

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	DPLUS005
Project Title	Sustainable management of the marine environment and resources of Tristan da Cunha
Country(ies)	Tristan da Cunha
Lead Organisation	RSPB
Collaborator(s)	Tristan da Cunha Government (Fisheries and Conservation), Sue Scott (marine biologist)
Project Leader	<i>Clare Stringer</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website	<i>n/a</i>

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).

The project started on 1 July 2013. A recruitment process was commenced in June, but eventually failed in late September when the two candidates that were offered the roles both withdrew (for differing reasons). The pool of good candidates was very small, and viable alternatives could not be found. Discussions with the team on Tristan have now led us to consider splitting the fisheries role into a field scientist (two six-month blocks) and a manager/analyst (one year contract). We have received support and guidance from Paul Brickle (ex Director of Fisheries in the Falkland Islands, now Director of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute). We have now identified good candidates for the two adjusted six-month roles and are waiting to confirm their availability to travel to Tristan in January. We have also identified the team for the Gough dive survey, also now planned for January to fit with fishing activity around Gough (see below).

Progress has been made in signing a contract between the RSPB and the Tristan government, and the first payment on this is due to be made shortly. Equipment has been purchased – a boat has been purchased by the Tristan da Cunha fisheries department for use in the project and is already facilitating improved fisheries management. An inventory of dive equipment on Tristan has been carried out by the Fisheries Department and we have assessed what new items are needed and when these need to be shipped. One Tristanian (Norman Glass) has received dive training in Cape Town to PADI Dive Master level (2.1). A diving safety plan has been drafted and will be refined further to ensure all diving is carried out in a manner which reduces risk as far as possible (2.1). Remote underwater monitoring options to reduce reliance on diving will also be investigated.

All of the training and diving activities: 1.1-1.4 and 2.1-2.2 are delayed (with exceptions as above) and will now start in Q4 rather than Q3. There has been some progress with 2.3, as a team at Nightingale are working on rockhopper penguins there, and will be attaching trackers with the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department; also Trevor Glass and Julian Repetto from Conservation have had training in attachment of loggers to albatrosses and will be carrying this out on Tristan this season.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

Unfortunately our recruitment process in July was not successful, and we were unable to make appointments to the two professional roles (fisheries scientist and marine biologist). We have re-assessed these posts with respect to completing the project work programme and aims. We have been discussing options with James and Trevor Glass on Tristan, and have agreed to defer the start of the field season to January 2014 (rather than the planned start in November 2013). This deferral start will lead to an underspend in the current financial year; however, the level of this is yet to be confirmed. We have now identified two good candidates who can start in January and will be issuing contracts shortly: this should now allow us to better estimate likely underspend. Delaying the start of fieldwork has had implications for transport to the island. There are currently only 2 spaces confirmed for the project on the January 2014 sailing, but another 1 or 2 are required for surveyors for the Gough survey. If no further spaces become available, this survey will have to be postponed until November 2014 or January 2015, resulting in an underspend in 2013/14. Other possible routes to the island in December 2013 and January 2014 are being investigated but there are very few other options.

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: Not as yet, as still confirming situation

Formal change request submitted: Not as yet, as still confirming situation

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

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

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £25,000 (very approximate)

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 present.

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 or budget should not be discussed in this report but 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 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**