Darwin Initiative

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the increased number of reports expected in 2005, we <u>will not be able to confirm receipt of reports</u> but will contact you individually should any questions arise

Project Ref. No. 14-027

Project Title Enabling the people of Montserrat to conserve the Centre Hills

Country(ies) UK, Montserrat

UK Organisation Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Collaborator(s) Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Environment, Montserrat National

Trust, Montserrat Tourist Board, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Royal

Botanical Gardens Kew

Report date 31st October 2006

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

Half yearly report 2

Project website *http://www.malhe.gov.ms/centrehills*

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

- 1. Knowledge of forest ecology and socioeconomic use is available to guide management of the Centre Hills
 - Results of biological assessment report presented at workshop, written report currently being drafted
 - Draft vegetation and other species maps currently in circulation for feedback
 - Research on rat ecology began in April, pre-assessment completed and rat knockdown currently underway
 - Forest boundary and forest trails demarcated digitally
 - Farmer, hunter, livestock tender, tourist, and general public surveys completed
 - Results of socioeconomic assessment report presented at workshop, written report currently being drafted
- 2. Participatory plan is produced for the Centre Hills
 - Stakeholder identification workshop held, draft stakeholder analysis matrix produced
 - Forest boundary agreed upon for purposes of management plan development
 - Planning workshop held for all partners and major stakeholders in September
 - Draft vision, management objectives, and desired institutional framework developed to evolve into management plan
- Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are strengthened in Montserrat
 - Staff mentoring and training has continued
 - Several staff and partners involved in four relevant regional workshops (Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (held in Montserrat in May), BirdLife Caribbean (held in Puerto Rico in June), Participatory Forest Management (facilitated by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute and held in Dominica in July), and the UKOTCF conference (held in Jersey in October)
- 4. Significant progress is made towards establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area
 - Legal consultant hired, results of desk review presented at workshop, written report due in October
 - First round of public consultations held in August aimed at sectors, groups, and general public
 - First informational memo to Executive Council circulated in July to inform of project and legal review
- 5. Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is increased locally and internationally
 - Tourism surveys ongoing, updated version to go into use in October
 - Draft leaflet-poster combination in production
 - Extensive ongoing local media, newsletters, and promotion of new project website (June)
 - Numerous outreach presentations to groups; project slide show developed

- 6. Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started
 - Ongoing biological assessments by local and overseas partners
 - Management objectives developed, which will guide long-term work programme content

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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 ecological research (rat ecology) is likely to take longer than planned. This is because recent advice from other global experts recommend a longer period of monitoring biodiversity before and after the rat knockdown. Therefore, it is likely that we will want to continue the research through the end of the project in 2008, whereas project funding for local field staff is only secured through June 2007. We are seeking extra funds to cover this work elsewhere, however it is possible that we will be requesting that any left-over funds from Year 2 be transferred into salaries for local field officers in Year 3.

As a result of bringing an experienced "Consultation Specialist" on board (part of a complementary OTEP project relating to the legislative review process), we have come to realise that the development of an effective management plan will involve more public and sectoral consultation than we had previously appreciated, particularly as it relates to fostering ownership among local partners to take the management planning process forward. While we are not currently stating that the final management plan will necessarily be delayed, we are cognizant of the fact that the process involves several steps, each of which will require a great deal of back-and-forth consultation and negotiation between stakeholders. Work in the coming months will focus on gaining consensus on vision and management objectives, firming up institutional commitments, completing a comprehensive economic valuation study on ecological services, researching protected area financing options, and addressing issues pertaining to management agreements with private land owners.

Supported by additional funds from OTEP, the legislative review process is going well, but it has (as anticipated) revealed that there are major gaps in environmental legislation. After consultations, revised legislation will be presented to the Attorney General's office in June 2007, which will enable much more effective implementation of a national park and related conservation activities in the Centre Hills.

The Project Manager will take maternity leave for 3 months from December. The RSPB will support an extension of her contract beyond the original timeframe to ensure there is enough support to the local Counterpart Manager to take forward the management plan in 2007. This should not affect budget or timeframes.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

No. There have been no changes made to the revised workplan that was submitted and accepted at the end of Year 1.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in...... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

The amended workplan is attached.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No

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 <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, <u>stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.</u>