Darwin Plus:
Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund
Annual Report

Important note *To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders:*

it is expected that this report will be about 10 pages in length, excluding annexes

Submission Deadline: 30 April

Darwin Plus Project Information

Project Ref Number	DPLUS029
Project Title	Securing St Helena's Cloud Forest Trees and Associated Invertebrates
Territory(ies)	St Helena
Contract Holder Institution	Government of St Helena
Partner Institutions	Buglife, RBG Kew, RSPB, St Helena National Trust
Grant Value	£98,380
Start/end date of project	01 February 2015 to 01 February 2017
Reporting period (e.g., Apr 2015-Mar 2016) and number (e.g., AR 1,2)	February & March 2015
Project Leader	Lourens Malan
Project website	
Report author and date	Author: Lourens Malan, Project Lead Report reviewed by: Ben Sansom, Head of Environmental Management Division, SHG 29 April 2015

Note: Please remove the blue guidance notes from all sections before submission

1. Project Overview

Secure the survival of four endangered/critical endangered keystone endemic tree species and their associated invertebrate fauna in the Peaks National Park.

Achieved by establishing 'seed-orchards' using clones from the remaining trees. Critical data will be collected to enable informed management of these trees and their associated fauna & flora.

The four 'keystone' species within the moist forest ecosystem; Critically Endangered He-Cabbage, False Gumwood, Endangered Dogwood and Whitewood are declining. Many of the easily accessible remnant trees have died out. The remaining individuals are biodiversity hotspots but widely separated, with an estimated combined total of less than 150 trees. Valuable genetic diversity is being lost; the situation compounded by poor seed set and low viability.

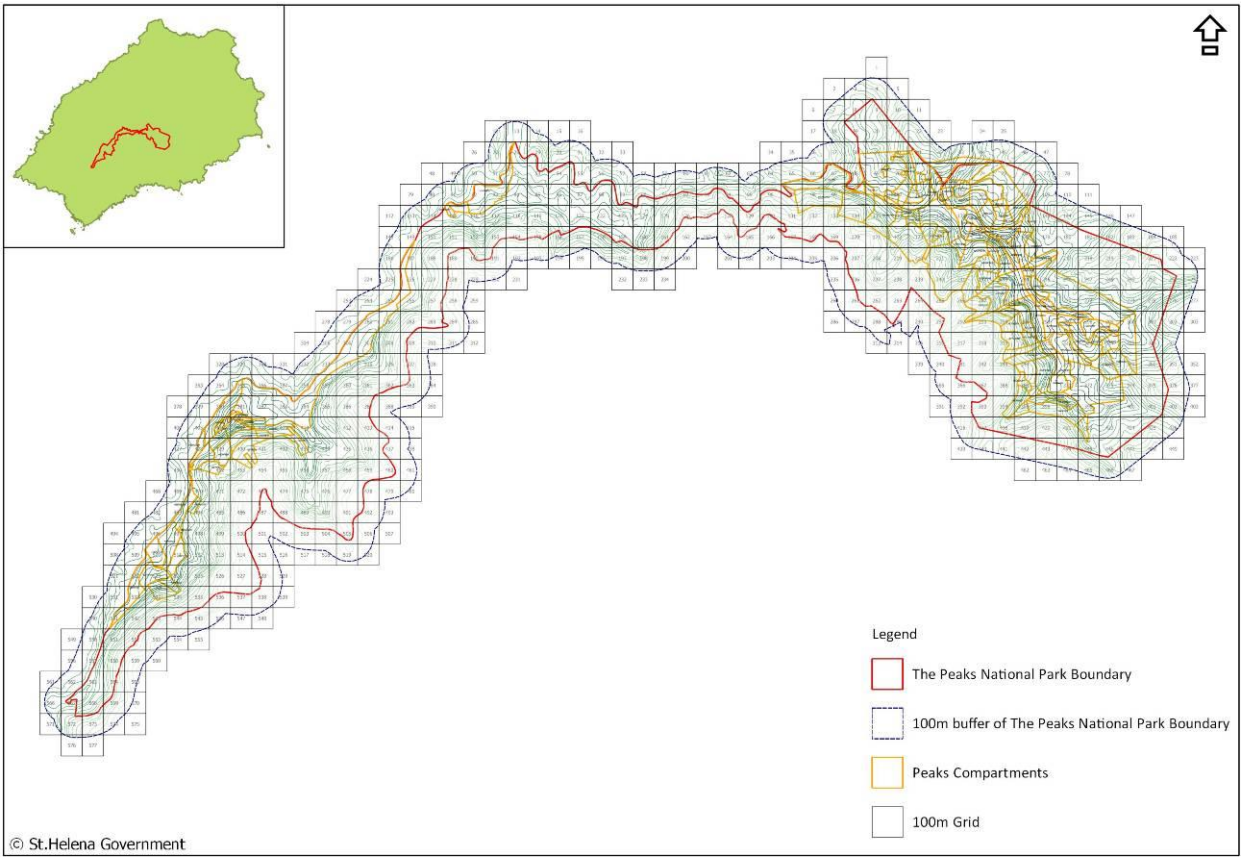

Figure 1 Project work area showing 100m x 100m UTM grid square covering the last remaining fragments of cloud forest habitat holding the 4 target tree species

Remaining trees are in remote locations and extremely difficult to access. Natural regeneration is suppressed by invasive species' impact. Limited genetic variability (through separation and consequent low cross pollination) is reducing the species' ability to adapt and/or survive change and threats.

Recent studies (Ashmoles 2004 & D. Pryce, current Buglife project) have shown that wild remnants support a rich yet rare invertebrate fauna, some uniquely adapted to specific tree species. Younger trees, planted over the last 20 years do not support the same level of invertebrate diversity.

The four tree species together with associated fauna & flora, 284 of which are endemic invertebrates, will be safeguarded and the invaluable water catchment service of the Cloud Forest improved.

The project is a high priority for St Helena and delivers the tools for: **National Goal 3 of St Helena Sustainable Development Plan,** *'Effective management of the environment';* **Principle 2 of SHG Land Development Control Plan,** '*Conserve and manage the natural … heritage of the Island to benefit tourism and the Island community.'*; **SHG Environment Charter,** *'ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through…appropriate management structures and mechanisms.'* **and,** *'encourage teaching…to promote the value of (the natural) environment,'* ***and commit to,*** *'attempt the control and eradication of invasive species'* through development of the practical methodology that will inform the Peaks National Park action plan.

2. Project Progress

2.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

The project has had severe delays due to difficulties recruiting a suitable stand-in for the Terrestrial Conservation Officer (TCO), allowing his secondment to the project without impacting regular TCO duties. A change request has been accepted and the official start date

have been changed to February 2015 (see annex 1.1 for change request and related correspondence).

A suitable TCO has been engaged and started work on 20th April 2015.

The project has been officially running for two full months in this reporting period. Despite challenges recruiting a replacement TCO, all activities planned for the first part of the project have been successfully initiated.

The only change to the project plan is its timeline. Changes can be seen in the Annex 1.2 Gantt chart.

Progress on activities started:

1.1 Refinement of survey protocols have been progressed. Identification of locations with special interest has been started with the help of the conservation fieldworkers. A GPS base-map has been created for fieldwork use (see Figure 1)
1.2 & 1.3 Specific methodology for use in community assessments will have to be tested and refined. Expert advice from Roger Key have been taken on board and further help from Buglife have been agreed.

2.1 None of the target species were in seed during the reporting period however progress is being monitored.
2.2 Orders for materials have been placed and some received on Island.

3.1 Ground preparation works has been undertaken by the conservation fieldworkers. Cloud Forest ferns have been planted in order for the microclimate to be at its best by the time the first clones are ready to be bulked up in the nursery. Additional nursery materials and propagation equipment has been purchased and are being shipped.

4.1 A project database has been developed on Microsoft Access. Further refinements will be made in line with changes / developments of the methodology.

2.2 Project support to environmental and/or climate outcomes in the UKOT's

See Section 1. This project supports Saint Helena's National Environment Management Plan, Sustainable Development Plan and Environment Charter.

2.3 Progress towards project outputs

We feel confident that we are in a very strong position to achieve the project outputs in a timely manner. Most notably is that the project has been set up well and with the support of a new TCO the project outputs will compliment the long term goals of conservation.

2.4 Progress towards the project outcome

The project is on target for successful delivery of the project outcome.

2.5 Monitoring of risks

The identified risks do not hold true anymore.
The first two risks have been resolved through secondment of the TCO to the project and through engagement of a competent replacement as TCO.
Alternative methods of propagation are in hand and we will be able to secure clonal material via any of the known methods eliminating the third risk.

The risk register will be updated to reflect the change in project risk profile.

3. Project Stakeholders

Due to the late start of the project minimal input from the Stakeholders were required. We have had two stakeholder meetings via Skype. The first in September 2014 to inform on our difficulties in engaging appropriate project staff. The second in February 2015 to inform on the developments with regards secondment and recruitment.

Very short discussion with input from Buglife confirmed that the needed support will still be available despite the delayed start. Buglife gave permission for the project lead to contact Roger Key directly to gain his expertise on invertebrate fieldwork (see Annex 1.3 Roger Key email support) and to assess his availability and or willingness to act as primary invertebrate consultant for the project.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

See section 3. M & E happens through Stakeholder meetings.

5. Lessons learnt

We have had particular difficulty with regards to internal Saint Helena Government procurement processes. Procurement issues are being looked at internally and a revised protocol will be published later in 2015 to speed up the procurement process. The shipment of goods to St Helena has always been difficult to time correctly. The only way to mitigate against delays due to shipment difficulties is by adding six months to the expected arrival time and planning your project activities accordingly. The opening of the airport in February 2016 will enable a 1 week delivery period for small items of post, compared with between (4 weeks and 3 months).

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

N/A

7. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

None

8. Sustainability

It is too early in the project to comment on any probable changes or additions to the projects' sustainability

9. Darwin Identity

Darwin has a very strong presence on St Helena gained through various projects (see attached pdf document: March 2015 Monthly Newsletter from the Environmental Management Division) over the last few years. The employment of the new TCO has been announced on the radio stations and in the newspapers sporting the Darwin logo and mentioning the Darwin Plus cloud forest project.

10. Project Expenditure

Table 1 Project proposed expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015)

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2014/15 Grant (£)	2014/15 Total actual Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
TOTAL			**0**	

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

I agree for the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	X
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	-
Have you included means of verification? You need not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	-
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	-
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	x
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	

ANNEX1.2 **Gantt chart**

	Activity	No of Months	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1	All old trees accessed and habitat assessment made including suite of invertebrates present													
1.1	Survey to identify location of remaining isolated trees													
1.2	Assess community composition of each site													
1.3	Collect representative sample for invertebrates identification													
Output 2	Germplasm of rare Peaks trees secured													
2.1	Collection, recording and banking of seed													
2.2	Secure clonal material for propagation													
Output 3	Secured genetic material grown on and planted in 'seed-orchards'													
3.1	Propagation facility set up													
3.2	Clonal material propagated													
3.3	Sites prepared for planting													
3.4	Seed-orchards planted up and labelled													
3.5	Establishment rates assessed													
Output 4	Practical methodology developed to inform NCA management plan activities													
4.1	Field data collated and analysed													
4.2	Produce protocols													
4.3	Present completed protocols to NCA management team													