



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

Project Ref No	DPLUS049
Project Title	Maximising long-term survival prospects of Montserrat's endemic species and ecosystem-services
Country(ies)/Territory(ies)	Montserrat
Lead Organisation	UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
Partner(s)	Treweek Environmental Consultants, Montana State University, Montserrat National Trust, Montserrat Department of Environment
Project Leader	Dr Mike Pienkowski
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR1
Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc	www.ukotcf.org
Funder (DFID/Defra)	Defra

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1 (integrating environment into physical planning): The first main phase of work on this output is in the second half-year. Progress is going well on refining needs by further consultations and planning the main work elements.

Output 2, Part 1 (establishing biodiversity database and making existing material available for local use): The parts of this work necessary to undertake remotely before local application and training are progressing well, also with planning for the later local stages.

Output 2, Part 2 (Increasing local capacity and community involvement in conservation work): Local project officer recruited and active. First steps made in setting up local community involvement, with initial volunteers in various categories (community groups, business, land-owners) identified and interested.

Output 3 (Agreeing across stake-holders an environmentally sustainable plan for the future of the south of Montserrat where volcanic activity prevents permanent human presence): Outstandingly successful initial participatory workshop held, involving stake-holders from a wide range of sectors and ministerial involvement throughout. An important first stage reached that participants wish to agree, and that conservation of the remaining natural areas is a priority.

Output 4 (Management and dissemination): Physical project team meeting held and frequent other communications by Skype. Management of project overall maintained satisfactorily. Project newsletter initiated, with 2 issues widely circulated electronically: very well received at a variety of levels. Other media used to widen message, including extended radio interview, radio being the prime local communication means.

Overall, progress has been very satisfactory, with good adjustment to refining needs assessments.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The major challenge that appeared in this period was the devaluation of approaching 20% of the GB pound against the US dollar as a result of the outcome of the Government's referendum. Most of the costs of the project are dollar-related, thereby effectively reducing the real value of the grant. Unlike many other funding programmes, Darwin Plus does not allow the inclusion of contingencies in the budget. Following correspondence with LTS, direct discussions with Defra revealed that, despite this being the largest short-term devaluation since the Darwin Initiative started, Defra had made no provision for already approved projects before committing resources to new projects. Defra made clear that project managers should reduce the agreed programme of work with the project so as to balance the budget, recognising that this may involve virement between sub-heads which would not be predictable in advance. This course is being followed.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £ nil

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Not at this time.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g., Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**