

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	19-031
<b>Project Title</b>	Mapping St Helena's marine biodiversity to create a marine management plan
<b>Country(ies)</b>	UK OT ST Helena
<b>UK Organisation</b>	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Marine Conservation Section, Environmental Management Division, St Helena Government
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr Tony Weighell
<b>Report date</b>	31 October 2013
<b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b>	HYR 2
<b>Project website</b>	Not a specific project website but information regarding the project available on <a href="https://www.facebook.com/sthelenaconservation">https://www.facebook.com/sthelenaconservation</a> and on <a href="http://wikivillage.sh/">http://wikivillage.sh/</a> and on <a href="http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/marine-division/">http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/marine-division/</a>

## **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).**

Due to the late recruitment of the Project Manager this project has been delayed, however excellent progress towards each of the outputs has been achieved. Darwin has agreed that this project will overrun by 8 months (to make up for the 8 month delay) and that the appropriate budget will also be carried over.

Work has continued on inputting data into the marine database – this was due to be completed within 12 months of the project and currently all known data has been entered. This will be updated for the rest of the project if and when further material becomes available.

Further training for three of the marine section staff, including dive surveys, fisheries science, species collection, preservation and taxonomy has been ongoing as well as training on scientific hardware (microscopes) and software (Adobe Lightroom, sidescan sonar program). The Project manager and one of the marine section staff joined a Darwin funded survey in Ascension island mapping marine biodiversity and gained further training as well as forming important cross territory links. Funding from JNCC has also been sought to send one of the marine section staff to present at an International conference on Whale sharks in October where she will also work with experts to establish a whale shark research programme for St Helena as well as working on a policy paper on whale shark interactions. IN the last 6 months a further five newspaper articles and two radio interviews have been done and a Facebook page and wiki village page have been established. Five work experience students have spent time with the marine section and a careers pathway day and participation in a school's career day have all been carried out by this project.

90 surveys have been completed and data entered. Analysis to be started in next 6 months. Over 20 extra dives have also been conducted for species collection and more new records and some new species have been identified. Samples have been sent to taxonomic experts for confirmation of identification and description of new species.

The sidescan sonar has been trialled and is ready for collection of habitat information. This will

be gathered in the next 6 months.

Marine related questions have been added to the general tourist feedback form to gain information on why they come to the island, how they rate the diving/snorkelling/sportsfishing and whether they would recommend these or return to the island for marine activities. Further information was requested in the year report feedback on how the awareness survey on importance of marine environment was conducted. This was emailed to numerous Government departments, private businesses and NGO's on island and passed to people who attended a community talk. 124 responses from a range of ages were gained and it is intended to repeat the survey near the end of the project. Answers showed people knew most about the terrestrial environment including the birds (when asked to name island endemics – 57% named plants, 21% birds, 13% terrestrial invertebrate and only 8% named fish). 58% of people felt they had no or poor knowledge of the marine environment.

Initial stakeholder meetings have been held for dive tourism, artificial reefs and sportsfishing. A policy for procedures for underwater blasting operations has been drawn up and approved by councillors to take to public consultation (which is currently underway).

A clearer description of project roles and responsibilities of the two main project partners was requested at the annual review. The project manager (Environment Management Directorate (EMD) of St Helena Government - host country partner) is responsible for the day to day running of the project including survey planning and design, training of staff, awareness raising, managing the budget, stakeholder engagement, collating and analysis of data and writing the marine management plan. JNCC (the UK lead institution) is responsible for providing oversight of the project as well as providing advice and expertise on all aspects of the project eg for the policy procedures on underwater blasting they provided guidelines of blasting procedures used in the UK. The project manager from St Helena will be travelling to UK at the start of November to spend some time with JNCC and attend and present at an MPA workshop hosted by JNCC which will directly assist in the preparation of the Marine Management Plan for St Helena. There are regular project updates sent from the project manager to the UK lead via email with further 3 monthly skype meetings for fuller project updates

**2a. 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.**

An 8 month extension has been agreed (including carryover of funds) to negate any negative impacts to the project due to the delayed recruitment of the Project Manager.

There has also been a delay in the recruitment of the GIS specialist; however they will be in post in sufficient time to provide the training and assistance as detailed in the project outputs.

**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

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

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

Yes  No  Yes but already agreed, £33,975 carried over into 8 month project extension period

**3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process.** However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £33,975 (already approved)

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

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk) . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**