

Being a consultant at SAERI

By Mike Jervois

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I've just completed two and half months working at SAERI in their Falkland Islands headquarters as a consultant to the Natural Capital Assessment (NCA) project. My role has been incredibly varied and has involved everything from managing contractors, researching and writing reports, managing budgets, and organising a conference. Anything to be as helpful as possible to the project manager and directors.

The NCA project is unique for the UK South Atlantic Overseas Territories. It aims to develop a framework to assess the value – both monetary and non-monetary – of ecosystem services, and to integrate this information into marine and terrestrial spatial planning, economic planning and environmental protection. It involves South Georgia, the Falkland Islands, Ascension, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha. Different territories are involved in different ways – the Falklands has been involved in a survey of peoples' links to the environment, Ascension is involved in a cultural ecosystem services project, and Tristan da Cunha will be involved in an assessment very soon, among many other small projects. My role in these has been to liaise with the researchers who live mostly in the UK, and the project manager Ness Smith, who is based in the Falklands, and keep the numerous parts moving which collectively make up the NCA project.

It's been fun. I worked on St Helena and have been involved in NCA workshops as a participant before joining the team here in the Falklands. My background is in ecology and conservation so I enjoy being a part of a project which can give decision makers some concrete evidence for managing the environment in their territories.

The biggest part of my work has been helping to organise a conference in St Helena. The conference will be a wrap-up of the NCA project and people from across the region and globally will travel to St Helena in 2019 consolidate the final outputs of the project through a regional conference – the first regional conference to be hosted on St Helena.

I feel incredibly grateful to SAERI for the opportunity to be involved in the NCA project. There is a feeling of camaraderie and cooperation, everyone passionate about whatever they are working on and happy to help each other. Despite the serious work going on at SAERI it's a small team and feels like family. Stay tuned for more updates about the NCA project!