



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	DPLUS012
Project Title	Conserving plant diversity and establishing ecosystem based approaches to the management of forest ecosystems in the British Virgin Islands
Country(ies)	British Virgin Islands (BVI)
Lead Organisation	National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI)
Collaborator(s)	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Kew)
Project Leader	Lynda Varlack, Director (Ag.)
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	HYR2
Project website	

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 following list of outputs took place in the last six months of Year 2 (Q1 and Q2):

Output 1.1 - Ground truth University of Colorado vegetation map to confirm habitat type and identify species composition, through plant species.

and

Output 1.4 Produce GIS ecosystem and land cover maps for the BVI

The NPTVI team continued to do field work one day per week for every week during this period. In June (1st – 14th) the Kew team were in the Territory and from the 3rd to 14th June they conducted daily field visits, with NPTVI staff participating on all days except weekends and Public Holidays.

In the last six months eleven islands have been assessed, including Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Prickly Pear National Park, Fallen Jerusalem National Park, Beef Island, Frenchman's Cay, Peter Island, Cooper Island, Norman Island, Salt Island and Dead Chest National Park (NP). At each visit the habitat type is recorded using GPS and then uploaded into the GIS system for cross referencing in order to produce update land cover maps for the BVI.

The focus of the June Kew visit were the islands of Virgin Gorda, Fallen Jerusalem and Prickly Pear National Parks, with a goal to collect baseline, phenotypic and monitoring data for threatened plant species; undertake groundtruthing of the vegetation map; provide training for NPTVI staff in field collection, processing of plant collections and propagation of native and threatened plant species. Kew also continued to draft inventory lists for Gorda Peak NP, Fallen Jerusalem NP and Prickly Pear NP.

Output 3.1: Conduct field work to collect 100 ex-situ collections for JRONBG.

Eight new live collections were made by the Kew team in June for the JR O'Neal Botanic Gardens, including two cuttings of cacti species *Stenocereus fimbriatus* and *Pilosocereus*

royenii, seeds from *Zanthoxylum thomsonianum*, *Stigmaphyllon emarginatum*, *Forestiera segregata* and an orchid *Tetramicra canaliculata*. One seedling of *Zanthoxylum thomsonianum* was also collected.

Output 4.1 – Conduct field work to collect 200 herbarium specimen vouchers

The Kew team collected 65 herbarium specimen vouchers during the June field visit. The NPTVI field team collected 30 herbarium specimen vouchers during this reporting period.

During the last reporting period we stated that 199 specimen vouchers had been collected, which brings the new total to 294, exceeding the project goal of 200. These collections will continue throughout the life of the project.

Output 5.1 – Conduct field work to study phenology of 15 threatened species

Every week during field visits the NPTVI team records phenological information and during this period this information was gathered for 6 threatened species, including *Croton fishlockii*, *Zanthoxylum thomsonianum*, *Malpighia woodburyana* and *Calypthranthes kiaerskovii*.

Output 6.2 – Prepare draft management plan for forest ecosystems

and

Output 6.3 – Conduct stakeholder meetings to present the draft plan

These outputs, whilst slated for Q2 of Year 2 have been delayed to occur in October 2014 so that more field visits could take place to the sister islands. By this time over 95% of all islands in the BVI will have been visited by the field team and a more Territory wide perspective can be utilised for management plan formulation.

Output 7.1 – Collate plant lists acquired in Output 1 with existing inventories.

Whilst this output is not slated to begin until Q3 of Year 2, these activities have been started by the Kew team and are ongoing, with inventories of plant species at eight National Parks taking place to date.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

N/A

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: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg 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 as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

There have been delays in NPTVI receiving the project funding from Darwin once claims for the 2014 year have been submitted. In March 2014, two claims were submitted for Q4/Year 1, Jan – March and Q1/Year 2, April – June 2014. However as of October 31st October only the first claim had been received.

The majority of this funding was allocated to cover the travel costs of our partners at Kew, who have made two visits this year. Kew has since paid for these trips and must be reimbursed as soon as possible.

NPTVI have been in communication with Darwin Projects Officer Ms. Eilidh Young who is always very supportive but there appears to be a delay at the DEFRA point of communication?

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 . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**