



## Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS 079
<b>Project title</b>	Improving Sustainability of Marine Management in Montserrat
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Montserrat
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Cefas
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Government of Montserrat, Waitt Institute
<b>Project leader</b>	Rachel Mulholland
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)</b>	30.09.2020 HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	@CefasGovUK

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

**Habitat Mapping:**

The analysis of the survey data was completed at the end of project year 2. In the first six months of this project year, work has continued within Cefas on the benthic assemblage analysis and object-based image analysis of environmental data layers, with a draft substrate map completed. The final data layers are on track to be delivered in the latter half of this year.

Cefas has been in contact with the Waitt Institute to discuss the combining of the survey data from the project survey with their previous survey data. This will take place in the latter half of this year. Cefas have also been in discussions with the Waitt Institute regarding the production of a joint academic paper based on the data analysis from the Cefas and Waitt Institute surveys.

An in-country training workshop on data analysis and interpretation is planned for Q4 of this year; however, due to the ongoing Covid-19 travel restrictions, we intend to submit a change request to Darwin to move this deliverable to next year.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**

Work on the EIA aspect of the project has been temporarily put on hold due to the Covid-19 disruption. We remain in regular contact with the Montserrat Environment Department and are available, if needed, to advise on discrete projects; however the training programme is unable to continue at this time due to the restricted working conditions, unavailability or redeployment of relevant staff, and inability to travel.

The Montserrat researcher exchange visit was due to take place in May 2020. Due to travel restrictions this had been delayed to later this year through an agreed change request. Due to ongoing restrictions, we will be submitting a further change request to move this deliverable to next year.

An in-country training visit was also planned for October 2020, but this has also had to be delayed and will be submitting a change request to move this deliverable to next year.

**Education:**

An in-country visit was planned for March 2020 under the education module of the project to meet with education stakeholders, hold the consultation on the draft resource pack and participate in an outreach event targeted at school children. Unfortunately, due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant travel restrictions, we were forced to cancel this visit at the last-minute (the day before the education team were due to fly out to Montserrat). As a result of this last-minute visit cancellation, we were unable to hold the in-person consultation meetings with the relevant stakeholders on the draft resource pack at that time. This visit was delayed through an agreed change request with Darwin and we had hoped to rearrange this visit for later this year. However, with the longevity of the travel restrictions becoming clear we have re-evaluated the possibility of undertaking these activities virtually and have agreed to proceed with the draft education pack consultation meetings online in order to allow us to proceed with finalisation of the resource pack. We will be looking to arrange this series of online meetings in the next quarter.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

N/A

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The project plan for this project year included several visits to Montserrat to deliver training, participate in outreach events and meet with stakeholders. Due to the nature of these visits (i.e. group participation workshops, training on vessel equipment) the majority of the work is unable to be delivered remotely. The training workshops to be delivered under the EIA and habitat mapping modules of this project are central to achieving several of the project outputs. Similarly, the stakeholder meetings and consultation on the educational resource pack are central to progressing the education module of the project and finalisation of this resource pack cannot happen until the stakeholder consultation on the draft pack has been undertaken.

Several planned visits were cancelled at short notice due to the introduction of travel restrictions. We have also had to delay several other in-country activities including two training workshops. We submitted a change request in April this year to delay all in-country project activities by six months; however, due to the long lasting and ongoing travel restrictions will be submitting an additional change request for a further six month delay to these deliverables. We are still unsure of when these activities may be able to resume.

We have reassessed each of the deliverables and have agreed to undertake the education stakeholder meetings virtually through a series of online meetings. This will allow us to proceed with the finalisation of the educational resource pack without the need for an in-country visit at this time. However, it was determined that, due to the nature of the training, the habitat mapping and EIA workshops were unable to be delivered remotely. Work on the data analysis aspects of the habitat mapping module has been able to continue.

The delay in undertaking these in-country activities and visits will ultimately have a knock-on impact on subsequent activities within the project and is likely to impact on the achievability of the project outputs this year. The project is currently due to end on 30 September 2021. If restrictions continue or if a project extension is not granted, any outputs that are not delivered will not be able to be addressed in future project years and could lead to the project not achieving its overall outcome.

We currently estimate that we will still be able to deliver the project within the overall agreed budget with some movement between budget lines and between years, and subject to an extension to the project end date being granted.	
<b>2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?</b>	
Discussed with LTS:	Yes
Formal change request submitted:	Yes – Change request 1 submitted in May 2020 (approved), change request 2 submitted in October 2020 (pending)
Received confirmation of change acceptance	<u>Yes/No</u> – Yes for change request 1, change request 2 still pending.

<b>3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?</b>	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated underspend: £
<b>3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.</b> Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year. <b>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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</b>	
<b>4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin’s management, monitoring, or financial procedures?</b>	
Please find attached the project’s response to the most recent Annual Report Review.	

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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto: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 e.g. Subject: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**