

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31st October)

Project Ref. No.	17-004
Project Title	Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs
Country(ies)	Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks & Caicos)
UK Organisation	Commonwealth Foundation
Collaborator(s)	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
Project Leader	Vijay Krishnarayan
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Project website	

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) 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).

Activity 1.1. Mobilise 10 CSOs: 8 CSOs were mobilised for the proposed first regional ARLG meeting in September.

Activity 1.2.: Mobilise partners and establish Technical Advisory Committee and hold inception meeting: Inception meeting held on 16 September, with 6 UK Partner organisations. The members have agreed to call this group *UK Action Learning Group*.

Activity 1.3: Establish project team and refine project workplan: Done, following initial project launch at UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum in July 2009 in Cayman. However, workplan has had to be further amended due to late withdrawals by some of the identified CSOs or CSO representatives from the proposed 7-11 September regional Action Research and Learning Group meeting in Montserrat. Request to amend the workplan and rationale sent by CANARI to Commonwealth Foundation was submitted to the Darwin Initiative / LTS International earlier this month.

Activity 2.1 Plan, facilitate and report on first ARLG meeting and training workshop (Montserrat):

The workshop was fully designed and all logistical arrangements were in place when one CSO (AREO, Anguilla) and 2 representatives of Cayman National Trust withdrew at a short notice. Additionally, Turks and Caicos National Trust had only identified one person who could attend and no partner organisation. The representative of the Montserrat partner organisation would also have been unable to attend in person as she was standing for election (election dates announced after workshop had been arranged but Montserrat partners initially advised that this would not affect the workshop in any way).

It was then decided that it was better postpone the workshop until December and January and to organise national meetings in each of the participating UKOTs in order to:

- o launch the regional Darwin initiative project *Building civil society capacity for conservation in the UK Overseas Territories* and secure buy-in from a wider range of stakeholders, since only the National Trusts have in most instances previously been engaged in direct discussions;

- where necessary, identify a potential second civil society organisation to partner with the National Trust in the regional Action Research and Learning Group;
- identify what are currently the main priorities in terms of biodiversity conservation in each Territory and who are the key stakeholders, with a particular focus on those from civil society;
- identify the key capacities that civil society needs to be effective in biodiversity conservation in each Territory, which capacities it already has and which need enhancing or building;
- discuss how government agencies can improve the enabling environment and form effective partnerships with civil society organisations;
- determine how the project can best support civil society capacity building in each Territory and, in particular, to discuss with the Trust and the partner organisation (if identified during the visit) the specific areas of capacity building they would like to see included in the project.
- where possible, to provide advice on other possible sources of capacity building/funding/peer exchange on areas of capacity building that this project would not address.

National visits have been arranged as follows:

Anguilla	12-13 October
BVI	14-16 October
Cayman	10-11 December
Montserrat	w/c 7 December – exact dates to be confirmed
Turks & Caicos	3-4 December

The expenses incurred doing this will be covered by reducing the number of ARLG meetings to three and involving the Saint Lucia National Trust instead in the meeting in Nevis. A generic agenda for a stakeholder meeting has been developed, although this will be modified slightly for each country. Additionally, separate meeting will be held where possible with the Board and staff of the Trusts and partner organisation and with key government partners, including the CBD focal point.

The postponement of the ARLG meeting has had a knock-on effect on other project activities such as the communications that were due to be developed in a participatory manner.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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 main challenges have been those outlined under Activity 2.1 above (which were submitted separately to the LTS International earlier this month through the standard procedure) and relate to the capacity of the targeted organisations being weaker than anticipated in certain areas. However, we are confident that the national meetings will secure the necessary buy-in of the Boards and staff of the Trusts and that partner organisations will be identified in all Territories. In some ways, this experience has only served to further validate the need for the project and for participatory processes, such as the stakeholder identification and analysis that will be conducted during the national meetings. The process of organising the Anguilla and BVI meetings is already unearthing potential CSO partner organisations that the Trusts had not previously thought of mobilising.

