

DPLR3\1041

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Linzi Ogden

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00072

Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

☒ Anguilla

Lead Organisation or Individual

Anguilla National Trust

Partner Organisation(s)

Aurora Anguilla Resort and Golf Club

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

£40,815.00

Project Start Date

01 April 2024

Project End Date

31 March 2025

Project Leader Name

Farah Mukhida

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

No Response

Report Author(s)

Report Date

06 May 2025

Project Summary

No Response

Project Outcomes

Checked	Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;
Unchecked	Climate Change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;
Unchecked	Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment;
Checked	Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.

Section 2 - Project Outcomes (Essential)

On a scale of 1 (high – outcome substantially exceeded) to 5 (low – outcome substantially did not meet expectation), how successful do you think your project has been?

⦿ 3 - Outcome met expectation

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

This Darwin Plus project, led by the ANT in partnership with Aurora Anguilla, aimed to enhance local capacity for impactful restoration of at-risk, culturally important, and endemic species. Two main approaches were employed: increasing the population and range of the nationally endangered cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*) and investigating the germination and propagation of the Anguilla bush (*Rondeletia anguillensis*) for future restoration.

Our cocoplum restoration initiative achieved significant success. Over the course two fruiting seasons, over 650 cocoplum seeds were collected, with Aurora Anguilla successfully germinating over 600. The first cohort of c.325 seedlings germinated by Aurora Anguilla were potted in July 2024 and nurtured at ANT’s nursery. We collected a second set of c.300 seedlings from Aurora Anguilla in early March 2025, which have since been potted.

Out-planting began in September 2024, with 61 seedlings re:wilded in partnership with hotel partners and landowners on their properties, as well as within Fountain National Park, along crown-owned mainland beaches (along the vegetation line), and Prickly Pear East offshore island’s main beach. In collaboration with the


Government of Anguilla's Department of Physical Planning, we are ensuring that cocoplum seedlings will be safeguarded, with results of this work being integrated into the Government of Anguilla's GIS system and used to cross-check with any potential developments that are being considered. For sites where out-planted cocoplum trees would/could be at risk, there would be opportunities to discuss options to either maintain or move the seedling/tree rather indiscriminately clearing it from the land.


A major out-planting event on Anguilla's Annual Jollification Day, in partnership with the Anguilla Enhancement Project and communities from across the island, saw 247 seedlings being planted island-wide.


Starting with only five wild cocoplum trees and an additional four within private landowner's backyards, this project has increased the population 35-fold, representing an impressive >3400% increase. Only five out-planted seedlings were lost and subsequently replaced. Additionally, just over 300 young seedlings are being cared for in our nursery and will be re-wilded as soon as they are strong enough.


Our efforts with the Anguilla bush have been less successful. Neither ANT staff or the Aurora Anguilla landscaping unit have had much success in propagating the species from seed or cuttings using various soil types and germination techniques. The species continues to confound us. However, a valuable partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (Kew) has emerged. In late November, experts from Kew visited Anguilla, collected additional *Rondeletia* seeds from plants within Fountain National Park, and are now conducting germination trials in their far better-equipped labs and nurseries. This visit also facilitated a meeting with natural resources managers in St. Martin regarding a morphologically similar plant. Visual and genetic testing has confirmed it as the same species, indicating that the Anguilla bush is endemic to broader Anguilla Bank, not solely Anguilla. This initial work with Kew has led to continued conversations about a closer partnership, with a return visit planned for June to conduct further surveys and build ANT's and national capacity.

Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload

 [DPL00072 - Supporting Evidence - Link](#)

 06/05/2025

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 docx 17.4 KB

Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

Please see attached document, including link to supporting Evidence.

Project Challenges

Determining ex situ conservation options for the *Rondeletia anguillensis* continues to be a challenge for us. We (ANT, Aurora Anguilla) have not been able to determine what triggers seed germination or what is needed to enable rooting. While we thought that there may be something in the soil where the plant is found in the wild that helps or stimulates growth, we still have not been able to replicate it in our nursery even when we use soil collected directly from where the plant naturally grows. With our new partnership with Kew and potentially with our colleagues in St. Martin (where the plant grows exclusively on private, unprotected lands) we hope to establish a more comprehensive research and development programme centred specifically on the *Rondeletia*.

Lessons Learned

With so much of Anguilla's land being privately owned, and with some of our most at-risk and culturally-important biodiversity found on those private lands while also still being a national resource, only serves to underscore how important collaborative approaches to conservation are. The success of cocoplum conservation

efforts is rooted in those community and private sector partnerships. Aurora Anguilla has been a champion of this project, using their knowledge, nurseries, and personnel to germinate hundreds of cocoplum seedlings. The Anguilla Enhancement Project has used their network to connect us with communities. Communities from across Anguilla have whole-heartedly adopted cocoplum rewilding in an effort to reconnect with their past and their culture. We feel privileged to be a part of this movement.

While we had hoped for similar success with the Rondeletia, it has still been an opportunity for learning through trial and error and we are at least in a better position to know what does not seem to work. We also again recognise the value of partnerships and networks. A closer relationship with Kew, which began through a mutual interest in Rondeletia and its range, is poised to grow which will help with a scaling up and expanding of our native plant re-wilding efforts.

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs				
Consultancy Costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and Subsistence				
Operating Costs				

Capital Items			
Others			
Total	40,816.00	33,320.27	18.3

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

The greatest expense for this project was the purchase of a new rugged, all-wheel drive vehicle for the ANT to assist us with the project-related fieldwork, which almost always took us off-road. We were able to purchase this vehicle in neighbouring St. Martin rather than the Florida (United States) saving both in taxes and shipping costs. We had expected to purchase the vehicle from the US and had therefore budgeted for that as preliminary investigations into pick-up truck options with the specifications that we were looking for were not available in St. Martin at the time (during project concept development).

Co-financing was secured for the project, including ANT staff time, partial overheads, fuel for local transportation, and some nursery supplies (pots, soil, water).

Section 4 - Contribution of Project to Darwin Plus Programme Objectives

Please select up to **one** indicator that applies within **each group/indicator list (A, B, C, D)** and report your results for that indicator in the text box underneath. If you do not have relevant results to report for any of the indicators in a particular group, you can leave them blank.

Please also submit some form of evidence (above) to demonstrate any results you list below, where possible.

Group A: Capability and Capacity - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Checked	DPLUS-A01: Number of people from key national and local stakeholder groups completing structured and relevant training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A02: Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A03: Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.
Unchecked	DPLUS-A05: Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.

Group A Indicator Results

DPLUS-A01: 6 individuals from the ANT completed training

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management- Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-B01: Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B02: Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B03: Number of new/improved community management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B04: Number of new/improved sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans available and endorsed.
Checked	DPLUS-B05: Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement).
Unchecked	DPLUS-B06: Number of Local Stakeholders and Local Communities (people) with strengthened (recognised/clarified) tenure and/or rights.

Group B Indicator Results

DPLUS-B05 – 7 communities with increased participation in local management organisations

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-C01: Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C03: New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C04: New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C05: Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.

Group C Indicator Results

N/A

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-D01 Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices.
Unchecked	DPLUS-D02: Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.
Unchecked	DPLUS-D03: Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended.

Group D Indicator Results

N/A

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

Aurora Anguilla Resort was a formal partner on this project and led on the germination of cocoplum seeds and the trialling/experimentation of different Anguilla bush germination and growth methods. Aurora Anguilla was able to germinate over 600 cocoplum seeds that we had collected and shared. They provided advice to ANT staff on how to transplant seedlings from germination trays to pots as well as post-potting care.

The Anguilla Enhancement Project, a locally-led grassroots not-for-profit organisation that supports community enhancement projects (community clean-ups as well as beautification and tree planting activities) helped to coordinate a community-based tree planting (jollification) event that led to the out-planting of over 250 seedlings across the island.

Land owners have reached out directly to us requesting cocoplum seedlings for their backyard gardens. With additional seedlings to share post-project, we plan on organising a cocoplum give-away event for anyone interested in out-planting cocoplums in their backyards.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

As part of this project, we have collected GPS points of all out-planted cocoplum trees. Collecting this data will not only help us monitor the long-term growth and survival of out-planted seedlings, but will also be considered during the Planning Application review process. We have created a GIS shapefile which has been shared with the Department of Physical Planning.

The ANT is sometimes requested to comment on Planning Applications, but this is not always the case as it depends on the nature of the proposed development. For cases where we are consulted, we can cross-check the proposed development location with re-wilded cocoplum trees. When we are not involved, the Department of Physical Planning's GIS Unit can now do the same using the shapefile that we have shared with them. Through this approach, we can advise on positioning of and landscaping for the proposed development and, in cases where cocoplums will be disturbed, we are now in a position to move them before land clearing/construction begins.

Sustainability and Legacy

Despite the project coming to an end, the work started with DPLUS Local funding will continue post-project. While cocoplum seedlings have been out-planted, it is important to monitor growth and survival. In addition, although re-wilding just over 300 plants is an undeniable success (and our target number), it is not enough; more seedlings need to be out-planted until the species is once again a common plant along Anguilla's beaches, sand dunes, and even backyards.

Our work with the *Rondeletia* is similarly just beginning. Even though we were unable to grow the plant *ex situ*, our preliminary work has raised more questions that we are determined to answer, not the least of which is whether there is a relationship between the plant and where it is growing *in situ* that is essential to its survival. We will likely need to do more research on soil composition and chemistry.

In addition to working with Kew specifically on *Rondeletia anguillensis*, we have also begun preliminary conversations regarding our plant nursery, how to transform it into a more effective space to conserve native, endangered, and endemic plants *ex situ*, and how to enhance our staff's capacity to take on and integrate more plant conservation into our work programme.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity

Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements

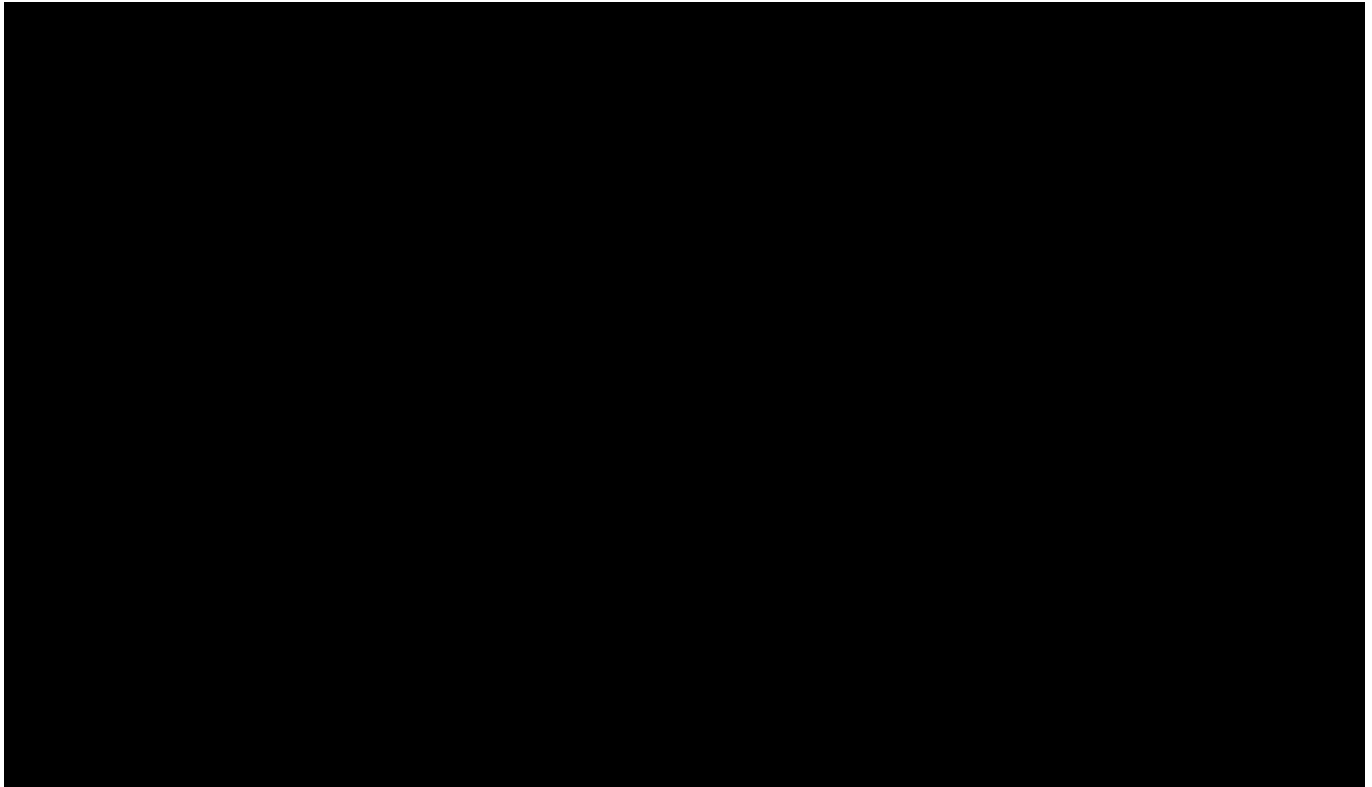
An achievement that we would like to showcase is our successful campaign to re-wild Anguilla's coastline and communities with our native but nationally at-risk cocoplum *Chrysobalanus icaco*:

Once found along many of Anguilla's sandy beaches, the cocoplum *Chrysobalanus icaco* is valued for its purple-pink, slightly coconut-flavoured fruit. Tourism development pressures, however, have led to clearing of coastal

vegetation and the once prevalent cocoplum tree is now relegated to only one beach, with only four trees remaining in the wild and just a handful of others in a people's backyards. But we're working to change this. With support from the UK Government's Biodiversity Challenge Funds' Darwin Local Initiative, the Anguilla National Trust and Aurora Anguilla, in partnership with the Anguilla Enhancement Project, communities from across the island, hotels, restaurants, private landowners, and the Government of Anguilla, we've re-wilded Anguilla's coastline with more than 300 cocoplum seedlings – representing a 3400% increase in the number of trees and an island-wide expansion of its range. Saving a species takes a community and we're proud and privileged to have been able to work with so many people to help bring this tree back from the brink of extinction on Anguilla.

Photo, video or graphic to be used for publicity and communications.

Please upload at least one relevant and engaging image, video or graphic that you consent to be used alongside the above text in Defra, JNCC or NIRAS communications material.



Photo, video, and/or graphic captions and credits.

DPLR3_00072-cocoplum fruit on tree-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

Cocoplums were once only found on one beach on Anguilla. With support from the UK Government's Biodiversity Challenge Funds Darwin Local Initiative, and with the help of over a hundred volunteers, over 300 seedlings now line Anguilla's shoreline.

DPLR3_00072-cocoplum seedling in pot-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

Cocoplum thrive in sandy substrate. This seedling is ready for out-planting as part of an island wide re-wilding event.

DPLR3_00072-cocoplum seedling out-planted-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

Saving Anguilla's cocoplum trees one seedling at a time.

DPLR3_00072-outplanting cocoplums at Sandy Hill Bay-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

Communities come together to help bring back Anguilla's culturally-important cocoplums.

DPLR3_00072-planting cocoplum seedling with afterschool programme students-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

With so few cocoplum trees on Anguilla, most young people had never seen the tree or tried its fruit. Through this project we're introducing this once widespread species to a new generation.

DPLR3_00072-planting cocoplums with afterschool programme students-Anguilla-Farah Mukhida-Anguilla National Trust:

From seed to tree: young people help re-wild Anguilla's coastline with native cocoplums.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat, Administrator, and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

☒ Yes, I agree for the BCFs Secretariat and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Please list any accounts that you would like tagged in online posts here. This can include project pages, partners' pages or individuals' accounts for any of the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Anguilla National Trust (Facebook, Instagram: @axatrust)

Aurora Anguilla (Facebook, Instagram: @auroraanguilla)

Government of Anguilla (Facebook: @anguillagovernment, Instagram: govanguilla)

Anguilla Enhancement Project (Facebook, Instagram: anguillaenhancementproject)

Section 7 - Darwin Plus Contacts

Please tick here to confirm that you have read and acknowledge the BCF's Privacy Notice on how contact details will be used and stored and that you have sought agreement from anyone that you are sharing personal details with us on their behalf.

☒ I confirm I have read the Privacy Notice and have consent to share the following contact details

Project Contact Details

Project Contact Name	Farah Mukhida
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Lead
Email	
Phone	
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No