



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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.

Project reference	DPLUS125
Project title	Protecting Anguilla's biodiversity by building capacity in invasive plant management
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla
Lead Organisation	Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Government of Anguilla
Partner(s)	GB NNSS
Project leader	Rhon Connor
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30/10/2024, HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/Dplus125

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).

The timeline for Dplus125 has been revised to conclude, in March 2025. Despite encountering minor delays over the past six months, the project remains on track and progress continues to be made on its targeted outputs.

Output 1

Baseline knowledge on priority invasive plant species improved through surveys and mapping, and Territory database created.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Environment Unit - DPLUS125 team routinely monitors and surveys the target species. The Invasive Plant Distribution Report has been updated for September 2024 and can be accessed. This report provides information on the maps, which are periodically updated as surveys are ongoing. Monitoring protocols have been completed, and work continues to eradicate the tropical bull nettle.

The Project Team maintains an internal spreadsheet of active treatment for the management of the Tropical Bull Nettle, detailing the sites, number of individuals treated to date, and types and concentrations of herbicide used. This spreadsheet will continue to be updated throughout the remainder of the project as monitoring and treatment continue. We will incorporate these data and lessons learned into a final update of the Tropical Bull Nettle Management Plan in March 2025, which can be made publicly available for other practitioners tackling this species.

The Database of introduced and invasive plants in Anguilla has been developed as part of a complete updated flora list for the country. This database is regularly updated, some species are cryptogenic, so it is challenging to produce a list of only introduced or native species without acknowledging the unconfirmed species. We are also validating our list against a similar database being developed by DPLUS175 of introduced plants and animals for multiple UKOTs, including Anguilla. DPUS175 is managed by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH). DNR in collaboration with the Anguilla National Trust (ANT) will develop a complete list, and an accompanying summary document will be made publicly available before the end of the project.

Output 2.

Local capacity built through “learning by doing”, with the delivery of large-scale management interventions to eradicate invasive plant species and prevent their spread.

The Control Manual has been finalized. The Agriculture Unit provided valuable feedback during the drafting process of this document. Copies of the Control Manual has been distributed to landscape managers, garden centre and other persons who are interested in using this document.

Output 3

Key stakeholders (Community members, hoteliers, Government and land managers) are actively engaged in early detection of invasive plants.

In the first half of FY24-25, the Project Team successfully executed various activities per the Communication and Awareness Plan. DPLUS125 actively participated in the events organized to observe Invasive Species Awareness Week led by DNR. These included webinars, school visits, radio interviews, and exhibition. The webinar, held on May 23, 2024, for Invasive Species Week, was a collaborative effort between DNR, DPLUS125, ANT, and the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat (GB NNSS), featuring presentations on invasive species in Anguilla, eradication of the Tropical Bull Nettle, and restoration work at the Fountain National Park. This activity captured a broad audience across the UK, and other overseas territories. Access the recording of the webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpE3WbzXQUI>

Additionally, the Project Team engaged with students at the Morris Vanterpool Primary School and the Adrian T Hazell Primary School, conducting slideshow presentation on Anguilla's invasive plants and animals. The team also participated in a radio interview on Radio Anguilla 95.5 FM and organized an exhibition at the People's Market Square, showcasing live fauna and informative materials on invasive plant species.

Furthermore, in July 2024, the Project Team contributed a poster board to the Anguilla National Library as part of their annual Summer Programme.

The dissemination of the Horticulture Code of Practice is currently in progress. A copy has been distributed to garden centers and landscape managers at various hotels. The Agriculture Unit provided feedback during the drafting of this document. Unfortunately, hotel closures (for the slow season) and communication delays have impeded the distribution process. However, the project team anticipates resuming distribution at the commencement of the new tourism season in November 2024.

Output indicator 4.1.

Lessons learned are consolidated into a long-term invasive plant management strategy, which is shared with other UKOTs in the region.

The forthcoming stakeholder consultations to establish the draft invasive plant action plan are scheduled in Anguilla from October 16th to 18th, 2024. Mr. Alan Tye, a recognized expert in invasive species management, will facilitate the sessions.

The Department of Natural Resources and UKCEH are jointly organizing a face-to-face Regional Lessons Learned Workshop scheduled to take place from October 21st to October 25th, 2024. This collaborative workshop focuses on invasive species monitoring and management under the Darwin Plus-funded projects, DPLUS 175 and DPLUS 125, respectively. We are pleased to confirm the attendance of participants from the Overseas UK Territories, whose role is integral to the success of this event. Logistics for organizing and coordinating the workshop activities are progressing smoothly.

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.

Regrettably, we are currently experiencing a delay in finalizing the Biosecurity Protocol for inter-island controls due to challenges in the procurement process. Unfortunately, we received no offers in response to the Request for Quotation. You can access the Procurement Notice advertised in July. However, despite this setback, the project team is actively exploring alternative options to progress with the biosecurity component of the project. If successful, we anticipate completing this deliverable before December 2024.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

Yes/ No

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes/ No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes/ No

Change Request reference if known: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

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

Actual spend:

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 ☒

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?

No

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.

The most recent Annual Reviewer's Report requests a response to comments in the following annual report.

Checklist for submission

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.

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.