



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects**  
**Half Year Report**  
**(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021)**

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS 153
<b>Project title</b>	Conserving tropical marine ecosystems in TCI through science-based fisheries management
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Turks and Caicos Islands
<b>Lead organisation</b>	South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Turks and Caicos Islands Government – Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (TCIG – DECR) Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Fish Ageing Services PTY Ltd (FAS) Ocean Environmental (OE)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Tara Pelembe</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 HYR1</i> <i>Reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> September 2021 (3 months)</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	Organisation: <a href="https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/">https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/</a> Project: <a href="https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/dplus-153-conserving-tropical-marine-ecosystems-in-tci-through-science-based-fisheries-management/">https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/dplus-153-conserving-tropical-marine-ecosystems-in-tci-through-science-based-fisheries-management/</a> SAERI Twitter: @SAERI_FI SAERI Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/S4ERI/">https://www.facebook.com/S4ERI/</a> SAERI blogs: <a href="https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/news/">https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/news/</a>

**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).**

The project has started less than 6 months ago, therefore the reporting period is just 3 months. There were no measurable indicators to report against for each of the outputs for this period as outlined below:

**Output 1: Stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in understanding the requirements for robust fisheries data and in the designation of landing sites.**

There were no measurable indicators to report against for this reporting period, both 1.1 and 1.2 are due by Y1 Q3

**Output 2: TCIG staff and fishers trained in data collection and fisheries data is well managed.**

There were no measurable indicators to report against for this reporting period, 2.1 is due by Y1 Q3, 2.2 by Y2Q2, 2.3 by Y2Q2 2.4 is routinely and 2.5 is by Y3Q1.

**Output 3: Fisheries Science laboratory fully equipped, and staff fully trained, and age and growth studies for 4 species completed.**

There were no measurable indicators to report against for this reporting period both 3.1 and 3.2 are due by Y1 Q3, 3.2 by Y3Q1 and 3.4 by Y3Q2.

During the face-face visit to TCI, Dr Paul Brickle and Tara Pelembe visited the new lab building in DECR offices, and discussed the layout, equipment purchases etc. DECR is purchasing equipment for the laboratory as well for other analytical purposes, and therefore it was important to ensure that the purchases and equipment were complementary and made best use of the full resource available.

**Output 4: Stock assessments of priority species undertaken.**

There were no measurable indicators to report against for this reporting period 4.1 is due by Y3Q1 and 4.2 by Y3Q2.

**General project updates**

The main focus of the project activity to date has been around setting up the partnership MOUs and recruiting the project staff.

Tara Pelembe and Dr Paul Brickle visited the Turks and Caicos Islands for the other work and took the opportunity to spend some days (20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of July and 5<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> August), meeting with stakeholders about DPLUS153 to help to facilitate the project implementation. This included:

- Meeting with key project partners in TCIG to discuss the project, its implementation, recruitment etc. There were also a number of discussions and meetings around where in the TCIG the project would best sit as there has been reshuffle of departments, and the DECR fisheries team has moved to a department of Fisheries and Marine Resources. It was decided that DECR would stay as the host department for the first year of the project, and DFMR would become project partners and sit on the Project Management Group.
- The first Project Management Group meeting was held with TCIG partners DECR and DFMR on teams to agree this and to discuss recruitment, including recruitment to the TCIG role funded by the project.

The Project Manager/Fisheries Scientist role has been advertised, and the recruitment panel is comprised of both SAERI and DECR staff to ensure that the appointment is made with input from both key partner organisations.

## FISHERIES SCIENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

This is a responsible and strategic position based in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) that will co-ordinate the newly-awarded Darwin Plus 2-year Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSSF) project *"Conserving tropical marine ecosystems in TCI through science-based fisheries management"*.

In partnership with the TCI Government (TCIG) this project aims to address barriers to landings and life history data, crucial to stock assessments.

Salary Band D from £34,412  
Flights and relocation grant included

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## Support the fisheries in the Caribbean with your skills and expertise as a scientist

SAERI is recruiting a Senior Marine and Fisheries Scientist to be based in the Turks and Caicos Islands for 2 years to work closely with the government and local fishers and stakeholders. The role will build fishers' capacity for participation in fisheries management and landing sites. It will also train staff in landing and biological data collection and management as well as equip a fisheries laboratory to conduct stock assessments using the data collected.

Specifically, this newly developed role will:

1. Centralise fish landing points through stakeholder engagement
2. Train data collection and equipment use to create an integrated fisheries database
3. Equip a fisheries laboratory; and
4. Develop monitoring and stock assessment routines

Main Essential criteria:

- ✓ PhD in Marine Sciences, marine policy, or related field
- ✓ Experience with statistical modelling, with a fundamental knowledge of stock assessments



Further information can be obtained from Arlene Bowers by emailing [abowers@saeri.ac.fk](mailto:abowers@saeri.ac.fk)

Apply online at

<https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/jobs/>

By 30 September 2021

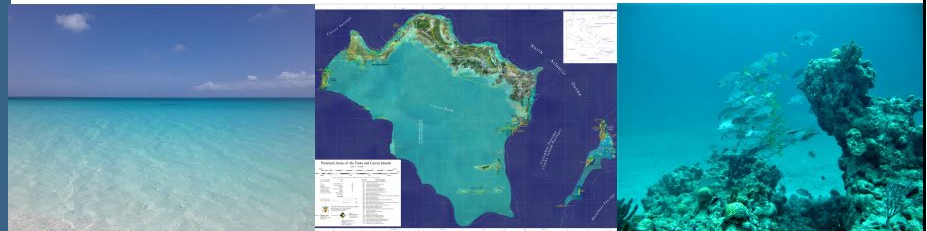



Figure 1: screenshot of the Job advertisement for the Senior Marine and Fisheries Scientist role

The [project webpage](#) has been created on the SAERI website and a screenshot provided below.

Home About Us Research Partners Consult us Contact us Jobs Privacy
Research Institute


### DPLUS 153: Conserving tropical marine ecosystems in TCI through science-based fisheries management



Shallow waters and mangroves in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands

A SAERI-led 2.5 year project that started on the 1st July 2021 funded by Darwin Plus. Building on the successful partnerships established under DPLUS094 that focused on developing Marine Spatial Planning tools in TCI, SAERI is again spear-heading a territory to territory partnership with the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources in TCI to focus on fisheries. Other project partners are the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Fish Ageing Services PTY Ltd and Ocean Environmental.

**Project overview:**  
The balance between sustainable tropical marine ecosystems (TME) and Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSSF) is delicate. SSSF require robust evidence-based management, which in TCI is impeded by insufficient fish landings and life history data for stock assessments. With DECR and local fishers, the project will: build fishers' capacity for participation in fisheries management; centralise landing sites; train DECR staff in landing and biological data collection and management; provide equipment for the DECR Fisheries laboratory and conduct stock assessments using data collected.



**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.**

The recruitment element of the project has fallen behind schedule and this might have an impact on the project activities. The detail of this depends on the availability/start date of the successful candidate which is still to be confirmed. Once we have confirmed this we will revisit the budget and timeline as soon as possible and discuss with LTS international.

**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.**

There is nothing that has been specific to Covid-19

**2c. 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

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

**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. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

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

Not at this stage.

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**