

## Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

*Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.*

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

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| <b>Project reference</b>                  | <a href="#">DPLUS 125</a>  |
| <b>Project title</b>                      | Protecting Anguilla's biodiversity by building capacity in invasive plant management |
| <b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>        | Anguilla   |
| <b>Lead partner</b>                       | Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Government of Anguilla                        |
| <b>Partner(s)</b>                         | GB   |
| <b>Project leader</b>                     | <i>Rhon Connor</i>   |
| <b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b> | <i>31/10/2023 HYR2</i>   |
| <b>Project website/blog/social media</b>  | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Dplus125">https://www.facebook.com/Dplus125</a>    |

**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).**

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

During the last six months, the project has made great progress. The Project Team is now fully staffed with the recruitment of a Project Manager, Field Coordinator, and Field Assistant. The Project Staff has been actively monitoring the priority invasive plant species and raising awareness to promote the project. Additionally, the project management structure is now complete with the formulation of the Local Steering Committee (LSC). The LSC was established on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2023, and all of the members are fully aware of their role in the project. Please use the link [here](#) to access the LSC Minutes of Meeting. The next LSC meeting is scheduled for October 2023. Thereafter, the LSC will meet monthly to support the planning and implementation of project activities.

### **Output 1**

**Baseline knowledge on priority invasive plant species improved through surveys and mapping, and Territory database created.**

1.1 During the last six (6) months, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been performing routine monitoring and surveying of the target species. DNR and the Anguilla National Trust (ANT) have collaborated efforts to survey four (4) of the offshore cays. Several field visits were conducted to the offshore cays: Dog Island, Prickly Pear, Sombrero and Scrub Island. An Invasive Plant Distribution Report has been compiled to provide information on the current status of species distribution on the mainland and offshore cays. The Invasive Plant Distribution Report can be accessed [here](#). This report will be updated periodically as some

surveys are ongoing.

1.3 The local team has received training in designing and using monitoring and management protocols. The control and monitoring protocols for the priority species are being prepared by the Field Coordinator and Project Consultant and are scheduled to be finalized by December 2023. A Field Work Plan has been prepared and is used to guide the monitoring and eradication activities. The Field Work Plan can be accessed [here](#).

1.4 and 1.5 First drafts of the priority species management database and the introduced and invasive plant databases are currently being prepared. The latter also includes native plants and will contribute to a working list of the plants of Anguilla. These drafts will be completed by December 2023.

## Output 2

### **Local capacity built through “learning by doing”, with the delivery of large-scale management interventions to eradicate invasive plant species and prevent their spread.**

2.2 The invasive plant Tropical bull nettle (*Cnidocolus urens*) has been selected as the top priority target species for the eradication program. There are three (3) sites selected for eradication of the tropical bull nettle: Welches, The Valley (Agriculture Plot), and North Side. Preparations for the eradication have commenced with a GPS mapping, delimiting each site using flagging tape and cutting trails. Please click [here](#) to view photographs of preparatory work for field eradication. Field evaluation of control methods such as seedling removal and spot herbicide treatment is scheduled to commence in October 2023.

2.3 Three organizations have been identified for training in the best practices. The three organizations are the Anguilla National Trust, as well as the Agriculture Unit and the Environment Unit within the Department of Natural Resources. This training will focus on the principles of invasive plant management, specifically on eradication feasibility assessment and planning. This training is schedule to be conducted before March 2024.

2.4 All five (5) priority invasive plant species are currently being monitored and updates on the target species database will be available for December 2023.

2.5 DNR has commenced dialogue with ANT to establish biosecurity protocols for interisland control. A meeting scheduled for October 1st, 2023, to outline the intended approach to create a biosecurity system to support early detection and rapid response and to maintain them free of invasive plant threat.

## Output 3

### **Key stakeholders (Community members, hoteliers, Government and land managers) are actively engaged in early detection of invasive plants.**

3.1 A Communication and Public Awareness Plan was drafted in May 2023. This document outlines the communication medium and tools required to effectively educate and sensitize all stakeholder about the project, and how to identify the target species. The Communication and Public Awareness Plan is a document pdf file that can be accessed [here](#).

The education component of the Communication and Public Awareness Plan incorporates educational institutions in invasive plant species management. Slide show presentations were the main communication method used during the second week of September 2023 to three primary schools: Vivian Vanterpool, Alwyn Allison Richardson and Orealia Kelly. Students were sensitized about Anguilla's invasive species, with a focus on the priority of invasive plants. To view the slideshow presentation, click [here](#). The students participated in a quiz and were awarded promotional items as prizes. These items include pencils, pens, stickers, water bottles, and reusable shopping bags. Photographs of the school presents can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/Dplus125>.

The Project Team has commenced dialogue with the Albena Lake Hodge Comprehensive School to participate in the upcoming Citizen by Science Programme scheduled for November

2023.

3.2 DPlus125 published its first article on invasive plant species titled “Engaging Anguillans in Invasive Plant Management.” It was published in the local newspaper dated July 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. To view this article, click [here](#).

3.3 The Invasive Plant Awareness Week was completed in the last week of June 2023 (26th-30th). A programme was developed to outline the schedule activities for the Invasive Plant Awareness Week. The programme of activities can be accessed [here](#). The program of events and other promotional information were shared via several media platforms including the Dplus125 Facebook Page, DNR Facebook page, the Government of Anguilla TV display at the airport and sea port, and an email broadcast was sent to all staff within the various Government departments. Also, a radio Advertisement was aired for several days on Radio Anguilla 95.5 FM. The following are the programme of activities that were conducted to celebrate the Invasive Plant Awareness Week:

- Launch – the Invasive Plant Awareness Week was officially opened with a speech by the Hon. Minister Mrs. Quincy Gumbs-Marie. This is speech was recorded and aired via Dplus125 Facebook page.
- Trivia Facebook – trivia quizzes were created on DPLUS125 Facebook page to engage the audience to learn about the priority invasive plants and to gain more interaction on the page.
- Radio Interviews - two radio stations were used to conduct interviews, namely Radio Anguilla (92.5 FM) and Klass Fm (92.9 FM). The interview on Radio Anguilla 92.5 FM, was broadcast live on their Facebook platform, the government’s website and Lloyd Live Facebook page; It is also shared on Dplus125 Facebook page. The interview on Klass FM 92.9 was aired on live radio and streamed live on their Facebook page. There was live audience interaction via telephone and in the comment section of the Facebook page. The audience were quizzed at the end of the interview, and each winner received a promotional prize from the project.
- Poster Distribution - key stakeholders such as the Department of Customs and Excise Tax, Agriculture Unit, ANT, Anguilla Community College, Albena Lake-Hodge Comprehensive School, and all of the primary schools received posters.
- Exhibition - an exhibition was held at the Peoples Market Place showcasing informational and promotional materials about the project. Live specimen of the target species for eradication “Tropical bull nettle” was exhibited as well as dried leaves of the other species. Promotional materials displayed were brochures, Identification keys, stickers, posters, caps, T-shirt and the banner. Other promotional items such as key rings, water bottles, pens along with brochures and stickers were distributed to the participants. Approximately 200 persons attended the exhibition which commenced at 10:00 am and ended at 4:00 pm. This event was broadcast live for one hour via Lloyd Live Facebook.

To access Dplus125 Facebook page to view photographs and media footage of the aforementioned activities, click this link <https://www.facebook.com/Dplus125>

3.4 A general poster identifying the 5 top priority invasive plant species was produced for awareness purposes. To view the poster, click [here](#).

#### **Output 4**

**Lessons learned are consolidated into a long-term invasive plant management strategy, which is shared with other UKOTs in the region.**

The activities for Output 4 are expected to be completed in the latter half of 2024.

**2. 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.**

A change request was submitted in October 2023. The purpose of the change request is to revise the project log frame, timeline and budget. The request will allow for the transfer of funds to the final year budget to ensure staff retention for the proposed additional six (6) months. If approved, the new date for project completion is March 2025. Please note that If the change request is not approved there will be a significant underspend of approximately £. Given that the revised budget is £. On the other hand, if the change request is approved the expected underspend is approximately £.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)**

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

**4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £ [REDACTED]

**4c. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.**

**NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.**

**5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**