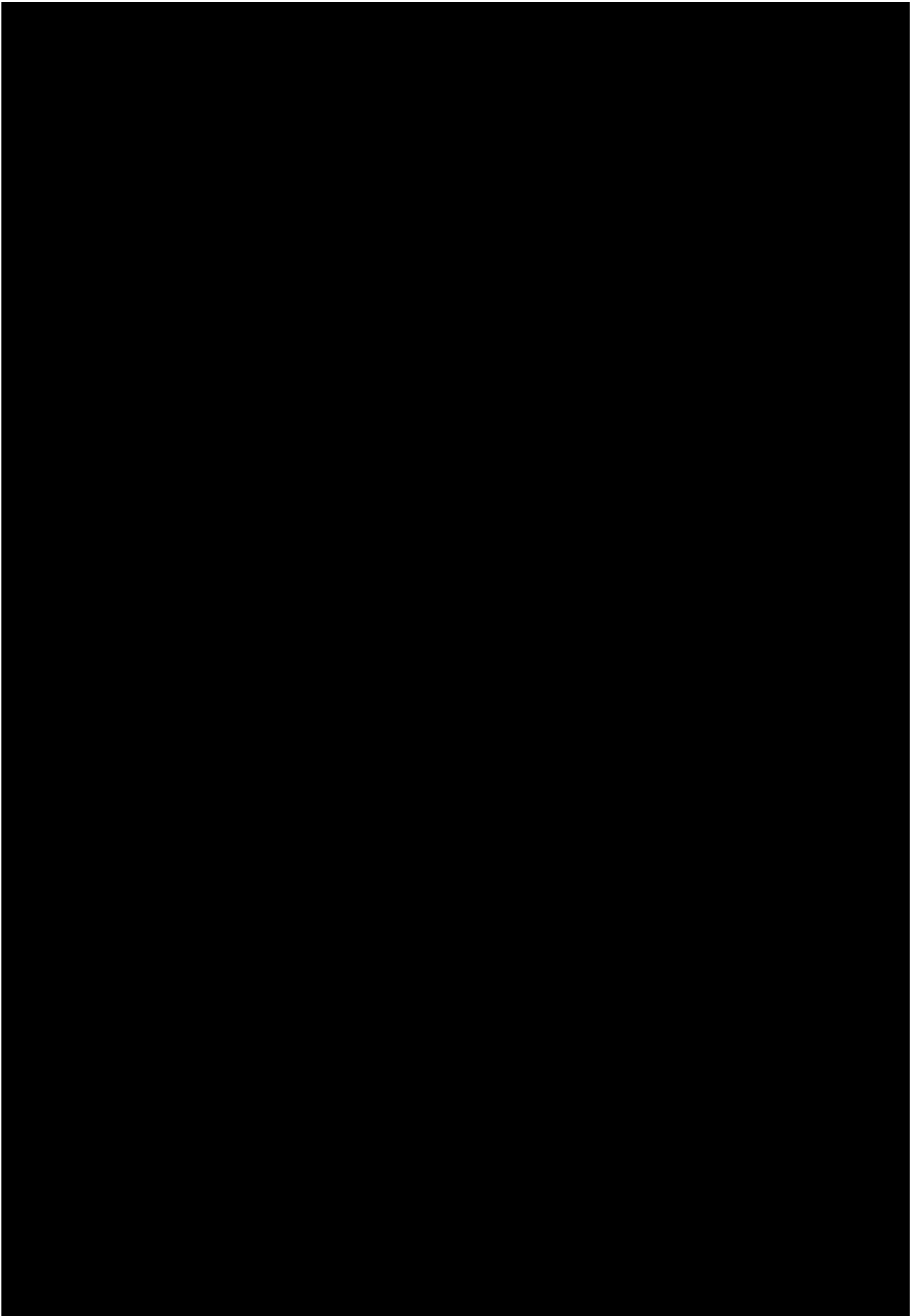
working with farmers. The pastureland policies and procedures that are currently drafted will feed into the government agriculture policy. Year 2 the analysis of the livelihood survey and the diversification scheme report was completed. This will allow the project to make a realistic plan with the farmers as to how the proven methodologies can continue thereafter the project is completed.

## **11. Darwin Plus identity**

Darwin Plus is a well-known funder in St Helena, with the St Helena National Trust and St Helena Government carrying out a few previous projects under this funding. Due to Darwin Plus funding previous projects for the wirebird habitat management, Darwin Plus is distinctly associated with the Trust and this work.

The Trust remains grateful to the support of the Darwin Plus for the funding of its conservation projects. In the case of this project, the project team wears polo shirts with the Trust and Darwin Plus initiative logos for meetings and events such as outreach activities etc. All publicity that the Trust carries out for this project includes the logo in the materials, mentions in interviews and tagged on social media. The Trust annual report also provides reference to Darwin Plus initiative as funder for this project as well as one of our main funders.

## 12. Safeguarding



### 13. Project expenditure

**Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)**

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2024/25 D+ Grant (£)	202/25 Total actual D+ Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£98,40</b>	<b>£89,09</b>		

**Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)**

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			SHG ENRP in kind support and transport costs RSPB
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)	0	0	

**14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

The Trust has been doing well in ensuring that it is up to date and meeting the requirements of Darwin throughout the project. GESI is an element that is being applied across the Trust and not just this project, therefore whilst we have only started implementation, by the end of the project we are confident we will be increasing our scoring.

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

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

<b>File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)</b>	<b>File Name or File Location</b>	<b>Caption including description, country and credit</b>	<b>Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)</b>	<b>Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)</b>
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

## Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
<b>Impact</b> [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Outcome: Effective pasture management implemented to improve St Helena's grassland habitats by sustainably enhancing local livelihoods through increased livestock capacity and quality, which also benefits grassland biodiversity</b>		
Outcome indicator 0.1 8 ha of grassland under improvement management practices by the end of the project	Currently there are 7 ha under management with trialling of intensive management and medium intensive management. Only 2 of the intensive management has been completed so far, with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> application requiring permissions to commence.	Continue working the high priority sites and the 2 medium priority sites.  Implement the 3 <sup>rd</sup> medium priority site management
Outcome indicator 0.2 Three priority trial sites have increased quantity of pasture grasses by at least 20% (through invasive plant removal) by the end of the project	Most plots were covered in invasive vegetation. Through the management techniques, the project has increased the cover of useful grass species.	Continue working on the priority control sites  Monitor regularly and seed if necessary  Carry out annual vegetation surveys
Outcome indicator 0.3 The livelihoods of 21 syndicate members are measurably enhanced (monitored via project start/end repeated assessments) over the course of the project	The livelihood survey was completed and analysed, with a survey report. From the survey report, a diversification scheme feasibility study was carried out, with the livelihood initiative agreed. The livelihood initiative being improving rain water capture and storage to reduce dependency on metered water.	Continue with implementation of the livelihood initiative  Monitor the effectiveness of the livelihood initiative
Outcome indicator 0.4 Annual biodiversity surveys reveal no loss of native species richness in existing grassland habitat over the course of the project and a significant increase in areas under enhanced management	Yr 2 annual survey was carried out. Prior to surveying the priority sites, these areas have never been studied before, therefore we have now being able to create a baseline.	Continue annual surveys of invertebrates and vegetation  Continue regular nest monitoring  Complete annual wirebird population census

Outcome Indicator 0.5 Pasture management and development mitigation measures built into protected area management plans by the end of the project	Pasture management best practices have been submitted to ENRP, SHG to help formulate the IWA management plans. It was confirmed that these best practices will form part of the plans. The Trust also forms part of the NCA Management Plan core delivery group, as well as participated in the IWA management plan workshop.	Review the IWA and NCA management plans and support the consultation process
Outcome Indicator 0.6 St Helena Government leases and draft agriculture policies (Agricultural strategy and estates management policy) in National Conservation Areas updated to include provisions for improved land management by end of project	The SHG has drafted their agriculture policies and updated their leases. During year 2 the Trust was invited to review the revised lease agreements.	Continue to provide data to SHG to assist with informed decision making.
<b>Output 1 Effective pasture management is implemented across priority grassland areas</b>		
Output indicator 1.1 Pasture management techniques (including livestock stocking; rotavating/rolling and invasive species management) identified with a trial pasture management plan produced by end yr 1	Completed in year 1. Management of the intensive management techniques continued in year 2 and the identification of medium management techniques was identified with 2 priority sites started.	Continue with the management techniques and implement medium priority site 3 – free range grazing animals.
Output indicator 1.2 Higher impact management techniques initiated by end of Yr1 across 3 high priority trial sites (Man and Horse, Deadwood Plain and Bottom woods)	Complete in year 1 Management of the high impact/intensive management techniques continued during year 2 to ensure their effectiveness.	Continue monitoring high impact management techniques
Output indicator 1.3 Lower impact management techniques initiated by end of year 2 across 3 medium priority trial sites (Middle Point, Woody Ridge, and Thompson's wood)	Complete 2 of 3 medium priority sites were completed during year 2. Manual digging of invasives at Middle Point, and herbicide treatments at Thompson's wood. Woody Ridge was identified for free range pigs, with the landowner looking for innovative and cost-effective ways to continue pig farming. However, creating a free range site requires planning permission and SHG licensing. This is still ongoing and hopefully will be delivered in yr3.	Continue monitoring of low impact management techniques Implement free range pigs' trial at site 3 – Woody Ridge.
Output indicator 1.4 Planting and encouragement of useful pasture grasses and species (Kikuyu grass <i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i> , mat grass <i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i> and legume <i>Desmodium incanum</i> ) (depending on the level of natural regeneration) in all trial sites by end of project	Annual vegetation surveys were carried out during year 1 and 2. Monitoring is being carried out to determine the necessity of planting seeds or to plant runners of kikuyu. This is on track to be completed in yr3	Continue monitoring the natural regeneration Procurement of grass seed/runners depending on the levels of regeneration.

<b>Output 2.</b> Livelihoods of agriculturalist communities (through existing farming syndicates) are enhanced through climate resilient initiatives.		
Output indicator 2.1 A baseline assessment completed in Yr 1 to better understand the drivers of recent land use change and the needs of the farming syndicates and landowners to inform initiatives and diversification schemes	The baseline assessment was completed, with the data analysed and report complete.	
Output indicator 2.2 Best practices produced for pasture management techniques and built into protected area management plans and lease agreements by the end of the project	Best practice guidelines for pasture management have been drafted and built into the Important Wirebird Areas/Nature Conservation Areas management plans. SHG has drafted an agricultural policy using the data obtained from the project and have provided the Trust a copy of the revised lease agreements for comment.	Continue to support the NCA Management plans project
Output indicator 2.3 A finalised pasture management plan produced (based on 1.1) and implemented for at least 2 of the 3 priority sites in year 3	On track for year 3	Monitor effects of management on priority areas Complete management techniques for Woody Ridge
Output indicator 2.4 Two additional livelihood initiatives are identified (with a focus on climate resilience) with one developed and trialed by the end of the project, in line with 2.1 (baseline data to be established).	Following the livelihood survey report, a diversification scheme feasibility study was undertaken identifying 3 potential livelihood initiatives. The project consulted with the Chamber of Commerce before the project board making the final decision the livelihood initiative to trial – improving rainwater capture and storage, to reduce dependency and cost of metered water. The project has started implementation of the livelihood with the purchase of additional water storage. This will continue for year 3 and monitored.	Complete the rainwater storage livelihood initiative. Monitor and collect data for effectiveness.
Output 2.5 A repeated assessment with farming syndicates and landowners completed at end of project to monitor impact against year 1 baseline (2.1)	To complete at end of project	Continue positive relationships with farmers Attend regular syndicate meetings Carry out survey
<b>Output 3.</b> The conservation impacts of the pasture management are monitored and evaluated		

Output indicator 3.1 Annual vegetation surveys of trial management areas	The annual vegetation survey is complete for year 2.	Carry out vegetation survey for year 3
Output indicator 3.2 Establish bi-annual data collection of rabbits culling effort led by farming syndicate at Deadwood from year 1	Unfortunately, the project was not able to collect data from the farmers – either the farmers were not shooting and/or not collecting data. With no financial support from the project, it is left to the farmers if they want to cull rabbits.	Change method of collecting rabbit culling data – one to ones with farmers.
Output Indicator 3.3 Invertebrate monitoring undertaken pre and post pasture management (start and end of project) inside and outside of trial sites	Annual invertebrate surveys complete for year 2.	Carry out invertebrate survey for year 3
Output Indicator 3.4 Annual St Helena Plover census count undertaken showing a 10% increase in presence across all priority sites by end of project	Annual wirebird census complete for year 2. Whilst we had a 11% decrease in adult wirebirds this year, we did have an increase of juveniles (40%), chicks (54%) and nests (22%). Unfortunately an overall decrease of 6%	Carry out further assessments on potential reasoning for decrease.
Output Indicator 3.5 St Helena Plover nests showing a 5% increase in survival rate across all priority sites by end of project	To complete by end of project. To note there was a 22% increase in nests in the annual wirebird census	On going nest monitoring
Output Indicator 3.6 Improved understanding of St Helena Plover movement in relation to protected areas through ringing at least 30 birds and annual monitoring.	Last year the project rang 54 birds as part of their training with RSPB. At the end of year 2, further ringing is being undertaken	On going monitoring of bird movement Mapping of resighting
<b>Output 4. Enhanced in-territory capacity to implement and monitor effective management of St Helena's grassland protected areas</b>		
Output Indicator 4.1 Review and update of St Helena Government leases on crown pasturelands to integrate improved land management practices within National Conservation Areas by the end of project.	See output indicator 2.2 above. The project has fed into SHG's drafting of agriculture policy and revision of lease agreements. SHG has provided the draft lease agreement to the project for review	Ongoing support of SHG's policy revisions
Output Indicator 4.2 Review and draft updated St Helena agricultural policies to integrate improved land management practices by end of project (Agricultural strategy and estate management policy)	See output indicator 4.1	
Output Indicator 4.3 Update of wirebird species action plan produced in year 2	A wirebird species action plan workshop was held in September 2024, reviewing the wirebird (SAP) 2011-2016. A revised draft have been produced and presented to the project board, before sending to key actors for their feedback.	Finalise draft wirebird SAP for ENRP approval in June 2025

	The final draft is currently being prepared for ENRP Advisory Board endorsement	
Output indicator 4.4 Grassland management and development mitigation measures included within the outputs of the sustainable management planning for St Helena's National Conservation Areas project (DPLUS154)	The Trust is a member of the DPLUS154 core delivery group and the project team attended the IWA management plan workshop to agree the drafting of the plans. The grassland management best practices will form part of the management plan.	Continue supporting the DPLUS154 project and consultation of management plans
Output indicator 4.5 A total of 20 persons from SHG, Trust and general public (farmers etc) well informed and trained in pasture management techniques through cross-partner training by the end of the project	Despite interest from the farmers and other members of the chamber of commerce for herbicide and spraying usage, only 2 people attended the training. Further interest has been made by farmers to learn different management techniques. Lessons learnt from the herbicide training will be applied to ensure as many people as possible attends the training.	Review training delivery methods and change to maximise the opportunity to farmers
Output indicator 4.6 Ongoing communication of project outputs with wider community through promotional and education materials throughout the project duration	The Trust continue to thrive with promotion of the project with the completion of newspaper articles, radio interviews and shows and social media posts	Continue with the regular newspaper, social media and radio content
Output indicator 4.7 Conduct wirebird tours with an overall attendance of 30 persons by end of the project	The project has exceeded the number in year 1 (79 attendees) and in year 2 54 attendees. Wirebird tours remains popular	Continue to provide wirebird tours

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

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<b>Impact:</b>  The unique biodiversity of St Helena's grasslands can thrive through effective and sustained pasture management achieved via enhanced local livelihoods, providing a win-win for the island's people and wildlife. (Max 30 words)			
<b>Outcome:</b> (Max 30 words)  Effective pasture management implemented to improve St Helena's grassland habitats by sustainably enhancing local livelihoods through increased livestock capacity and quality, which also benefits grassland biodiversity.	0.1 8 ha of grassland under improvement management practices by the end of the project  0.2 Three priority trial sites have increased quantity of pasture grasses by at least 20% (through invasive plant removal) by the end of the project  0.3 The livelihoods of 21 syndicate members are measurably enhanced (monitored via project start/end repeated assessments) over the course of the project.  0.4 Annual biodiversity surveys reveal no loss of native species richness in existing grassland habitat over the course of the project and a significant increase in areas under enhanced management 0.5 Pasture management and development mitigation measures built into protected area management plans by the end of the project	0.1 Maps, GIS data, reports  0.2 Methodologies of controls produced, monitoring data and analysis of results, reports, public presentations and feedback  0.3 Baseline and end of project assessments, public presentations, workshops and feedback, livestock data  0.4 Biodiversity surveys data and reports (invertebrates, vegetation and rabbits) including annual Wirebird census counts and regular nest monitoring	Effectiveness of pasture management techniques are detected and measurable. Methods will be built upon previously explored techniques with additional expert advice provided.  Continued positive engagement with farming syndicates and St Helena Government. We believe this will hold true based on discussions during project development, as demonstrated in the provided letters of support from both the farming community and St Helena Government. Government department ANRD is a project partner and has a long-term close working relationship with the St Helena National Trust.

	0.6 St Helena Government leases and draft agriculture policies (Agricultural strategy and Estates Management policy) in National Conservation Areas updated to include provisions for improved land management by end of project	0.5 Policies, legislation and species action plans reviewed and updated including practices identified adopted by National Conservation Areas project outputs (DPLUS154)  0.6 Lease documents, draft policy amendments	
<b>Outputs:</b> 1. Effective pasture management is implemented across priority grassland areas	1.1 Pasture management techniques (including livestock stocking; rotavating/rolling and invasive species management) identified with a trial pasture management plan produced by end Yr. 1.  1.2 Higher impact management techniques initiated by end Yr.1 across 3 high priority trial sites (Man and Horse, Deadwood Plain and Bottom Woods).  1.3 Lower impact management techniques initiated by end of Yr. 2 across 3 medium priority trial sites (Middle Point, Woody Ridge and Thompson's wood).  1.4 Planting and encouragement of useful pasture grasses and species (Kikuyu grass <i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i> , mat grass <i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i> and	1.1 Methodologies documented and action plans produced, map of priority sites.  1.2 Photo evidence, documentation, survey data, maps produced, signed contracts  1.3 Photo evidence, documentation, survey data, maps produced  1.4 Vegetation survey data, seeding/planting records, photo evidence	The Wirebird mitigation project 2008-2011 worked toward enhancing agriculture and natural resources department's (ANRD) licencing system and collaborate with grazing syndicates and farmers to manage wirebird sites to offset the impact of the development of the islands airport. A steering group was formed and Identified sites underwent clearance of invasive woody plants with good response in the wirebird population. Over the last decade droughts and increased costs have hindered agricultural sectors and aided new invasive species to take hold. St Helena agriculturalist communities (farming syndicates) continue to engage with project through active face-to-face communication with meetings on site, providing their views and receiving updates on planned project works. We believe this will hold true based on project

	legume <i>Desmodium incanum</i> ) (depending on the level of natural regeneration) in all trial sites by end of project.		development discussions, as evidenced by syndicate support letter
<b>2.</b> Livelihoods of agriculturist communities (through existing farming syndicates) are enhanced through climate resilient initiatives	<p>2.1 A baseline assessment completed in Yr. 1 to better understand the drivers of recent land use change and the needs of the farming syndicates and landowners to inform initiatives and diversification schemes.</p> <p>2.2 Best practices produced for pasture management techniques and built into protected area management plans and lease agreements by the end of the project.</p> <p>2.3 A finalised pasture management plan produced (based on 1.1) and implemented for at least 2 of the 3 priority sites in Year 3</p> <p>2.4 Two additional livelihood initiatives are identified (with a focus on climate resilience) with one developed and trialled by the end of the project, in line with 2.1 (Baseline data to be established).</p> <p>2.5 A repeated assessment with farming syndicates and landowners completed at end of project to</p>	<p>2.1 Assessment report and recommendations, workshop and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>2.2 Best practices documents produced, DPLUS154 management plans, draft leases, draft relevant policies/legislation.</p> <p>2.3 Pasture management plan, public presentation, attendance and feedback</p> <p>2.4 Documentation of initiatives, survey data, feedback</p> <p>2.5 Database, completed assessment questionnaires, report</p>	Drought events do not impact livestock stocking.

	<p>monitor impact against year 1 baseline (2.1).</p> <p>2.6 A livelihood enhancement plan (linking provision of livelihood benefits to support for improved pasture management) is developed in consultation with farming syndicates, landowners and St Helena Government by end of project.</p>	2.6 Plan document, meeting notes	
<p><b>3.</b> The conservation impacts of the pasture management are monitored and evaluated</p>	<p>3.1 Annual vegetation surveys of trial management areas.</p> <p>3.2 Establish bi-annual data collection of rabbit culling effort led by farming syndicate at Deadwood from Yr. 1.</p> <p>3.3 Invertebrate monitoring undertaken pre and post pasture management (start and end of project), inside and outside of trial sites.</p> <p>3.4 Annual St Helena Plover census counts undertaken showing a 10% increase in presence across all priority sites by end of project.</p> <p>3.5 St Helena Plover nests showing a 5% increase in survival rate across all priority sites by end of project.</p>	<p>3.1. Survey reports and data (shorter yearly report and a detailed final report in Yr. 3)</p> <p>3.2 Survey data and report produced</p> <p>3.3 Invertebrate monitoring data and report produced (shorter report in Yr. 1 and final report in Yr. 3)</p> <p>3.4 Annual census counts</p> <p>3.5 nest records (includes success rate) and maps produced.</p>	<p>RSPB sabbatical undertaken in August 2022 has been successful at providing baseline habitat and livelihood information in relation to the St Helena Plover including a starting point for review of the Wirebird species action plan.</p>

	3.6 Improved understanding of St Helena Plover movement in relation to protected areas through ringing at least 30 birds and annual monitoring.	3.6 Ringing training report, ringing database and monitoring data and report.	
4. Enhanced in-Territory capacity to implement and monitor effective management of St Helena's grassland protected areas	<p>4.1 Review and update of St Helena Government leases on crown pasturelands to integrate improved land management practices within National Conservation Areas by the end of the project</p> <p>4.2 Review and draft updated St Helena agricultural policies to integrate improved land management practices by end of project (Agricultural strategy and Estates Management policy)</p> <p>4.3 Update of Wirebird Species Action Plan produced in YR2</p> <p>4.4 Grassland management and development mitigation measures included within the outputs of the sustainable management planning for St Helena's National Conservation Areas project (DPLUS154)</p> <p>4.5 A total of 20 persons from SHG, Trust and general public (farmers etc.) well informed and trained in</p>	<p>4.1 Updated leases, workshops and public presentations and feedback</p> <p>4.2 Draft policy documents</p> <p>4.3 Workshops, public consultation and Species action plan produced</p> <p>4.4 National Conservation Areas management plans</p> <p>4.5 Workshop, public presentation and feedback surveys</p>	

	<p>pasture management techniques through cross-partner training by the end of the project</p> <p>4.6 Ongoing communication of project outputs with wider community through promotional and educational materials throughout the project duration</p> <p>4.7 Conduct Wirebird tours with an overall attendance of 30 persons by end of the project.</p>	<p>4.6 Social media analytics, newspaper articles (number of papers sold), radio interviews and public film screening at end of project</p> <p>4.7 Tour records (attendance), feedback and photo evidence.</p>	
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p><b>Output 1: Effective pasture management is implemented across priority grassland areas</b></p> <p>1.1 Recruit Senior Project Officer by Q1 Year 1.</p> <p>1.2 In consultation with project partners and stakeholders, pasture management techniques are identified and agreed by Q2 Year 1.</p> <p>1.3 A trial pasture management plan and map for all priority trial sites is produced by end Year 1.</p> <p>1.4 Intensive management techniques (both mechanical and through livestock) initiated by end Yr.1 across 3 high priority trial sites (Man and Horse, Deadwood Plain and Bottom Woods).</p> <p>1.5 Less intensive management techniques (both mechanical and through livestock) initiated by end of Yr. 2 across 3 medium priority trial sites (Middle Point Woody Ridge and Thompson's wood).</p> <p>1.6 Supplementary seed trial sites with useful pasture grass species if required (depending on the level of natural regeneration) by end Q2 Year 3.</p> <p><b>Output 2: Livelihoods of agriculturist communities (through existing farming syndicates) are enhanced through climate resilience initiatives</b></p> <p>2.1 Recruit Field and Livelihoods Officer by Q1 Year 1.</p> <p>2.2 Produce a repeatable questionnaire to better understand the drivers of recent land use change and the needs of the farming syndicates and landowners to inform initiatives and diversification schemes by Q3 Year 1.</p> <p>2.3 Collect baseline assessment from questionnaire surveys with farming syndicates and landowners by end of Year 1.</p> <p>2.4 Repeat questionnaire assessment at end of project to monitor impact against Year 1 baseline.</p> <p>2.5 Produce a finalised Pasture Management plan (based on 1.1) in Year 3</p> <p>2.6 Based on 2.3, complete a scoping assessment for two climate resilient livelihood initiatives in year 2.</p> <p>2.7 Implement a trial of one additional livelihood initiative in Year 3.</p> <p>2.8 Produce a best practice protocol for pasture management in National Conservation Areas by end Year 2.</p>			

- 2.9 Integrate best practice pasture management and development mitigation into any drafted National Conservation Areas management plans under DPLUS154 for grassland areas by end of project.
- 2.10 Integrate best practice pasture management into lease agreements by the end of the project.
- 2.11 Produce a livelihood enhancement plan (linking provision of livelihood benefits to support for improved pasture management) in consultation with farming syndicates, landowners and St Helena Government by end of project

**Output 3: The conservation and livelihood impacts of the pasture management are monitored and evaluated**

- 3.1 Recruit Field and Monitoring Officer by Q2 Year 1.
- 3.2 Complete annual vegetation surveys of all trial management areas.
- 3.3 Establish bi-annual data collection of rabbit culling effort led by farming syndicate at Deadwood from year 1.
- 3.4 Complete Invertebrate monitoring undertaken pre and post pasture management (start and end of the project), inside and outside of trial sites.
- 3.5 Complete annual St Helena Plover census counts and nest monitoring.
- 3.6 Training delivered to project staff on ringing St Helena Plover and monitoring techniques by end Year 1
- 3.7 Annual monitoring of St Helena Plover movement based on ring re-sightings.
- 3.8 Complete annual data analysis to monitor population and survival trends.
- 3.9 Produce a map of St Helena Plover re-sightings data by end of project.

**Output 4: Enhanced in-Territory capacity to implement and monitor effective management of St Helena's grassland protected areas**

- 4.1 Recruit Project Manager by Q1 Year 1.
- 4.2 Complete review and update of St Helena Government leases to farming syndicates to integrate improved land management practices within National Conservation Areas by the end of the project
- 4.3 Review and draft updated St Helena agricultural policies (Agricultural strategy and Estates Management policy) to integrate improved land management practices by end of project
- 4.4 Hold species action planning workshop in Year 2 to update Wirebird Species Action Plan
- 4.5 Produce updated species action plan document by end of project.
- 4.6 Provide cross-organisational training opportunities between project partners and wider stakeholders (farming syndicates and landowners) throughout the project.
- 4.7 Produce regular public communication materials through the newspaper, radio and social media to promote the project to the wider community.
- 4.8 Take regular film footage of project activities throughout the project and produce an end of project film by Q3 Year 3.
- 4.9 Host a community event with a project film screening in Q4 Year 3.
- 4.10 Deliver regular wirebird tours to community members and visitors, including information on the active pasture management and the win-win relationship for people and wildlife.

## Annex 3: Standard Indicators

**Table 1 Project Standard Indicators**

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DPLUS-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	4.5	People	“actors”	4	2		6	40
DPLUSD11	Number of people benefiting from improved sustainable agriculture practices and are more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends	2.4	People	Men/Women	0	9 (M&H syndicate)		9	21
DPLUSD04	Stabilised/improved species population (relative abundance/distribution) within the project area	3.4	% increase	Flora	0	30		30	20
DPLUSD12	Area of degraded or converted ecosystems that are under active restoration	1.2 & 1.3	Are Hectares	Biome/ecosystem/habitat	4	2		6	8

## 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 <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	✓
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> putting the project number in the Subject line.	
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	✓
<b>Have you provided an updated risk register?</b> If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encourage to develop a risk register.	✓
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.	