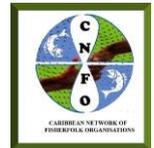




Centre for Environment
Fisheries & Aquaculture
Science



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS



Press Release

New £317,000 project launched on sustainable fisheries management in the Virgin Islands

Port of Spain, July 2, 2020 – The UK Government funded Darwin Initiative has announced the projects funded under this year's Darwin Plus scheme which provides grants to projects working on environmental issues in the UK Overseas Territories. One of the successful projects in this latest funding round is a joint project being delivered by the UK Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), the Government of the Virgin Islands, and the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). This project will build capacity in fisheries evidence, networks, and management to support ongoing sustainable fisheries management.

This three-year project will review and consolidate existing evidence, data and maps for the marine area, and produce a centralised fisheries database and fisheries evidence report to improve the capture and display of fisheries data and support future licensing and management decisions. It will also strengthen fisherfolk capacity and engagement and facilitate the development of a formalised network of fisherfolk to enable a collective voice and greater participation in decision-making. In addition, capability will be built with the Government of the Virgin Islands to support the ongoing management of the evidence base.

Minister for Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture, Virgin Islands, Dr Natalio Wheatley said *“This project will assist us to better manage our fisheries resources, which are an important part of the Virgin Islands culture and economy. We are happy for this partnership with CEFAS and CANARI and the technical expertise these agencies bring to our shores. An important part of this project is the work that will take place with fishers to assist them in organising themselves and understanding their role in sustainable fisheries. We are thankful for the opportunity afforded us through the UK Government's Darwin Initiative, and look forward to the implementation of the project over the next three years”*.

Cefas Chief Scientist Professor Stuart Rogers said, *“We are delighted to be working with the Government and fisheries stakeholders in the Virgin Islands to build on the progress already made on sustainable fisheries management. We understand the importance of evidence to support good decision-making and are looking forward to working in partnership with managers and the community”*.

CANARI Executive Director Ms. Nicole Leotaud said, *“We believe this project will contribute to strengthening the small-scale fisheries sector for food security, protecting valuable ocean resources key for economic development in the Virgin Islands, and supporting fisherfolk livelihoods in the face of COVID-19, climate change and other key risks. CANARI welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Government and fisherfolk in the Virgin Islands to enhance their capacity for sustainable management and resilience”*.

For further information on this project please contact one of our project coordinators:

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About Cefas: The UK Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) are the UK Government's marine and freshwater science experts, working for healthy and productive oceans, seas and rivers and safe and sustainable seafood. We work to safeguard human and animal health, enable food security and support marine economies. We use our research and innovation expertise to work towards a

sustainable blue future for the planet. For more information on Cefas and the work we do, visit www.cefas.co.uk.

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focus on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Equity, Resilience and Participatory Governance. For more information on CANARI, see: <https://www.canari.org/>.

About CNFO: The Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) is a regional network of small-scale fisherfolk and their organisations operating across the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The network is committed to the realization of profitable and sustainable fisheries that support fisherfolk livelihoods, promote effective ecosystem based management of fisheries resources, contribute to food security for Caribbean communities and increase resilience to risks including climate change. For more information on CNFO, see: <https://cnfo.fish/>.

About the Ministry for Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture, Virgin Islands – Department of Agriculture and Fisheries: The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is a part of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture of the Government of the Virgin Islands. The Department is responsible for ensuring food is safe, nutritionally sound, produced and harvested in an environmentally sustainable manner that builds resilience to internal and external shocks while contributing to the economic growth, social well-being and protection of the natural environment. For more information, see: <https://bvi.gov.vg/content/ministry-education-and-culture>