

Funding Support through OTEP for Environmental Programmes in the UK Overseas Territories

The Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) was established to enable the Governments of the UK and the Overseas Territories to meet their commitments under the Environment Charters. In 1999, the year of the White Paper, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) made available an annual funding programme for environmental projects in the UKOTs. And in 2003, the British Government worked together with Territory Governments and non-governmental organisations to develop OTEP, a new ring-fenced fund which supports environmental projects in the UKOTs. OTEP is a joint initiative of the FCO and the Department for International Development (DFID) which aims to build on the success of earlier FCO-funded programmes. Bids may be submitted by Overseas Territories governments; NGOs; community-based organisations; individuals; educational institutions; private sector. Bids may also be submitted by UK-based organisations, NGOs and academic institutions if they have been developed in collaboration with partners in the Territories.



Like several endemic plants of St Helena, the Ebony lacked defences against grazing animals, and was thought to be extinct for over 100 years until rediscovered on a cliff, and a recovery programme started.

Selection criteria

The selection panel is made up of people who have knowledge of UKOT environmental matters. Key to their consideration of project proposals is the extent to which a project has the potential to help:

- implement the Environment Charter for the Territory, including the development of strategies and action plans where necessary;
- meet the Territory's obligations under those Multilateral Environmental Agreements extended to it, and prepare for possible future extensions;
- build environmental management capacity in the Territory; and
- raise awareness of environmental issues, promote participation by civil society in decisions affecting the environment, and support environmental education in the Territory.

Examples of projects approved in the first round

- Assistance with developing the Strategy for Action required of each UKOT by the Environment Charters (St. Helena's Strategy development project)
- Monitoring and management projects for ecosystems (a protected area plan for St Helena's central peaks, management guidelines for Bermuda's woodlands, management projects for Anguilla's coastal areas, a general environmental management plan for the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands)
- Conservation programmes for particular species (seabirds and turtles in St Helena, the spectacled petrel in Tristan da Cunha, Ascension's seabirds)
- Projects to support eco-tourism (a mangrove wetland interpretive centre for the BVI, development of eco-tourism infrastructure in the Turks & Caicos Islands)
 - Environmental education (a conservation leaflet for the British Indian Ocean Territory)
 - Projects involving several UKOTs (planning for climate change in the Caribbean)



Several Wolf-spiders are among some 400 endemic invertebrates of St Helena.

Full details of the Guidance Notes, application forms and a complete listing of projects approved to date may be found on the website of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum at www.ukotcf.org. Click on 'OTEP'.



THE ST. HELENA ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

A Partnership for Conservation and Sustainable Use of St. Helena's Environmental Resources

It is a little-known fact that many of the United Kingdom's most significant biodiversity resources are not in the British Isles themselves. They are to be found in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) former colonies and territories scattered around the world. St Helena, one of the most remote of the UKOTs, is also one of the most long-standing: it has been associated with Britain since 1659. Endemic species – those which occur in only one place in the world – are critically important to the planet's overall biodiversity, and the UKOTs have at least ten times as many endemic species as Britain itself. St Helena is a goldmine of endemism, having some 45 endemic plants, 400 endemic invertebrates, and a dozen endemic shore fishes. Much damage has been done to St Helena's native flora and fauna since the island was discovered in 1502; of its six endemic species of land birds, only the Wirebird has survived. Under international treaties, it is the joint responsibility of the UK Government and the Government of St Helena to care for this precious biodiversity, and intensive conservation efforts are now underway.



Wirebirds, last surviving of at least six endemic bird species on St Helena, carry leg-rings as part of a study of their conservation needs.

In 1999 the UK Government issued the Overseas Territories White Paper 'Partnership for Progress and Prosperity.' This recognised that responsibility for environmental issues in the Overseas Territories rested with the local governments, but that the UK Government had responsibility to support these local efforts. This concept was embodied in the Environment Charters; St. Helena's Charter was signed by the UK Minister for the Overseas Territories and by Councillor Hon. Eric W. George on 26 September 2001. (See centre pages of this brochure.) The Charter includes guiding principles and a set of mutual commitments between the UK Government and the St. Helena Government in respect of integrating environmental conservation into all sectors of policy planning and implementation.



The waters around St Helena are richer than surrounding seas, supporting both dolphins and an abundance of endemic fish.

St. Helena's first commitment is to develop a detailed strategy for action to implement the principles of the Charter, and the first commitment of the UK Government is to help build capacity to support integrated environmental management. With help from OTEP, St. Helena is well on her way to meeting the first commitment.

Environment Charter

ST. HELENA



Guiding Principles

For the UK Government, for the government of St. Helena and for the people of St. Helena

- 1 To recognise that all people need a healthy environment for their well-being and livelihoods and that all can help to conserve and sustain it.
- 2 To use our natural resources wisely, being fair to present and future generations.
- 3 To identify environmental opportunities, costs and risks in all policies and strategies.
- 4 To seek expert advice and consult openly with interested parties on decisions affecting the environment.
- 5 To aim for solutions which benefit both the environment and development.
- 6 To contribute towards the protection and improvement of the global environment.
- 7 To safeguard and restore native species, habitats and landscape features, and control or eradicate invasive species.
- 8 To encourage activities and technologies that benefit the environment.
- 9 To control pollution, with the polluter paying for the prevention or remedies.
- 10 To study and celebrate our environmental heritage as a treasure to share with our children.

Eric W. George

ST. HELENA

26 September 2001

Valerie Amos

UNITED KINGDOM

26 September 2001

Commitments

The government of the UK will:

- 1 Help build capacity to support and implement integrated environmental management which is consistent with St. Helena's own plans for sustainable development.
- 2 Assist St. Helena in initiating, reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
- 3 Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to St. Helena and which St. Helena has the capacity to implement.
- 4 Keep St. Helena informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite St. Helena to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
- 5 Help St. Helena ensure it has the legislation, institutional capacity and mechanisms it needs to meet international obligations.
- 6 Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience between St. Helena, other Overseas Territories and small island states and communities which face similar environmental problems.
- 7 Use the UK, regional and local expertise to give advice and improve knowledge of technical and scientific issues. This includes regular consultation with interested non-governmental organisations and networks.
- 8 Use the existing Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, and promote access to other sources of public funding, for projects of lasting benefit to St. Helena's environment.
- 9 Help St. Helena identify further funding partners for environmental projects such as donors, the private sector or non-governmental organisations.
- 10 Recognise the diversity of the challenges facing the Overseas Territories in very different socio-economic and geographical situations.
- 11 Abide by the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and work towards meeting International Development Targets on the environment.

The government of St. Helena will:

- 1 Bring together government departments, representatives of local industry and commerce, environment and heritage organisations, the Governor's office, individual environmental champions and other community representatives in a forum to formulate a detailed strategy for action.
- 2 Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species.
- 3 Ensure that environmental considerations are integrated within social and economic planning processes, promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption within the Territory.
- 4 Ensure that environmental impact assessments are undertaken before approving major projects and while developing our growth management strategy.
- 5 Commit to open and consultative decision-making on developments and plans which may affect the environment; ensure that environmental impact assessments include consultation with stakeholders.
- 6 Implement effectively Multilateral Environmental Agreements already extended to St. Helena and work towards the extension of other relevant agreements.
- 7 Review the range, quality and availability of baseline data for natural resources and biodiversity.
- 8 Ensure that legislation and policies reflect the principle that the polluter should pay for prevention or remedies; establish effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- 9 Encourage teaching within schools to promote the value of our local environment (natural and built) and to explain its role within the regional and global environment.
- 10 Promote publications that spread public awareness of the special features of the environment in St. Helena; promote within St. Helena the guiding principles set out above.
- 11 Abide by the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and work towards meeting International Development Targets on the environment.