



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

Project reference	DPLUS074
Project title	Improving biosecurity in the SAUKOTs through Pest Risk Assessments
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	St Helena, Falkland Islands, UK
Lead organisation	CABI
Partner(s)	Environment and Natural Resources Directorate (ENRD) of St Helena; Department of Agriculture, Falkland Island Government
Project leader	<i>Norbert Maczey</i>
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	18/10/18; HYR1
Project website/blog/social media etc.	

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).

1.1 First audio/video conference with all project partners present; project introduction; discussion of work plan and amendments if necessary; establishment of communication channels/procedures; collation of information on existing PRA procedures and preliminary listing of priority needs and gaps.

The first project video conference was held 3rd of May 2018 using skype. Project partners from St Helena (SH), CABI and in addition a team of biosecurity officers from Ascension Island (AI)(not a full project partner) took part. Skype connection with the Falkland Islands (FI) could not reliably be established and the participation of their team had to be abandoned early on. However, notes on the meeting were discussed with Naomi Baxter, leading the project on the Falkland Islands, after the meeting. This first meeting covered the following agenda points:

Introduction to the project: Main aim of project is to make the process of doing Horizon scanning (HS) and Pest risk assessments (PRA) more user friendly for biosecurity officers in the SAUKOTs using SH and the FI as case studies. The CABI Horizon Scanning Tool (HST) is aimed to provide significant support to users and feedback by users during project to improve the HST further. In addition, a new CABI Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) tool is already under development but still has to be tested whether it can fully address the needs of the OTs.

Availability of data/protocols: On AI the recording of biosecurity interceptions has only recently started (from November 2017). This includes setting up traps surrounding the base and monitoring these monthly, initially to create baseline data (identification what is already there). In the FI interception data goes further back and PRA protocols are in place for inspection of shipped good (flights and ships). Due to a previous Darwin project a PRA protocol for the introduction of species for biological control is also in place. SH has implemented a screening process for plant material in order to decide case by case whether a PRA is needed. Information is obtained from different sources including CABI compendia. A huge problem is, that PRA requests are not coming up very frequently, so experience and skills are lost with time. On SH requests for PRAs usually relate to agricultural imports (plant material mostly,

particularly plant bulbs). As a new air link to SH has now been established, it is possible that requests for PRAs will become more frequent. SH has already a detailed protocol for biosecurity inspection of luggage at the airport in place covering also cargo and including the setup of traps. Data on interceptions is stored locally by the Government.

Tools provided by CABI: A PRA tool prototype should be delivered in December. It will be based on the PRA process that was initially developed for CABI's Crop Protection Compendium (CPC) in 2007. The HST is now available in a beta version; SH has been trying the HST but limited internet did not allow comprehensive testing as yet. The project team has decided to do more testing before giving final advice. SH has been using the CPC version of the tool, which it is more comprehensive than the version linked to the Invasive Species Compendium (ISC). CABI is currently working on filling data gaps from various databases, particularly the ISC with a focus on distribution and habitat data. Information on pathways varies considerably between individual datasheets and the team discussed in particular options to weight pathways. We also discussed the concept of 'neighbouring' countries in the context of islands and how we can use interception data to check whether the PRA tool is selecting a similar range of species closely related to the one actually intercepted. After the meeting interception data from FI, Turks and Caicos and BIOT was exchanged and analysed.

Current communication network: SH: e-mail is the most commonly used form of communication to AI and other OTs. There is room for improvement and the project should facilitate any possible improvements. AI: Skype talks have been proven to be quite useful for coordination. It was discussed how PRA procedures can be made easier by sharing skills through an improved communication network in the SAUKOTs. However, detailed discussions on this topic have been reserved for project workshops planned for March 2019.

Project communication: Frequency of skype talks: Every six weeks seems too frequent due to limited staff capacity. It was therefore decided to have meetings every 10 weeks (2-3 months) with other communication in between these meetings covered via e-mail. The next meeting was scheduled for the first week of August 2018. Steering group: Participants of teleconference meetings, not being project partners to act as steering group (Jill Key, Matt Stritch, CABI compendia team)

Next steps and integration with NNSS horizon scanning activities: Over the weeks/months following the first meeting we will concentrate on generating feedback to improve the HST by our project partners. It was suggested to use manuals already provided by CABI for the HST for further testing (manuals provided after the meeting). Assessment of any interception data (data base versus observations); assessment of existing PRA form /procedures and how best to use them to create a more integrated workflow. The initial usage of the HST should already provide suggestions for species suitable to test the PRA tool. The team decided that suggested species for PRA assessments should cover a range of taxa as well as a range of different pathways (marine invertebrate, invasive weed, ornamental plant etc.). It was also decided that the Darwin project should work more closely with the NNSS/CEH team working on horizon scanning (Since then a meeting with CEH took place and we decided on a much closer collaboration including incorporating the CEH team into the steering group of the project). CABI to develop draft PRA procedures (aside from HST, what triggers individual PRAs and what role do interception and black lists and play in this?)

1.2 Circulation of agenda prior to second audio/video meeting. Prioritisation of individual requirements for each OT in more detail.

The second project video conference was held 7th of August 2018 using skype. The teams from SH, FI and CABI as well as Jill Key from the NNSS-UK were participating. The team from AI (not a full project partner) could not talk part due to technical problems. However, notes on the meeting were forwarded to the Ascension team afterwards. The meeting covered the following agenda points:

Feedback on the CABI-HST: SH: At times there are still problems with slow internet connection (freezing screens), at other times this works well. The breakdown of HS into single and simple pathways remains difficult, in particular concerning the countries of origin. In individual ships/planes with a single defined country of origin containers will still originate from a wide

range of countries and often have various stops on the way. Before inspection, there is little warning about the origins of containers or other goods even if in principle the origin of individual goods is clear and declared. On SH shipments from South Africa may originate in Australia, NZ or Japan (e.g. vehicles). Diversification of trade routes may have led to diversification of intercepted species. On the other hand better compliance with recently introduced measures in particular for fresh produce such as fruits and vegetables may have brought interceptions significantly down. Equally, in the FI where direct links exist mainly with the UK and Chile, this is not necessary the origin of the shipped goods or containers. On SH a change of pathways (type of shipping and change of vessel) has led to change of interceptions (e.g. now far less spiders intercepted on SH). Interception data will show these changes and when linked to changes in procedures will hopefully give insight in future recommendation to reduce biosecurity risks. Interception data exchanged sent after the first meeting was analysed and results discussed during this meeting.

A first draft to prioritise species selected through HS for PRA procedures was circulated prior to the meeting and discussed in detail. The Harlequin Ladybird was providing a good example demonstrating existing gaps in our first approach to prioritize species. Showing up as a priority species it was revealed that indeed there are already control measures in place to deal with outbreaks of this species. There are additional factors, which are difficult to cover reliably within our suggested prioritization approach (e.g. broad climatic suitability or matching habitats). The team discussed the need to not only select species from HS for PRA but also species already present but not fully established or species with increasing negative impacts. Equally newly emerging threats not covered in databases as yet such as the Southern Armyworm should be picked up on as early as possible. Based on the discussions held during the meeting an updated version of the species prioritisation process is currently under development. A finalised version will become available after further testing and the collaborative work on this together with NNSS and CEH who are currently in the process of doing intensive HS for all UKOTs. The CABI team will participate in the next CEH lead workshops on this in October in Cambridge (covering FI, South Georgia and British Antarctic Territory) and in November in SH (covering SH, AI and Tristan da Cunha).

The date for a third skype meeting was set for the 27th of November.

2.1 Existing PRA procedures reviewed and draft for improved procedures developed

The timetable for this stretches into the next quarter and progress for this activity is well underway. In detail, the CABI team is working on the following individual aspects:

To develop an automated process condensing potentially long lists from the HS into a more manageable ranking of prioritised species for PRAs, requiring only limited input from experts on individual species). This will include attaching values to individual species, by building framework, which can be populated automatically.

To review existing prioritization tools/schemes (point systems) for HS/PRA.

To trial and test approaches with data for the project islands (Comparing with interception data; after the second meeting additional interception data recoded on St Helena was exchanged).

For the CABI PRA tool, next steps will be to finalise wire-frames, tested in June for sub-Sahara Africa (June), final tests will be made in November for release in December.

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.

So far the only problem encountered was the failure of some participants of the skype meetings to establish a reliable connection. However, this was dealt with by updating these teams and giving them the opportunity to contribute to all agenda points after the meeting. Despite its limitations skype worked overall fine and all team agree to continue to use this form of

communication during the upcoming meetings.

There had also the problem of some e-mails from St Helena containing attached files (interception data) not coming through. However, by establishing a procedure using double checking with e-mails without attachments we solved this initial problem.

No significant negative impact has been caused by these early communication problems.

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 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.

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

None 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. 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**