

## Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31 October 2016)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	23-006
<b>Project Title</b>	Translocating conservation success and skills-exchange across four Indian Ocean countries.
<b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>	Seychelles, Mauritius, Comores, Madagascar
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent.
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA); Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF); Durrell Conservation Training Limited (DCT); Dahari
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Professor Jim Groombridge</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	<i>HYR1; October 2016</i>
<b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b>	<a href="https://www.kent.ac.uk/sac/research/projects/jg_darwin_initiative.html">https://www.kent.ac.uk/sac/research/projects/jg_darwin_initiative.html</a>  <i>Facebook page:</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Translocating-conservation-success-and-skills-exchange-across-the-WIO-318569868505836/">https://www.facebook.com/Translocating-conservation-success-and-skills-exchange-across-the-WIO-318569868505836/</a>
<b>Funder (DFID/Defra)</b>	<i>Defra</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 first 6 months of this project have progressed to schedule. Progress is described below against project activities scheduled in the first 6 months of this project.

*Activity 0.1.* The Project Steering Group consisting of representatives from all partner organisations is operational. Our first Steering Group meeting was held in April 2016 in Mauritius involving the Project Leader (PL), Project Officer (PO) and representatives from all project partners except Dahari and Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA). SNPA and Dahari were updated by Skype and email.

*Activity 0.2.* Mauritian field biologist Veronique Couttee and Seychelles habitat rehabilitation staff Anselm Barra and Paul Uzice have all been employed to schedule and are implementing project activities to plan.

*Activity 1.3.* SNPA staff member Mr Allen Cedras was, via an application and interview process, selected as the recipient of our project funded MSc scholarship at DICE, University of Kent and started his MSc in Conservation Science and Management in September. A second SNPA staff member Mr James Mougall has also started the MSc at DICE, University of Kent alongside Mr Cedras on a Scholarship provided by SNPA and supported by this project. During the interview process to select the candidate for the project scholarship – two strong candidates emerged and SNPA did not want to turn either one down - so SNPA managed to source funds to enable James Mougall to pursue an MSc at DICE too. This project provided the impetus and also logistical support from the PO and the PL to make this happen. This is an excellent example of Darwin Project funds leveraging extra funds and outputs that will benefit the host country

partners.

*Activity 2.1.* Habitat rehabilitation is underway on Curieuse and Félicité Island in Seychelles and at Ferney in Mauritius to schedule.

*Activity 2.2.* Census and territory mapping of Seychelles paradise flycatcher (SPF) populations on Denis Island and on La Digue Island western plateau completed. In summary:

- Twenty-three flycatchers were introduced to Denis Island in 2008 under previous Darwin Initiative project 15-008 and the population has successfully established, is still growing, and currently numbers 70 individuals in 32 territories.
- The current SPF population size on the western plateau of La Digue is 103 individuals in 49 territories. This represents a small decrease of 2 territories from the western plateau over the last 9 years (since the last census in 2007), compared to a loss of 13 territories from the same area between 2001 and 2007.

Mascarene paradise flycatcher (MPF) population size and distribution surveys in Mauritius completed and monitoring of pairs in Combo underway to monitor breeding success and to identify individuals for translocation to Ferney. In summary:

- The current MPF population is estimated at 400-800 individuals restricted to pockets in the south-west of Mauritius and a small isolated population at Bras d'Eau National Park in the north-east (Mauritian Wildlife Foundation unpublished survey data).
- *Project field biologist* Veronique Couttee is currently locating pairs and nests at Combo, monitoring nests to determine breeding chronology and breeding success, and identifying potential individuals for translocation to Ferney.

*Activity 2.5.* The PO visited Project partner Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in April to help plan and prepare for the upcoming MPF reintroduction to Ferney. Phase 1 of the reintroduction where we will translocate the first group of birds is scheduled for November-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.**

We note that the GBP (£) has significantly decreased in value following BREXIT which has negatively impacted our project budget in the four countries where the project is being implemented as we get less local currency when converting GBP to local currency than budgeted. This has reduced our project budget for all expenses in local currencies including local project staff salaries, travel and subsistence and equipment.

**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?**

No

**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](mailto: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**