

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2022

Project reference	DPLUS162
Project title	Characterising the biodiversity of selected offshore seamounts to improve management
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cayman Islands
Lead partner	Central Caribbean Marine Institute
Partner(s)	Cayman Islands Department of Environment
Project leader	<i>Gretchen Goodbody-Gringley</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>Jan 10 2023, HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	

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).

Since the beginning of our project (May) to the end of September we have made significant progress towards implementation. Specifically, we began all logistical aspects of the project, such as establishing an MOU with project partner M. Leray from STRI and making travel arrangements for his participation in initial field work (Output 1.4 and 1.5). We sourced and secured necessary equipment for conducting surveys associated with Output 1, including cameras and lights (Output 1.2 and 2.1), and environmental loggers (Output 1.6). We also recruited a postdoctoral researcher to participate in the project who will begin in Year 2-Q1. In addition, we secured an appropriate liveboard charter vessel to facilitate surveys at the most distant seamount in Y2-Q2 (Output 1). Finally, two research technicians began their technical dive training with the CCMI Dive Safety Officer to participate in surveys at the seamounts (Output 1).

2. 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.

During Q1 of the project a major unexpected development was that the selected postdoctoral fellow for the project decided to take a different career opportunity. This left us without a project manager. As such, project lead, Goodbody-Gringley, took over the logistical planning of the project and recruited to fill the postdoctoral position. We also enlisted the assistance of a research technician to assist with all aspects of the project. The newly recruited postdoctoral scientist will begin in Q1 of Y2.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: £

4b. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

None

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response 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 NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**