



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	DPLUS024
Project Title	Darwin Fellowship – MRes Carbon sequestration in community forests, St Helena
Country(ies)	St Helena
Lead Organisation	Environmental Management Division, ENRD, St Helena Government
Collaborator(s)	St Helena National Trust
Project Leader	<i>Shayla Ellick</i>
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	<i>28 October 2014, HYR1</i>
Project website	<i>none</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 to end September).

The literature review started immediately once access to the University of York online library was received. From April to June two working days per week were spent on the lit review and thesis planning; the lit review and write-up will continue over the majority of the project lifetime. Methodology planning and testing took place in June and July with winter fieldwork occurring throughout August, approx. 3 days per week was spent on this where possible.

5 species that are planted within community forests are being studied: gumwood, black cabbage, scrubwood, ebony and she cabbage. 10 plots so far have been set up (see below) and aboveground biomass measured, soil samples taken and leaf litter collected:

- Gumwood: 1 plot at Millennium Forest, 2 plots at Peak Dale
- Scrubwood: 1 plot at Blue Point, 1 plot at Pipe Path Ridge, 1 plot at Ebony Plain
- Black Cabbage: 2 plots within the Peaks National Park
- She Cabbage: 1 plot at High Peak Ginger Patch, 1 plot at George Benjamin Arboretum

The remaining measurements required will be taken during the summer fieldwork, in addition to the ebony sampling. After consultation with island conservationists, permission has been given to destructively sample a small number of ebony plants, due to long-term plans for their removal from selected sites due to hybridisation concerns. Destructive sampling is not possible for any of the other species.

Finally, in late September I arrived at the University of York where I am auditing relevant modules, in particular Research Skills and Statistical Methods, and other modules useful to the project.

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.

On the advice of my supervisors some specific equipment was ordered; the logistics of freighting items to the island meant that this delayed fieldwork slightly. However, this time was used to test out the planned methods using interchangeable methods. The delay will not have an impact on the project as these can be made up in the summer fieldwork period. Thus, this was not discussed with LTS International as it has no major impact on the project.

The number of species to be studied was reduced after consultation with supervisors, due to the amount of fieldwork which would be required, which would not be possible within the timeframe of this project. This will of course result in a smaller quantity of data produced by the project; however, the quality of the data will be enhanced. The species retained for study are planted throughout community forest sites, are well-known species on the island, and offer a broad range for an island carbon off-setting scheme.

On the advice of island conservationists, He Cabbage was dropped from the list of species to be studied due to the extreme rarity of the species. This was not discussed with LTS International as it was felt that this species has a similar growth form to the She Cabbage and thus there would be no negative impact to the project from dropping this species. Indeed, it is expected that the results for these species will be interchangeable.

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: Yes

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg 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 as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

No underspend expected however it would be appreciated if the remaining 'Overhead costs' budget line could be carried forward to the final year of the project to cover any university continuation fee for the last three months of the MRes. We were not aware of this fee when applying for the funding.

Additionally, is there a possibility for any remaining travel and subsidence budget money this year to be carried forward to next year to cover any additional costs that arise, for example landing fees and insurance costs etc., which were not taken into account when applying for the funding and resulted in the student travel costs rising significantly this year.

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

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 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 eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**