



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2021)**

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
Lead organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Partner(s)	Conservation Department, Tristan Government Environmental, Conservation & Natural Resources Department, Government of Pitcairn Islands
Project leader	Andy Schofield; Jonathan Hall
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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).

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

1.2.1 Biosecurity expert provides on-island training to four Pitcairners, two primary staff and two to serve as reserves when primary staff are off-island.

Travel to Pitcairn is not possible due to the restrictions in place caused by the pandemic in New Zealand. Training will now be conducted remotely, supplementing the surveillance/response plan once finalised (See section 2b. for more detailed information).

1.2.2 Biosecurity equipment is purchased on Pitcairn, as required.

Border and on-vessel biosecurity equipment has been provided for the islands. However, at the request of Pitcairn, no incursion response equipment has been purchased due to concerns raised by the islanders about the difficulty of getting to the outer islands in response to a possible incursion. We are currently working with Pitcairn to come up with the best option for them given this restriction.

1.2.3 & 1.2.4

See Activity 1.2.1 and section 2b. for more detailed information.

1.2.5 Operational initiatives are established into a robust biosecurity system

A formal review is currently in progress.

1.4.2 New biosecurity equipment purchased for on-board vessel or in ports as required. Biosecurity signage and awareness-raising materials prepared and delivered to relevant ports.

A poster has been produced covering biosecurity risk items to be displayed at ports and in vessels. There have also been discussions about passenger arrival cards for the islands, specifically targeted at tourists. Opportunities for collaboration with French Polynesia (FP) and MMO for awareness-raising materials are ongoing but have been somewhat hampered by Covid restrictions. Michele Christian (Director of the Environmental, Conservation & Natural Resources Department) is going to be contacting the Mayor of FP to establish a relationship as Covid has prevented Pitcairners from visiting the country.

1.5.1 Pitcairn Council adopt new and proportionate biosecurity policy. New biosecurity requirements appended to supply vessel charter contract.

This has been delayed due to capacity issues. However, the supply vessel charter contract is up for renegotiation this year and will be amended in the next couple of months to include mention of adherence to the new biosecurity policy.

1.5.2 Biosecurity expert provides technical advice on policy development to Pitcairn Government NRD and Pitcairn Attorney- General's office (Auckland)

Wayne Hartley (NZ Biosecurity Academy) continues to provide advice as and when required. His contract has been amended to provide more advice on an incursion response plan, remote-sensing equipment and phyto-sanitary specifications.

1.6.1 Biosecurity expert returns to Auckland (twice) and Mangareva (once, accompanied by a Pitcairn biosecurity officer) to ensure sustainable recommendations are implementation

Travel to Mangareva has not been possible due to Covid travel restrictions.

Output 2 – Pitcairn-Henderson rat eradication feasibility study

2.2.1 & 2.3.1

The feasibility study has been completed and shared with the Island Council. We are currently waiting to hear from Michele Christian with feedback.

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

3.1.2 Tristanian biosecurity lead is main biosecurity officer on September 2021 Agulhas II voyage, overseeing implementation and adherence to new Gough biosecurity policy requirements, with support from biosecurity expert this time acting as deputy.

Due to Covid restrictions and necessary quarantine, it wasn't feasible for Julian Repetto (Tdc Biosecurity Officer) to travel to Cape Town and oversee the loading of the Agulhas in September. However, RSPB staff helped facilitate the pre-voyage inspections and Julian was able to oversee unloading of

passengers and cargo at Tristan. We are awaiting a biosecurity report from the SANAP/DEA team which will be added as an appendix to the annual report.

3.5.1 New Gough biosecurity policy recommendations from workshop and voyage implementation submitted to Island Council for adoption.

The new biosecurity policy recommendations have been approved by the Island Council to such an extent that they have now been legally drafted, approved and signed off by the St Helena Attorney General's Office. It is now enforceable legislation on all of Tristan's islands.

3.6.1 New biosecurity equipment, training and awareness-raising materials obtained and developed for addition to annual SANAP pre-voyage training programme and use at port / on-board.

The purchase of new biosecurity equipment and awareness-raising materials is ongoing with assistance from James Millett (APHA). From the first Cape Town stakeholder workshop, a biosecurity handbook was produced which can now be used by the South African government for training purposes and for port/vessel biosecurity best practice.

3.7.1 Second Cape Town stakeholder workshop reviews progress over two successive Gough voyages, approves finalised Gough biosecurity plan and makes final recommendations for sustainability.

Due to the continuation of South Africa on the UK's travel Red List, and only recently coming off, it hasn't been possible to carry out a second workshop. Similarly, travel restrictions in NZ have made it difficult for other partners to attend. If there is a window before the end of the project then it will be carried out, possibly remotely. On a positive note, the South African government have been proactive and formed a new biosecurity department in the DEA with three staff members.

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

4.1.2 New equipment and materials provided to Ovenstone, and biosecurity expert returns during loading of both vessels to assist in implementation and measure progress against baseline.

Tristan are currently recruiting for a biosecurity officer position based in Cape Town to support Ovenstone and ensure port and vessel biosecurity legislation is adhered to. Ovenstone are supportive of the appointment as they now have a legal obligation to follow the recently drafted biosecurity recommendations.

4.3.1 Second Cape Town stakeholder workshop about Gough also reviews progress on pre-border biosecurity and makes final policy and practice recommendations.

See Activity 3.7.1.

4.4.1 Tristan Government environmental policy officer develops and submits new pre-border biosecurity policy to Island Council for adoption.

The updated pre-border biosecurity policy has been adopted by the Island Council within new legislation. Policy recommendations have fed into forming the new biosecurity handbook for use by the Tristan government.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

N/A

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact travel for both Pitcairn and Tristan over the last six months. South Africa has remained on the UK's travel Red List for much of the period, although the lifting of restrictions recently has made things easier. Activities such as the second Cape Town stakeholder workshop may need to be conducted remotely rather than in person due to personnel from other countries attending, but all other deliverables are on track to be completed by project's end.

New Zealand (and Auckland specifically where NZ Biosecurity Academy are based) has remained at Alert Level 3 for much of the period, more recently moving to the highest Alert Level 4 restrictions due to the Delta variant. This has meant closed district borders and limited travel to essential trips. Leaving the country is possible but returning is far more complicated with enforced quarantine and the associated costs of roughly £2,000. There are also a restricted number of facilities where this Managed Isolation can occur meaning that there are waiting lists to get back into the country with large numbers of New Zealanders still stuck overseas. Such restrictions have prevented travel to Pitcairn and look set to do so for the remainder of the project. Support and training have therefore had to be conducted remotely and will continue in that vein over the next few months. The project timetable is unlikely to be impacted but on-island training and management is not going to be possible.

2c. 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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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

N/A

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 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**