Darwin Plus Main & Strategic: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note"
(https://darwinplus.org.uk/resources/information-notes)

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025

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

Darwin Plus Project Information

Scheme (Main or Strategic)	Main
Project reference	DPLUS204
Project title	Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem
Territory(ies)	SBAs of Akrotiri & Dhekelia (Cyprus)
Lead Organisation	Open University of Cyprus (OUC)
Project partner(s)	DICE - Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology, University of Kent SBAA ED - Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas Administration Environment Department
Darwin Plus grant value	£396,103
Start/end dates of project	01/06/2024 - 31/05/2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024-Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	June 2024 – March 2025, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Ioannis Vogiatzakis
Project website/blog/social media	www.dplus-arise.eu
Report author(s) and date	Elli Tzirkalli, Savvas Zotos, Marilena Stamatiou, Athina Papatheodoulou, Margarita Hadjistylli, Ioannis Vogiatzakis 9/05/2025

1. Project summary

The DPLUS204 project "Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem" aims to safeguard and enhance the long-term resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL), the most important coastal wetland in Cyprus, which lies within the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) of Akrotiri and Dhekelia. ASL constitutes a Ramsar Site, as well as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under SBA ordinances. Despite its ecological importance, it is under growing pressure from land use change, urbanisation, and the adverse impacts of climate change, such as prolonged droughts and reduced precipitation.

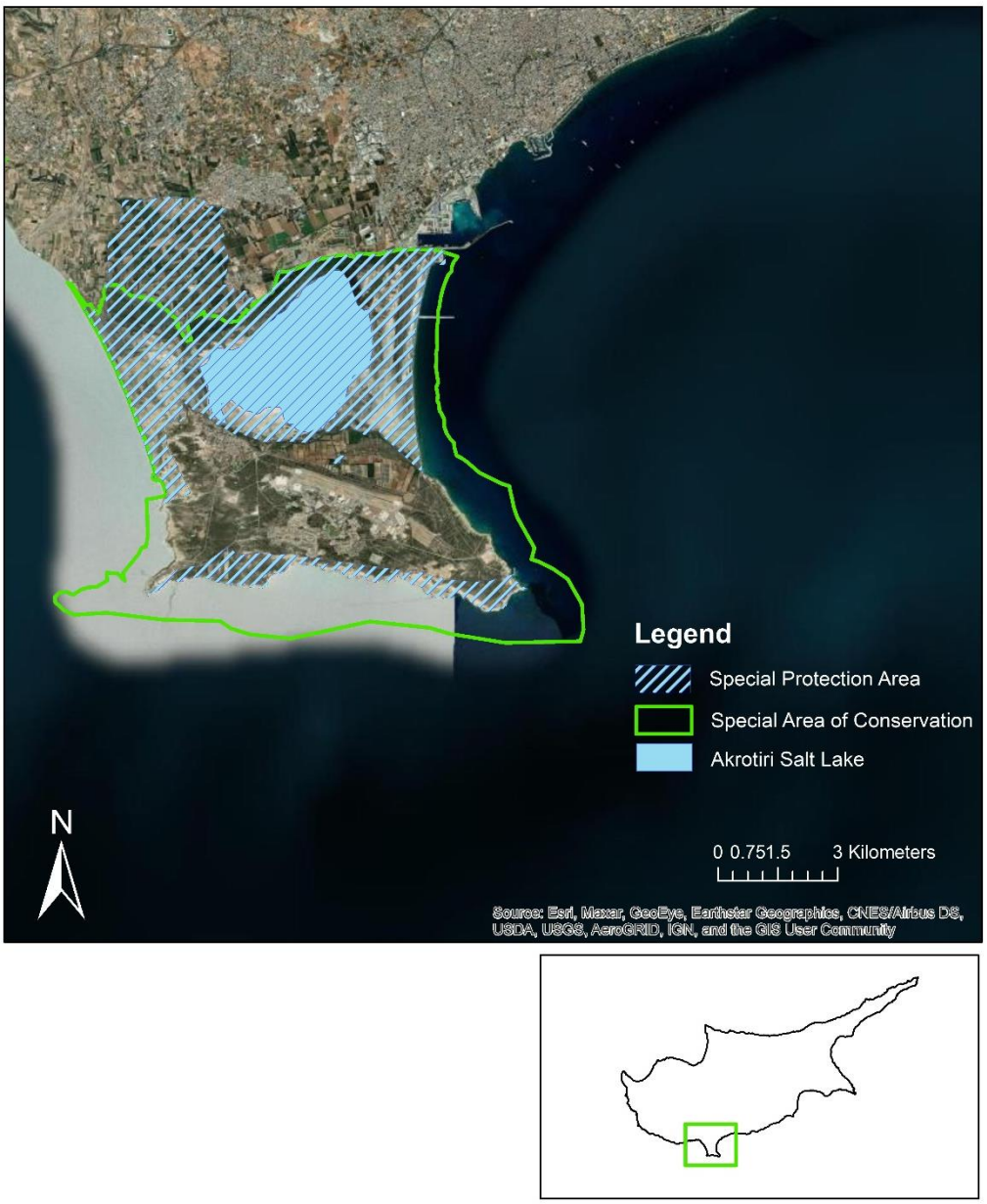
The project directly addresses the environmental degradation caused by large-scale developments, increased economic activities, and uncontrolled access to important habitats of ASL, which in combination with climate change, threaten the wetland's delicate ecological balance and biodiversity.

These challenges are highly relevant for local communities and authorities, and the broader biodiversity protection efforts in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), especially given ASL's unique ecological role as a habitat for endemic plant species, migratory birds, and ecosystem services of this fragile aquatic ecosystem.

The need for intervention was identified based on the scale and intensity of the pressures and threats in the area. The increasing documentation of developments (casino, golf courses, luxury residences, and others) and the newly adopted Policy Statement of the SBAs for Non-Military Development (planning zones) are both contributing to significant land use changes. The impact of pressures and threats on the biodiversity of the ASL and its sensitive ecosystems has been highlighted repeatedly by the authorities and stakeholders through previous Darwin projects such as DPLUS056, DPLUS088, DPLUS123, DPLUS141, and DPLUS171. These projects provide data demonstrating the ongoing land use changes and biodiversity threats affecting the ASL ecosystem.

The DPLUS204 project aims to address these threats and enhance the resilience of the ASL ecosystem through the implementation of concrete actions such as the creation of Plant Micro-Reserves (PMRs) for Red Data Book (RDB) species and Biological Soil Crust (BSC) restoration using cyanobacteria techniques. It also introduces a sustainability appraisal framework to align ecological actions with socio-economic considerations, ensuring community support and integration into SBAA policy mechanisms, thus enabling long-term conservation.

The ASL is located in the southern coastal region of Cyprus (Map 1), within the Akrotiri Peninsula (SBA territories). The site includes terrestrial salt marshes, seasonal saline lagoons, aquatic habitats of high conservation value and *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* plantations.



Map 1. Location of the study area.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

This project was developed in close collaboration with key partners and stakeholders, aiming at strengthening the conservation efforts within Cyprus' Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs). The project is led by the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) in partnership with the SBAA Environmental Department (SBAA ED) and the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) at the University of Kent. This partnership stemmed from clear, documented needs on dealing with the ongoing threats to the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) ecosystem.

All partners were actively engaged during the proposal development, and their roles are aligned with the project's needs. The OUC leads the overall implementation and coordination of the project. The SBAA ED, as the environmental authority within the SBAs, provides constant support and facilitates on-ground activities, while DICE contributes expertise on stakeholder engagement and sustainability appraisal.

Planning and decision-making involved all project partners (OUC, SBAA ED, DICE). Regular communication is achieved by e-mail, online meetings, as well as monthly face-to-face meetings to update on project progress and actions.

Throughout the year, we have worked closely with key stakeholders such as the Department of Forests (consultation on RDB plant species), the Agricultural Research Institute (seed collecting protocol, targeted plant species), the Department of Environment (consultation on ASL threats), the Water Development Department, the Game and Fauna Service, NGOs (e.g. Birdlife Cyprus) and local communities either by face-to-face meetings, field visits or through emails and telephone calls.

Team members from DICE/UKent visited Cyprus twice to support the planning and preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal report. During their visits, they engaged with key ASL stakeholders and collected preliminary data for the appraisal process.

In addition, international experts from Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC), Spain, visited Cyprus for the Biological Soil Crust restoration activity and collaborated with OUC team during sampling of dead plant and soil material from ASL.

Key meetings and updates are available on the project's website: https://www.dplus-arise.eu/.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1. Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL

1.1 Data collection for Spatial Prioritization Framework

Data collection for the spatial prioritization of restoration areas within the ASL has been completed. All available data were compiled from various sources, including the SBAA ED, the Department of Environment, the Department of Forests, as well as online platforms for climate data and scientific literature. These datasets encompass land use and land cover (LULC) information, biodiversity records, and climate indicators relevant to ASL's ecological health.

1.2 Application of Spatial prioritisation procedure (pressure analysis)

To identify priority areas for conservation and restoration within the ASL, a spatial pressure analysis was performed. This involved integrating LULC changes with climate change indicators such as the Standard Precipitation Index and the Soil Moisture index, alongside the compiled ecological and environmental data. Through this process, a «pressure zone» surrounding the ASL was identified, highlighting the areas under significant anthropogenic and climatic stress. This «pressure zone» serves not only to prioritize immediate restoration efforts but also as a baseline for monitoring future LULC changes and environmental pressures.

1.3 Report and Map of SP areas

A report, along with spatial maps, has been produced (Annex 4), outlining the identified priority areas within the ALS for conservation and restoration. Out of 21 areas, seven areas were

selected (with a total area of 10 ha) for restoration actions to take place. The final selection was made in close consultation with SBAA ED, incorporating insights from visits and stakeholder feedback to ensure practical feasibility and alignment with the project objectives. The decision was endorsed by the project's Consortium, with representatives from all the partner organisations (Annex 5).

Output 2. Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL

2.1 Monthly plant sampling during flowering period for two years

Following collaborative meetings with the Agricultural Research Institute and the Department of Forests, the proposed Red Data Book plant species, which will be included in the PMRs network were revised. A total of 18 plant species were assessed based on criteria such as conservation status, distribution across the Akrotiri Peninsula, ease of establishment, and environmental/anthropogenic pressures. Based on this evaluation, 14 species were selected for inclusion in the PMRs (Annex 6). Plant sampling is based on the flowering period of each plant species. Due to the increase in the number of plant species selected (initially six species were proposed for the establishment of PMRs) this activity will need to run until month 28 of the project. For prolonging the plant sampling period, a change request of the workplan will be submitted.

2.2 Mapping of RDB plant distribution and threats

Spatial data on the distribution of RDB plants in the ASL, as well as data on their threats and pressures, have been provided by the Department of Forests, the SBAA ED, and the Flora of Cyprus database (https://www.flora-of-cyprus.eu/). Additional data were acquired from previous Darwin projects such as DPLUS141 and DPLUS171. All data will be organised in a database, and distribution maps will be produced at the end of activity 2.2.

Activities 2.3 Delineation of PMRs sites and reporting, and 2.4 Placement of signs and fences for PMRs have not yet commenced.

Output 3. Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL

3.1 Selection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to be restored

Guided by the results of the spatial prioritization procedure, and consultation with project partners, the selection for both the terrestrial and aquatic sites has been completed. In total, we have seven areas (approximately 10 ha) where restoration actions will take place (see Annex 4).

3.2 Terrestrial plant and aquatic plant sampling during flowering period

Plant sampling across the restoration sites to create a species inventory and to assess baseline ecological conditions are underway. These data will inform restoration planning and enable long-term monitoring of species diversity and vegetation structure.

3.3 Moths, grasshoppers surveys in the beginning and at the end of the project

Sampling of moths and grasshoppers is underway. The sampling for the first year is expected to be completed by April 2025 and will start again for Year 3 in April 2027. For both insect groups, monthly sampling has been conducted monthly from November 2024 to April 2025 at the proposed restoration sites. Moths are collected using light-traps operated from dusk to dawn (Annex 7). Grasshoppers were recorded in two plots per site, each covering a standard area of $50m^2$, using a sweep net. Species identification is currently in process. Additionally, an Automated Insect Monitoring trap (AMI-trap), acquired from the UK Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, will be deployed in the ASL area. This equipment will complement current sampling efforts and support long-term monitoring of moth activity in the region.

3.4 Collection of dead plant material for BSC restoration and Cyanobacteria Lab testing

Experts María Prieto Álvaro and Pillar Hurtado from UCJR Spain visited Cyprus from 17-22 February 2025 and collected dead plant material and soil crust for the Biological Soil Crust restoration and cyanobacteria lab testing (Annex 8). Samples were collected from a total of 37 sites, spanning a gradient from drier to wetter areas of the ASL, in two different transects. Each transect was separated in bands, depending on the dominant vegetation type and the biological

soil crust present. The samples included cyanobacteria, algae, lichens and mosses. All samples have been transferred to the facilities of UCJR for further processing and analysis.

3.5 Application of dead plant material and Cyanobacteria inoculation for BSC restoration

A pilot experiment applied dead plant material and biological soil crust (cyanobacteria, algae, lichens, and bryophytes) in nine plot sites in the study area to examine the potential for biocrust establishment (Annex 8). Each plot site was inoculated with different inocula, depending on the soil BSC present at the near location, from which samples were collected. From February to March 2025, members of the OUC team visited twice per week the nine pilot sites to monitor BSC development. However, due to the dry weather conditions and the absence of positive establishment results, the pilot experiment was terminated in April 2025. Following the workplan, we will await results from cyanobacterial lab testing and continue with planned BSC restoration during Year 2 and 3 of the project.

3.6 Hydromorphological restoration (removal of barriers and alien plant species, plant native riparian species)

Specific restoration actions have been proposed for each area (Annex 9). The proposed restoration actions are under evaluation and approval by SBAA. Following their approval, a consultation with key stakeholders will follow. These include the removal of waste, removal of alien plant species (Eucalyptus, Acacia) as well as actions *Tamarix* sp. (native species requiring ecological succession management in the marsh) and pond excavation to support habitat enhancement for *Mentha aquatica*. The removal of plant species will be undertaken following procedures approved by the Forestry Department and SBAA. The planting of terrestrial and aquatic species will be supported through propagation, by collecting rhizomes and seeds, which will grow in the nursery before being transplanted to the restoration areas.

3.7 Collection of seed and propagules and transfer to DoF and ARI facilities

Target plant species have been identified in consultation with the Agricultural Research Institute and the Forestry Department (14 species as per activity 2.1). The seed collection will start in spring-summer 2025 following the targeted protocol provided by the Agricultural Research Institute (Annex 10).

Output 4. Regulated access to conservation priority habitats

4.1 Assessment of Access in ASL

The project team has identified key sites within the ASL ecosystem that require access management. An Access Management Plan has been drafted (Annex 11) to guide sustainable access and protect sensitive areas. The proposed Access Management Plan is currently under evaluation and approval by the SBAA ED. Following the approval, a consultation will follow to ensure key stakeholder engagement and support for the implementation of the access control measures.

4.2 Place restriction bars and signs to forbid access to targeted habitats and the lake bed

This activity is scheduled to start following the end of the consultation period and will involve the installation of barriers and gates to support access management. Please note that a new risk has been reported in the Risk Registry of the project related to the acceptance of the proposed measures by the ASL stakeholders. Mitigating actions have been identified as to reduce the severity of this risk.

Output 5. Implementation of sustainability appraisal

5.1 Development of project's website

A project website (www.dplus-arise.eu) has been established to provide updates and resources for the project. The website has been connected to Google Analytics as to collect information on the number of visitors and number of downloads of the project's materials.

5.2 Preparation and development of Sustainability report

A sustainability report is in preparation to assess and communicate the project's environmental impact and long-term viability.

5.3 Interviews and focus groups

The questionnaire related to this activity concerning the development of the sustainability appraisal report has been drafted (Annex 12), and the focus group are being formed. This activity will support the identification of the sustainability objectives for the long-term conservation of ASL ecosystem. Team members from DICE/UKent visited Cyprus twice for the preparation of this report and the relevant questionnaires that will focus on key stakeholders of the project area, The duration of this activity will need to be expanded to Year 2.

5.4 Organise three workshops on the importance and management of ASL

These are scheduled for Year 2 and 3 of the project. After evaluating the current condition of the study area, the multiversity of the stakeholders and their decentralisation from ASL, it was decided that an expansion of this activity to Year 2, is needed. A formal change request of the workplan will be submitted for 5.3 and 5.4 activities.

5.5 Publish three Policy briefs and a leaflet

The first policy brief of the project is completed and can be downloaded from the project's website (www.dplus-arise.eu)

5.6 Publish five articles in local newspapers and give three interviews in local radio stations

A press release about the project is available on the project website, and the first article is currently being drafted for publication in a local newspaper.

5.7 Peer-reviewed article in an international open access journal

Not yet commenced. However, a poster of the project was presented at the International Conference 5th Plant Conservation Week, 7-11 April, Limassol, Cyprus.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Overall, the project is progressing well towards achieving its planned Outputs, with most activities planned for the first year either completed or underway, and strong alignment with Output indicators. For Output 1, spatial prioritization for the identification of priority areas for restoration was conducted and a report (Annex 4) was produced. Output 2 is now covering 14 RDB species (Annes 6), as well as data on species distribution and threats. Mapping and PMR delineation are pending completion of ongoing sampling. For Output 3 the site selection for restoration has been completed and plant/insect sampling are underway; expert involvement from Spain has initiated BSC restoration preparation. Progress is documented through field surveys. Output 4 has reached the draft stage of an Access Management Plan (Annex 11), with key sites identified and is under evaluation and approval by the SBAA ED. For Output 5 a dedicated website has been launched, one policy brief published, and a press release available online. Activities such as interviews, workshops, and focus groups are in preparation. Indicators against Outputs align with the progress of the project.

Baseline Condition	Change recorded by 31/03/2025	Indicator	Source of evidence
Output 1. Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL			
While existing data on pressures and threats around Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) were available, no integrated	Spatial prioritization for the identification of priority areas for restoration was conducted, and a report	1.1 Identification of 10 areas of conservation concern and high conservation value of at least 10 ha in total.	Spatial Prioritization protocol (Annex 4).

Baseline Condition	Change recorded by 31/03/2025	Indicator	Source of evidence
prioritization framework existed before the project. A need was identified to spatially target restoration actions based on combined ecological and threat data.	and map were produced.		
	A Steering Committee meeting was conducted to agree upon the areas to be restored.	1.2 Consortium Agreement of at least 5 targeted areas where actions will take place.	Minutes of Steering Committee meeting (Annex 5).
Output 2. Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL			
The Akrotiri Peninsula hosts numerous threatened and vulnerable Red Data Book (RDB) species, yet no formal micro-reserves exist for their protection. Previous mapping and conservation efforts lacked conservation mechanisms like PMRs.	Acquired data on 14 RDB species.	2.1 Distribution map of the 6 Red data plant species.	During sampling, all records (GPS locations) per Red data plant species and per sampling period will be archived and available to SBAA ED and local authorities.
	Mapping and PMR delineation are pending completion.	2.2 Identification and establishment of at least 5 PMRs (0.5 ha) for red data plants of ASL.	Spatial file with PMRs locations along with geotagged images of the red data plants will be developed.
Output 3. Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL			
Although various conservation efforts have been implemented in the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) area in recent years, including habitat protection and management, no restoration activities involving Biological Soil Crusts (BSC) have been carried out.	Expert involvement from Spain has initiated BSC restoration preparation. Progress is documented through field surveys.	3.1 Creation of BSC in the Lab and implementation in the restoration sites.	Results of Cyanobacteria cultivations.
	The site selection for restoration has been completed and plant/insect sampling are underway.	3.2 Selection of 3 aquatic and 5 terrestrial species for soil seed collection, germination of seed and propagules and planting.	List of plant species selected for the restoration (Annex 6).
	The proposed restoration/conservation actions are currently under evaluation and approval by the SBAA ED. Following their approval, a consultation with key stakeholders will follow.	3.3 Restoration of at least 5 degraded aquatic sites of 5 ha.	Restoration plan for terrestrial and aquatic sites.
	Seed collection will start in spring-summer 2025.	3.4 Establishment of ex-situ seed bank including 6 RDB, 3 aquatic plants and 5 terrestrial from at least 10 individuals per species.	Report on plant seed bank status for the restoration sites to be prepared.
Output 4. Regulated access to conservation priority habitats			
Access control measures have been implemented primarily through previous DARWIN projects, such	The draft of the Access Management Plan (Annex 11), with key sites identified, has been developed.	4.1 Development of one Access Management Plan.	Access Management Plan (Annex 11).

Baseline Condition	Change recorded by 31/03/2025	Indicator	Source of evidence
as DPLUS141. However, additional actions are necessary to safeguard sensitive habitat areas of the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL), particularly to prevent illegal vehicle entry and trampling that threaten this ecosystem.	The implementation of access control measures will follow the approval of the Access Management Plan by the SBAA ED and consultation with key stakeholders.	4.2 Installation of 4 restriction bars.	Geotag photographs of the installed restriction bars.
		4.3 5 sign-posting in at least 5 priority areas by project.	Geotag photographs of the installed signs.
Output 5. Implementation of sustainability appraisal and raising awareness ASL ecosystem importance and conservation projects			
Public awareness on the lake's ecological value is considered limited. Communicating its importance and engaging the local communities is crucial for the long-term conservation of the ASL.	Preparation of sustainability appraisal report.	5.1 Development of one sustainability report.	Publish sustainability report.
	The project website has been developed and launched.	5.2 Project website visitation (visits per month).	https://www.dplus-arise.eu/ Report from Google analytics.
	A list of key stakeholders that will be invited to participate has been formed.	5.3 Participation in three workshops hosted by SBAA on the importance andmanagement of ASL.	Workshops attendance sheets.
	A dedicated page on the project website has been developed to accommodate materials available for downloading. Currently, three materials (press release, leaflet, 1st policy brief) have been uploaded on this webpage.	5.4 Downloads of project material.	Report from Google Analytics (number of downloads).
	One policy brief has been published.	5.5a Three Policy Briefs downloaded from the project websites at least 100 times in year 3.	Report from Google Analytics (number of downloads).
	A press release has been conducted and is available online. Activities such as interviews, newspaper articles are scheduled or in preparation.	5.5b Five Articles regarding the project results submitted in local newspapers and three local radio interviews by year 3.	Copy of the articles uploaded as Annexes in pdf format (or video/audio file) in the final report. Articles and media material will also be uploaded on the project's website.
	Not commenced yet. However, a poster of the project was presented at an international conference.	One Journal article on ASL long-term conservation strategy submitted by year 3 to open access journal.	Copy of the submission report or Journal confirmation email. Copy of the article after publication.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

The indicators for measuring the achievement of the project outcome, as outlined in the Logical Framework, are proving to be relevant and adequate. The project outcome of enhancing the ASL ecosystem through in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and the local community, is progressing well. It is on track for completion by the planned deadline of May 2027 and within budget.

Baseline Condition	Progress to date	Indicator	Source of evidence
There hasn't been a framework on identifying and prioritizing specific terrestrial and aquatic areas for targeted restoration/conservation activities.	Following the results of the Spatial Prioritisation Framework, the restoration areas have been selected and agreed upon by the consortium. The restoration/conservation activities are expected to initiate in year 2 as planned without any delay.	0.1 Restoration of 10 sites (10ha) including 5 terrestrial sites (5ha) and 5 aquatic sites (5ha).	Spatial Prioritization report (Annex 4) Consortium Agreement of the selected areas for restoration/conservation activities (Annex 5)
The baseline condition will be assessed using appropriate surveys for each one of the three targeted groups (plants, moths, grasshopper) within year 1.	Surveys to assess the baseline condition are being conducted in all selected sites.	0.2 Increase biodiversity of plants, moths and grasshopper by 10% in ASL restoration sites by year 3.	Annex 7
A good network with stakeholders and the local community in Akrotiri is already available due to previous DPLUS projects. We will build on this network and the good relations already developed to further leverage engagement not only in the Akrotiri community but in the surrounding villages/communities (northern of the ASL), that are also impacting the ASL ecosystem.	Colleagues from DICE/UKent visited Cyprus twice to discuss the strategy for leveraging public engagement, raising awareness and implementing the sustainability appraisal for the project.	0.3 Leveraging public engagement in 7 villages and 500 inhabitants.	Key meetings with stakeholders are available on the project's website: https://www.dplus-arise.eu/. Three workshops will be organized in Year 2 and 3 to facilitate public engagement and increase awareness on the importance of the ASL.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome: ASL ecosystem enhancement by in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the local community

Assumption 1: SBAA provides access to the project team to implement conservation actions and surveys across the ASL. SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities.

Comments: SBAA has provided consistent support by providing data on ASL, facilitating field surveys across ASL, and guiding the process for obtaining permissions related to the

restoration/conservation tasks. Collaboration with the local communities remains positive throughout the project so far.

Output 1: Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL

Assumption 2: All datasets available to project team

Comments: Valuable datasets were provided by SBAA ED and local authorities, allowing spatial prioritization to be completed (Annex 4). All data are available to the project team and no issues are foreseen for future use.

Output 2: Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL

Assumption 3: Involve both SBAA and local authorities for the PMRs establishment

Comments: Collaboration with SBAA ED and local authorities (e.g., Department of Forests, Agriculture Research Institute) is ongoing, through joint field visits and in-person meetings. The final list of plants to be included in the PMRs has been selected (see Annex 6). The project team will maintain close collaboration with these key stakeholders until the completion of this output.

Output 3: Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL

Assumption 4: Access to terrestrial and aquatic habitats remains feasible for the duration of the project

Comments: Access to project areas has been feasible so far, although weather-related limitations may occasionally delay field activities. The overall risk remains low but will be monitored as restoration/conservation tasks progress.

Output 4: Regulated access to conservation priority habitats

Assumption 5: Access restriction to be followed by local community and visitors

Comments: A draft Access Management Plan has identified key areas that are in need for access control measures (Annex 11). The implementation of these measures will proceed upon the outcome of stakeholder consultations. The positive response of previous access control measures under DPLUS141 minimizes the risk of non-compliance by local communities and ASL visitors.

Output 5: Implementation of sustainability appraisal and raising awareness ASL ecosystem importance and conservation projects

Assumption 6: SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities

Comments: SBAA has a vital role in the communication and collaboration with local communities due its long engagement with the local communities of the Akrotiri Peninsula.

Assumption 7: A minimum number (10%) of local stakeholders participate in the public consultation exercise

Comments: With the support of the SBAA the number of local stakeholders in the public consultation exercise related to the sustainability appraisal, 10% still remains a feasible target.

Assumption 8: Up to 90% of CY nationals participate to the workshops

Comments: A list of stakeholders to be invited to workshops has been drafted, and through collaboration with SBAA and local communities, participation of 90% of CY nationals is considered feasible.

4. Project support to environmental and/or climate outcomes in the UKOTs

During the first year of implementation, the project has made significant progress toward supporting the overarching Darwin Plus objective of delivering strategic long-term outcomes for the natural environment in the UK Overseas Territories. Key achievements include the identification and mapping of priority restoration areas within the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) ecosystem, based on a comprehensive spatial pressure analysis that incorporated climate, land use, and biodiversity data. This analysis will enabled evidence-based planning and targeted conservation actions. The project also contributes directly to UKOT Government priorities such as the Environmental Charters, national biodiversity strategies, and commitments under the 2021 Environment Act. By supporting the recovery of threatened and iconic species and helping to prevent biodiversity loss, it strengthens the UKOTs' ability to meet environmental targets. Moreover, capacity building through close collaboration with SBAA staff has strengthened local expertise for future conservation responsibilities.

5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	X

The project has actively incorporated Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles into both its design and implementation, with clear consideration of rights, roles, representation, and access to resources. From the beginning of the project, the steering committee ensured equal opportunities for participation, training, and employment through transparent and inclusive procedures. Half of the project team comprises women, including two in senior leadership roles (Dr. Elli Tzirkalli and Dr. Margarita Hadjistylli Stavrinide). Dr. Hadjistylli is also specifically responsible for monitoring gender participation and addressing equality-related issues. Engagement activities are designed to be accessible to people of all genders, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and dissemination materials are tailored to diverse audiences through both digital and conventional formats to ensure inclusion of those with limited internet access or different literacy levels. The project is mindful of how intersecting identities such as gender, age, class, and disability can impact individuals' ability to participate, and has adapted outreach methods and meeting formats accordingly. While the internal gender balance is strong, the project recognises the need to continually assess and improve the inclusivity of field-based activities and stakeholder interactions. Going forward, participation will be further supported

through targeted adjustments that respond to identified barriers, ensuring that GESI remains an integral and evolving part of the project's delivery and impact.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation activities are designed to ensure that project Outputs and Activities are directly contributing to the intended Outcome, namely, the restoration of important sites within the ASL area. To assess this, a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, as outlined in the project's Logical Framework, is being used such as the number of hectares that will be restored, and access management measures.

Progress is tracked through a mix of field-based ecological monitoring (e.g., insect surveys, BSC establishment checks), administrative follow-ups (e.g., meeting and photographic records). The project's M&E responsibilities are shared across partners. The SBAA Environment Department, the Department of Forests, the Agricultural Research Institute, and other stakeholders play active roles in both data collection and evaluation. Information is shared among partners through coordination meetings, collaborative field visits, and email correspondence.

As of this reporting period, no major changes have been made to the M&E plan. However, due to the expanded number of plant species selected for Plant Micro-Reserves (PMRs), a workplan amendment will be submitted to reflect the adjusted timelines for Activity 2.1. Feedback from stakeholder engagement sessions in relation to interviews and workshops will also be extended. This collaborative approach ensures that the M&E process remains participatory and aligned with the project's goals.

7. Lessons learnt

Over the past year, the project has generally progressed according to plan, with outputs delivered as expected. However, we did face some challenges, particularly related to budget allocation and administrative procedures, which initially caused delays. These issues were resolved through internal adjustments and close coordination among partners. We also found that certain procedures, especially those involving fieldwork and stakeholder engagement, took longer than originally anticipated due to logistical and environmental factors. One clear lesson learned is the need to allocate more time to field-based activities in future planning cycles. This learning will be directly integrated into our approach moving forward, and we are planning to submit a Change Request to extend the timeline for specific activities that require additional time to complete effectively. Despite these challenges, the team remains highly motivated and committed to delivering all project outputs. For others working in similar contexts or regions, we recommend allowing greater flexibility in scheduling field activities and building in contingency time for procedural approvals and coordination with local stakeholders. These adaptations are being factored into our planning for the next phase of the project to ensure continued progress and successful completion.

8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

N/A

9. Risk Management

Risk Management is proceeding following the initial design. No significant adaptations were needed to address this year's risk. Major risks were successfully foreseen in advance. Mitigation measures to reduce the impact were applied where/when needed, while foreseen risks have been updated following small changes. A new risk related to the access management measures proposed, and more precisely, the risk of part of the proposed measures not being accepted during the ASL stakeholders consultation, has now been added as a new issue registered. The updated version of the Risk Register is provided in Annex 13.

10. Scalability and durability

The project's sustainability and long-term legacy are in close alignment with the statutory responsibilities and environmental priorities of the Sovereign Base Areas Administration (SBAA). By directly contributing to the revision of the Management Plan for the Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and also contributing to the preparation of a legally binding Management Order, the project ensures that its outputs are aligned with SBAA's ongoing obligations. This includes providing essential scientific data to inform access restrictions, ecological assessments, and baseline monitoring for current and future developments. Because these are statutory requirements, no additional funding is required to ensure the uptake or implementation of project results, which significantly enhances the durability of its outcomes.

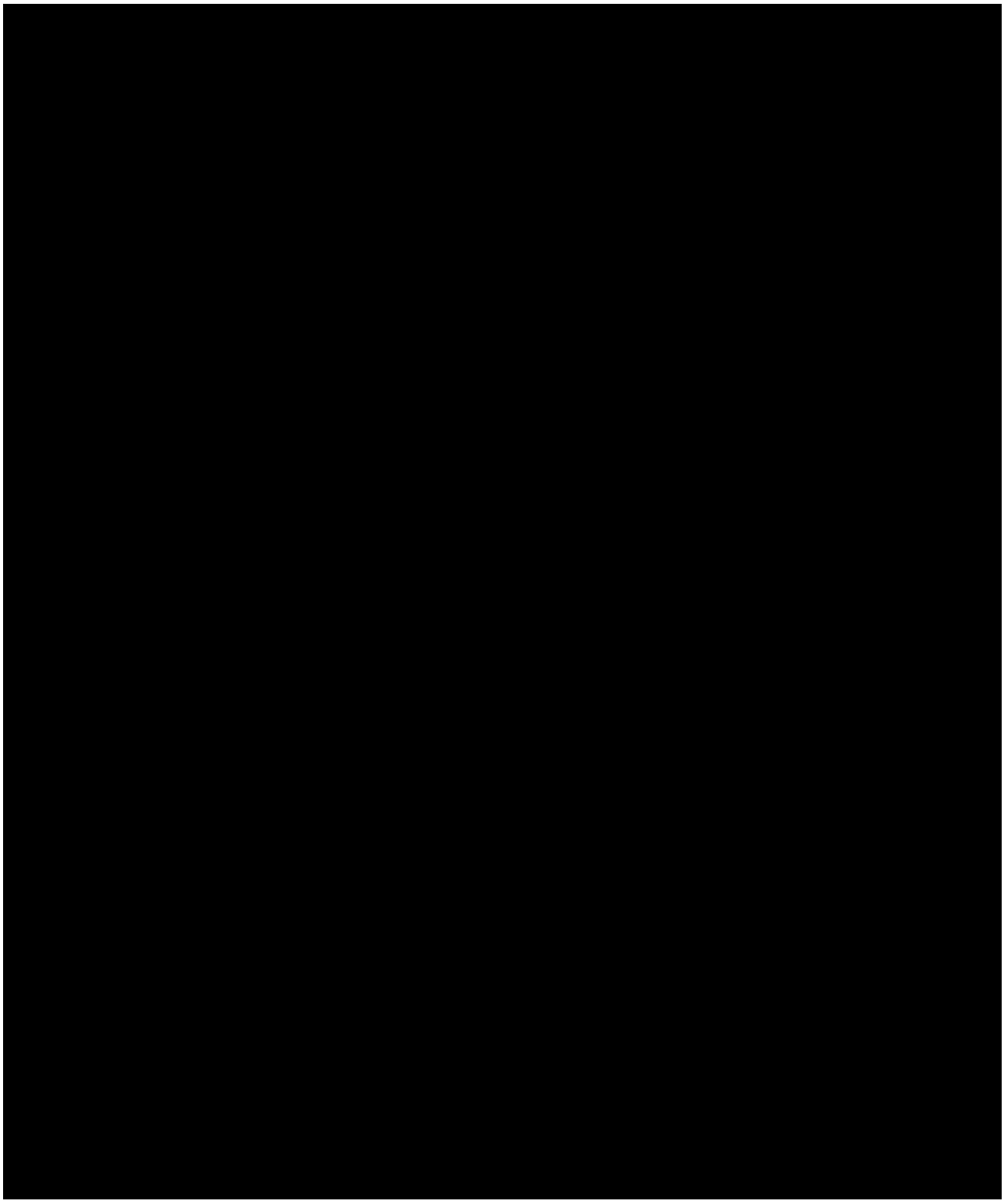
Key stakeholders, particularly the SBAA Environment Department, have been fully engaged from the beginning and are actively participating in the implementation and future scaling of project activities. Two Environmental Wardens from the SBAA Environment Department have been actively involved in fieldwork, gaining technical skills and knowledge. Their continued role in conservation efforts post-project ensures both institutional continuity and on-the-ground implementation.

The project has helped to increase awareness among relevant stakeholders, by participating in public events and workshops and through the development of a dedicated website (www.dplus-arise.eu), the project has built recognition of the importance of biodiversity protection and the role of scientific evidence in decision-making. The use of the Darwin Plus logo in all project materials has further strengthened its visibility and credibility. To promote the long-term legacy of the project, outputs and data are being made available through open access channels, ensuring transparency, reproducibility, and potential for uptake by other regions or projects. These actions, combined with the institutional adoption of project results and capacity built within the SBAA, provide strong evidence that the project's impacts will be both scalable and durable beyond its initial funding period.

11. Darwin Plus identity

The project has made consistent efforts to publicise Darwin Plus Fund. The Darwin Plus logo is displayed on the project's dedicated website, www.dplus-arise.eu, and is used across all project communications, including presentations, reports, leaflet, policy brief etc. The project was presented during the 5th Plant Conservation Week (7–12 April) in Limassol (Annex 14), Cyprus, where a dedicated poster featuring the Darwin Plus logo was showcased to a wide audience. The project also participated in the "Drivers of change, One Health and One Biosecurity at the Akrotiri Peninsula" workshop held at the Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre on 17-18 February 2025, as part of the Darwin project DPLUS175. In addition, Dr. Elli Tzirkalli presented the project to researchers at the UKCEH during her training on the deployment and data analysis of the AMI-trap system. This training took place as part of a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) under the InsectAI COST Action (CA22129), between 2-7 March 2025. The Darwin logo is included in all materials, especially in events held within the Akrotiri Sovereign Base Area (SBA), where Darwin Plus is widely recognised. The project is identified as a distinct Darwin Plus funded initiative, helping to reinforce its unique contribution to the long-term conservation of the ASL ecosystem.

12. Safeguarding



13. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2024/25 D+ Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual D+ Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	[redacted]			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
TOTAL	87,432	75,196		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)	[redacted]		Staff Costs, Overheads, travel & Subsistence
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)	N/A	N/A	N/A

14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Access management has proved more challenging than initially anticipated. The extensive area of ASL, particularly its halophytic habitats in the eastern region, presents numerous entry points that facilitate illegal vehicle access and unauthorized parking expansions. Even after the completion of this project, additional measures will be necessary to ensure long-term protection of ASL. Both locals and tourists appear to respect the access restrictions established during the DPLUS141 project. This demonstrates community acceptance of such interventions and supports the potential success of similar access control measures introduced under the current project.

A preliminary pilot for biological soil crust (BSC) restoration was also conducted. Although the trial of biocrust establishment was not successful due to unfavourable dry conditions, it represented a valuable step forward in developing effective restoration strategies for BSC in the area.

Additionally, issues related to stakeholder interests, are the cattle grazing in the Akrotiri marsh, as well as the rise of surface water levels, which appears to be linked to increased enrichment of the communicating aquifer with tertiary treated water. A further significant environmental concern that occurred in early spring 2025 has been the inflows of water leading to pollution in the northern area of the Akrotiri Salt lake, that seems to be linked to the increasing development in the area. This issue may be linked to land use change from orchards to urban development. This matter will need investigation and stakeholder dialogue in future phases of the project.

One issue that we would like to raise is related to budget reporting as requested by DEFRA. We do understand the reason why DEFRA is managing the budget quarterly but we admit that this has caused administrative confusion to partners' accounts offices. Particularly in the case when we submit financial change requests and whilst waiting for a decision, we also need to submit advance and/or actual claims to DEFRA. This confusion, in combination with a late start of the project, has resulted in minor mistakes in the first year but most importantly in underspending in some categories since we exercised prudence in spending before receiving approval. This unfortunately for us means loss of precious resources given that transfers between years are not possible.

15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)

While a plethora of data is available on pressures and threats around Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL), there is a clear absence of an integrated prioritization framework, that will combine ecological and threat data to identify and propose spatially targeted restoration actions. The opportunity to develop such a framework as part of the DPLUS204 project was a thrilling, rewarding experience. The collaborative work with SBAA ED and stakeholders for compiling the available information

and assessing results was significant step of this project. The final outcomes of this prioritization are not only of utmost importance for the initiation of this project's restoration action but will also provide solid ground for future conservation and restoration activities in the ASL.

Although various conservation efforts have been implemented in the ASL area in recent years, including habitat protection and management, no restoration activities involving Biological Soil Crusts (BSC) have been carried out. This is the first time that such a novel restoration approach will be tested and implemented in ASL as a result of the collaborative efforts of the project's partners and experts from Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC) in Spain. Despite the fact that preliminary trials on biocrust establishment were not successful, due to unfavourable dry conditions, they represent a valuable step forward in developing effective restoration strategies for BSC in the area. We are continuing our efforts with determination and confidence that this novel approach will not only succeed but will provide the foundation for the restoration of not only the pilot areas of this project, but much larger areas in the ASL that are now suffering from soil crust degradation.

An additional first of this project, which has inspired the whole team, is the development of Plant Micro-Reserves (PMR) for key threatened and vulnerable Red Data Book (RDB) species. Despite the numerous conservation efforts conducted in the past in the ASL, there is a clear absence of the PMR conservation mechanisms. Currently, through the assistance of an extensive network of public authorities and stakeholders, distribution maps of crucial RDB species are being developed. The willingness of local stakeholders (from community members to experts, authorities, and NGOs) to engage and collaborate with our team, working together towards a common goal, has created a rewarding and productive partnership.

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Build Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) resilience to natural and anthropogenic changes by incorporating novel conservation approaches, improvement of knowledge, ensuring long-term benefits to biodiversity and people.	- The Spatial Prioritization report has been completed, and restoration sites have been selected. - The RDB plants have been identified, and field surveys are being scheduled based on their flowering period. - Collection of dead plant and soil material for BSC restoration has been completed for Year 1. - Insect and plant surveys are underway. - Access Management Plan has been drafted. - Project website is up and running. - Sustainability appraisal report is currently in development. - Project presented at an International Conference.	[redacted]
Outcome ASL ecosystem enhancement by in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the local community.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 Restoration of 10 sites (10ha) including 5 terrestrial sites (5ha) and 5 aquatic sites (5ha) [DPLUS- D12] [M36]	Seven restoration sites selected with a total area of 10 ha (six terrestrial and five aquatic, see Annex 4).	Restoration actions to commence in 2025/2026 project year.
Outcome indicator 0.2 Increase biodiversity of plants, moths and grasshopper by 10% in ASL restoration sites by year 3 [DPLUS-D04] [M36]	Surveys have been initiated for collecting the baseline values for plants, moths and grasshoppers.	Surveys to identify the increase of biodiversity are planned for year 3.
Outcome indicator 0.3 Leveraging public engagement in 7 villages and 500 inhabitats [M36]	We have established communication with key stakeholders of ASL.	One public consultation for the Access Management plan. Organise two workshops.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Output 1. Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL		
Output indicator 1.1 Identification of 10 areas of conservation concern and high conservation value of at least 10 ha in total [DPLUS- C08] [M6]	21 areas were assessed: Seven selected for restoration. Four areas are combining terrestrial and aquatic restoration activities. See Annex 4.	No further action required under this indicator.
Output indicator 1.2 Consortium Agreement of at least 5 targeted areas where actions will take place [M6]	Following Spatial Prioritization framework, targeted site visits and discussion with SBAA ED and stakeholders, agreement was achieved in proceeding with conservation of seven targeted areas (Annex 5)	No further action required under this indicator.
Output 2. Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL		
Output indicator 2.1 Distribution map of the 6 Red data plant species [DPLUS-C08] [M21]	Mapping in progress. Based on 14 selected species (Annex 6)	Complete mapping after the conclusion of 2.1 activity.
Output indicator 2.2 Identification and establishment of at least 5 PMRs (0.5 ha) for red data plants of ASL [DPLUS-C02] [M33]	14 plant species selected (initially 6); PMR delineation not yet started.	Begin PMR delineation and installation of signs/fences (Activities 2.3–2.4).
Output 3. Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL		
Output indicator 3.1 Creation of BSC in the Lab and implementation in the restoration sites [DPLUS-12] [M36]	Dead plant material and biological soil crust was collected and transferred for analysis at the URJC; pilot application conducted in Feb 2025 (Annex 8)	Cyanobacteria cultivation in the Lab for the creation of BSC.
Output indicator 3.2 Selection of 3 aquatic and 5 terrestrial species for soil seed collection, germination of seed and propaguals and planting	14 species identified with the Agricultural Research Institute and the Department of Forest (Annex 6); seed collection per Agricultural Research Institute protocol.	Seed collection and propagation at plant nurseries and the Agricultural Research Institute and the Department of Forest facilities.
Output indicator 3.3 Restoration of at least 5 degraded aquatic sites of 5 ha [Ramsar Convention, DPLUS-D12][M36]	Aquatic sites selected; hydromorphological actions proposed (Annex 9).	Implement proposed restoration actions (e.g., waste/alien removal, pond excavation).

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 3.4 Establishment of ex-situ seed bank including 6 RDB, 3 aquatic plants and 5 terrestrial from at least 10 individuals per species [M36]	Seed collection on the 14 targeted species.	Transfer and storage at ARI and DoF facilities; initiate seed banking.
Output 4. Regulated access to conservation priority habitats		
Output indicator 4.1 One Access Management Plan [M7]	Draft plan completed; pending stakeholder input (Annex 11).	Approval of plan and implement access measures to selected sites.
Output indicator 4.2 Installation of 4 restriction bars [M33]	Will proceed post-consultation.	Install restriction bars and gates at priority sites.
Output indicator 4.3 5 sign-posting in at least 5 priority areas by project [M33]	To follow the infrastructure implementation.	Instalment is planned for year 3 of the project.
Output 5. Implementation of sustainability appraisal and raising awareness ASL ecosystem importance and conservation projects		
Output indicator 5.1 Development of one sustainability report [M28]	Report in preparation.	Continue with the preparation of the Sustainability appraisal report.
Output indicator 5.2 Project website visitation (visits per month) [M7 and on a monthly basis]	Website is live at www.dplus-arise.eu	Track visits and update content regularly.
Output indicator 5.3 Participation in three workshops hosted by SBAA on the importance and management of ASL per year. [Target 250 attendees (of which 20% decision-makers), 50% women, per workshop [DPLUS-C14] [M9, 18, 27]	Planned for Year 2 and 3.	Conduct workshops and ensure balanced participation.
Output indicator 5.4 Downloads of project material (e.g., Policy briefs) [DPLUS-C18] [M36]	1st Policy brief, leaflet are downloadable from the project's website.	Monitor and promote further downloads to enhance the dissemination of the project material.
Output indicator 5.5a Three Policy Briefs downloaded from the project websites at least 100 times in year 3 [DPLUS-C18]	One policy brief published.	Publish additional briefs and promote access
Output indicator 5.5b Five Articles regarding the project results submitted in local newspapers and three local radio interviews by year 3 [DPLUS-C15] [M10, 21, 36]	First article in drafting stage.	Publish articles and schedule interviews

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Output indicator 5.6 One Journal article on ASL long-term conservation strategy submitted by year 3 to open access journal [DPLUS-C17] [M33]	Not yet commenced.	Initiate drafting and submission in Year 3.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Build Akrotiri Salt Lake (ASL) resilience to natural and anthropogenic changes by incorporating novel conservation approaches, improvement of knowledge, ensuring long-term benefits to biodiversity and people.			
Outcome: ASL ecosystem enhancement by in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions, with collateral benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the local community	0.1 Restoration of 10 sites (10ha) including 5 terrestrial sites (5ha) and 5 aquatic sites (5ha) **[DPLUS- D12] [M36]** 0.2 Increase biodiversity of plants, moths and grasshopper by 10% in ASL restoration sites by year 3 **[DPLUS-D04] [M36]** 0.3 Leveraging public engagement in 7 villages and 500 inhabitats **[M36]**	0.1 Monitoring of restoration sites in regular intervals 0.2 Changes in biodiversity indices compared to biodiversity baseline values for plants, moths and grasshoppers using survey data (moth traps and fixed transects respectively) on restoration sites in year 1 and 3 0.3 Number of local people participating on public consultation exercises, workshop and focus groups during the project	SBAA provides access to the project team to implement conservation actions and surveys across the ASL SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities.
Output 1 Spatial prioritization of restoration areas within ASL	1.1 Identification of 10 areas of conservation concern and high conservation value of at least 10 ha in total **[DPLUS- C08] [M6]** 1.2 Consortium Agreement of at least 5 targeted areas where actions will take place **[M6]**	1.1 Map of the identified conservation priority areas, year 1 1.2 Consortium Agreement report	All datasets available to project team

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Output 2 Establishment of a Plant Micro-reserves (PMRs) network across the ASL	2.1 Distribution map of the 6 Red data plant species **[DPLUS-C08] [M21]** 2.2 Identification and establishment of at least 5 PMRs (0.5 ha) for red data plants of ASL **[DPLUS-C02] [M33]**	2.1 Records (GPS locations) per Red data plant species per sampling period 2.2 Spatial file with PMRs locations along with geotag images of the red data plants	Involve both SBAA and local authorities for the PMRs establishment
Output 3 Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL	3.1 Creation of BSC in the Lab and implementation in the restoration sites **[DPLUS-12] [M36]** 3.2 Selection of 3 aquatic and 5 terrestrial species for soil seed collection, germination of seed and propaguals and planting 3.3 Restoration of at least 5 degraded aquatic sites of 5 ha **[Ramsar Convention, DPLUS-D12][M36]** 3.4 Establishment of ex-situ seed bank including 6 RDB, 3 aquatic plants and 5 terrestrial from at least 10 individuals per species **[M36]**	3.1 Results of Cyanobacteria cultivations 3.2 List of plant species selected for the restoration 3.3 Restoration plan for terrestrial and aquatic sites 3.4 Plant species and aquatic plant species surveys on restoration areas 3.5 Report on plant seed bank status for the restoration sites	Access to terrestrial and aquatic habitats remains feasible for the duration of the project
Output 4 Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL	4.1 One Access Management Plan **[M7]** 4.2 Installation of 4 restriction bars. **[M33]** 4.3 5 sign-posting in at least 5 priority areas by project **[M33]**	4.1 Development of an Access Management Plan with a clear demarcation of the places where signs and fencing will be placed	Access restriction to be followed by local community and visitors
Output 5 Restoration of degraded terrestrial and aquatic habitats on ASL	5.1 Development of one sustainability report **[M28]** 5.2 Project website visitation (visits per month) **[M7 and on a monthly basis]**	5.1 Published sustainability report 5.2 Google analytics (number of visitation) 5.3 Workshops attendance sheets 5.4 Google analytics for year 3 (number of downloads)	SBAA will maintain good relations with the local communities. A minimum number (10%) of local stakeholders participate in the public consultation exercise

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	5.3.Participation in three workshops hosted by SBAA on the importance and management of ASL per year. [Target 250 attendees (of which 20% decision-makers), 50% women, per workshop **[DPLUS-C14] [M9, 18, 27]** 5.4 Downloads of project material (e.g., Policy briefs) **[DPLUS-C18] [M36]** 5.5a. Three Policy Briefs downloaded from the project websites at least 100 times in year 3 **[DPLUS-C18]** 5.5b Five Articles regarding the project results submitted in local newspapers and three local radio interviews by year 3 **[DPLUS-C15] [M10, 21, 36]** 5.6 One Journal article on ASL long-term conservation strategy submitted by year 3 to open access journal **[DPLUS-C17] [M33]**	5.5 Newspaper and audio file (number of people reached) 5.6 Journal confirmation email	Up to 90% of CY nationals participate to the workshops

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

1.1 Data collection for Spatial Prioritization Framework
1.2 Application of Spatial prioritisation procedure (pressure analysis)
1.3 Report and Map of SP areas
2.1 Monthly plant sampling during flowering period for two years
2.2 Mapping of RDB plant distribution and threats
2.3 Delineation of PMRs sites and reporting
2.4 Placement of signs and fences for PMRs
3.1 Selection of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to be restored
3.2 Terrestrial plant and aquatic plant sampling during flowering period
3.3 Moths, grasshoppers surveys in the beginning and at the end of the project
3.4 Collection of dead plant material for BSC restoration and Cyanobacteria Lab testing

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
3.5 Application of dead plant material and Cyanobacteria inoculation for BSC restoration 3.6 Hydromorphological restoration (removal of barriers and alien plant species, plant native riparian species) 3.7 Collection of seed and propagules and transfer it to DoF and ARI facilities 4.1 Assessment of Access in ASL 4.2 Place restriction bars and signs to forbid access to targeted habitats and the lake bed 5.1 Development of project's website 5.2 Preparation and development of Sustainability report 5.3 Interviews and focus groups 5.4 Organise three workshops on the importance and management of ASL 5.5 Publish three Policy briefs and a leaflet 5.6 Publish five articles in local newspapers and give three interviews in local radio stations 5.7 Peer-reviewed article in international open access journal			

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DPLUS-D12	Area of degraded or converted ecosystems that are under active restoration	0.1 3.1 3.3	Area (hectares)	-	0			0	10
DPLUS-D04	Stabilised/ improved species population (relative abundance/ distribution) within the project area	0.2	% increase	-	0			0	10
DPLUS-C08	Areas of importance for biodiversity identified	1.1 2.1	Area (hectares)	-	10			10	10
DPLUS-C02	Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published	2.2	Number	-	0			0	5
DPLUS-C14	Number of decision-makers attending briefing events	5.3	Number	Men	6			6	125
DPLUS-C14	Number of decision-makers attending briefing events	5.3	Number	Women	8			8	125
DPLUS-C14	Number of decision-makers attending briefing events	5.3	Number	Decision-makers	0			0	50
DPLUS-C19	Number of other publications produced	5.4 5.5a	Number	Policy-briefs	1			1	3
DPLUS-C15	Number of Media related activities	5.5b	Number		0			0	5
DPLUS-C17	Number of unique papers submitted to peer reviewed journals	5.6	Number		0			0	1

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
ARISE Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt Lake Ecosystem	Informational leaflet	ARISE project, 2025	NA	NA	NA	https://www.dplus-arise.eu/
Sustainability appraisal description for ARISE policy brief	Policy brief	ARISE project, 2025	NA	NA	NA	https://www.dplus-arise.eu/
Enhancing Resilience of the Akrotiri Salt lake ecosystem - The ARISE project	Conference poster	Tzirkalli et al., 2025	Female	CY	OUC	https://www.dplus-arise.eu/

Annex 4: Onwards – supplementary material (optional but encouraged as evidence of project achievement)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the **correct template** (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and **deleted the blue guidance text** before submission?	Y
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Y
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	N
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Y
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encourage to develop a risk register.	Y
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	Y
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Y
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Y
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	