



The Buzz

Newsletter of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network
Trinidad and Tobago (BES-Net TT) project

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Issue #1

**More
to come!**

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The Buzz is the quarterly produced newsletter of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network Trinidad and Tobago project (BES-Net TT).

This newsletter reports on progress made in the implementation of the BES-Net TT project over the period, 2021-2023.

The Buzz is produced by the BES-Net TT Project Management Unit.

Welcome!

Welcome readers to this first issue of “**The Buzz**”!

This is a quarterly publication of the Project Management Unit for the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network Trinidad and Tobago project, BES-Net TT. We will bring you updates on the project through the newsletter, keeping you on top of progress made.

In this first issue, get an overview of the project, information on its virtual launch and upcoming activities. We also take the opportunity to introduce you to the project team.

We are happy to meet you in this forum and invite your comments and feedback. Enjoy reading **The Buzz** and be sure to share with your networks!



BES-Net TT

BES-Net TT is a two-year project which is being implemented by the Environmental Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development in Trinidad and Tobago, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP. The project is focused on conservation and management of local pollinator species. The key thrust of the project will be actions to improve the science, policy and practice of pollinator and pollination management in T&T. For more information on the project, please visit the project webpage at [this link](#).



Meet the Team

The Project Team is a small unit that brings various competencies to the table for project coordination and implementation.

Dr. Lena Dempewolf, coordinates the project for the Environmental Policy and Planning Division (EPPD), where she is currently engaged as a Biodiversity Specialist. Her background is in pollination ecology, ecosystem services and conservation biology, and she has worked on a number of projects in this regard over the past 10 years.



Mr. Shane Ballah, the Project Manager, is an environmental consultant with a strong education background in ecology, plant-insect interactions and botany. He has worked on projects with various agencies

including the Ministry of Works & Transport, IUCN, FAO and NIDCO. He specialises in plant identification, ecological assessments and bryophytes and is an active member of the local environmental community.



Science Communication Officer, Ms Celeste Chariandy, has worked in the science



communication field for over two decades. She has also engaged in environmental conservation locally with several groups.

The project is also supported by a Project Steering Committee and the team at the EPPD, Ministry of Planning and Development.

And we are off!

On Wednesday 15th December 2021 the project hosted its official launch via the Zoom platform.

Speakers at the launch included BES-Net Global's Policy Specialist and Coordinator, Ms Yuko Kurauchi, Ms Rosemary Lall of the local UNDP office and Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh, Head of the TT Government's Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit.

The BES-Net TT project launch event was attended by over one hundred (100) stakeholders drawn from the research and scientific community, non-governmental organizations, government agencies and



representatives of the private sector. Local media houses covered the event, which was also streamed live on Facebook to a global audience. *(continued on page 3)*

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Immediately following the launch, the project team, was assisted by BES-Net Global's representatives to host a short workshop session with pollinator stakeholders from across the country.

The session enabled participants to review the three main areas of focus in the project—scientific research, policy development and knowledge building – and supply information on relevant initiatives that can assist in furthering the project's goals.

Both activities provided a useful platform for exchange of ideas. A report on the launch event will be posted on the project's webpage.



Screenshot of participants at the Project Launch

In the field

Very little data on pollinators has been captured to provide baseline information on diversity and population levels. However, the widespread use of broad-spectrum pesticides in the country, is believed to threaten local populations of beneficial insects and other pollinators. The BES-Net TT project is therefore employing a range of research methodologies to address data gaps.

A pilot activity has begun in partnership with CEMEX, a company in the industrial sector. At two (2) research sites, field sampling will ascertain the identify and diversity of pollinators at these locations. The research activity will also generate educational material for use in public education activities.

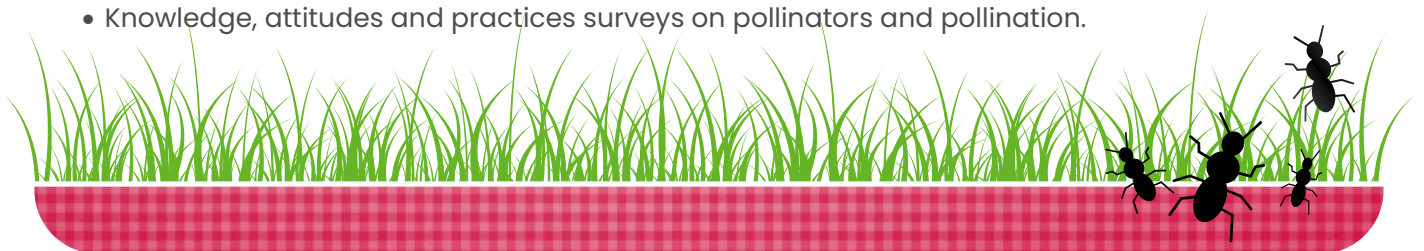
Other field research activities in the project include:

- A survey of local stingless bee species;
- Identification of seagrass pollinators in coastal waters;
- Research to generate information on bat pollination;
- Knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys on pollinators and pollination.



Photograph: Celeste Chariandy

Shane Ballah, Project Manager (at right) sets up a malaise trap at a CEMEX site with two of the company's employees (at left).



All about the bees

The BES-Net TT project will take a particular focus on stingless bees. Not enough is known about the local species, however, it is clear that they face a serious threat from habitat destruction. As such, a survey of stingless bees will be conducted in both islands to identify species and distribution.

The activity will engage persons from communities and, in order to increase awareness of these bees, training in their management and conservation will be provided.

Another project activity will involve research and analysis of the honey produced by local hives including those of stingless bees, which is said to be low volume but rich in medicinal benefits. This study is expected to generate recommendations for local honey production standards.



Photograph: Lena Dempewolf

Nannotrigona testaceicornis
a local stingless bee

Upcoming activities this quarter!

February 16th: "Pollinators and Pollination" – live webinar on Zoom (details on Facebook)

March 9th: "Science 101 for Beekeepers" with the Tobago Apicultural Society

March 21-27 – Participation in NIHERST's Sci-TechKnoFest 2022

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) is jointly implemented by:



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We would love to hear from you and get your feedback on this issue of The Buzz!

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