

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: 31st October 2022

| | |
|---|---|
| Project reference | DPLUS130 |
| Project title | Sustainable sargassum management in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat |
| Lead partner | Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) |
| Partner(s) | Department of Natural Resources – Anguilla Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration – BVI Department of Environment – Montserrat Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (CERMES) Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission |
| Project leader | Yasa Belmar |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | October 31, 2022 (HYR1) |
| Project website/blog/social media | https://canari.org/darwin-sargassum-ots/ |

1. 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).

Output 1 – Strengthening the evidence base for decision-making

The **scoping study** reports for each territory were finalised with further inputs from OT stakeholders and are being disseminated.

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) **drones** and related software were procured for each OT in July 2022, based on feedback from stakeholders and advice from the consultant.

Drone training workshops were held in Anguilla from September 5-9, Montserrat from September 19-23, and Tortola, Virgin Islands, from September 26-30, 2022. In total, 21 persons (7 in each territory) representing partner agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and local communities were trained in how to conduct drone monitoring using standardised sargassum monitoring protocols.

During the workshops, teams in each territory conducted drone mapping surveys on at least two sargassum-affected beaches earmarked for monitoring. The teams created orthomosaic maps and elevation models as Digital Surface and Terrain Models, which will inform refinement and finalisation of the **participatory sargassum research and monitoring framework** and support ongoing systematic data collection to address key information gaps and inform decision-making. See Appendix 1 for the report on the drone training workshops.

Output 2 – Mobilising knowledge for action

Knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) surveys were completed in target communities in each territory to capture baseline data on stakeholders' knowledge and preferences related to sargassum influxes, the impacts and management and adaptation actions. These target communities were identified based on the scoping study in terms of communities that are exposed to sargassum influxes and dependent on fisheries, tourism and other related livelihoods that are significantly impacted by influxes. The draft project communications and engagement strategy was updated based on the survey findings. See Appendix 2 for the KAP survey report and Appendix 3 for the final draft communications and engagement strategy. To validate the findings and ensure the proposed communications and engagement actions are well matched to each territory as roll-out begins, virtual workshops will be held later this year with a broad range of stakeholders from each OT and the strategy refined and finalised.

Output 3 – Improving sargassum management

The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) has initiated work on the **sargassum management plans** for each OT, however, completion was delayed due to dependence on inputs from the completed scoping report, KAP surveys and participatory research and monitoring framework. These plans are now scheduled to be completed by March 2023.

OT stakeholders participated in the 3rd virtual meeting of the Regional Sargassum **Action Learning Network** with other government, civil society, private sector, academic and technical/intergovernmental agency stakeholders working in the Eastern Caribbean region to support knowledge exchange, learning and partnerships to improve management and adaptation to sargassum influxes. See the report of the 3rd Action Learning Network meeting at Appendix 4.

Output 4 – Project management

The **Project Steering Committee** met for the second time on October 11, 2022 and undertook the following:

- reviewed the actions implemented between April 2022-September 2022
- reviewed and refined the actions to be undertaken between October 2022 – March 2023
- Identified and discussed synergies with regional and other relevant initiatives, including the regional *Adapting to a New Reality: Managing Responses to Influxes of Sargassum Seaweed in the Eastern Caribbean as Ecosystem Hazards and Opportunities (SargAdapt)* project

See Appendix 5 for the minutes of the 2nd bi-annual meeting of the Committee.

The appendices to this report can be accessed as follows via this Dropbox link:



- Appendix 1: Report on the drone training workshops
- Appendix 2: KAP survey report
- Appendix 3: Final draft communications and engagement strategy
- Appendix 4: Report of the 3rd ALG meeting
- Appendix 5: Minutes of the 2nd bi-annual meeting of the Committee

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.

Restrictions and uncertainties related to COVID-19 affected the range of data that was collected during scoping and this led to delays in drafting/updating of sargassum management plans under activity 3.1. It was therefore decided that additional data collected by local sargassum monitoring teams during implementation of the standardised drone monitoring protocols would be used to inform implementation of this activity. As such, this will delay completion of Activities 3.1 and 3.2 until January 2023 and Activity 3.3 until March 2023.

Activity 3.4 (*design and facilitate a 2-3-day training of trainers workshop in each OT on best practices for sargassum collection, removal and use and rehabilitation of affected areas*) will therefore not be completed until Year 3, Quarter 1. CANARI is proposing that the budget for this Activity be shifted to Year 3 and will submit a formal Change Request for approval.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: **No**

Formal Change Request submitted: **No**

Received confirmation of change acceptance -

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: ██████████

4b. 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.

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 (including the submission of your risk register), 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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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. 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**