Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	14-027
	14-027
Project Title	Enabling the people of Montserrat to conserve the Centre Hills
Country(ies)	UK, Montserrat
UK Contract Holder Institution	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
UK Partner Institution(s)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Royal Botanic Gardens - Kew
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing, & Environment; Montserrat National Trust; Montserrat Tourist Board
Darwin Grant Value	£160,900
Start/End dates of Project	1 May 2005 – 31 March 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3)	1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007 Annual Report 2
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Project website	http://www.malhe.gov.ms/centrehills
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Author(s), date	27 th April, 2007

1. Project Background

Montserrat is located in the Lesser Antilles chain at approximately N16°44' and W062°12'. Situated 27 miles southwest of Antigua, the island is approximately 102km² in size. Recent volcanic activity since 1995 has changed the landscape of Montserrat, including explosive eruptions of Chances Peak (formerly 3000') and other volcanic centres in the south. The former capital of Plymouth was completely destroyed by volcanic activities, and sections of the city, and many villages, rivers, and pastures, lie beneath metres of ash and rock. A map of Montserrat and the Centre Hills appears in Annex 4.

Today, over 60% of the island is contained within an Exclusion Zone, which is off limits to human activity. The island's population, which was over 12,000 in the early 1990s, shrunk to less than 2,000 during massive evacuations during the peak of the volcanic crisis in 1997. Many people have since chosen to return, however the population of 4,500 today is growing quite slowly.

The impacts on the natural environment have been devastating. As a result, Montserrat's Centre Hills have become of global biodiversity importance, supporting many of Montserrat's key endemic species. Volcanic activity destroyed almost all the forests of the southern Soufriere Hills, resulting in the total loss of about 60% of Montserrat's forest ecosystem. The Centre Hills is now the largest intact forest area remaining on Montserrat. It is the last viable enclave for most of the island's wildlife, including those of global conservation concern, such as the critically threatened Montserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi*, Montserrat Galliwasp *Dipoglossus montisserrati*, and Mountain Chicken *Leptodactylus fallax*. The Centre Hills forest also provides essential environmental goods and services to the people of Montserrat. They are the main water catchment area on the island and provide protection from soil erosion, landslides and flooding during severe weather events.

Despite this importance, recent research by the project partners indicates the Centre Hill forests are currently in relatively poor ecological health, due to a combination of historical factors and increasing pressure as the island's infrastructure is rebuilt in the North. Historically the area was cleared for plantations so most of the forest is secondary. Non-native species such as rats and pigs have been introduced. These are having a devastating impact on the ecology of the forest, and are major predators of native wildlife; little is known of the impacts of invasive alien plants, but they are known to be widespread. The Centre Hills now provides the sole water supply for the people on Montserrat and there is substantial water abstraction for human use, which may be adversely affecting forest ecology.

There are several barriers to be overcome if successful management of the Centre Hills is to be achieved: Little is known about the status and distribution of some taxa, so there is an urgent need to assess the current status of the remaining biological resources; the protection status of the Centre Hills is unclear. Conflicts have arisen over the Centre Hills Forest Boundary and people are not aware of their rights and responsibilities; there are few persons on the island with the technical skills to take forward conservation work; there are a range of stakeholders involved in the management of the Centre Hills but communication between them is poor.

There remain serious economic issues and shortfalls as the government has focused initial efforts on rebuilding basic infrastructure such as housing and public works. Increasingly, effort is being made to expand economic investment and growth across a variety of sectors including agriculture and tourism. The Government of Montserrat envisages nature tourism as a major future source of income, and the Centre Hills would need to play a key role in this. This potential is not yet developed.

2. Project Partnerships

The six primary project partners signed a Memorandum of Collaboration in Year 1 and have continued to work well together in Year 2. The UK partners, including <u>RSPB</u>, <u>DWCT</u>, and <u>RBGK</u>, have continued to contribute primarily to the biological assessment and the ecological research components of the project. An OTEP grant for a project to build capacity for species action planning in Montserrat means that the scientific partners will continue to carry out related work in Montserrat for the next two years. The Kew partners hosted a regional conference on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in Montserrat in May 2006, which used the CHP as a case study for plant conservation activities.

The <u>RSPB</u>, as lead UK partner on this project, also contributes significantly in other ways, some of which have also enhanced the RSPB's own capacity. Additional RSPB staff expertise was allocated to provide training in the areas of Geographic Information Systems,

environmental education, and management planning. These opportunities have offered RSPB staff members the benefit of applying theory and techniques in a new and unique setting. Additionally, one other approach that was very successful this year involved working with a regional (Caribbean) organisation to carry out workshop facilitation, a role that had traditionally been filled by the RSPB. While the RSPB is fortunate to have such a wide range of expertise in its ranks, it proved even more effective for it to instead lend its support to and increase capacity of regional facilitation talent that was able to engage persons more effectively using the benefit of a better understanding of the local dynamics and culture.

In the past year, local ownership of various project activities has increased, particularly by the <u>Montserrat Tourist Board</u> (MTB) and the <u>Department of Environment</u> (DOE). The MTB worked with the CHP to develop a trail map and is working currently on the production of a wildlife guide. The DOE, officially launched during Year 2, is naturally rising to the challenge of taking on some of the more technical aspects of the work. Since the DOE is a new entity, much of their current remit involves updating policy and setting up a comprehensive programme to address broad environmental issues and needs. One of the priorities of the coming year will be to push forward Montserrat's accession to the CBD, of which it is not yet a member. This fits in very well with the CHP's activities, particularly the legislative review and production of the draft management plan. As it is likely that the DOE will "absorb" much of the work of the CHP when the project ends, it has been useful to have DOE partners participating fully in planning sessions to ensure that the work done today will help them to meet their own objectives.

The <u>Montserrat National Trust</u> has remained involved in the project through participation in public consultations and focus groups, hosting the CHP's planning workshop in September 2006, and continuing work on the development of a national botanic garden. When completed, the garden will serve to showcase native, threatened, and invasive plants of the Centre Hills and to illustrate some conservation best-practices.

The CHP has continued to enjoy a strong collaboration with the <u>Physical Planning Unit</u> and its <u>GIS Centre</u>. They have been playing a critical role in working out land ownership and other boundary issues, and in developing maps to serve as educational tools for policy-makers and other stakeholders. The <u>Governor's Office</u> in Montserrat has also continued to lend support on legal and fundraising matters. The <u>Attorney General's Chambers</u> regularly provides technical input on legal matters. The CHP is actively engaging the <u>Statistics Department</u> and the <u>Development Unit</u> in data collection and policy development respectively.

There are numerous new partners outside of the original six that have become involved, largely through the creation of the <u>Centre Hills Management Committee</u> (CHMC), an advisory group comprised of government, civil society, and private sector organisations and individuals, which reviews and advises on the work of the CHP. Some of the more involved new partners include the <u>Farmers Cooperative, Livestock Association, Taxi & Tours Association, Hospitality</u> <u>Association, and Land Owners Association</u>. The CHMC meets on a quarterly basis, though there are subcommittees which meet more frequently to address particular issues.

The Trinidad-based <u>Caribbean Natural Resources Institute</u> (CANARI) has continued to play a major role in the public participation and consultation aspects of the project. Through an OTEP grant, CANARI has been able to make several visits to Montserrat and have provided impartial facilitation at several workshops and meetings. They led in the production of a stakeholder analysis and public participation strategy. Through CANARI, the CHP identified an environmental lawyer, <u>Ms. Christine Toppin-Allahar</u>, who was contracted through the OTEP grant to draft new environmental legislation for Montserrat.

The CHP has continued its contact and collaboration with <u>BirdLife</u> International and the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds. CHP staff attended a BirdLife Caribbean workshop in June 2006 which focused on project design and management.

A recent and new collaborator has been the <u>Joint Nature Conservation Committee</u> (JNCC), which has been offering expertise in the development of a second OTEP-funded project for the CHP that involves carrying out an economic valuation of Montserrat's natural resources.

Montserrat is not a signatory to the CBD as yet, but as the JNCC is the focal agency for the UK's implementation of the CBD, this is one step in that direction.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

3.1.1 Knowledge of the ecology and socio-economic use of the forest is available to guide management of the Centre Hills

The biological assessment was completed and a draft report has been produced (see Annex 10). It has been circulated for comment from partners. The final report will include a detailed presentation of results, as well as a "laypersons guide" to understanding the key conservation implications at species and habitat-levels. Among numerous others, a map was produced showing, for the first time, the extent of the island's vegetation communities (see Annex 4).

The socioeconomic assessment was also completed (see Annex 10). Data was gathered via consultations, meetings, surveys, literature review, and observation. Five surveys targeted tourists, the general public, farmers, livestock tenders, and hunters respectively. Two part-time assistants were hired to conduct the general public surveys, which involved 235 persons in 20-minute interviews. The report has been circulated among partners and stakeholders, and has been instrumental in advising the development of the draft management plan and legislation.

Research into ecological processes of the forest is ongoing. A summary of work-to-date appears in Annex 10. This has involved setting up experimental and control areas to monitor the impact of rats on biodiversity. In September, a rat knock-down began in the experimental area to establish a zone where species might hypothetically be allowed to "recover" from the impacts of rats, and this recovery is being documented. Data is also being gathered about rat ecology. The two project Field Officers spend most of their time gathering data for this research.

The land ownership map was updated with new information provided by the Lands & Survey Department (see Annex 4). The forest boundary trace and many of the foot trails were marked using GPS technology in August. This data has been added to the national GIS.

Current findings of all of these activities were presented orally to participants at the September Management Planning Workshop.

3.1.2 Participatory management plan is produced for the Centre Hills

A stakeholder analysis workshop was held in July, resulting in the completion of a stakeholder analysis document (see Annex 9). A participation strategy was completed (see Annex 9), which makes recommendations for engaging stakeholders and the public in environmental decision-making.

A multi-stakeholder planning workshop was held in September and facilitated by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). Research results were presented and plans for the future outlined. A vision for the Centre Hills was produced, as well as identification of the major Centre Hills management objectives. Discussions were held to discuss the institutional framework for protected area management, as well as matters pertaining to financing activities. These issues and discussions are documented in a workshop report (see Annex 9) which was produced and are largely addressed in the new (draft) environmental management bill and/or draft management plan.

At the September workshop, the Centre Hills Management Committee (CHMC) was formed, which includes representation from government, civil society, and the private sector. The CHMC went on to meet in November and February.

Numerous public meetings and focus groups were held during the year to solicit input and feedback into the stakeholder assessment, vision, and management objectives.

A draft management plan has been produced and is currently under review by partners and stakeholders (see Annex 11).

3.1.3 Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are strengthened on Montserrat

We have been able to involve a wide range of people in training activities that were more extensive than originally anticipated. There has also been greater-than-expected opportunity for local field staff to receive on-the-job training from UK scientific partners in the field. This has included work in plant and seed collection for the herbarium, biodiversity monitoring, and ecological research on rats.

Project staff and partners have benefited from several overseas training opportunities as well. These include a wetland education workshop for educators in April, a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation workshop in May, a BirdLife Caribbean workshop in June focusing on project development and management, a participatory forest management workshop in August, the UKOTCF conference and workshop sessions in October, and a workshop focusing on MEAs and strategic planning in January.

A total of 18 persons received 58 weeks of training in the abovementioned activities. Additionally, a workshop was held in November which aimed at empowering members of the CHMC to become more involved in outreach and public consultation on issues relating to Centre Hills management planning.

The local counterpart Project Manager was promoted to full Project Manager status in November.

Two successful funding applications were made to OTEP: one for an economic valuation study which will advise policy development (see Annex 13), and the other to build capacity for developing species action plans. Another funding application for further socioeconomic assessment work was made to MacArthur Foundation and is still pending.

3.1.4 Significant progress is made towards establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area

A draft of the Centre Hills Management Plan and the new Conservation and Environmental Management Bill was produced and circulated for comment in March (see Annex 12). These were both informed heavily by extensive consultations outlined in section 3.1.2. This new legislation updates existing legislation with regard to the creation and management of protected areas. Protected area designation would come via an Executive Order.

Two papers were presented to the governing Executive Council (Exco) in July and February. The first one was purely informational, advising members about the legislative review process. The second paper sought a change in the map of the forest boundary, which had been updated in August using GPS technology. Exco has requested that the Ministry provide further evidence as to the accuracy of the demarcation (i.e., stamp of approval from the Lands & Survey Department) and this is currently being resolved.

The National Environmental Management Strategy was adopted by Exco. While not a Darwin output, this provides a strong and timely policy framework under which protected areas will be managed.

3.1.5 Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is increased locally and internationally

There has continued to be very strong local media coverage about project activities (see Annexes 6 and 7), including 12 local print media articles, 11 appearances on the radio, and 2,350 copies of project newsletters distributed locally. A project leaflet has been produced which folds out into a poster on one side (see Annex 8). There has also been successful promotion of project activity within the Caribbean region and in the UK via channels such as the UK Overseas Territories Association, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, BirdLife International, Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, Darwin Initiative and Wildlife Extra. The project's website (<u>http://www.malhe.gov.ms/centrehills</u>) received over 1,800 hits since its inception in May. Two peer-reviewed journal articles were published (see Annex 5). A trail map for hikers was produced (see Annex 4). The project produced t-shirts for the September planning workshop, and promotional pencils for students and other audiences.

Surveys of the general public, farmers, livestock tenders, and hunters were also carried out, gathering baseline data on knowledge, perceptions, and behaviours of each targeted group. The general public survey included 235 persons, the farmer survey involved 15 persons, the livestock survey involved 10 persons, and one hunter was involved in that survey. The tourist exit survey was revised to make it more user-friendly. The tourist survey has been completed by 374 persons since its inception in December 2005.

The teacher workshop was postponed in order to accommodate the needs of the Education Department. It will be held in July 2007 instead.

3.1.6 Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started

Targets relating to staff time are on track. Work on the IT components (e.g., databases) are in progress. Digital mapping of the Centre Hills forest boundary was completed and added to the national GIS (see boundary on trail map in Annex 4). Some of the activities in the draft management plan are currently being implemented already by various partners, including ongoing biodiversity monitoring, development of an outreach strategy, and promoting Montserrat as a nature tourism destination.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Overall progress to achieve the project outputs has been strong this year, and the prognosis for the project achieving most or all of the outputs by the end of Year 3 is good.

For the most part, the indicators are adequate to measure the outcomes. The one exception to this is that the project will likely prove unable to boost the number of tourist visitors to the Centre Hills, due to factors beyond the project's control. Ferry service to Montserrat, which brought in many day-trippers, was cancelled during Year 1, and the airplane service has not been proving a match in terms of cost and accessibility to tourists. Also, heightened volcanic activity in the past year may be contributing to a decline in overall tourist arrivals in Montserrat as well.

Output-level assumptions are holding true for the most part. The continued cooperation between stakeholders has been strengthened in many ways. One stakeholder group that has been difficult to engage has been the land owners. In all cases, communication with land owners has improved, and in most cases, a relationship of trust and collaboration has developed. There are a couple of land owners who still seem sceptical about the government's intention to create a national park that will not involve them losing significant land rights. Efforts have been made to include these land owners in discussions pertaining to the development of the draft conservation and environmental management legislation, which will ultimately govern the relationship between government and private land owners. The CHP is working to

encourage government bodies to keep the lines of communications with land owners open since some land owners have felt excluded from decision-making in the past.

The other primary output-level assumption is that trained staff remains on Montserrat. This is holding true with one exception, which is that the CHP partners have encouraged one of the Field Officers, Jervaine Greenaway, to apply to the University of the West Indies to enter the environmental management programme in September. However, it is assumed that if he did this, that it would be under the auspices of the Government of Montserrat/Department of Environment and that Jervaine would return to work for the DOE in Montserrat upon completion of his degree.

3.3 Standard Output Measures

In many areas, we have far exceeded the anticipated outputs in many areas. There have been a few additional outputs added to the list, including the environmental management bill, economic valuation study report, and the development of a local management committee. It is expected that these will all be completed by the end of Year 3.

Code No.	Description	Year 1 total	Year 2 total	Year 3 total	Year 4 total	Total
6A	25 people to receive training	11	7			18
6B	23 training weeks to be provided	21	37			58
7	1 Monitoring Protocol	1				1
	1 Project leaflet	0	1			1
	1 Educational materials pack	0				0
	1 Project poster to promote the Centre Hills	0	1			1
8	Geoff Hilton = 27 weeks	9	9			18
	Sarah Sanders = 15 weeks	5	5			10
	Colin Clubbe = 10 weeks	4.5	4			9.5
	Martin Hamilton =	6.5	6			12.5
	Project Manager = 77 weeks	30	40			70
	Forest Ecologist = 24 weeks	NA	NA			NA
	Durrell Experts = 45 weeks	45	4			49
	Kew GIS Expert = 4 weeks	2	2			4
9	1 Management plan for the Centre Hills	0	1 (draft)	-	_	1
10	1 Guide to the Centre Hills	0				0
11B	1 Summary report biological assessment	0	1 (draft)			1
	1 Summary report of social, cultural and economic assessment	0	1			1
	1 Summary report of consultation process	0				0
	1 scientific paper to be submitted to a peer reviewed journal on impact of invasives on forest ecology of Centre Hills	0				0
12A	1 Plants of Montserrat specimen database established	1				1

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

12B	1 Plants of Montserrat specimen database handed over to Montserrat	0		 	0
	1 Computer database handed over to Montserrat	0	1 (under developm ent)	 	0
13A	1 Plant herbarium reference collection established (ongoing)	1		 	1
14B	2 – representation at 2 international conferences	1	6	 	7
15A	6 - At least two national press releases per year on Montserrat	8	12	 	20
15C	3 - At least one national press release in the UK per year	4	3	 	7
16A	3 – One newsletter to be produced per year	1	2	 	3
16B	500 of each newsletter circulated on Montserrat	65	2400	 	3050
16C	50 of each newsletter circulated in the UK	525	1040	 	1565
17A	The Montserrat Biodiversity e-group will be strengthened	1		 	1
19A	6 - At least two national radio interviews in Montserrat per year	10	11	 	21
20	£31,500 worth of computer, equipment etc. to be handed over	0	0	 	0
22	12 permanent monitoring plots	0	0	 	0
23		£16,609	£27,879	 	£44,488
		£106,028	£3,014	 	£109,042
		£22,250	£3,014	 	£25,264
				 	£1,140
		£1,140		 	21,140
		£500	£500		£1,000
		£15,000			£29,670
			£14,670		,
New -	1 environmental management bill		1 (draft)	 	1
Project	1 economic valuation report			 	
specific measures	1 local management committee established		1	 	1

Table 2 Publications

Type*	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
Newsletter*	Montserrat Centre Hills Project Newsletter, Centre Hills Project, June 2006 and December 2006	CHP, Montserrat	www.malhe.gov.ms/ce ntrehills	No cost
TV miniseries	A Year at Kew miniseries, 2007	BBC Television,	c/o Colin Clubbe, RBG Kew,	N/A

		UK	C.Clubbe@rbgkew.or g.uk	
Book	The World of Kew, by Carolyn Fry, 2006	BBC Books, UK	www.amazon.co.uk	£13
Leaflet*	Montserrat Centre Hills Project, RSPB, 2006	RSPB, Bedfordshire, UK	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Leaflet*	Trail map, 2006	Montserrat Tourist Board	Montserrat Tourist Board, Farara Plaza, Brades, Montserrat	£2
Report*	Stakeholder analysis, 2006	CHP, Montserrat	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Report*	Participation strategy, by Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, 2006	CHP, Montserrat	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Report*	Draft Biological Assessment Report, Dr. R. Young et al., 2006	CHP, Montserrat	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Report*	Socioeconomic Assessment Report, by Carole McCauley and Stephen Mendes, 2006	CHP, Montserrat	www.malhe.gov.ms/ce ntrehills	No cost
Report*	Draft management plan, 2007	CHP, Montserrat	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Report*	Workshop report: Planning for the Management of the Centre Hills, Centre Hills Project, 2006	CHP, Montserrat	www.malhe.gov.ms/ce ntrehills	No cost
Legislation*	Draft environmental bill, by Christine Toppin- Allahar, 2007	CHP, Montserrat	CHP office, Montserrat	No cost
Journal article*	"Recent observations of the Montserrat galliwasp", by A. Ogrodowczyk et al., in <i>Herpetological Bulletin</i> , No. 98	Zoological Society of London, UK	http://www.herplit.com /contents/BHSBull.htm l	No cost
Journal article*	"Impacts of a volcanic eruption on the forest bird community of Montserrat, Lesser Antilles", by B. Dalsgaard et al., in <i>Ibis</i> , No. 149	British Ornithologists Union, UK	http://www.blackwell- synergy.com/doi/full/1 0.1111/j.1474- 919X.2006.00631.x	Free copy by emailing geoff.hilton@ rspb.org.uk

*copy included as an annex to this report

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the people of Montserrat so that they are better able to take targeted action to conserve the Centre Hills Forest Reserve for present and future generations.

It is safe to say that the outputs to achieve the project's purpose have already been met to a large extent, and these will continue to be strengthened in Year 3. Data has been collected to inform decision-making. A wide representation of decision-makers from government, private sector, and civil society has been brought to the planning table. Enabling legislation and plans are in development that will give "teeth" to the organisations who will ultimately manage the environment through the implementation of conservation activities.

Challenges in Year 3 relate to the adoption and implementation of the legislation and management plan. The legislation will need to be approved by both Executive and Legislative Council. The bill will be presented by the Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing, and Environment, who has been very vocal about her support for the new legislation throughout the past year. Efforts have and will continue to be made to educate legislators about the bill's content so that when it reaches the Council tables, they will hopefully be fully on board and approving of content and the process taken to arrive at the final draft. The effort has also received strong support from the Attorney General's Chambers and the Governor's Office.

In terms of how actions in the management plan will be initiated and led by local partners, this will depend more on time and resources than will. All partners have expressed an appreciation of how the CHP's work is helping them to fulfil their own professional mandates to some degree. What confounds agencies is the lack of staff, support, and funding to get things done sometimes. The Centre Hills Management Plan draws attention to each of these challenges and it is hoped that some of these concerns will be addressed in the coming year. In particular, the CHP hopes to assist partners in the development of funding proposals in Year 3 that would bring additional income after the project ends that would go towards various implementation activities. The Department of Environment, recently established, does not have all positions filled yet, but it is hoped that more staff will be brought on board in the coming year. An effort will be made to inform the government's Development Unit and Training Division about capacity needs in environmental management.

In terms of purpose-level assumptions, apart from the threat of a hurricane, the major thing that hovers over Montserrat, as it has for the past 12 years, is the threat of increased volcanic activity. Coincidentally, since the start of the CHP, the volcano has been more active than it had been in a couple of years. There have been a few "hiccups" – partial or complete dome collapses – in the past year, and it is anticipated that another major dome collapse is imminent. To what extent this will affect Montserrat and her residents is unclear at this time. The scenario could range from minor to major ashfall that might involve clean-up periods of days, weeks, or even months. The Centre Hills would be impacted, though it is expected that they would rebound quickly as they have in the past. Hopefully there would be no major physical inconvenience to residents, however there is potential for a volcanic event to necessitate diversion of resources towards recovery efforts, during which time it might be difficult to engage local partners and stakeholders fully. Time will tell.

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

It is anticipated that the project will impact on all three of the Darwin Initiative's generic final goals. In terms of impact on biodiversity, it is anticipated that the conditions of threatened and endangered species and habitats will be improved through the management of the Centre Hills as a designated protected area. While this may take many years to be measured, the management plan will provide a framework to reduce the devastation caused by invasive species (e.g., pigs and rats). In terms of moving towards sustainable use, the plan addresses

the need for monitoring, regulation, and control of resource extraction, which was previously non-existent or severely limited. In terms of costs and benefits to local communities, it is anticipated that sustainable agriculture and nature tourism will be developed in a way that will harness the potential of the Centre Hills natural resources without degrading or threatening them in any way.

All of these are being addressed via an approach that is based on the principle of full participation – involving input not only from resource managers, but also resource owners and users. On the general-public-level, it is possible that past and current threats to biodiversity in Montserrat have stemmed primarily due to a lack of appreciation of the value of the resources rather than self-interests for economic or other purposes. For this reason, the public participation approach also plays a large outreach role in promoting greater appreciation for the natural environment by stakeholders and the role that individuals, as well as organisations, can play in its protection.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

The project has made tremendous progress towards achieving the quantitative output goals set out at the start, and has overachieved in several outputs (as per Table 1).

Project managers regularly reported on project progress to the project leader, project steering committee, and the Centre Hills Management Committee (CHMC). The steering committee includes all of the local and overseas project partners and collaborators, while the CHMC is comprised of local partners and stakeholders from civil society and the private sector. Written records of meetings are kept and circulated, and regular electronic communications on project activities and progress are the norm.

An e-group was established to facilitate written communication between members of the steering committee. Based on feedback from committee members, the e-group has been an effective means of keeping persons abreast of project implementation. However, although email has been a highly effective means of soliciting feedback and dialogue from overseas partners, in-person meetings have been more effective in terms of involving local partners in dialogue. The project staff have adapted to the various communication "preferences" to maximise partner involvement and input.

The utilisation of "subcommittees" has recently been phased out due to the fact that most people felt that they were on too many committees. However, it has not dampened productivity to date to call on relevant persons for specific meetings/activities as need be, without the burden of having it be part of an official subcommittee.

The legislative review portion of the project has been under quarterly review by OTEP via FCO, and positive feedback has been received.

To a great degree, the partnership with CANARI has provided useful feedback in terms of approach and progress. They have been able to apply many of their best practices towards our work and make positive and meaningful suggestions as to how we could improve the work, particularly in the area of stakeholder engagement.

The CHP have been in contact with other regional organisations and projects to solicit input on best practices and experiences of similar projects. Lessons have been shared by and with other regional entities, including the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' Protected Areas and Associated Sustainable Livelihoods (OPAAL) project and another FAO-sponsored participatory forest management project. Additional research and technical advice has been solicited from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Florida Institute of Technology on economic valuation and socioeconomic assessment tools respectively. The scientific partners have also benefited from consultation with colleagues around the globe, particularly on the implementation of the rat control experiment protocol.

The project leader visited Montserrat 2 times to review progress. Annual appraisals were given to the Project Manager and Counterpart Project Manager. The local Project Manager completed quarterly reports of activities against the annual workplan. A detailed project management workplan for Year 3 has been produced based on an analysis of the status of objectives and performance.

The CHP has learned to be flexible in terms of timing for implementing certain activities. Some things have taken a lot longer than planned, particularly the development of the draft management plan, which is one of the main project outputs. However, it was felt that this could not be done until stakeholders had come to a consensus on vision and management objectives for the Centre Hills. It is felt that the draft management plan is now the result of comprehensive consultation and participation by stakeholders.

Another lesson has been that some stakeholder's don't want to be involved in discussions with any other stakeholders, but they still have strong rights and messages to be heard. For example, some land owners do not want to come to a communal planning table, but still have strong influence and the right to be heard. Therefore, engaging different stakeholders in different ways has been critical.

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

There were no actions required from previous reviews.

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

One of the major improvements to the project's approach has been the involvement of a regional organisation, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), to assist with facilitation and policy discussions. This has been warmly welcomed by local partners who will continue to benefit from this relationship in the future. Indeed, local partners have already expressed interest in working on future projects with CANARI relating to strategic planning, community tourism, and NGO/CBO development.

There is sometimes a sense in Montserrat that projects (in any sector) are very UK-centric and that local input and involvement is not always adequately represented in planning and decisionmaking. This may be due to the fact that Montserrat is a dependent territory, but it is also likely influenced by the fact that due to the volcano, much of the workforce left the island and that there has been an even greater dependence on overseas development aid. At any rate, the involvement of Caribbean expertise in lieu of British expertise has been seen as quite positive. This is not to say that British support for conservation work is not crucial; indeed it is felt that British partners, recognising the value of regional integration and support, can play an important role in fostering these types of networks. CANARI has already been selected to play a facilitating role in the CHP's OTEP-funded economic valuation project which is just beginning. Through this, the CHP has been able to introduce CANARI to UK partners at RSPB, BirdLife, and JNCC. All are excited about potential synergies which will have a wider impact within the region.

There are no other significant enhancements, difficulties, or risks that have not been mentioned elsewhere in this report.

7. Sustainability

There has been encouraging progress in the past year related to project sustainability. The following measures are all strong signals that project outputs, outcomes, and impacts are likely to be sustained after Year 3.

Draft environmental management legislation has been produced and is currently under review through an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation process. This will govern most aspects of biodiversity conservation and protected area management in Montserrat, as well as making provision for the development of a multi-stakeholder Environmental Management Board. It also makes provision for the creation of an Environmental Fund which will include funds from a variety of sources and will be governed by a Board of Trustees.

The Centre Hills Management Committee (CHMC) was convened in the past year. This multistakeholder advisory group provides input into the work of the Centre Hills Project. It is anticipated that the group will evolve into the legally mandated Protected Areas Standing Committee of the Environmental Management Board that should come into creation once the new legislation has been adopted. Hopefully this will happen by the end of Year 3.

The new government Department of Environment (DOE) has been established and a Director appointed. This will be the lead agency responsible for biodiversity conservation and protected area management. There are still unfilled staff positions, but hopefully these will be filled in the next year.

The National Environmental Management Strategy has been adopted by the Executive Council. Although not a true policy document, this will serve as the main guidelines for the work of the DOE. Preparation of a national environmental policy was recommended during the preparation of the new legislation.

The Centre Hills Management Plan, currently in draft form, clearly spells out the roles and responsibilities of local agencies and individuals in the implementation of various activities. It is hoped that in Year 3, the activities in the plan will be formally written into the official workplans of the respective agencies. This has already been discussed at CHMC meetings.

8. Dissemination

There has been extensive media coverage in Montserrat, throughout the Caribbean region, and in the UK. This has happened through radio, television, newspapers, newsletters, journal articles, the project website, electronic discussion groups and other such communications networks, leaflet and poster, public meetings and consultations, project logo, and general word-of-mouth. See Annex 6 for a complete list of press releases. These activities have been done at little or no cost to the project, and thus do not present a major burden in terms of production of materials. The most significant costs have been in staff time.

In Year 3, it is planned that these types of media activities will continue to be utilised and/or developed. The DOE, in receipt of an OTEP grant to develop environmental education materials, will also be promoting knowledge of the Centre Hills through these means and utilising their own staff time. It is also planned that the DOE will develop an Outreach Strategy in the coming year which will outline activities as well as costs and responsibilities.

9. Project Expenditure

Table 3Project expenditure during the reporting period(Defra Financial Year 01April to 31 March)

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

The Centre Hills Management Committee (CHMC) was formed as an advisory body of local stakeholders representing government, civil society, and the private sector. This Committee is working to spread word about the Centre Hills and project activities, and is engaging the public in discussions about the vision and management objectives for the Centre Hills.

Two major pieces of research were completed that are contributing to the development of updated environmental legislation and the Centre Hills Management Plan. The socioeconomic assessment report documents land ownership and use, legislative and institutional frameworks for environmental management, and knowledge/perceptions/activities of various stakeholder groups with regard to the natural environment. The biological assessment report documents the presence, abundance, and range of key taxa, including plants, reptiles, amphibians, insects, bats, and birds. It also identifies biodiversity "hot spots" containing species and habitats of high conservation concern.

The Conservation and Environmental Management Bill has been produced and circulated among stakeholders such as resource owners, users, and managers. This new legislation will ultimately provide an updated framework under which biodiversity and protected areas will be managed. It includes provisions for a regulatory board and an environmental fund to finance conservation and management activities.

A successful bid to OTEP to conduct an economic valuation study will allow for the collection of information critical to the Centre Hills management planning process. It is hoped that enhanced appreciation of the costs and benefits of conservation and various development activities will inform policy development.

Research on rats is ongoing. A 10-ha. experimental ("rat-free") area has been established with two adjacent control areas. Protocols have been developed and work is underway to monitor abundance of key biodiversity in the areas. Additional research on rat ecology is also contributing to a greater understanding of the impact that invasive rats have on the ecology of the Centre Hills forest. The findings will inform the development of conservation interventions aimed at reducing these impacts to critical species and habitats.

The Centre Hills and the Montserrat Botanic Garden were featured in the widely-acclaimed miniseries "A Year at Kew". The segment on Montserrat, in production for the better part of a year, highlights the value of plant documentation and collection, the educational and recreational contribution that botanic gardens make to a community, and the unique role that Kew partners have played toward plant conservation in Montserrat.

I agree for ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006-Mar 2007	Actions required/ planned for next period
United Kingdom to work with biodiversity but poor in resou The conservation of b The sustainable use o	iological diversity, f its components, and sharing of the benefits arising out of	 Improved knowledge of Centre Hills biodiversity and increased capacity for monitoring and conservation Civil society given a voice and role in environmental planning and management through the creation of a local management committee which includes representatives from government, private sector, and civil society 	N/A
Purpose The people of Montserrat are better able to take targeted action to conserve the Centre Hills Forest Reserve for present and future generations	 Centre Hills are designated a Protected Area by end of Y4; Actions in management plan are initiated and led by local team from Y3; 	 New environmental legislation has been drafted and is under review which is necessary for effective protected area (PA) management, including provisions for meaningful PA designations Land ownership information currently being updated, boundary digitally demarcated Centre Hills Management Committee (CHMC) established which is charged with monitoring current project activities, preparing the management plan, and defining future roles and responsibilities with regard to plan implementation and financing 	 Submit final draft of environmental legislation to Executive and Legislative Councils Create statutory order to declare Centre Hills National Park according to updated boundary information Integrate the CHMC with the existing environmental management board

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006-Mar 2007	Actions required/ planned for next period
Outputs 1. Knowledge of the ecology and socio- economic use of the forest is available to guide management of the Centre Hills	 Management plan by end of Y2 integrates conservation of species and habitats and socio- economic needs; All key stakeholders support scientific and socio-economic basis for management plan by end of Y2 	 Socioeconomic assessment report completed Draft biodiversity assessment report completed Ecological research ongoing Land ownership map updated Draft management plan is based on priorities identified in the biological and socio-economic assessment 	 Finalise biodiversity assessment report, including identification of critical habitats Continue ecological research and report on results All data to be transferred to Department of Environment and/or national GIS
2. Participatory management plan is produced for the Centre Hills	 2 stakeholder workshops (Y1&2); All key stakeholders sign up to management plan by Y2 All key stakeholders renew their commitment to the implementation of the plan at the end of the project (Y3) 	 Draft management plan completed and currently under review Two major stakeholder workshops and numerous additional presentations and consultations held to educate and solicit feedback toward the development of the plan Stakeholders represented on CHMC Numerous consultations and focus group meetings held to solicit participation in planning Participation Strategy completed 	 Further consultation with stakeholders to complete sections in the management plan pertaining to roles and responsibilities, costs and financing, and general administration Complete management plan and begin implementation of activities Ensure that CHMC momentum is not lost by working to integrate with existing environmental management board
3. Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are strengthened on Montserrat	 All key stakeholders participate in 2 training workshops during Y1 & 2; 2 staff receive training in UK by Y2; 10 local persons involved in fieldwork Y1 – Y3; Database established by Y2; Local person employed as project manager or co-project 	 One workshop held for all stakeholders pertaining to promoting public involvement in decision-making Technical training provided to staff and partners in the areas of GIS, MEAs and strategic planning, environmental education, plant conservation, participatory forest management, project 	 Additional relevant training opportunities for Counterpart Project Manager will be identified OTEP-funded species action plan project will overlap with CHP work to enhance local capacity for biodiversity conservation One project Field Officer to begin studies at University of the West Indies (application pending)

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Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006-Mar 2007	Actions required/ planned for next period
	manager (Y1 – Y3) – Funding applications submitted by Y3	 management/planning, ecological monitoring 4 project partners (including 2 staff) received training in the UK 18 persons have been involved in field work and data collection to date Local project manager employed and promoted to full Project Manager status Two successful funding application from OTEP made for economic valuation study and development of species action plans Application (pending) made to MacArthur Foundation for further socioeconomic work 	 Greater involvement from Department of Environment officers will be sought to assist with ecological research in the field All databases to be handed over to Department of Environment and/or GIS Centre Database manager needs to be clearly identified to ensure timely updating and maintenance of the database Local Project Manager to continue work through the end of Y3 Further applications to OTEP and other agencies such as USFWS Environment Fund to be created pending exact provisions for it in the new environmental legislation
4. Significant progress is made towards establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area	 Draft legislation approved in principle by key stakeholders at end of Y3; Proposed Protected Area contains representative examples of all key habitats and species for which the Centre Hills are important 	 Draft environmental management legislation produced and currently under review/consultation Draft Centre Hills National Park management plan produced and currently under review/consultation Two Executive Council white papers produced, one informing on the legislative review and the other relating to correcting the map of the forest boundary 	 Environmental management legislation to be finalised and adopted by both Executive and Legislative Councils Biodiversity "hot spots" need to be identified within the protected area to incorporate key species and habitats; these will likely be nominated for more stringent conservation protection than other parts of the protected area
5. Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is	 No. of tourists visiting Centre Hills increases by 10% during the project; 	 Tourist exit survey revised and updated following a period of several months' trial 	 Continue to monitor and analyse tourist knowledge, perceptions, and behaviours of tourists

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Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006-Mar 2007	Actions required/ planned for next period
increased locally and internationally	 >60% of tourists express satisfaction with visit; Final project survey compared to initial project survey shows increased awareness amongst local people; Increased local media coverage of the Centre Hills; No. of website hits increases 	 374 number of tourists surveyed when leaving Montserrat to date Surveys establishes baseline data about knowledge, perceptions, and behaviours of tourists, the general public, farmers, livestock tenders, and hunters Very strong local and international media coverage about all aspects of the Centre Hills Project work Project poster and leaflet produced, as well as t-shirts and pencils 1,817 website hits in the first 10 months since launch 	 Conduct follow-up general public survey to measure change in residents knowledge, perceptions, and behaviours Develop a socioeconomic monitoring protocol that will outline how future data will be collected, in what form, at what cost, and by whom Continue to update website Identify website manager to take over responsibility once the project ends
6. Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started	 Boundary is demarcated on the ground by end of Y3; 2 significant conservation interventions in the management plan are begun by end of Y3; 90% of first year of annual workplan is completed on schedule by end of Y3 	 Digital mapping of the Centre Hills forest boundary completed and submitted and pending adoption by Executive Council 	 Adoption of forest boundary by Executive Council Identification of buffer zone Implement 2 conservation interventions (e.g., long-term forest monitoring protocol, outreach programme Development of Species Action Plans for key species Complete 90% of Year 3 workplan

Annex 2 Project's full current logframe

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodivers but poor in resources to achieve	ity from within the United Kingdom to work with	local partners in count	ries rich in biodiversity
 the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, an the fair and equitable sharing of benefits a 	d arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources	5	
Purpose			
The people of Montserrat are better able to take targeted action to conserve the Centre Hills Forest	Centre Hills are designated a Protected Area by end of Y4;	Draft Protected Area Ordinance;	Volcanic activity impacts on the forest are
Reserve for present and future generations	Actions in management plan are initiated and led by local team from Y3;	Local Project Manager leads project in Y3; Annual workplans	minimal. Hurricanes do not destroy island infrastructure.
Outputs			
1. Knowledge of the ecology and socio-economic use of the forest is available to guide management	Management plan by end of Y2 integrates conservation of species and habitats and socio-	Inventory of forest biota;	Trained staff remain on Montserrat.
of the Centre Hills	economic needs;	Scientific publications;	Continued co-operation
	All key stakeholders support scientific and socio- economic basis for management plan by end of	Socio-economic report;	between stakeholders.
	Y2	GIS database;	
		Habitat map	

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
2. Participatory management plan is produced for	2 stakeholder workshops (Y1&2);	Workshop reports;	
the Centre Hills	All key stakeholders sign up to management	Management Plan;	
	plan by Y2	Composition of project	
	All key stakeholders renew their commitment to	steering committee;	
	the implementation of the plan at the end of the project (Y3)	End of project meeting report	
3. Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are	All key stakeholders participate in 2 training workshops during Y1 & 2;	Workshop evaluation forms;	
strengthened on Montserrat	2 staff receive training in UK by Y2;	Assessment of UK	
	10 local persons involved in fieldwork Y1 – Y3;	training;	
	Database established by Y2;	Project Steering Committee Minutes;	
	Local person employed as project manager or co-project manager (Y1 – Y3)	Project Reports;	
	Funding applications submitted by Y3	Funding applications	
4. Significant progress is made towards	Draft legislation approved in principle by key	Draft legislation;	
establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area	stakeholders at end of Y3;	Protected Area Maps	
	Proposed Protected Area contains representative examples of all key habitats and species for which the Centre Hills are important		

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
5. Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is increased locally and internationally	 No. of tourists visiting Centre Hills increases by 10% during the project; >60% of tourists express satisfaction with visit; Final project survey compared to initial project survey shows increased awareness amongst local people; Increased local media coverage of the Centre Hills; No. of website hits increases 	Tourist survey forms; Tourist board stats; Guided Tour stats; Awareness questionnaire; Radio; Newspaper coverage; Web hit stats	
6. Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started	 Boundary is demarcated on the ground by end of Y3; 2 significant conservation interventions in the management plan are begun by end of Y3; 90% of first year of annual workplan is completed on schedule by end of Y3 	Annual Workplan; Management plan; Implementation monitoring report;	

Annex 3 Year 3 workplan (07 – 08)

Activity		Apr 07	May 07	Jun 07	Jul 07	Aug 07	Sep 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08
1.	Knowledge of the ecology and socio-economic use of the forest is available to guide management of the Centre Hills												
1.3	CHMC Meetings												
1.5	Produce habitat map												
1.6	Summary report of biological assessment												
1.7	Hand over computer database												
1.8	Research processes impacting Centre Hills												
1.13	Summary report of consultation process												
1.14	Conduct economic valuation research												
1.15	Report on economic valuation												
2	Participatory plan is produced for the Centre Hills												
2.5	Complete management plan												
2.6	Circulate Plan to stakeholders												
2.7	Publish and Launch management plan												
2.8	Seek and secure resources for implementation												

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3	Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are strengthened on Montserrat												
3.4	Mentor counterparts												
4	Significant progress is made towards establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area												
4.4	Secure agreement on draft legislation												
4.5	Present final draft to AG's office												
4.6	Approval by Exco and Legco												
5	Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is increased locally and internationally												
5.2	Conduct tourist satisfaction surveys												
5.6	Teacher workshop to produce educational materials												
5.7	Production educational materials/pack												
5.8	A guide to the Centre Hills published												
5.9	Media Campaign (radio, newspapers)												
5.10	Newsletters												
6	Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started												
6.3	Implement priority actions in the plan												

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