



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development



Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund Final Report

Darwin Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS034
Project title	Akrotiri Marsh Restoration: a flagship wetland in the Cyprus SBAs
Territory(ies)	Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs)-(Akrotiri)
Contract holder Institution	BirdLife Cyprus
Partner institutions	Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre (SBAA sponsored), RSPB
Grant value	£248,073
Start/end date of project	1 April 2015/ - 31 May 2017
Project leader name	Initially Dr Foteini (Claire) Papazoglou and later Mr. Martin Hellicar
Project website/Twitter/blog etc.	www.akrotirimarsh.org , www.facebook.com/akrotirimarsh
Report author(s) and date	Martin Hellicar, Melpo Apostolidou, Pantelis Charilaou, John Badley, 11 August 2017

1 Project Overview

Akrotiri Marsh lies within the western Sovereign Base Area (Akrotiri), in Cyprus (figure 1). It covers an area of approximately 150 ha mainly covered by reeds and to a lesser extent, open meadow.

During recent decades the site suffered from lack of management and a decrease in grazing. That, together with hydrological changes (building of Kourris dam upstream of the site in 1988) resulted in expansion and encroachment of reeds leading to build-up of sediment and loss of bird and plant diversity (including rare plants and those useful for local handicrafts). The area available for grazing animals as well as the open water areas had been reduced. Overall, the expansion of reeds into open water areas slowly turned the Marsh into a simplified, reed dominated system which led to a reduction of biodiversity.

A decrease in bird species and numbers indicate the loss of biodiversity in the Marsh, as do the local extinction of plant species, *Baldelia ranunculoides*, *Cynanchum acutum* and *Orchis palustris* and the fact that other Red Data Book plants are not as widespread as before. Also the last breeding record for the Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* is in 2008 and for the Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* in 2012. Both waders are qualifying (Birds Directive Annex I) species for the Special Protection Area status of the site. Moreover, aerial photos of the site taken over the last 15 years highlight the encroachment of reeds into open areas.

The project was designed to address the challenge of biodiversity loss. Akrotiri Marsh is a crucial component of one of the most important sites designated as protected for nature conservation purposes in Cyprus (it is designated as the equivalent of a Natura 2000 site). The proper management of the site can make a significant contribution to efforts to reverse biodiversity loss at a local (Cyprus) and EU level, as it holds species identified as priority targets for conservation action at an EU level under both the EU Directives on Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC, formerly 79/409/EEC). The project aimed to contribute in delivering long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment in the Cyprus Overseas Territory as it complies with the OT's obligations to protect and manage the designated Ramsar, SPA and SAC. As stated in the paragraph above, many of these key species were in less than favourable status on the site at the start of the project, and remedying this situation through targeted conservation actions was identified as something that could make a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation. Meeting the challenge of reversing biodiversity loss is recognised as a key objective for sustainable development and the long-term well-being of human society. It also holds the potential for encouraging green growth at a global and local scale, by supporting sustainable use (as in the example of grazing for conservation purposes promoted under this project) and sustainable, and alternative, tourism development, which can contribute to the sustainable diversification of the global and local economy (as in the example of promoting managed birdwatching tourism under this project).

The project aimed at addressing the problem of decreased biodiversity value on site by employing on site conservation actions as well as awareness raising actions. Through habitat modification and water management, the project aimed at restoring the sites biodiversity value, creating a mosaic of habitats to increase species diversity. The project also created opportunities for graziers to promote grazing and increase grazing intensity (in a managed manner) which would contribute to reed management. In combination with the above actions, the project also promoted the site to reach a wider audience to increase visitors. It enhanced the bond between the local community of Akrotiri and the site by creating renewed opportunities for handicraft production and opportunities for activities by locals in relation to land uses at the Marsh.

Please find the project's logframe in Annex 1.



Figure1: Project location

2 Project Stakeholders/Partners

The full and active involvement of partners and stakeholders in the implementation of the project has been a key factor contributing to the success of the project.

All project partners had been involved in all stages of the development of the project, from preparing the application and throughout project implementation. BirdLife Cyprus has been the lead partner of the project and responsible for the implementation of the majority of actions and responsible for the overall project management and coordination. The organisation has been building on existing experience and knowledge in managing a project for the management of a wetland. The Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre (AEEC) run by the SBA Administration has been acting as a link between the project and the local community as after 12 years of operation it has built good relations with the community. The AEEC has been also involved in all stages of project development as they have good knowledge of the site and its history. AEEC has been also involved in actions relevant to plants and monitoring water quality. The RSPB has extensive experience in wetland management both in terms of ecology and conservation as well as in attracting visitors and has been contributing in all project outputs. The RSPB provided their expertise and support in activities relevant to access management, water management, habitat creation and grazing management.

All project partners have been involved in decision making and maintaining project momentum. Project partners in Cyprus (BirdLife Cyprus and AEEC) have had regular meetings and site visits to plan actions ahead of time and take decisions, together with the SBA Administration. RSPB experts have visited the project five times during project duration, to provide support to project activities. During the RSPB visits, all project partners had meetings and joint site visits were organised.

Beyond the immediate project partnership, other key stakeholders have also been involved in project planning and decision-making. This was mainly achieved through the formation of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) which had regular meetings during the project. Members of this Committee were relevant departments from the Republic of Cyprus, i.e. the Game and Fauna Service, the Department of Forests, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and the Water Development Department. The other members of the Committee were the Akrotiri Community Council and MERAS Committee as well as the three project partners. The composition of the PSC achieved the involvement of key stakeholders with historical knowledge of the site, knowledge on species or other specialised knowledge. This involvement has played a key role in project planning and decision making.

Other stakeholders of the project have been the various users of the site, i.e. cattle ranchers, basketry weavers, birdwatchers and bird photographers. These stakeholders were involved in areas of the project relevant to each one. Cattle ranchers have been consulted on and kept informed in activities relevant to grazing management, i.e. the erection of permanent fencing, movable electric fencing and cattle sheds, in the funding of cattle purchases etc. Moreover, the project helped graziers to increase their herds and improve cattle management techniques. Basketry weavers have also been consulted in designing fencing, especially as regards access points. The project also included actions to promote this traditional activity. Birdwatchers and bird photographers were also consulted during access planning, overall site plan design for management and in bird hide design specifically.

In terms of challenges faced, there was an issue with 2-3 birdwatchers who strongly complained on social media after they read an article published by BirdLife Cyprus which was informing the public that fencing would be erected at Akrotiri Marsh. This small group of birdwatchers did not want a fence, as they wanted to have full access in the Marsh. To address the concerns, BirdLife Cyprus published a reply that explained the need for the fence and the impact of uncontrolled access to sites and how this affects the breeding success of bird species. Moreover, BirdLife Cyprus explained that birdwatchers and bird photographers will enjoy access through purpose-built birdwatching hides. Moreover, the project organised information days and site visits for birdwatchers to discuss the site plan, location of bird hides and the reasoning behind the fence. The meeting aimed at exploring issues, while the project team took on board comments and suggestions from birdwatchers especially around photography. Since that meeting, birdwatchers

seemed content. The project team also encouraged the group to contact BirdLife Cyprus directly to resolve any issues related to the project.

Managing to keep a wide diversity of stakeholders engaged and involved in the project implementation was a major achievement and the approach proved its worth, in terms both of the results achieved and acceptance levels for the project actions. Early engagement of stakeholders was key to this, as was actively maintaining ongoing involvement, not just in order to engage particular expertise as needed, but also to ensure good and steady support for the project aims and vision.

3 Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

The project set out to produce four main outputs, which have all been achieved. More details are given below in relevance to each of the four outputs. Also, please find the report of progress and achievements against the project logframe in Annex 2.

- **The first output was to modify habitat to create a mosaic with increased species diversity and opportunities for villagers.** Before the project, Akrotiri Marsh was dominated by reeds with the result that habitat diversity was severely reduced. Over the decade prior to the project, the reeds had expanded into new areas, taking over open habitat, with no management or control in place. This change, especially between 2003 and 2015, is obvious from satellite maps (google earth photos). As a result of reed encroachment basketry plant areas had also been reduced. The expansion of reeds into open water areas and other areas where other plant species existed, slowly turned the Marsh into a simplified, reed dominated system which led to a reduction of biodiversity. Through targeted conservation actions, i.e. engineering works, cutting of reeds, increasing grazing pressure etc. the project managed to create habitat for birds, stop reed encroachment into new areas, expand the grazed area where other vegetation can colonise including plants used in basketry, and to create open water areas. That this diversification of habitat will lead to increased diversity of both bird and plant species on site is a reasonable expectation.

The project (during year 2) created seven pools, in a targeted action aiming to help the status of the three key Annex I breeding bird species, i.e. the Ferruginous Duck, the Black-winged Stilt and the Spur-winged Lapwing. During the 2017 breeding season, flocks of 8 and 7 Ferruginous ducks were recorded in the open water areas (BirdLife Cyprus monthly water bird counts, June 2017, and observation by RSPB expert John Badley). Aerial photos taken at the beginning and towards the end of the project show the open water areas that have been created. In addition, from satellite photos (google earth) in 2016 (comparing August 2016 and October 2016) it is evident that grazing area has expanded allowing other plants to recolonise. The project cleared a total area of 38000 m² of reeds in different locations within the Marsh, and graziers collaborated with project partners to put their cattle into these cleared areas after the mechanical reed cutting. In other areas, control of reeds was achieved through grazing alone. It is estimated that the grazing area increased from 12.5ha at the start of the project to 17.5ha at the end of the project.

At the early stages of the project, the project team realised that it would not be efficient and cost effective to clear 50ha of reeds with mechanical means, as originally proposed, because reeds re-establish very quickly after removal and the number of grazing animals on site were not enough to maintain 50ha of cleared areas reed free. Therefore, the project team focused its efforts on increasing the number of grazing cattle on site as this was identified as the most important, sustainable and cost effective management tool for reed management. We can be sure that by increasing the grazing pressure, the reed area will be minimised, allowing space for other plant species to colonise. Although reed management with grazing cattle will take more time, it provides a cost efficient and sustainable option with long-term results. This was also explained in our Y1 Half Year Report and later in our Y1 Annual Report.

The project included activities that supported graziers and resulted in the increase of grazing cattle. Through erection of cattle sheds, provision of training for graziers, funding purchase of cattle, fencing and providing electric fencing, the number of grazing cattle increased from 28 animals in May 2015 to 87 animals in March 2017 and 103 in May 2017 (numbers include bulls, all females and calves). Moreover, graziers increased in numbers from three at the start of the project to nine by the end of the project.

The restoration of the scrape area for waders and the creation of the pools (for the Ferruginous Duck) were actions that were only completed in the autumn of 2016. These were the two actions expected to generate the most immediate results for key bird species, while the clearing of drainage canals and reed management can certainly be expected to enhance habitat availability for birds in the medium-term. Despite the fact that the pools and scrape were only created in the autumn of 2016, there was already some clear evidence of their value for birds. Ferruginous ducks were already seen using the pools created specifically for them during June 2017 (flocks of 7 and 8 birds were counted on separate occasions). And this despite there not being much emergent vegetation, which the ducks need for feeding, and which will naturally colonise in the next year or two.

The Ferruginous Duck sightings were the most clear-cut and encouraging evidence of effectiveness of management actions carried out for birds, but there was also some other, though far less conclusive, evidence of increased usage of the Marsh by key migratory bird species during the project. This despite the fact (as noted above) that it was too early to expect to see significant positive impact from relevant management actions.

The tables found in Annex 6 (taken from the BirdLife Cyprus database of monthly waterbird counts) suggest that numbers of both Glossy Ibis and Squacco Heron were generally higher in 2015 and 2016 than in preceding years, which could be attributed to reduced disturbance and reed clearance actions on site, while the additional bird counts carried out as part of the project (in the 2015 and 2016 breeding seasons), showed that several species were recorded in 2016 that were not seen during 2015, again pointing to improved habitat status. These species were: Corncrake, Grey Heron, Spotted Crake, Greenshank, Great Snipe and White-winged Tern.

It should be noted that other factors may have played a part in the patterns concerning visitor species outlined above, and these records are only indicative of successful management. More time is needed for the effects of the management actions to clearly materialise.

The impact of the project to rare plants has been confirmed for two Red Data Book plant species so far. *Phyla nodiflora* has been identified in many new areas around the enclosure and in areas where reeds have been controlled and grazing has been taking place. *Ipomoea sagittata* has now been recorded in areas where cattle have created corridors and open areas within the reed stands, which shows that this species benefits from the habitat opening. Also, during the project we recorded other important vegetation, including the first record of *Apium graveolens* in the area.

- **The second output was to develop a Site Management Plan based on clear site management objectives and to monitor site values.** Before the project, there was limited information about specific aspects of the site such as water management, grazing capacity, topography, bird productivity etc. Moreover, although there is a Management Plan for the whole area of the Akrotiri Peninsula there were no site management objectives set and nor was there a site management plan specifically for Akrotiri Marsh. One of the project's main successes was that it managed to gather and produce important information about the site which were then used to produce clear site management objectives. The information collected through preliminary studies (i.e. topography study, grazing capacity study, bird productivity study, study on Killifish) have been valuable in preparing the Site Management Plan which was discussed and agreed among project partners and the Project Steering Committee. The Site Management Plan provides an important tool for the future management of the site. The Site Management Plan is given in Annex 8.

- **The third output, as set in the proposal, was to develop and promote birdwatching tourism infrastructure.** Before the project, Akrotiri Marsh did not have any visitor facilities, no access management was in place and only one information sign existed, while it was difficult to find information about the site, either online or in the local area. There was also a lack of awareness about the importance of the site among both the public and the local community. Through the creation of two birdwatching hides with walkways to provide easy access to them, the installation of information signs, allocation of parking areas, production of an eco-touristic brochure for Akrotiri Peninsula, creation of a website dedicated to the site and the production of targeted press releases, the project managed to promote Akrotiri Marsh to a wider audience, raise awareness about the importance of the site among the local community and the wider public and at the same time enhance the visitors' experience on site. The two information events organised in December 2015 and in February 2017 focused on informing the local community on the project and the importance of Akrotiri Marsh. Around 25 people attended the first event and around 35 the second. To celebrate the successful completion of the project, the project team organised a high profile event which featured the inauguration of the hides. The hides were inaugurated by the Commander of British Forces Cyprus, Major General James Illingworth OBE, the RSPB Global Conservation Director, Martin Harper and the BirdLife Cyprus President, Melis Charalambides. The event was very well attended (by around 100 people) and it received very good media coverage. During project implementation three press releases were sent out and there were 10 newspaper mentions to the restoration project and 12 articles published in electronic media. All media coverage was highly positive about the project and its achievements. Moreover, three different interviews were given in Cyprus radio. The website counts 169714 clicks and Facebook page has 234 likes. The eco-touristic brochure printed in 5000 copies is targeted to be distributed through the Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre and BirdLife Cyprus. In addition, in collaboration with the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, the brochure is available at the two national airports in Cyprus (Paphos and Larnaka airport).

It is too early to assess the demand of official school visits as the applications are made in autumn, but in general there is more interest in visiting the Marsh as a result of the improved profile of the area as well as the improved access and parking, the bird-hides and access to them via well marked paths.

- **The fourth output as set out in the project proposal was to deliver the project on time and within budget.** All reporting deadlines have been met throughout the duration of the project. The project team, through a change request form, received a two months extension to the project end date (i.e. 31 May instead of 31 March) so that the costs for the high profile inauguration event (May 18th) for the completion of the project could be included in the project expenses. A two week extension was also allowed in order to allow some more time for the completion of this report. These small deviations in timeframe did not in any way affect the project outcome or results. The project also followed the proposed budget, while some changes between budget lines were accepted through the proper procedure of change request forms. The final audit confirms that the total grant was fully and solely expended for the purposes set out in the original application and in a later subsequent agreement with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and in accordance with the terms and conditions for the grant.

One unexpected problem was the fall of the GBP as a consequence to the Brexit vote. To cover this exchange-rate shortfall, the RSPB committed approximately £7500. However, the shortfall was higher than expected so activity 2.9 had to be cancelled as explained in our Year 2 Half year Report. The cancellation of this activity was compensated for by the fact that the invited speakers for the networking workshop were experts in cattle management and management of meadows with grazing.

A couple of issues that were not anticipated were the sometimes cumbersome SBA administrative process and the Republic's equivalent procedures that have at times slowed progress (also explained in our Annual Report in more detail). This was prominent especially when the need for a building permit came as a surprise that caused some delays, and contradicted previous relevant advice we had received. However, through collaboration and the

support from the SBAA and the Akrotiri Community Council the fencing permit was issued relatively quickly and the problem was overcome.

Another issue the project team was challenged with were the reactions of a local from Akrotiri village. This individual had placed a bid for the second round of engineering works. The proper assessment of bids resulted in awarding the bid to a company that was not from Akrotiri village (we had received only one bid from locals of Akrotiri village). The local bidder reacted by taking his machinery on site and blocking the entry points to the site while he was threatening that he would destroy any work the awarded bidder would do. The Akrotiri Community Council initially insisted that priority in the bidding process should have been given to the local. However, after project partners explained that the bidding procedure and assessment were legitimate and lawful, and added that the local's reaction was jeopardising the project's success, the Council tried to convince the local bidder to allow the awarded bidder to work on site. SBAA officials also had to intervene to ask the Akrotiri Community Council to respect legal bidding procedures. The collaboration of the project team with the SBAA and later with the Community Council eventually allowed for the works to take place with no problems.

3.2 Outcome

The project gave a dynamic start towards restoring Akrotiri Marsh and returning it to its biodiversity-rich state of 20 years ago. If the management continues as it started through the project and following the management proposals of the Site Management Plan, we estimate that Akrotiri Marsh will return to its biodiversity rich state of some decades ago. Already, the project has managed to break the wall of reeds and create some habitat for other wildlife. It has also managed to increase grazing pressure through the managed increase of grazing cattle which is the most important management tool to control the reed bed. Although it wasn't possible to return the Marsh to how it was 20 years ago within 2 years (for the reasons already explained in Section 3.1), the success is that the project has provided the right conditions to enable this to happen sustainably through local graziers. A comparison of the georeferenced orthophotomap created at the start of the project and the drone photos taken after the end of the engineering works shows the creation of habitat within the reedbed – Annex 6. Moreover, satellite photos from during the project show the decrease of reed-bed area and increase of grazing area (see Section 2.2. in the Site Management Plan given in Annex 8. Moreover, the expansion of Red Data Book Plants into new areas indicates the site's response to restoration efforts. The benefit to rare plants has been confirmed for two species so far. As mentioned in Section 3.1, for two plant species of the Red Data Book (*Phyla nodiflora* & *Ipomoea sagittata*) new areas have been identified. Also, during the project we recorded *Apium graveolens* for the first time on site.

There was also some evidence of outcomes for birds on site. The restoration of the scrape area for waders and the creation of the pools (for the Ferruginous duck) were actions that were only completed in the autumn of 2016. These were the two actions expected to generate the most immediate results for key bird species, while the clearing of drainage canals and reed management can certainly be expected to enhance habitat availability for birds in the medium-term. Despite the fact that the pools and scrape were only created in the autumn of 2016, there was already some clear evidence of their value for birds. Ferruginous ducks were already seen using the pools created specifically for them during June 2017 (flocks of 7 and 8 birds were counted on separate occasions). And this despite there not being much emergent vegetation, which the ducks need for feeding, and which will naturally colonise in the next year or two.

The management plan and preliminary studies developed through the project provided valuable knowledge about the site which ensure appropriate future management and maintenance of project outcomes.

Two years of project implementation were not enough to decrease the reed bed area to the extent it occupied 20 years ago. This would only be achievable if we could have big numbers of cattle that would graze the site after mechanical removal of reeds. Only locals from Akrotiri village have the legal right to graze the Akrotiri Marsh and the activities relevant to grazing (i.e. fencing, erection of sheds, funding of cattle purchase, training, installing electric fence and training/convincing graziers that it works, changing the grazing strategy from tethered animals to untethered) were time consuming and it took almost two years to increase the number of cattle

on site. All graziers are committed and understand their role in managing the reed-bed. The site's future depends on these people and their animals, so we consider this as one of the greatest achievements of this project.

The project has given Akrotiri Marsh the identity and profile that was missing and locals value it more than before. Already, there are locals, especially younger people, who are looking into options to promote eco-tourism/agrotourism. However, this is a new area that locals are not so familiar with and one they will need more support on.

Because of the project and the boost it gave to the site, graziers have created an organisation (the 'Cyprus cattle breed organisation') and are looking into marketing options to promote and create a brand for the local, free range, conservation-friendly beef.

There is also an increased interest in basketry, using materials from the Marsh.

The visitor infrastructure created through the project is expected to contribute to local economic development as the visitor numbers increase.

The local community in general has become more aware about the site and its importance and this was also evident from the fact that, half-way through the project, the Community successfully exerted pressure on the SBA Administration to demolish the abandoned, unlicensed buildings that were within the Marsh. This was done because the community saw this as another improvement to the Marsh's habitat and image. Moreover, the 2nd year of the project was the first year that there was no deliberate/wild fires at the Marsh. Deliberate fires were traditionally set by locals to control reed expansion and create more room for grazing and for basketry plants to colonise. One of the messages the project tried to put across at every opportunity, through the information events involving the local Community, meetings and personal communication, was that deliberate and uncontrolled fires actually help reeds grow and expand. Another problem of the fires which was communicated to the locals is that these fires pose a threat to the infrastructure created as part of the project and the bad image these create for the village.

3.3 Long-term strategic outcome(s)

The project has contributed in delivering long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment in the Cyprus Overseas Territory as it complies with the OT's obligations to protect and manage the designated Ramsar, SPA and SAC and it complies with international obligations for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The project has helped enhance biodiversity under the Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy and contributed in the conservation of legally protected species. The project has also achieved good stewardship of the environment and sustainable development.

The project achievements have been described in section 3.2. To summarise them, the project has achieved the engagement of the local community and other stakeholders in conservation and sustainable development. It has also promoted sustainable and traditional activities, i.e. grazing and basketry which have enhanced the community's relation with the Marsh. Moreover, through the engineering works, the project has improved access and promotion of biological methods for mosquito control. At the same time it has reduced wildfire risk as explained in detail in section 3.2. The infrastructure created as part of the project has improved visitor's experience which can be expected to bring more economic benefits to the local community. In terms of conservation impact and achievements, this project has improved habitat conditions for important bird and plant species. The information gathered through the project and the Site Management Plan are valuable elements for the future management of the site. Moreover, the increase of grazing cattle ensures the continuation of reed control in the future given that grazing follows management proposals as set out in the Site Management Plan.

Moreover, indirectly the project has influenced wider decision-making and has helped embed environmental issues into decision making, in the sense that raising the profile of the area, confirming the conservation interest, engaging stakeholders etc. helps consultation and correct decision making.

The impact of the project is prominent on two levels. On a conservation level, the project has laid down the foundation for targeted restoration options and effective management. The project has established the method for controlling the expansion of reeds and reducing the reed bed area, thus leading to an increase in biodiversity over the course of time.

On a socioeconomic level, the local community has embraced the project and is more aware of the importance of the site and the benefits it can bring to the local community. More locals use the site in the traditional way, i.e. grazing and collecting basketry material. Graziers have increased in number from 3 to 9.

Value for money has been achieved through the efficient purchasing and bidding procedures for large sums. Moreover, BirdLife Cyprus contracted a lawyer to support the bidding procedures. RSPB has a great experience in overseeing engineering works and monitor contractors performance. This experience was used for the second phase of engineering works in autumn 2016.

4 Sustainability and Legacy

Throughout the project there was a high level of support from the SBA Administration (the responsible site manager) and, as was anticipated, there was also high support from the local community. Ongoing site management, the details and requirements of which are set out in the site management plan, can ensure the continuation of all project achievements. The project has set the foundations and the management can continue at low future cost and will be sustained by the SBAA in close cooperation with the local community. The graziers, which are locals from Akrotiri village, have responded very well to the incentives generated by the project and have worked closely with the project team. Future reed management can continue based on the good relation built between the graziers and the project team. However, there are some restrictions that need to be resolved if graziers are to keep sufficient numbers of cattle on site (for example the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) government funding for Cyprus cattle needs to continue and on site conditions need to improve if we are to increase cattle numbers on site). The project team has worked closely with the relevant departments of the RoC in order to include the new graziers in a relevant agro-environment scheme that allows receipt of support for keeping the Cyprus cattle breed. The RoC Department of Agriculture aims to include them from in the scheme from March 2018 onwards, under the condition they become an organisation (something that is happening). Moreover, the RoC Department of Agriculture is working to create another agro-environment measure in order to subsidise graziers' activities that are relevant to conservation grazing management and provide motives to manage reed expansion. This is another indication of project success, showcasing mobilisation of stakeholders for the protection of the site as a result of the project efforts.

The new Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre run by the SBAA is a key information centre for Akrotiri village and the whole Akrotiri Peninsula. Visitors to the centre are encouraged to visit Akrotiri Marsh. The project leaflet and visitors' brochure is also distributed at the Centre. The Centre also implements environmental education programs for the Marsh to promote its conservation value. Moreover, the Centre continues its efforts to promote basketry, through events, training courses and other awareness raising activities.

BirdLife Cyprus continues monitoring the site during key seasons and will promote it as a birdwatching destination through its website and through its publications. BirdLife Cyprus will also aim to provide ongoing support and advice related to site management to the SBAA after the end of the project, in the same way that it has during project implementation. Moreover, now that Akrotiri marsh has become more visitor friendly, it provides more opportunities for it to be used as a site for birdwatching and educational outings organised by BirdLife Cyprus.

Moreover, the SBA Environment Service is fully committed to continue the monitoring and habitat management. The SBAA Environment Department has submitted a budget line entry for continuation of key management actions, i.e. to maintain draining ditches on a regular basis. However, this is still subject to budget approval.

The website, dedicated to Akrotiri Marsh will continue to run and can be further enhanced in the future if new possibilities arise such as information on accommodation at Akrotiri village.

The Site Management Plan, which includes clear management and monitoring proposals, can ensure that all project achievements endure.

The collaboration achieved through this project provided opportunities for building partnerships for potential future collaborations. Buoyed by the success of this project there is an enthusiasm to do more conservation work within Cyprus SBAs through a second project.

The Project Manager (PM), who was working full time on the project, will continue to work at BirdLife Cyprus as Project Coordinator. The involvement of the PM in this project provided further knowledge and experience which is valuable for a growing conservation organisation like BirdLife Cyprus. The rest of the staff members who worked part time on the project will continue to work for the same employer.

5 Lessons learned

In terms of the management of the project, the fact that there was one person (Project Manager) working full time on the coordination of the project worked very well for this project as this person could have the full overview of the project, its timeframe, activities and budget. Another useful element that has helped the smooth implementation of the project is the fact that the Project Manager and the Finance Officer for the project as well as the Project Director worked for the same organisation and could communicate on project issues promptly. Moreover, the Project Steering Committee has contributed in involving relevant stakeholders in decision making and project progress. In addition, the project had set achievable targets and it involved all key partners with relevant expertise. The involvement of the appropriate partners (for example the RSPB, with its many years of experience on reserves management, partners with knowledge on wetland management, birds and managing projects like BirdLife Cyprus as well as partners like AEEC with good historical knowledge for the site) played a key role in the effective implementation of the project.

One of the main lessons learnt from this project was that the expectations of the local community needed very careful management. This challenge was identified during the first year of the project so during the second year the project team aimed at communicating project aims, activities and long-term benefits in a better manner, in order to manage expectations within the local community. It was important that the local community would understand that changes to the site would not happen overnight and therefore most of the economic benefits to the local community would need time to become evident.

Another lesson learnt was that project aims and activities should be communicated in detail at the first stages of the project with the SBAA to avoid administrative 'surprises' of the 'red tape' kind. We would recommend asking for clarification on such issues early on, and in writing. However, ultimately, working closely with project partners and key stakeholders can (and did) help overcome these and other issues. Maintaining communication and involving all key partners in both the design and implementation phases of the project also helps deliver a project within timeline and in an effective way.

Another challenge that the project team had to deal with throughout the project was that decision making relating to the Site Plan had to take into account all the various uses of the site and the needs of different users (i.e. birdwatchers, graziers, educators). This is something that we would recommend to others doing similar projects.

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation of the project implementation and progress was done internally. BirdLife Cyprus was responsible for monitoring project implementation and evaluation of project results while project partners were also involved in this, both ad hoc and, more formally, through the regular project steering committee meetings. The Monitoring and Evaluation System contributed in providing feedback that could be used in decision making and planning actions ahead. The 'Expected Outputs' table presented in the project application was widely used to monitor project progress and through the indicators set to evaluate project impact and results. For example, by setting performance indicators the project team could monitor the effective implementation of specific activities. Moreover, this table was also used by the Project Steering Committee to monitor project progress and results. During these meetings, detailed project progress and

results were presented, which helped plan and agree future steps. Also, project partners visited the site often to evaluate the impact of activities and the response of the site to changes brought about by the project. Through the Monitoring and Evaluation System, the project team could demonstrate that the outputs and activities contribute to the project outcome.

At the early stages of the project, the project team identified that the indicator target set for Output 1 regarding the clearing of reeds over an area of 50 ha could not be effectively reached during the project duration, as explained in the Y1 Half year report. Grazing was identified as the most efficient method of controlling reeds and minimising the area they cover. To adapt to the change, the project focused its efforts and resources on creating suitable conditions and providing targeted motives in order to increase the number of grazing animals on site and change the grazing method to untethered animals, as this method would be more effective. While controlling reeds with grazing demands more time, it is a much more effective and efficient method rather than removing reeds with mechanical ways and not having sufficient numbers of cattle to maintain those areas reed-free.

5.2 Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

The review from the Annual Report (Y1) included three comments but did not ask for any responses. However, this report is an opportunity to report on those comments. Regarding comment no 1 (further use of activity images, historical and contextual narrative and a more 'familiar' style), the comment was taken into account and changes to the project website were made where appropriate, with more images, mention of the historical connection of the locals with Akrotiri Marsh etc. Regarding comment no 2 (restructure of budget to reduce the proportion of expenditure classified as 'other') the budget has been reconstructed and this change was submitted with a change request form, in August 2016. Regarding comment no 3 (considering cattle disease in the project risk assessment) we considered cattle disease as a risk and we worked closely with the Republic of Cyprus Veterinary Services to minimise this risk.

The review was circulated among partners in order to inform them on the comments included therein.

6 Darwin Identity

Akrotiri Marsh has been effectively and widely promoted through this project, significantly increasing the profile of this important site and the profile of the Darwin initiative in Cyprus also. As more and more people become aware of the site's existence, uniqueness and importance, the more responsibility lies on the competent authorities to protect it and manage it. Increased visitors may also bring socioeconomic benefits to the local community. In total three press releases were sent to the media and these had very good take-up: as a result the project had 10 articles in newspapers. In addition, 12 articles were presented in electronic media. Moreover, three separate interviews were given on Cyprus radio. The project website and Facebook page were regularly updated with news and activities. The website counts 169714 clicks and Facebook page has 234 likes (as of end May 2017). The eco-touristic brochure printed in 5000 copies has been distributed in a targeted manner through the Akrotiri Environmental *Education Centre* and *BirdLife Cyprus*. In addition, in collaboration with the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, the brochure has been made available at the two national airports in Cyprus (Paphos and Larnaka airport), which receive hundreds of thousands of travellers each year.

The Darwin Initiative funding has been recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity, throughout. All stakeholders involved in the project (i.e. RoC Departments, contractors who worked for the project, locals, and of course project partners) understand that the project is funded by the UK Government and that the Darwin Initiative provides grants for projects working in UK Overseas Territories (OTs) to support conservation actions.

All the material produced as part of the project prominently displayed the Darwin Initiative logo and where possible the Darwin Initiative contribution was also acknowledged with the phrase "*The project is implemented with aid from the Darwin Initiative through UK Government funding*". More specifically, the Darwin Initiative contribution was acknowledged in all information and awareness material (i.e. brochures, sticker, website & signs, link to material is <http://www.akrotirimarsh.org/en/web-pages/information-material/3>), reports and studies (Grazing

Capacity Study, Water Management Regime, Site Management Plan, poster during the Conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities that took place in Gibraltar, in mid-July 2015, etc.), Press Releases and other announcements (i.e. announcement for cattle purchase funding within the local village), and presentations (i.e. during events and Project Steering Committee meetings). The project was also promoted through BirdLife Cyprus' publications, i.e. in thirteen issues of the monthly e-newsletter (with around 3000 recipients, samples are given here: [A pioneering conservation project in the British Bases is completed](#) & [Akrotiri Marsh gets its breathing space back and ready to welcome visitors](#)) and four times in the BirdLife Cyprus' quarterly magazine (received by 500 members of the organisation). Please note that, in an effort to keep the volume of this report to a minimum, copies of these publications are not provided here, but are available upon request.

Moreover, to promote Darwin funding opportunities and other projects, the project website www.akrotirimarsh.org includes a link for the Darwin Initiative website.

7 Finance and administration

7.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2016/17 Grant (£)	2016/17 Total actual Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Audit				
Capital items				
Others				
TOTAL				

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Melpo Apostolidou - Project Manager/Coordinator	
Elena Markitani-Communication Officer <i>*note: in relevance to a comment on the Audit Spot Check, please note that Elena works as a Development Officer for BirdLife Cyprus and worked partly on the project as a Communication Officer to support production of information material, events etc. The accounts show her cost only for the time she worked for the project.</i>	
Myria Achilleos-Accountant	
TOTAL	

Consultancy – description of breakdown of costs	Consultancy – cost (£)
INSURANCE FOR FENCE ALL RISK 9/5-18/6/2016 INSURANCE FOR FENCE ALL RISK 18/6-10/7/2016 ADDITIONAL TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY BASKET REED LESSON (4 DAYS) BASKET REED LESSON (3 DAYS) BASKET REED LESSON (4 DAYS) BASKET REED LESSON (4 DAYS) BASKET REED LESSON (1 DAY) BASKET REED LESSON (4 DAYS) BASKET REED LESSON (1 DAY) FIRE INSURANCE 12/7-31/3/2017 PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE 12/7-31/3/2017 CONSERVATION STUDY AKROTIRI MARCH-1ST PAYMENT 30% STATIC STUDY FOR HIDES DESIGN HIDES DESIGN HIDES STATIC STUDY FOR HIDES CONSERVATION STUDY AKROTIRI MARCH-FINAL PAYMENT 70% WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING GLOVES FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING WIRE FOR SCREENING CASES FOR LEAFLETS CIVIL ENGINEER SITE VISIT - WORKS SUPERVISION SCREENING SCREENING SCREENING CREATION & PLACEMENT OF ROAD SIGNS INSURANCE FOR HIDES DESIGN SIGNS PRINTING LEAFLETS PRODUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF INFORMATION SIGN FINAL PAYMENT DRONE TRAINING SITE VISIT - SUPERVISION FOR HIDES CONSTRUCTION & INSTAL OF A WOODEN POST FOR INFO SIGN EARTHWORKS FOR WOODEN POSTS FOR SIGNS MISCELLANEOUS FOR SIGNS MISCELLANEOUS FOR SIGNS PRODUCTION OF A SIGN FOR DISABLED SPACE ADDITIONAL WOODEN BOARD ON POST FOR INFORMATION SIGNS PRODUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF WELCOME SIGN ON SITE (PVC SIGN) 2 CASES FOR LEAFLETS	
TOTAL	

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
WELLINGTON BOOTS FOR ACCESS TO MARSH & WATER GUTTER SHEDS DRONE ADVANCE FOR 2 HIDES WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENT -FENCE 2ND PAYMENT HIDES FINAL PAYMENT LOW HIDE HIDES HIDES	
TOTAL	

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
CONSTRUCTION PERMIT CLEARING FOR FENCE CLEARING AFTER WATER DEVELOPM DEPT INDICATIONS & CREATION PARKING LOTS REPAIR CANAL FENCE WATER WORKS CLEARING MAPS WATER WORKS CATTLES CATTLES CATTLES CATTLES CATTLES CATTLES FENCE CATTLE CAGES FASTENER FOR ADDITIONAL LINE OF WIRE WASHER ADDITIONAL LINE OF WIRE WIRE ADDITIONAL LINE OF WIRE WIRE,PADLOCK EXTRA FENCE KEY FOR PADLOCK EXTRA FENCE EXTRA FENCE 1ST PAYMNEY EXTRA FENCE 2ND PAYMENT EXTRA FENCE 3RD PAYMENT CONSTRUCTION PERMIT GATE & BOLLARD PADLOCKS FOR GATE TAPES SOLAR PADLOCKS FOR GATE PADLOCK FOR GATE PADLOCK FOR GATE EXTRA ELECTRIC FENCE WIRE FOR ELECTRIC FENCE PADLOCKS & 6 KEYS FOR GATE	
TOTAL	

7.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Source of funding for project lifetime	Total
RSPB (funds raised during the project as indicated in the application, due to fall of GBP value)	
RSPB STAFF TIME	
SBAAs STAFF TIME	
Staff time BirdLife Cyprus-Leventis Conservation Foundation	
TOTAL	

Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime	
RSPB (short term support from RSPB for specific actions)	
BirdLife Cyprus (Staff cost for Project Coordinator)	
*Please note that long-term funding is still uncertain	
TOTAL	

7.3 Value for Money

Looking back over the life of the project, it is evident that the project has achieved a great number of things within a limited time-frame and through efficient use of the available budget. Targeted actions were carried out within budget and with the aim of ensuring maximum impact and maximum long-term sustainability for the measures implemented, to achieve a 'turning of the corner' and the long-term sustainable management of a key wetland site. Originally, the budget for this project was calculated in Euro (which is the Cyprus currency) to minimise exchange rate fluctuation risk. The project fully utilised the experience of BirdLife Cyprus, gained through other projects (mostly EU funded). There was also close consultation with the SBAA and the RSPB, who also have relevant experience to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in project implementation.

Value for money was achieved through the use of efficient purchasing procedures including tender procedures for large sums. BirdLife Cyprus also used a lawyer as 'Consultancy' to provide support in tender procedures and ensure their efficiency. During the engineering works in Year2, where a large amount would be spend to implement key engineering actions for habitat creation, the RSPB was involved in monitoring contractor's work and performance, again to ensure efficiency.

Tender documents and contracts are available from BirdLife Cyprus to provide evidence for the above.

Moreover, BirdLife Cyprus undergoes a financial audit every year, therefore project expenses were additionally audited in year 1 of project implementation. In addition, the audit report prepared as part of this project demonstrates the efficiency of resources used.

Annex 1 Project's original logframe

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Impact: Akrotiri Marsh, part of Akrotiri wetland complex in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, will be restored to a mosaic of habitats, similar to its state 20 years ago. This will lead to restoration of species diversity at the site as well as providing increased socio-economic opportunities for local villagers.</p>			
<p>Outcome:</p> <p>1. Output 1 includes the changes to the physical characters of the site and when the activities under this output are completed, the site will include a mosaic of habitats leading to increased species, especially birds and plants, diversity and more opportunities for grazing and collection of handicraft materials.</p> <p>2. The management plan developed through Output 2 will lead to gaining more knowledge about the site and good future management and maintenance of project outcomes.</p> <p>3. The visitor infrastructure designed through Output 3 will contribute to local economic development and enable sharing of experiences.</p> <p>4. Output 4 supports achievement of the other three outputs.</p>			<p>General assumption: We have converted the Euro budget to GBP, using the Euro Exchange rate as reported in the EU Official Journal on 4 January 2014, rate of 2 January, page 2, (Vol. 57, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2014:001:TOC), which 0.8282 GBP to the Euro. If this changes significantly during the project, the RSPB will seek to make additional co-funding available to support BirdLife Cyprus in project implementation.</p>
<p>Outputs:</p> <p>1. Habitat modified to create mosaic with increased species diversity and opportunities for villagers</p>	<p>1.1 Site is visibly transformed from solid reedbed to a habitat mosaic (site map)</p> <p>1.2 Open habitat created where sedge/rush can re-colonise (in the future). Reeds cleared in an area of around 50ha</p> <p>1.3 More space for grazing animals created</p> <p>1.4 Bird diversity and plant diversity increased.</p>	<p>1.1 Project reports, photographs, habitat map</p> <p>1.2 Habitat map before and after works. Counts of grazing cattle as part of site monitoring.</p> <p>1.3 same as 1.2</p> <p>1.4 Bird and plant monitoring data collected and baseline studies carried out throughout the project</p>	N/A
<p>2. Site management plan developed based on clear site management objectives and site values monitored</p>	<p>2.1 Site management plan will be developed and agreed by project Steering Committee. Clear site management objectives agreed.</p>	<p>2.1 Water management regime Finalised site management plan Monitoring reports</p>	N/A

	2.2 Preliminary studies (topography study, grazing carrying capacity, bird productivity, study on Killifish) produced Bird productivity and population assessment study produced	Data collected and preliminary studies produced. 2.2 More information available from preliminary studies and bird productivity and population assessment study.	
3. Birdwatching tourism infrastructure developed and promoted	3.1 Visitors observation tower, walkway, information boards and car parking all installed. 3.2 Tourism leaflet developed and available at key locations 3.3 Public awareness increased	3.1 Photographs and reports of new tourism infrastructure Website 3.2 Photographs of visitors on site. Increased accommodation bookings at Akrotiri village. Increased demand of schools for Fassouri visits. 3.3 Number of newspaper clippings about project, likes on Facebook page, and website clicks. Number of people attending event with local community.	N/A
4. Project delivered on time and within budget	4.1 Reporting deadlines met, audit passed with no issues identified	4.1 Reports to Darwin Plus, financial reports, audit	N/A
<p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>1.1 Design of site map and agreement by Project Steering Committee</p> <p>1.2 Landscaping works to clear/remove reeds and create open areas and islets, dredging</p> <p>1.3 Water management by clearing existing outlet ditches, install water control structures like sluices</p> <p>1.4 Manage vegetation with grazing animals – purchase of Cyprus breed Cattle and mobile electric livestock fence, livestock watering troughs</p> <p>2.1 Production of a topography survey (contours)</p> <p>2.2 Key bird species productivity study and population assessment</p> <p>2.3 Production of a grazing animal carrying capacity study</p> <p>2.4 Production of a study on Killifish (current condition, species requirements, management options) for Akrotiri marsh.</p> <p>2.5 Production of a water management regime</p> <p>2.6 Monitoring of key variables carried out at site (water quality, bird species present, plants present, habitat area, etc.)</p> <p>2.7 Site management plan, with clear site management objectives, drafted and agreed by Project Steering Committee</p>			

- 2.8 Workshop on wetland restoration held in Cyprus with experts from abroad to share knowledge and experience
- 2.9 Networking travel to a wetland abroad for Akrotiri Village, Environment Centre and BirdLife Cyprus
- 2.10 Purchase of equipment optics (binoculars, telescope, tripod and cover for telescope), computer for monitoring and project management, camera, chest waders, dingy, drone and camera
- 3.1 Design and construction of observation tower with display space
- 3.2 Design and construction of information signs
- 3.3 Design and construction of a walkway to the observation tower
- 3.4 Allocation and development of designated parking area and bollards to restrict accessibility to site and guide cars to parking
- 3.5 Hire local villagers to make screening for walkway to observation tower
- 3.6 Hire local villagers to harvest sedges and other material for basketry
- 3.7 Design and production of ecotourism brochure for Akrotiri including other activities and products (e.g. basketry, handicrafts) in Akrotiri village and the wider area
- 3.8 Design and production of website to highlight Akrotiri and other birdwatching tourism in the area
- 3.9 Production of project logo, small leaflet and sticker to promote project and Akrotiri wetland at the early stages of the project
- 3.10 Organise two awareness raising events with the local community
- 4.1 Recruitment of project manager
- 4.2 Establishment of Project Steering Committee with key stakeholders
- 4.3 Regular Steering Committee meetings (minimum four in total)
- 4.4 Regular budget monitoring
- 4.5 Reporting

Annex 2 Report of progress and achievements against final project logframe for the life of the project

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements for the life of the project
<p>Impact: N/A (application did not include Impact statement)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active involvement of the local Community of Akrotiri in protecting an important wetland - Involvement of locals with expansion of sustainable and traditional farming (graziers) - Expansion of area for two Cyprus Red Data Book plants - Key steps towards contributing in the conservation of important species, such as Ferruginous Duck, while foundations laid for sustainable long-term conservation of breeding wader species and migrant/wintering birds at a key wetland.
<p>Outcome: Akrotiri Marsh, part of Akrotiri wetland complex in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, will be restored to a mosaic of habitats, similar to its state 20 years ago. This will lead to restoration of species diversity at the site as well as providing increased socio-economic opportunities for local villagers.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The project significantly increased the habitat diversity of Akrotiri marsh by clearing areas of the reed bed that had come to take over and dominate the marsh and creating new habitat in the form of seven pools (open water areas) and the restoration and expansion of a scrape area (shallow water with islands) for waders. The project increased cattle grazing on site to control reed growth, within the areas cleared of reeds (mechanically), within the existing wet grassland area and also within the reed-bed expanse not cleared mechanically (cattle 'invaded' this area in search of feeding). The restoration of the habitat mosaic led to an increase in cover of rare plant species and increased occurrence of key bird species such as the ferruginous duck (for which species the pools were created). This biodiversity restoration can fully be expected to continue and gather pace and the management measures initiated under this project begin to have an effect in following years. Socio-economic opportunities were created through the increase in the grazing herd on site, increased access for visitors including birdwatchers and also management for locals collecting plants from the Marsh for basketry. Significant information collected throughout the project and clear conservation objectives produced as part of the Site Management Plan can contribute in the long-term sustainable management of the site.</p>

<p>Output 1 Habitat modified to create mosaic with increased species diversity and opportunities for villagers</p>	<p>1.1 Site is visibly transformed from solid reedbed to a habitat mosaic (site map)</p> <p>1.2 Open habitat created where sedge/rush can re-colonise (in the future). Reeds cleared in an area of around 50ha</p> <p>1.3 More space for grazing animals created</p> <p>1.4 Bird diversity and plant diversity increased.</p>	<p>1.1 Site map has been produced. The wall of reeds has been broken in some areas where pools (open water habitat) were created. Increase grazing has opened more areas. More details are given in Section 3.1 of the report. Evidence can be found in Annex 7 (images of the site at the start of the project and images after the completion of engineering works).</p> <p>1.2 Open habitat has been created as the map and photos in Annex 7 demonstrate. Reeds have been cleared in an area of around 5ha for reasons fully explained in Section 3.1. However, the success of the project is that it has provided the right conditions to enable this to happen sustainably through the local graziers</p> <p>1.3 As above.</p> <p>1.4 Flocks of 8 and 7 Ferruginous ducks were recorded in one of the open water areas during the 2017 breeding season. Two Red Data Book plants have been identified in many new areas, also a first reference to <i>Apium graveolens</i> in the area. (Please see section 3.2 for more details). The actions that were expected to generate the most immediate results for key bird species were only completed in the autumn of 2016 so we expect more indications of impact in the future.</p>
<p>Activity 1.1 Design of site map and agreement by Project Steering Committee</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Activity 1.2.Landscaping works to clear/remove reeds and create open areas and islets, dredging</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Activity 1.3 Water management by clearing existing outlet ditches, install water control structures like sluices</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Activity 1.4 Manage vegetation with grazing animals – purchase of Cyprus breed Cattle and mobile electric livestock fence, livestock watering troughs</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>Output 2 Site management plan developed based on clear site</p>	<p>2.1 Site management plan will be developed and agreed by project Steering Committee. Clear site management objectives agreed.</p>	<p>2.1 Site Management Plan with clear site management objectives has been developed and agreed by project Steering Committee, please find it in Annex 8.</p>

management objectives and site values monitored	2.2 Preliminary studies (topography study, grazing carrying capacity, bird productivity, study on Killifish) produced Bird productivity and population assessment study produced	2.2 All studies have been produced. To minimise volume of report these are not included in Annexes but they are available upon request (The results of all these studies are incorporated in the Site Management Plan and it also includes the grazing carrying capacity and the water management regime as Annexes).
Activity 2.1 Production of a topography survey (contours)		Completed
Activity 2.2 Key bird species productivity study and population assessment		Completed
Activity 2.3 Production of a grazing animal carrying capacity study		Completed (provided in Annex 8 as part of the Site Management Plan's Annexes)
Activity 2.4 Production of a study on Killifish (current condition, species requirements, management options) for Akrotiri marsh.		Completed
Activity 2.5 Production of a water management regime		Completed (provided in Annex 8 as part of the Site Management Plan's Annexes)
Activity 2.6 Monitoring of key variables carried out at site (water quality, bird species present, plants present, habitat area, etc.)		Completed
Activity 2.7 Site management plan, with clear site management objectives, drafted and agreed by Project Steering Committee		Completed
Activity 2.8 Workshop on wetland restoration held in Cyprus with experts from abroad to share knowledge and experience		Completed
Activity 2.9 Networking travel to a wetland abroad for Akrotiri Village, Environment Centre and BirdLife Cyprus		This action did not take place, as approved through Change Request form procedures and as explained in Section 3.1 and in our Year 2 Half year Report
Activity 2.10 Purchase of equipment optics (binoculars, telescope, tripod and cover for telescope), computer for monitoring and project management, camera, chest waders, dingy, drone and camera		Completed (dingy was not purchased, as approved through Change Request form procedures)
Output 3 Birdwatching tourism infrastructure developed and promoted	3.1 Visitors observation tower, walkway, information boards and car parking all installed.	3.1 Two birdwatching hides created with walkways, information boards and car park installed (please follow this link

	<p>3.2 Tourism leaflet developed and available at key locations</p> <p>3.3 Public awareness increased</p>	<p>http://www.akrotirimarsh.org/en/web-pages/visitor-facilities/12 for photos as evidence)</p> <p>3.2 Brochure for visitors produced and circulated through key locations (please see more information in Section 3.1, brochure is available here http://www.akrotirimarsh.org/en/web-pages/information-material/3)</p> <p>3.2 Public awareness has increased as explained in Section 3.1. This is evident from the newspaper clippings about project, likes on Facebook page, and website clicks as well as number of people attending event with local community.</p>
Activity 3.1 Design and construction of observation tower with display space		Completed
Activity 3.2 Design and construction of information signs		Completed
Activity 3.3 Design and construction of a walkway to the observation tower		Completed
Activity 3.4 Allocation and development of designated parking area and bollards to restrict accessibility to site and guide cars to parking		Completed (instead of bollards fence has been erected)
3.5 Hire local villagers to make screening for walkway to observation tower		Completed
3.6 Hire local villagers to harvest sedges and other material for basketry		Completed
3.7 Design and production of ecotourism brochure for Akrotiri including other activities and products (e.g. basketry, handicrafts) in Akrotiri village and the wider area		Completed
3.8 Design and production of website to highlight Akrotiri Marsh and other birdwatching tourism in the area		Completed
3.9 Production of project logo, small leaflet and sticker to promote project and Akrotiri wetland at the early stages of the project		Completed
3.10 Organise two awareness raising events with the local community		Completed

Output 4 Project delivered on time and within budget	4.1 Reporting deadlines met, audit passed with no issues identified	4.1 Reporting deadlines have been met, audit has passed with no major issues identified, please find the Audit report in Annex 9.
4.1 Recruitment of project manager		Completed
4.2 Establishment of Project Steering Committee with key stakeholders		Completed
4.3 Regular Steering Committee meetings (minimum four in total)		Completed
4.4 Regular budget monitoring		Completed
4.5 Reporting		Completed

Annex 3 Standard Measures

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required)
Training Measures		
1	Number of (i) students from the UKOTs; and (ii) other students to receive training (including PhD, masters and other training and receiving a qualification or certificate)	
2	Number of (i) people in UKOTs; and (ii) other people receiving other forms of long-term (>1yr) training not leading to formal qualification	
3a	Number of (i) people in UKOTs; and (ii) other people receiving other forms of short-term education/training (i.e. not categories 1-5 above)	
3b	Number of training weeks (i) in UKOTs; (ii) outside UKOTs not leading to formal qualification	
4	Number of types of training materials produced. Were these materials made available for use by UKOTs?	
5	Number of UKOT citizens who have increased capacity to manage natural resources as a result of the project	
Research Measures		
9	Number of species/habitat management plans/ strategies (or action plans) produced for/by Governments, public authorities or other implementing agencies in the UKOTs	One Site Management Plan with clear management objectives (available in English)
10	Number of formal documents produced to assist work in UKOTs related to species identification, classification and recording.	One, the Conservation study of the Mediterranean Killifish <i>Aphanius fasciatus</i> in Akrotiri Marsh (Akrotiri SBA, Cyprus). The primary aim of the study was not to assist the identification, classification and recording but the work and the study can contribute towards this direction.
11a	Number of papers published or accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals written by (i) UKOT authors; and (ii) other authors	
11b	Number of papers published or accepted for publication elsewhere written by (i) UKOT authors; and (ii) other authors	
12b	Number of computer-based databases enhanced (containing species/genetic	

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required)
	information). Were these databases made available for use by UKOTs?	
13a	Number of species reference collections established. Were these collections handed over to UKOTs?	
13b	Number of species reference collections enhanced. Were these collections handed over to UKOTs?	
Dissemination Measures		
14a	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops/stakeholder meetings organised to present/disseminate findings from UKOT's Darwin project work	One event at the end of the project to promote project achievements and two information events for the local community Seven stakeholders meetings to present project's aims and results and also steering group meetings One workshop/seminar to disseminate project work Nine events in total
14b	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops/stakeholder meetings attended at which findings from the Darwin Plus project work will be presented/ disseminated	One conference where project was presented with a poster. Theme was: <i>Sustaining Partnerships</i> : a conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities in Gibraltar (11-17/7/2015), organised by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and HM Government of Gibraltar Department of Environment, with the support of Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society
Physical Measures		
20	Estimated value (£s) of physical assets handed over to UKOT(s)	(for example hides, fence, screening, signs)
21	Number of permanent educational/training/research facilities or organisation established in UKOTs	
22	Number of permanent field plots established in UKOTs	
23	Value of resources raised from other sources (e.g., in addition to Darwin funding) for project work	

Annex 4 Publications

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Nationality of lead author	Nationality of institution of lead author	Gender of lead author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink, contact address, annex etc)
Study	Akrotiri Marsh breeding bird study: April-July 2015, Peter Beckenham, 2015	English	N/A	male	BirdLife Cyprus, Nicosia	
Study	Akrotiri Marsh Restoration Project Bird Report 2016, Nathan Wilkie & Ellie Ellwood, 2016	English	N/A	Male	BirdLife Cyprus, Nicosia	
Study	Topography study for Akrotiri Marsh, Melios Agathangelou, 2016	Greek	N/A	Male	N/A	
Study	Conservation study of the Mediterranean Killifish <i>Aphanius fasciatus</i> in Akrotiri Marsh (Akrotiri SBA, Cyprus), Dr Stamatis Zogaris, 2017	Greek	Greek	Male	N/A	
Study*	Water Management Plan, Matt Self, 2017	English	English	Male	N/A	
Study*	Akrotiri Marsh Grazing Capacity Study, John Badley, 2017	English	English	Male	N/A	

Site Management Plan*	Site Management Plan for Akrotiri Marsh, Cyprus SBAs, Melpo Apostolidou, Martin Hellicar, 2017	Greek	Greek (Cyprus)	Female	BirdLife Cyprus
Brochure	Explore the Akrotiri Peninsula, Editor: Melpo Apostolidou, 2017	Greek	Greek (Cyprus)	Female	BirdLife Cyprus

Annex 5 Darwin Contacts

Ref No	DPLUS034
Project Title	Akrotiri Marsh Restoration: a flagship wetland in the Cyprus SBAs
Project Leader Details	
Name	Martin Hellicar, BirdLife Cyprus
Role within Darwin Project	Project Director
Address	
Phone	
Fax/Skype	
Email	
Partner 1	
Name	Pantelis Charilaou
Organisation	SBAs Environment Department & Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre
Role within Darwin Project	Project Officer
Address	
Fax/Skype	
Email	
Partner 2 etc.	
Name	John Badley
Organisation	RSPB
Role within Darwin Project	Project Officer
Address	
Fax/Skype	
Email	