



Darwin Initiative/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2019)

Project reference	DPLUS095
Project title	Strengthening biosecurity for remote Territory communities and their World Heritage
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Pitcairn Island Group, Tristan da Cunha Island Group, Republic of South Africa, New Zealand
Lead organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Partner(s)	Tristan da Cunha Government, Government of the Pitcairn Islands, BirdLife South Africa
Project leader	Jonathan Hall & Andy Schofield
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	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).

In accordance with Section 10 of the application, the *Logical Framework*, the project partners have undertaken work on the following project elements and outputs:

Output 1: Practices and policies along the biosecurity continuum reviewed, updated and implemented for the Pitcairn Islands

Tendering was undertaken and a biosecurity expert, Wayne Hartley, retained to assess the standards along the Pitcairn supply vessel route (1.1), the contract was placed with New Zealand Biosecurity Academy. Assessment was undertaken between 22nd August and 1st September 2019, and a report provided. Vessel loading protocols were assessed between Mangareva and Pitcairn (1.2) during this same trip, those between Auckland and Mangareva are still to be undertaken. Due to government reorganisation, two Pitcairners, instead of four, received capacity training (1.3) on 28th August 2019. The Pitcairn Government has requested further follow-up training later in the project cycle for four islanders, following reorganisation.

Two biosecurity and invasive species risk assessments (Pitcairn reed-warbler and honey production) were undertaken (1.4) by the New Zealand Biosecurity Academy during the Pitcairn visit, with the reports awaited.

The visit of the biosecurity expert Wayne Hartley was timed to coincide with a visit by Gillian Key, project lead for the UK Government's CSSF-funded OT Biosecurity programme. The RSPB provided an additional financial contribution from our core funds to cover Gillian's accommodation costs on Pitcairn and enable her visit to happen. As a result of the visit Gillian Key produced a draft Biosecurity Manual. This will form the basis for discussion with the Pitcairn Government to develop the Biosecurity Policy (1.7).

The RSPB are awaiting invoicing from New Zealand Biosecurity.

Andy Schofield's trip to the Pitcairn Islands has now been booked for 22 October – 5 November, where he will be providing further refresher training on biosecurity and aiding implementation. In addition to when this project was originally developed, his trip will include a

visit to all 3 of the Pitcairn group's uninhabited outer islands alongside the Pitcairn Government Director of Natural Resources, Michele Christian. This will be Michele's first ever visit to the outer islands after approximately a decade in post and will enable detailed on-site discussions about their biosecurity requirements, plus first-hand shadowing of Andy conducting the biosecurity checks prior to each disembarkation.

Output 2: Feasibility of combining invasive rodent eradications for Pitcairn and Henderson Islands assessed, and Island Council decision on whether to proceed on such a basis taken

The tendering and contract procedure to hire the eradication expert has been completed (2.1), with Biodiversity Restoration Specialists Ltd being hired. The Pitcairn assessment (2.2) has been re-shaped because the successful contractor, Grant Harper, has previously visited both Henderson and Pitcairn, so has first-hand familiarity with both islands already. This enables him to review earlier, pre-project, pieces of work (*The Feasibility of Eradicating Pacific Rats and Feral Cats from Pitcairn Island, Operational Plan for the Eradication of Pacific Rats and Feral Cats on Pitcairn Island, Biosecurity and Ecological Monitoring on Pitcairn Island, Invasive Species Pitcairn Island: the Pitcairn Islanders' view*), and determine if these can be used as a basis for eradication following modification by the review outcomes. The travel budget which was set aside for the contractor's familiarisation visit to Pitcairn will be re-assigned within the financial year so as to make a more impactful contribution to the project's goals. Andy Schofield, who has extensive experience of engaging the Pitcairn community as he previously lived on the island for 3 months, will conduct community consultation discussions by himself.

Output 3: Practices and policies along the biosecurity continuum reviewed, updated and implemented for Gough Island World Heritage Site

The lead for Tristan da Cunha Government biosecurity has been identified as Trevor Glass. The biosecurity baseline was established after review of previous inspection reports undertaken by the RSPB of facilities at Cape Town (3.2). The findings of these inspections were reported at the Workshop, together with a further inspection, by BirdLife South Africa of the Ovenstone supply vessel (see Output 4). The findings of these reports were provided at the Cape Town Workshop.

The workshop was undertaken at Cape Town on 10-12th July 2019 (3.3). The event was attended by 24 representatives from the Tristan Government, South African Government National Department of Public Works (NDPW), South African Government Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Ovenstone Agencies, African Marine Solutions (AMSOL), South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP), BirdLife South Africa, UK Government Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) and RSPB. A draft report of the event has been prepared. This documents the principle outcomes:

1. Revision of biosecurity procedures during loading of the Agulhas II and Ovenstone vessels;
2. Training of delegates in pre-border and on-vessel biosecurity procedures;
3. Commitment to, and initiation of, developing a Biosecurity Best Practice Manual for the Cape Town- Tristan da Cunha - Gough route.

An additional outcome to the project has been the expansion of the Manual to cover all SANAPs Antarctic/ Sub Antarctic operations, further widening the impact of the project.

Output 4: Improved pre-border biosecurity for the Tristan da Cunha group

The assessment of loading protocols for Ovenstone vessels has been completed by Birdlife South Africa (4.1.1). A workshop report (4.2) has been drafted, with a stand-alone biosecurity best-practice manual in preparation (see 3.3).

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.

During the Cape Town Workshop, we had excellent attendance and engagement from the public port warehouse used by the South African Government but were unable to get attendance from the private port warehouse operator used by Ovenstone. There is a need for follow-up engagement here, and Ovenstone themselves remain very engaged and keen to implement new activities.

Due to reorganisation by the Pitcairn Government only two of the intended four staff received biosecurity training. There is a need for follow-up work to address this issue once the Pitcairn re-structuring has been completed.

Following submission of this report, the RSPB will discuss with LTS and a formal change request submitted. Subject to approval, it is the intention to use the travel cost saving underspend from 2.2 to finance work on the Pitcairn Training and Cape Town engagement (see above).

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?

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 R25 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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**