

The Virgin Islands Consortium

BVI To Develop Coral Reef Restoration Nurseries

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TORTOLA -- The BVI will soon improve its capacity to restore coral reefs following Cabinet's approval of the development of Coral Reef Restoration Nurseries throughout the BVI's fishing waters.

This initiative is a partnership between the Government, the Association of Reef Keepers, the Nature Conservancy and the business sector. Works have already commenced with the establishment of two nurseries within the territory.

Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, Dr. Kedrick Pickering said the Ministry continues to seek ways to improve the natural environment because the BVI is economically dependent on the tourism and fisheries industries.

He added that restored coral reefs will help the Territory's coastal disaster resilience and will form part of the territory's Climate Change adaption framework.

The Minister stated that coral reef restoration efforts have been successful in replenishing and restoring degrading reefs in other parts of the region.

He said this restoration project will be able to address damage inflicted on the corals in the Territory. Minister Pickering said the development of the nurseries will be funded through public and private donor sources.

The Minister said the funding will be used to establish and monitor the sustainability of the nurseries, to study and monitor the survival and growth of the out-planted corals within the restored reefs and to provide educational outreach programs.

Director of the Association of Reef Keepers, Dr. Shannon Gore, is enthusiastic about forging a partnership with Government.

Dr. Gore said the Association of Reef Keepers anticipates many benefits to the Territory's biodiversity from the establishment and management of coral nurseries.

She said they are pleased to work along the Conservation and Fisheries Department and the National Parks Trust on this vital project and other projects as they continue to build their partnerships.