

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	DPLUS029
Project title	Securing St Helena's cloud forest trees and associated invertebrates
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	St Helena
Lead organisation	St Helena Government, Environmental Management Division
Partner(s)	Buglife, RBG Kew, RSPB, SHNT
Project leader	<i>Lourens Malan</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>HYR3 2017</i>
Project website/blog/social media etc.	N/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 to end September).

Activities under output 1 are complete, with surveys completed and site assessments bar one which is in a steep remote area requiring 'dry' weather and should the soils dry out sufficiently over the following two months will be completed.

These results feed into activity 4.1 notably a continuation of making duplicate sets, which will be ongoing until the extended project close in December 2017 are now likely to continue beyond the project thanks to the project extension allowing to 'accommodate the slow development of some plants' and 'continue with nursery work and further development of field gene banks' through collaboration with the peaks management team which has resulted in better transfer of techniques and knowledge from the project team to the peaks management.

Over the last six months the numbers secured ex-situ in the nursery and field gene banks (FGB) has increased as follows: **False gumwood 6 individual** make up the wild population, this has been increased by **20 individuals** successfully growing in the FGB; **He-cabbage** – **80%** of he-cabbage species were represented in seed gene bank. Following a second visit to all he cabbage sites, seedlings from **100% of all trees now growing** in nursery ; **Whitewood** – from **93%** in ex-situ collections increased to **100% whitewoods rooted** and **95% established** in FGB; **Dogwood** – approximately **65%** previously in ex-situ collections - increased to **90%**.

In addition to the success in the nursery the peaks management team has benefited from training provided and is now capable of running the continued propagation of duplicates without input from the project. Importantly, awareness has been raised and more care is taken regards provenance of nursery stock with the aim of maximising gene-flow and conserving diversity.

The project protocols have been drafted and are in use by the peaks management. This serves as a trial run, pointing out areas in need of change or improvement, through practical field testing the protocols in real life situations.

The project logframe that was created for reporting purposes at the last end of year report is still to be submitted in an official change request and will be progressed in November.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

Nothing unexpected, apart from a particularly wet and cold season in late winter & spring. However we expect the unexpected regards the weather on St Helena. Rooting and plant development is slowed and or stalled. **It will not affect the outcome of the project** thanks to the number of individuals we have managed to save. It will however lessen the number of duplicates that could have been produced successfully during the project lifetime.

Having an event like this happen while the project is still running has allowed for guiding the Peaks management team through the methods of dealing, and mitigating against extended cold weather events.

We are investigating an off grid solution for heating the root-zone to manage rooting conditions better. If a feasible solution can be found, we will investigate alternative funding sources to procure such facilities.

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/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No **but soon to be submitted to formalise a project logframe**

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No NA

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

No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. 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, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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