

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

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 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

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| Project reference | DPLUS137 |
| Project title | Transforming Anguilla's Marine Parks: institutionalising sustainable and collaborative management solutions |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Anguilla |
| Lead Organisation | Fisheries and Marine Resources Unit-Department of Natural Resources (FMRU) |
| Partner(s) | Anguilla National Trust (ANT), Blue finance (Bf) |
| Project leader | £328,144 |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | 31 October 2024 HYR4 |
| Project website/blog/social media | |

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end of September).

Output 1. Marine values (ecological, socio-economic) are established to inform sustainable management frameworks and to monitor and evaluate management plans
We have continued to collect benthic data, applying FMRU standardised protocols (Anguilla Marine Monitoring Programme) within three of Anguilla's six marine parks (Shoal Bay-Island Harbour, Little Bay, Sandy Island) (Activity 1.1). Unsafe in-water conditions currently preclude in-water surveys from being conducted by divers. Data collected from these sites assist with long-term monitoring of ecological health (and recovery).

Supporting this in-water work, in April 2024, project partners, supported by the University of Exeter, collected six underwater acoustic stations that were deployed within five of the six marine parks (all except Sombrero due to the depth of the water) in November 2023 (Activity 1.1). SD cards were replaced in each of the stations and the stations were redeployed to collect additional data outside of the main tourism season. Data collected from the first set of deployments is currently being analysed.

Output 2. Effective and sustainable co-management structures and tools are in place for the integrated management of Anguilla's marine parks

With marine park legislative amendments being approved by the Government of Anguilla Executive Council in Year 3 of the project, the Attorney General's office is currently integrating the recommended (and approved) changes into the actual Marine Park Act, including (but not limited to) the establishment of marine parks as replenishment zones, the expansion of the marine park network to include dive wrecks (as also no-take/replenishment areas), and the establishment of a marine park multi-stakeholder advisory committee which will assist with the oversight of marine park management plan implementation. This management approach is slightly different than what was first envisioned (the establishment of a co-management entity) which means the need for a marketing plan/business model and de-risking strategies (Activity 2.6) are no longer necessary as marine parks will still ultimately fall under the responsibility of the Government of Anguilla, but with stakeholders playing important advisory and oversight roles.

With this framework now finalised, we have been focusing our efforts on the development of sustainable financing instruments (Activity 2.7). Recognising the strengths of and opportunities available to the FMRU and the ANT, we are taking a multi-faceted approach to the identification and pursuit of sustainable financing. With FMRU being identified as the management agency for Anguilla's marine parks, the development of an Environmental Trust Fund has been identified as one of the best mechanisms to collect revenue to support environmental management, including the management of Anguilla's marine parks. The Environmental Trust Fund has been included and formalised within the Environmental Management Bill which is currently undergoing wider public consultation. The Environmental Management Bill outlines how the Trust Fund would be managed and operated; sources of funds to support the Fund are still under discussion.

At the same time, Blue finance is working with the ANT to establish sustainable financing solutions that leverage relationships with tourism partners through education, sponsorships, and merchandise.

Also under this Output, we have continued to implement our marine park enforcement programme (Activity 2.9), with an additional 26 patrols within the six marine parks over last six months. Enforcement activities have focused on monitoring boat numbers, visitor numbers, conversations with individuals operating restaurants on Prickly Pear East regarding biodiversity (sea turtle nesting, Lesser Antillean iguana sightings), and biosecurity monitoring on restored islands.

Output 3. National capacity to plan, manage, and monitor marine parks is raised, supported by enhanced technical skills and greater public awareness and cooperation

With additional financial support through the European Union's RESEMBID funding mechanism, we procured mooring buoys for deployment within our marine parks in October and November 2024, following peak hurricane season.

Also with EU funding, we were able to procure a fit-for-purpose, locally-constructed vessel for the FMRU to support marine park monitoring and enforcement activities. The vessel was launched on 10 July 2024 at a ceremony chaired by the ANT with remarks provided by the Government of Anguilla (Ministry of Environment, FMRU), the EU, and one of the marine park technical advisory group's members.

Over the course of the last six months, we have also been able to increase our capacity through staff development trainings. Eleven FMRU staff received training from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism in the in-field use of a data collection and enforcement app (Kobo) (May 2024). Seven FMRU and ANT staff also received training from Dr. Matthew Witt (University of Exeter) in statistical analysis using R programming in April 2024

Communications and outreach activities between April and September 2024 included five social media posts, reaching an audience of 4562 individuals (Facebook, Instagram). We also

led on Anguilla's BLUE Week programme which was held from 20-25 April 2024 and incorporated a series of marine park and marine biodiversity public events, including beach and underwater clean-ups within and along Anguilla's marine parks (20 April 2024), an evening trivia night (22 April 2024), a public exhibition showcasing blue initiatives including this project (24 April 2024), and the premiering/screening of FMRU's and ANT's marine parks short films at an outdoor movie night (25 April 2024), with 225 individuals participating. Both FMRU and ANT hosted youth summer camps that featured Anguilla's marine parks and marine biodiversity, with a total of 28 participants. We also organised a public event which involved a presentation about Anguilla's marine parks followed by a kayaking experience to Little Bay Marine Park. The event was attended by 34 individuals, with registration reaching maximum capacity within an hour of posting/advertising.

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.

We have not encountered any notable problems or unexpected developments over the last 6 months of the project.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

N/A

Formal Change Request submitted:

N/A

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

N/A

Change Request reference if known: N/A

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

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 2025)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should 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 to your project 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?

N/A

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report. If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

Checklist for submission

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| For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st April 2024) | |
| Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate. | |
| If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ? | |
| For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st April 2024) | |
| Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate. | |
| For All Projects | |
| Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email. | |
| Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com . | |
| Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website? | |
| Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ? | |
| Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report. | |