



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2018)

Project reference	DPLUS080
Project title	Securing South Georgia's native habitats following invasive species control
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	South Georgia
Lead organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Partner(s)	Indigena and Durham University
Project leader	<i>Rosemary Newton</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	<i>HYR1</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).

Output 1: A Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) has been developed and circulated to GSGSSI (Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands), Indigena (project partner) and Durham University (project partner) and comments received and implemented from all except Durham University. We expect to receive acceptance of the MoC from Durham University early in November, when all partners and GSGSSI will then sign the MoC. The MoC runs for 5 years to cover the 3 years of the current project, the project exit strategy and potential follow-up activities. Regular contact has been maintained between project partners by email, telephone and Skype. Dr Wayne Dawson (Durham University partner) spent a day at Kew's site at Wakehurst in October to review experimental work and participate in planning for the Inception Workshop in the Falkland Islands.

Output 2 and 3: Different seed trap designs have been evaluated, and a prototype has been constructed and is currently being tested prior to the first field season (December 2018 - March 2019). Methodology and protocols for vegetation monitoring, soil sampling and seed trap monitoring have been discussed with all parties and are currently being written up to be agreed and finalised ahead of the Inception Workshop.

The Inception Workshop will be held in the Falkland Islands from 15 - 22 December 2018. Planning of the workshop is proceeding well, flights have been booked and accommodation has been arranged. Draft activity plans are being discussed.

Output 4: Species pairs have been identified and initial germination testing to confirm high viability in these seed collections is underway. The first thermal gradient plate germination experiment has been set up for the native grass, *Poa flabellata*, to characterise the germination response of this species to different constant and alternating temperatures and under simulated climate change scenarios. This experimental work is being conducted at Wakehurst.

Output 5: Members of the field teams are familiar with the native and non-native plant species on South Georgia and where they occur. The timing of visitation to sites during the South Georgia field season will be determined primarily by the weather and boat availability; however, when at sites the teams will be on the lookout for target species and will collect seeds if they are mature. Additionally, while in the Falklands, seeds of species for thermal gradient plate work (either to replace seeds used or fresh seed collections) will be collected where possible. All this will be discussed and finalised at the Inception Workshop.

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.

When planning the financial split of the Inception Workshop into the categories of Travel and Subsistence costs and Operating costs, costs for travel and subsistence were underestimated and operating costs overestimated. Travel and subsistence are more expensive than anticipated due to the workshop being held so close to Christmas. This timing was necessary, however, as this enabled overall financial savings due to the field team being in the Falklands ahead of the start of the South Georgia field season. Conversely, operating costs for the workshop have been overestimated, as hiring a venue will not be necessary for the Inception Workshop. The workshop should still run within the overall allocated budget; however, the split between Travel and Subsistence and Operating categories will change.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. 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?

No

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R24 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**