



## Darwin Initiative/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS084
<b>Project title</b>	Identifying and conserving resilient habitats in the British Virgin Islands
<b>Territory</b>	British Virgin Islands
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
<b>Partner(s)</b>	National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI), Fort Worth Zoo (FWZ)
<b>Project leader</b>	Dr Martin Hamilton
<b>Report date and number</b>	October 2019 HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media etc.</b>	<a href="https://www.kew.org/science/our-science/projects/resilient-habitats-bvis">https://www.kew.org/science/our-science/projects/resilient-habitats-bvis</a> ; Twitter @KewUKOTs #kewbvi; Facebook <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 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 took place during the first six months of the project. Activities are reported by Output number in the project implementation timetable. The Co-PIs are maintaining an M&E Workbook with separate tabs for the Implementation timetable and the Logical framework where information relating to each output and measurable indicator is recorded. Supplemental information (M&E Plan, M&E Workbook, June 2019 field report, and Training Plan) is available at: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/0oFZHV0Azx>.

Output 1.1: In June 2019, fieldwork was undertaken on Anegada, Tortola, Virgin Gorda and Fallen Jerusalem. New data (occurrence data, habitat survey) were collected for threatened tree species: *Vachellia anegadensis*, *Varronia rupicola*, *Calypttranthes kiaerskovii*, *C. thomasiana*, *Zanthoxylum thomasianum*; and threatened animal: *Cyclura pinguis* (habitat survey, sightings and nest sites mapped). Surveys were undertaken for *Spondylurus anegadeae*.

Output 1.2: 150 leaf tissue samples of *Z. thomasianum* were collected from Virgin Gorda and Tortola for population genetic analyses of this species, representing almost all the known BVI subpopulations of this species. Samples of *Z. thomasianum* from elsewhere in its range will be sought in the coming half year. In addition, leaf samples were collected from historic herbarium collections of congeners for phylogenomic analysis, representing about 23 taxa. Additional species will be sampled from other herbaria to include in the analysis.

Output 1.3 Field data, representing almost 1000 records, was added to the project GIS.

Output 2.1: Experimental design for the vegetation survey plots discussed during collaborative fieldwork and sampling protocol established.

Output 2.2: Habitat and vegetation data collected during collaborative fieldwork in June 2019.

Output 2.3: The National Archives in Kew, UK was consulted for historic land use maps, with several reports and maps of interest gathered for the project.

Output 2.4 Survey and sampling data added to project GIS.

Output 3.1: Two seed collections of the threatened tree, *Vachellia anegadensis*, were made on Anegada for *ex-situ* conservation at the J.R. O'Neal Botanic Garden and Kew's Millennium Seed Bank.

Output 3.2: No seed storage behaviour studies undertaken during this period due to limited material available. This output is planned to occur at any point during the course of the project, as fruiting allows.

Output 3.3: No material appropriate for vegetative propagation available during this period. Vegetative propagation requires suitable growth in the field, not encountered in the first 6 months, during the dry weather.

Output 4.1: Training and evaluation plan circulated to Steering Group.

Output 4.2: Two NPTVI staff trained in survey techniques and species identification by Kew and FWZ specialists during collaborative fieldwork.

Output 4.3: No evaluations undertaken during this period – planned for Q4.

Output 4.4 Training recorded for final report development.

Output 5.1: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan agreed by the project steering group.

Output 5.2: Steering Group minutes, June field trip and HYR1 reports compiled and circulated to project team.

Output 5.3: A steering group comprising staff of NPTVI, FWZ and RBG Kew was formed, co-chaired by Dr Colin Clubbe (RBG Kew) and the NPTVI Director, and an initial Steering Group meeting held in BVI during April 2019. Minutes compiled and circulated to project team. Joseph Smith Abbott has been invited to sit as an independent external reviewer to provide regular and authoritative feedback and guidance of project progress and impact.

5.4 Project activities recorded in M&E Workbook for final report development.

**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.**

The project has progressed well overall; however, we encountered a few issues that slowed progress on our M&E and Training plans. The Acting-Director of the NPTVI moved to work in the Government Ministry requiring the Deputy-Director for Science to take on the Acting-Director role during recruitment of a replacement Director. The added workload may impact the project, but it is not expected to be significant. A new director is due to begin in late October. Developing agreements between the partners took longer than expected due to staff changes at NPTVI and new processes at FWZ. The team worked together to resolve the issues and all agreements are now in place. Travel and project commitments beyond DPLUS084 were encountered by many members of the project team at all partner institutions. This slowed feedback to drafted plans/reports; however, the impact was minimal as the team worked together to meet deadlines. None of the issues encountered are expected to affect the budget or timetable of project activities.

**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/No
Formal change request submitted:	Yes/No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No

**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: £

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

None