



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2016)

| | |
|---|--|
| Project Ref No | 20-005 |
| Project Title | Creating Community Forests to Enhance Biodiversity and Provide Educational Activities |
| Country(ies) | St Helena |
| Lead Organisation | St Helena National Trust (SHNT) |
| Collaborator(s) | Environmental Management Division (EMD); Education Directorate; Enterprise St Helena (ESH); Tourism Directorate; New Horizons; Civil Society Support; Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBGK); Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) |
| Project Leader | Jeremy Harris |
| Report date and number (eg HYR3) | April 2016 – Sept 2016 |
| Project website | http://www.nationaltrust.org.sh/shnt-conservation-programmes/natural-heritage/community-forests-project/ |

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: MRes on the carbon sequestration potential of St Helena endemic tree species

Completed and reported in Annual Report April 2016.

Update on how we are setting up the voluntary carbon reduction scheme will be provided in the final project report.

Output 2: Setting up a Forest School Programme on St Helena

Forest School programme on St Helena has now been established and up and running for two years. The first session was held 19/11/2014. During this time Forest School has hosted 2,582 pupil visits, this equates to reaching out to 571 pupils. This programme has been hugely successful and the Trust has been working closely with the Education Directorate to ensure that it is funded to continue beyond the end of the CFP project. Shirley Wahler, Director of Education & Employment has lent significant support, including presenting arguments with the Trust to the DFID Financial Aid Mission to secure future funding and preparing bids to the island's Safeguarding Children Board (Appendix 1). Shirley Wahler stated "Forest School is a very important part of children's education in St Helena. Its focus on the natural world and on children's relationship to nature complements their structured learning in school and helps them become more thoughtful and confident learners. We also value the respect Forest School builds for the natural world. When children across St Helena's schools were asked to contribute their ideas to the Island's 10 Year Plan, their very favourite topic was Altogether Greener; everyone had ideas about how to protect and preserve the natural environment. We believe that this is in large part due to the influence of Forest School and the National Trust's work in schools. We build a greener tomorrow by teaching children to love nature and to care for it, but in doing so, we also teach them to value themselves and each other. Forest School is a key part of that effort."

Matched funding from the Community development Grant of £2,300 for re-wiring the school secured.

Output 3 – NVQ Level 2 work-based Diploma in Environmental Conservation - 4 NVQ Level 2 Diplomas in Work-Based Conservation achieved.

Demonstrable progress being made: Rebecca Cairns-Wicks is now training to become an Assessor and has new two Candidate NVQ students. Brianna Yon, who has been working with us on the CFP as Nursery Officer and Antonio Green, a conservation worker with the St Helena Government Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Programme. Both Candidates have now started their NVQ and are working on their first units.

Sadly we've had to say farewell to Candidates Kayleigh Harris and Marayka Henry. Kayleigh left her position with the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Programme for work overseas and Marakya left the Trust following disciplinary problems. Both students completed units towards their NVQ (3 and 2 respectively) and are able to get recognition from City and Guilds for the units they did achieve.

The CFP will not achieve its target of 4 NVQs but what we can expect is that finally (after 2 previous attempts at training Assessors who have then left) we will have a trained Assessor who is island based and can continue to assess candidates beyond the life of the CFP. With its wide choice of Units of study, the NVQ enables Candidates to design their NVQ aligning it with the main tasks of their job. The learning process and topics covered means that it will provide benefits to our field based conservation staff as well as service the wider conservation community.

Output 4 – Three Community Forests actively and sustainably managed: Millennium Forest, High Peak and Blue Point; training at RBG Kew for CFP Nursery Officer

Much of our focus over the last 6 months has been to ensure that the benefits gained by the project are sustained. This has been a transitional period to secure continuation of success after the CFP. We have worked to retain as many of the trained and skilled staff as we can afford beyond the life of the project, have management tools and processes in place and the financial capacity to provide management. This has included:

- Completion of the nursery records database with support from Andrew Darlow,
- Contract extension, revision of TORs and incremental salary increase for MF worker Richard Henry to give him more responsibility for nursery production at the MF. One year contract.
- Contract extension, revision of TORs and incremental salary increase for Martina Peters to change her job title and responsibilities from Forest Schools Officer to Conservation & Education Projects Officer so that she can extend her practical conservation work, splitting her time and responsibilities between Forest School (3 days per week) and supporting the implementation of the plans at our three CF sites. Two year contract.
- Revision of TORS for Brianna Yon to enable her to continue to work part time to support nursery work at the MF, including data recording and develop our educational outreach programme based at the MF and part time at EMD's nursery Scotland. Six month contract.
- We've brought together our ideas about what we've learnt about practises over the

course of the project and drawn up a set of best practise guides

- CFP site management plans have been reviewed by CFP staff and are now being updated in consultation with CFP and wider Trust staff and our SHG colleagues at the Environmental Management Division (EMD). Revised site plans will be produced by the end of the project to provide clear goals and confirm the actions required to support them over the coming 3 years.

In addition,

- Monitoring surveys of the Ginger patch and Blue Point have been completed. The MF is near completion.
- New position established to provide part time field work support to weed, maintain and plant at the ginger patch in accordance with our site management plan.
- Matched funding - Cynthia Llas secured 2 grants to financially support development of signage and interpretation at the MF (£3,590) and work with the Brownies to add infrastructure to develop their 'Brownie Wood' (£726).
- We said farewell to Cynthia Llas our Community Forest Project Co-ordinator at the end of her contract on the 12th October. Cynthia has taken up a short term position with EMD Marine Team.

Output 5 – Endemic mini-forests established at all the island schools with pupils actively managing and taking responsibility of their endemic environments.

New income streams established from enterprise initiatives (sale of plants and forest products (e.g. mulch) and eco-tourism) contributing to the financial sustainability of the Community Forests by end year 3

Endemic mini-forests – KTC guides produced for the schools.

We have been working with the Education & Employments Directorate's Head of Inclusion Lolly Young. The Enrichment studies programme that was running in the Secondary School has now been extended to the Primary Schools. The timing of this is great because it has enabled the mini-forests to continue to be integrated into educational activities for pupils. This is working particularly well at Pilling Primary. In addition, the mini-forest is providing a weekly venue for a young boy who is out of school and being given supported learning. On Wednesdays he has been weeding, watering and cleaning plants of bugs. Further development of the mini-forest is now being planned and taken forward by the Head of Inclusion and the school.

Guide, pictures and feedback from schools to be included in final report.

Income streams – Business plan under preparation for enterprise initiatives. We will be seeking a grant from Enterprise St Helena as matched funding to meet the costs of the business plan and product market research. Estimated value £500.

Planning application under preparation to enable us to expand and upgrade the nursery facilities, including shade house, standing out ground, composting areas, access and a retail licence to sell plants. Estimated cost £1,250. This is not within our budget and we would like to seek permission to be able to direct projected underspends to this purpose.

Sales of plants and mulch to the SHG LEMP established. We have a contract to produce 10,000 plants (3,500 gumwoods, 3,500 ebonies and 3,000 hair grass) and mulch. We have also been establishing a market to the public, the St Helena Nature Conservation Group and

our own projects.

A copy of the business plan and planning application will be provided in final report.

8 staff, including volunteer Sue Halfacre took part in 'in-house training for tour guiding provided by Rebecca Cairns-Wicks and Denny Leo (Wirebird Conservation Manager)

Two new paths have been established at the MF – a walk through the gateway area which has been the main focus of restoration work under the CFP and a wirebird walk through the MF to Horse Point.

Cynthia Llas has worked on producing new walk guides for the paths and these will be provided in the final project report.

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.

The project has gone well and we have not encountered any significant problems other than those previously highlighted in our annual report and referred to here under Output 3, regarding meeting our NVQ target of 4. An unexpected development was that the Trust had to let Marayka go and her Apprenticeship with us was terminated. We worked closely with Cynthy Bennett, Work Development Co-ordinator, to support Marayka Henry and help her realise her potential, but she wasn't willing to take responsibility herself and we had disciplinary problems. This was another set back to the NVQ

We have not secured a Kew visit as originally intended. This impacts our budget. Under Travel and Subsistence, we have a £6,500 budget for 2016-2017. Of this £4,000 was for international travel. Expected costs were to repatriate our Community Forests Project Co-ordinator at the end of her contract and meeting travel costs for a Kew support visit.

We took a precautionary approach to accommodate eventualities such as accommodating staff on route and flexibility of routes, via Ascension or Brize Norton and for Cynthia, repatriation of belongings. The high costs haven't materialised, Cynthia is travelling via Ascension and with no belongings - she is planning to return to St Helena having taken up employment with the Environmental Management Division.

The Kew support visit did not take place as originally envisaged. Whilst not planned under the CFP, Marcella Cocoran's visit under DPLUS037 did enable us to achieve our original expectation of horticultural support and nursery training and moreover represents a positive example of organisational collaboration, maximising benefits of funded projects (avoiding duplication) and creating a saving for our project. Additionally we keep in contact with Colin Clubbe (Head of Conservation Science) and Marcella, asking for advice and support when it is needed. In addition Marcella provided us with a report of her visit to the nursery with advice on improvements. It has proven impossible to arrange a separate Kew visit since Kew's Review and a change of work priorities (more science orientated & less physical conservation!) and the huge demands that it placed on Colin Clubbe, the Head of Conservation Science.

This has also impacted on our Staff Costs budget, with £2,000 allocated for the Kew support.

Together these savings are expected to be circa £5,000.

We intend to apply for a change request to use the money for

a) Staff Costs – Staff costs were originally only budgeted until 30th September. In August we secured a no cost extension to the project until 30th November. Both the Project Manager and Forest Schools Officer have remained engaged in working on project outcomes. The National Trust has secured the continued employment of Martina Peters as Education and Projects Officer. Martina is now employed to continue to support the development of Forest School, she is also continuing to support the activities of the CFP taking a more active role and responsibility for implementing the site management plans. However, we haven't yet secured funding for her salary. We are hopeful that we will get 3 days salary through an application to

the St Helena Government's Safeguarding Children's Board (see Doc_1). We are also planning to present a bid to the SHG Financial Aid Mission, together with the Director of Education & Employment to support the project for the next SHG budgetary period. If we can continue to pay Martina from CFP until the end of the project in November that would be a big help. This would be in the region of £2,000 to cover salary, home to duty transport & work related travel.

b). Contribution to the costs of upgrading of the MF nursery - we are very much in need of upgrading for the MF nursery. During the course of the project we have grown the production capacity and we seek to grow the demand for plants through sales to the public and wholesale (we currently have a contract for 10,000 plants with the St Helena Government Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Programme). We would like to expand the shadehouse and upgrade and extend the standing out ground. The standing out ground is simply overhead and partial side shade cloth and plants laid out on the ground. The shade cloth needs replacing and the ground gets slippery when wet. Because the ground cover has disintegrated the plant pots are invariably standing on mud and this encourages the spread of pests like root (obscure) mealy bug. We would really like to construct benching to put the plants on - to improve efficacy and reduce the backbreaking of the job of watering and plant care (weeding, pest control) and extend new shade netting across a larger area. The upgrading to the nursery will form part of our planning application in which we also need to seek a shop licence. The work supports Output 5. Community engagement and social enterprise Outcome indicator: Local communities and schools are engaged and involved in conservation, actively managing and taking responsibility of their endemic environments. Social enterprise opportunities within conservation are developed and promoted.

We would like to request that estimated project underspends from International Travel are directed to upgrading the nursery at the MF which will be a very positive project legacy.

2. With reference to Subhead expenditure, whilst we are well within our budget overall, I have significant deviations on two subheads: Overheads and Other Costs and would seek confirmation on them. (see actual quarterly expenditure file named 20-005 15_16 Q2 actual_30_09_16)

The first is for Overheads we have charged expenditure on carrying out necessary repairs and renovations (to support its function) to Blue Hill Forest School under the subhead Blue Hill Community School. The budget head uses confirm costs applicable are for the running costs of Blue Hill School. This takes us over the budgeted £3,750 for Overhead costs to £5,193.92 (though the Trust has overcharged for some of the materials (£740) and this will need to be reimbursed to the project). We do have savings in Operating Costs but I am not sure I have the mandate to put the costs to that - there is a subhead for Training Programme, including Forest School.

The question is whether the work constitutes overhead or operating costs, and the appropriate application of financial reporting. The work covered activities identified in the CFP Work Plan under Output 2.2 implement plan for improvements to the building covering redecorating, carpentry and plumbing. We were awarded a Community Development Organisation Grant of £2,300 to cover the costs of re-wiring which has been completed which is valuable matched funding element to the project. Please advise if the subhead deviation is acceptable to remain as is or other action required given overall the project is not overspent. If we could split the costs between the two heads Overheads and Operating Costs we could accommodate them without significant project deviation.

The second is other costs under Other Costs, subhead Communications. We have installed signage at the MF primarily directed to our school age visitors. The cost has been charged to Communications as interpretation /signage is an appropriate use. However the budget is small and wasn't planned to meet costs of signage - other costs charged to the subhead are adverts for the paper, signage on vehicles, IT support, GIS services and SHNT Website. The subhead stands at £1354.69 with an allocated budget of £700.

We have however been successful in securing a second Community Development Grant, constituting matched funding to the value of £3,590 to signage for the Millennium Forest and Ginger patch. The grant supports Outputs 4.7 Set up Wirebird interpretation area 4.7.2 With support from the Wirebird Officer, produce information about Wirebirds at the MF Nature Reserve for tour guides and visitors and 4.7.3 Produce a self-guided walk and interpretation for

the visiting public and Output 5.1 New path and sign posted path network giving improved access to and interpretation of CFP sites. Grateful for confirmation that the deviation in actual costs for subhead other costs is acceptable.

A change request will be submitted together with this report for consideration.

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: | No - Email |
| Formal change request submitted: | No - with this report |
| Received confirmation of change acceptance | No |

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

Yes No Estimated underspend:

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

Underspend estimated to be less than £5,000. The changes to the budget highlighted above will be requested as part of the change request.

4. 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 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 eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**