

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

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

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

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| <b>Project reference</b>                  | DPLUS 180   |
| <b>Project title</b>                      | Integrating climate change resilience into protected area design and management |
| <b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>        | British Virgin Islands  |
| <b>Lead partner</b>                       | National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands                                      |
| <b>Partner(s)</b>                         | Environment Systems Ltd. and Wavehill   |
| <b>Project leader</b>                     | Nancy Pascoe, National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands                        |
| <b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b> | 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 HYR1  |
| <b>Project website/blog/social media</b>  | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/NPTVI/">https://www.facebook.com/NPTVI/</a>   |

**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).**

The first six months of the project have gone very well, with many activities implemented as per schedule despite the official project notification not being received until June 2022.

**1.1a. Obtain open-source climate change data, eg. RTP85 database, available for the BVI and process the data into meaningful sets, such as hurricane season, temperature, wind speeds etc. that will describe important criteria for BVI climate resilience.**

Environment Systems Ltd. (ESL) have obtained and processed WorldClim climate data for the years 1970-2000, 2021-2040, 2041-2060, 2061-2080, and 2081-2100. These include variables such as precipitation, solar radiation, temperature and wind. The future climate predictions differentiate between two shared socio-economic pathways; SSP245 which assumes that climate protection measures are being taken; and SSP370 which represents policies enacted that focus on national security rather than education and the environment. This is different to the UKCP18 that was originally intended, as it has a much higher resolution, and is based on social and policy behaviour, rather than purely on greenhouse gas emissions.

**1.1b. For all National Park locations, a set of 5 ecosystem service factors will be agreed. These will then form the basis of the individual ecosystem services and multi-criteria analysis.**

A four-day workshop was held from 22nd - 25th August 2022 in Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands (BVI) that was facilitated by Dr. Katie Medcalf and Samuel Pike of Environment Systems Ltd. The workshop gathered information from local experts to determine ecosystem services and conservation threats to protected areas. The National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI) invited members of the Virgin Islands Government National Geographic Information Systems (NGIS) committee, as well as key representatives from non-governmental organisations to ensure that local knowledge is incorporated

into the design of the climate change analysis modelling. The Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Honourable Melvin Turnbull also attended the opening session.

There were an equal number of men and women attending the workshop, with 12 males and 12 females attending, with an age range of 27 – 50 years.

The workshop examined the role the National Parks provide to the ecosystem services of BVI and a shortlist of the priority services were drawn up through practical exercises. This shortlist will be discussed with the National GIS committee in Y1Q3, to finalise the priority ecosystem services.

**1.1c. Collate existing key factor data held in the BVI National GIS and pre-process this for the climate and ecosystem service modelling, including land- and sea-form**

Lidar, ortho, contours, DTM data was requested and received from BVI Survey Department.

Additional data was requested from DDM, including geology, local weather data, tidal gauge and drainage channels. These are expected to be delivered in Y1Q3. ESL are downloading and processing all Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-2 satellite imagery from 2021 onwards.

**2.3a. Project team to agree four conservation threats and link these to the remote sensing indicators.**

The August 2022 workshop included BVI participant feedback to examine what conservation threats exist across BVI, within the terrestrial and marine parks through practical exercises. The participants produced a shortlist of the main conservation threats. This shortlist will be discussed and finalised with the National GIS committee in Y1Q3. The role that remote sensing can play in helping to monitor conservation issues was also discussed in the workshop through practical exercises, identifying the time and spatial scales required for each.

**2.3b. Project team with input from Steering Committee, to design a fieldwork protocol for use over the course of the project.**

A draft fieldwork protocol was designed by ESL, incorporating potential conservation threats, ecosystem services, fieldwork techniques and remote sensing indicators. This was discussed and tested during the workshop fieldtrip. Amendments will be made in Y1Q3 when the conservation threats, ecosystem services and remote sensing indicators have been finalised.

**2.4a. Undertaken fieldwork in Prickly Pear and Sandy Cay National Parks, and feedback the results to ESL.**

A field trip to Prickly Pear National Park took place during the August 2022 workshop in order for ESL to better understand the BVI geography as well as to teach the workshop participants more about ground truthing satellite imagery, and the concept of the fieldwork protocol.

**3.3a On-island project launch within six months of the project starting, with up to 9 key staff from the National GIS, Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, relevant policy officials, and the media.**

The project was officially launched in August 2022 with 20 people from eight Government departments, including the Minister and Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour (MNRL). A press conference was held with four media houses attending, with presentations made by the Director of the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI) Dr. Cassander Titley O’Neal, Dr. Katie Medcalf from Environment Systems and remarks from the Minister for Natural Resources and Labour the Honourable Melvin Turnbull.

The online media outlet JTV filmed the press conference, and this had 1,100 views as of 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022, which demonstrates successful awareness raising on the topic of climate change and how the public are interested in knowing more about how it will impact the BVI.

The JTV coverage can be seen at: <https://www.facebook.com/jtv55/videos/804376484080082/>

The publicity that this project launch created has already raised NPTVI’s profile in the BVI as an agency to be consulted regarding climate change, as seen by recent enquiries made to NPTVI by members of the public and different Government departments in the past two months.

**3.4a A project website is created on the NPTVI website with reports, press releases, maps and messages.**

The existing NPTVI website will be used to host the project with a new tab added and this is in development. However, the NPTVI facebook page is being used for

**3.4b Create and disseminate press release introducing the project and explaining the importance of BVI specific climate data generation being used for conservation, development, disaster planning.**

A press release was issued with media interviews at the August 2022 workshop. There was also a recorded video of the press conference filmed by media outlet JTV which has had 1.1k views as of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**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.**

In the first six months of the project there have not been any problems or unexpected developments that have occurred. We have been meeting monthly to plan activities and weekly prior to the August workshop. The benefit of NPTVI and ESL having worked together previously is that we were able to start immediately on the actual project activities with no lead time needed for equipment purchases or staff orientation. No change request is required, we are progressing as per our application timeline and budget.

**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: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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?**

N/A

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