

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 Sarah McIntosh)
Project Leader	Vijay Krishnarayan
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Project website	http://www.canari.org/civil_sub3.asp http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/Areasofwork/Naturalenvironment/DarwinInitiativeinUKCaribbeanTerritories

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).

General

The main progress during the period has been the organisational development activities taking place in the UKOTs under the small grants issued in the previous period, with several projects nearing completion (see detailed report under Activity 6 below).

The dates and venue for the third Action Research and Learning Group (ARLG) meeting were fixed during the period (March 2012 in Tortola) and the BVI National Parks Trust (NPT) agreed to act as co-host.

The communication strategy was refined following the second ARLG meeting and several communication products were completed during the period (see Activity 3 below). In order to maximise the opportunities for cross-fertilisation with other CANARI projects, the project team implementing this component of the project has been expanded to include three CANARI senior technical officers, Anna Cadiz, Neila Bobb-Prescott and Celeste Chariandy.

An opportunity was offered for one-two persons from each territory to attend a mentor training workshop in October 2011, under a complementary project funded by the John D and Catherine D MacArthur Foundation and designed to build mentoring skills to support civil society organisations working in biodiversity conservation. However, only one territory was able to identify a suitable person who was available for the workshop, so Mr Alric Taylor from Montserrat will be the sole participant at the training.

Two meetings of the UK Action Learning Group (ALG) were held during the period 5 April and 29 June (minutes attached). Additionally CANARI team members made presentations on the project to a DCNA Board meeting in May (also used to validate Bonaire case study findings), RSPB staff on 27 June, and UKOTA on 18 July.

Regular contact was also maintained with the UK partners whose current activities complement those under this project, notably Birdlife/RSPB and JNCC. As a result, during the project period, a joint BEST proposal was developed by Birdlife UK and European partners with EU OT interests (including RSPB), CANARI and the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance which draws on approaches used in this project and is designed to continue the process of building capacity for biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean UKOTs. Similarly, JNCC initiated discussions with CANARI to potentially partner on a pilot environmental mainstreaming project in the BVI.

Activity 1.3: Third ARLG meeting

The dates and venue for the third ARLG meeting were discussed and agreed for 19-23 March 2012 in Tortola, BVI, with the BVI National Parks Trust (NPT) acting as co-host. The BVINPT currently manages all the protected areas in BVI, which is a unique arrangement in the Caribbean UKOTs. Field and classroom study will provide a rich opportunity for peer learning and comparison of the institutional arrangements for protected area management in the different territories. Discussions with the Virgin Island Environmental Council on their various advocacy initiatives and approaches will also provide an opportunity to build on the advocacy training during the second ARLG.

3 Communications

Research for and writing of two of the communication products under the project (Bonaire case study and paper on endowment funds) were completed and are respectively out for review by the local partners and with the designer (both drafts attached). Research for the third case study (Centre Hills) is completed and the first draft for review by partners will be sent out shortly. The project will also benefit from another case study of effective networking of civil society organisations to improve biodiversity conservation, (*Consortio Ambiental Dominicano*), which was translated into English during the period and sent to the designer and should be published before the end of the year. All three case studies will be widely disseminated in the UKOTs and beyond.

CANARI is taking advantage of another opportunity to collaborate with project activities under complementary projects, which will facilitate joint publication of a more comprehensive toolkit on participatory tools and methods for natural resource management, instead of the guidelines on civil society participation in natural resource management originally envisaged. This should be completed by 31 December 2012.

Similarly, based on feedback from the second ARLG meeting, it has been decided to publish a communications toolkit in place of the guidelines on civil society development and management originally envisaged. This should be completed by the end of February 2012 and will form part of the training during the third ARLG meeting.

6. Small grants and peer mentoring

During the period, one organisation, Jost van Dyke Preservation Society (JvDPS) completed its project and is about to submit its final report. BVINPT has offered its small grant funding to JvDPS for a second project that will benefit both organisations and the project proposal for this is being refined following inputs from the small grant coordinator.

Anguilla National Trust and Turks and Caicos National Trust (in collaboration with TCI Rotaract) have completed their strategic planning processes and expect to complete their projects shortly. The processes have reenergised the organisations, attracting new Board members/supporters as well as producing tangible outputs such as the strategic plans, resource mobilisation plans etc. Montserrat National Trust has also begun its strategic planning process, while Montserrat Small Business Association is revising its proposed approach following successful sourcing of complementary funding to undertake some aspects of the original project. The Youth Environmental Society of Anguilla has completed its study visit to BVI and has produced an advocacy manual based on the lessons learnt.

The application from the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) was delayed in part because of the resignation of the former Executive Director but it has recently had its application approved for a strategy to increase donations and membership and improve its outreach through upgrades to its website and staff capacity to manage it. The new website will facilitate commercial transactions; have a discussion forum, a blog to provide greater insight into the Trust's work, mechanisms for volunteer sign up, and webpages with information relevant to the local school curricula.

CANARI's website has also been upgraded to provide for electronic forum discussions but to date there has been no response to requests to identify topics that the participating organisations would like to discuss. CANARI therefore proposes to identify a topic and pilot the process.

A summary of the impacts of and lessons learnt from the small grants programme will also be drafted and finalised by end February 2012 for discussion at the third ARLG meeting.

7.1 Participatory development of project monitoring and evaluation framework

Monitoring and evaluation of the small grants component is ongoing and the participating organisations know that they can solicit advice from the small grant coordinator if the encounter unexpected challenges or factors that necessitate a change in the project design. The third ARLG meeting will have use participatory techniques to assess the overall impact of the project.

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.

There have been no major problems during the period. However, the resignation of the Executive Director of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) shortly after the second ARLG meeting made it clear that there was not a full understanding or ownership of this project at all levels in the organisation, in spite of the fact that it had been regularly reported on to the Board. Fortunately, a second NTCI representative attended the ARLG meeting, which has smoothed the transition to the new acting Executive Director (who is also the Chair of the Board), which confirms the value of requiring two persons from each organisation to attend such meetings.

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

No problems arose that required discussion.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no / yes, in..... (21/10/2009)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no / yes, in.....(21/10/2009)

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

N/A