



Press Release

New £228,000 project launched to improve sustainable management of sargassum in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat

November 29, 2021 – The United Kingdom (UK) Government-funded Darwin Initiative recently awarded a £228,595 grant for the project ‘*Sustainable Sargassum Management in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat*’. The two-and-a-half-year project, which officially started in October 2021, received funding from the Darwin Plus scheme which provides grants to projects that aim to protect the unique biodiversity and improve resilience to climate change within the UK Overseas Territories.

Severe sargassum influxes have become a recurrent event in the Eastern Caribbean, including in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat. Influxes have resulted in adverse impacts, including biodiversity loss in coastal and marine ecosystems, health impacts on local communities, and socio-economic and livelihood impacts in the tourism, fisheries and marine transport sectors. Impacts are directly felt in these sectors, including by fisherfolk, dive and tour operators and other community micro-enterprises, as well as by all coastal users, which for these tiny islands, comprise their entire populations.

Research by the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (UWI-CERMES) and the United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) highlights that management of sargassum influxes is hampered by: (1) inadequate local and scientific information on lessons and best practices for management and adaptation; (2) poor forecasting and inadequate preparation; (3) lack of guiding national policies or plans and poor coordination for effective responses; and (4) inadequate access to funding to implement management and adaptation solutions.



Sargassum stranding in BVI. Photo credit: Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration

The main aim of the ‘*Sustainable Sargassum Management in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat*’ project is therefore to enhance the institutional frameworks and knowledge, experience and commitment of coastal and marine resource managers and users in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat to manage the ecological and socio-economic risks from sargassum influxes. The project will use a participatory approach to document local and scientific information to inform management best practices and decision-making. Capacity building will also be a strong feature of the project, including training partner agencies, civil society organisations and local communities to use drone technology to monitor sargassum influxes. At the policy level, the project will also

seek to collaboratively develop and implement sargassum management plans in each of the targeted Territories.

The project will be implemented by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources - Anguilla; Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration - British Virgin Islands; Department of Environment - Montserrat; UWI-CERMES and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission.

A virtual launch for the project will be held on December 1, 2021.

To learn more about the 'Sustainable Sargassum Management in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat' project visit <https://canari.org/darwin-sargassum-ots/>.

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 over 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focuses on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Equity, Participatory Governance and Resilience. See here for more information on CANARI: <https://www.canari.org/>.

About the Department of Natural Resources, Anguilla: The mandate of the Department of Natural Resources is to achieve Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Sustainable Fishing and Agriculture and Food Security. The Department's mission is to deliver best practices in food production and environmental governance which emphasise entrepreneurship, public engagement and, ultimately, sustainable development. <http://www.gov.ai/department.php?id=6&dept=45>

About the Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration, British Virgin Islands: The Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration is responsible for the effective management of the natural resources of the British Virgin Islands, as well as the keen regulation of the supply of labour in the Territory, ensuring that supply meets demand. The Ministry's mission is to effectively manage and administer the natural resources of the Territory in a manner that ensures long term sustainability, and to ensure that the supply of labour is commensurate with the level of development in all sectors of the economy under working conditions which preserve the individuals' health, safety, and welfare. <https://bvi.gov.vg/content/ministry-natural-resources-and-labour>

About the Department of Environment, Montserrat: The Department of Environment's key roles are to provide environmental stewardship, promote conservation and advise on the sustainable development of Montserrat. Responsibilities include direct management responsibility for climate change, biodiversity conservation and Multilateral Environmental Agreements and collaborative responsibility for monitoring developmental best practices. The Department's mission is to efficiently and effectively carry out the responsibilities for mainstreaming environmental matters and ensuring the protection, conservation and sustainable management and use of natural resources and the environment by promoting sound environmental management policies and practices through policy formulation and implementation, monitoring, data analysis, regulation, education, information and advice and assisting organisations and agencies across the public, private and civil society sectors in achieving their mandates through support, coordination and facilitation. <https://www.gov.ms/government/ministries/ministry-of-agriculture-lands-housing-environment/department-of-environment/>

About UWI-CERMES: The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) promotes and facilitates sustainable development in the Caribbean and beyond. CERMES has a strong focus on tropical island environmental management and its mission is to make a significant contribution to sustainable development in the Caribbean region. CERMES is a department within the Faculty of Science and Technology on the UWI Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. <https://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/home.aspx>

About OECS Commission: The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an International Inter-governmental Organisation dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean. The vision of the organisation for 2020-2024 is "A better quality of life for the people of the OECS". The Commission's mission is to drive and support sustainable development through regional integration, collective action and development cooperation. <https://www.oecs.org/en/>