



**Darwin Initiative/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2019)**

Project reference	DPLUS073
Project title	Improving small island resilience and self-sufficiency in habitat monitoring and management
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	British Virgin Islands
Lead organisation	University of Roehampton
Partner(s)	Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society
Project leader	<i>Louise Soanes</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website/blog/social media etc.	<i>N/A</i>

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

The following activities have taken place over the last six months of the project:

Output 1 Baseline data collection and assessment of the status and resilience of key habitats in JVD and its offshore cays to future climate change

Baseline data collection is now almost complete, and has covered seven key seagrass sites, nine coral reef sites, four mangrove areas, and five coastlines/offshore cays. Manta-tows of the remaining data-deficient marine areas are still underway to ensure we can achieve comprehensive data collection and coverage by the end of the year. Surveys have been conducted using both project staff and volunteers and we have trained more than 20 persons in biological survey methods. We recently obtained map layers representing watershed catchment areas, erosion risk, flood and sea level rise and buildings and infrastructure on the island of Jost Van Dyke (JVD). All of these layers and baseline data are currently being compiled into a draft manuscript for publication that will report on the overall status and resilience of JVD's coastal ecosystems.

Output 2. Development of conservation management actions to increase the resilience of key ecosystems to severe weather events, incorporating stakeholder input.

Over the past 6 months Susan Zaluski (JVDPS) has met with various stakeholders including Jost Van Dyke landowners, and Government agencies, including Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Department of Conservation and Fisheries (DCF) and the Virgin Islands National Parks Trust (NPT) to discuss and plan project activities. Based on evidence provided by this project recommendations have been made to DDM on how to improve flooding issues in the settlement of Great Harbour including the restoration of mangroves and clearance of water guts. Coastal restoration activities to date included the (1) re-vegetation of Sandy Spit National Monument site, (2) establishment of a mangrove nursery on JVD (3) transplanting of mangrove saplings to JVD's East End mangrove stand, (4) wetland debris clearance, and (4) resiliency assessments and our prioritisation of coastal habitats led to the decision by JVDPS to purchase a plot of coastal land with the view to manage and showcase this site as a healthy coastal ecosystem.

Output 3. Increasing understanding of the important role that healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems can play in improving small islands resilience to extreme weather events

Over the last 6 months, the project has been highlighted on the JVDPS and JVD community notice board sites twice and a press release has been sent highlighting the training opportunities for the project. Project activities were incorporated into JVDPS summer camp – with 10 children being involved in the re-vegetation of Sandy Spit cay. Eleven youths on-board the ActionQuest Sailing Programme took part in seagrass surveys around JVD. Presentations detailing the project were made at the Caribbea Initiative meeting in Dominican Republic, May 2019 where Louise Soanes co-facilitated a coastal resiliency symposium. The project was also presented at the Wilder Islands (British Islands) Conference held in Alderney, September 2019 which was attended by representatives from UKOTs and UK Crown Dependencies. Susan Zaluski presented to NPT and DCF on the use of AIS boat mapping data as a tool for protecting important marine areas and has supported and assisted in the development of further mangrove restoration activities on Tortola led by DDM. In addition, this project has helped to support the establishment of a scholarship to introduce BVI educators to marine ecology research and to promote understanding of coastal resilience at the Marine Resources Development Foundation’s Marine Lab in the Florida Keys. Miss Argel Horton, Fisheries Officer from DCF was funded by this project to attend a training course at the Marine Lab held in July 2019 and she has since presented on her experience to her colleagues at DCF.

2a. 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.

- 1) It has taken longer than expected to extract relevant map layers from UK National agencies (e.g. erosion shapefiles, flood risk maps etc) , but we now have them so will be able to draw all of the information collected together to produce a detailed and comprehensive report and draft manuscript detailing our resilience assessments and resilience building activities on the island of Jost Van Dyke.
- 2) The reviewers of our Year 1 project report recommended that we make several small changes to our project log frame to better reflect our methodology in collecting baseline data and to be more ambitious in what we hope to achieve by the end of the project (based on our achievements so far). We have made the proposed changes and have submitted our revised logframe to Darwin for review. – These changes will not negatively affect any of the project overall outputs.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS:	Yes
Formal change request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Not as yet

3a. 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:

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.

The underspend in year one of this project is due to an error in the allocation of Louise Soanes' salary between years 1 and year 2 of the project – we have submitted a change request form to explain this further, and request that the funds can be moved into year two of the project.

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

No

Please send your **completed report by email** to Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 25-035 Darwin Half Year Report**