

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.

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

- Monitoring and management projects for ecosystems (management guidelines for Bermuda's woodlands; management projects for Anguilla's coastal areas; St Helena's central peaks; Nightingale Island; 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 and Caicos Islands)
- Environmental education (a conservation leaflet for the British Indian Ocean Territory)
- Projects involving several UKOTs (planning for climate change in the Caribbean)

Full details of the Guidance Notes, application forms and 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'.



Remote locations allow even small islands to evolve endemics such as iguanas which are important to worldwide biodiversity.



The UKOTs support many of the world's populations of globally threatened seabird species, including albatrosses.



THE ENVIRONMENT CHARTERS

A Partnership for Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Environmental Resources of the UK Overseas Territories

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 or territories scattered around the world. A few have no permanent populations, but in the inhabited ones the local populations have chosen to stay part of the sovereign territory of the UK. There are relatively few people in the UKOTs (less than 200,000 in all) – but there is a vast array of unique flora and fauna and of pristine and diverse ecosystems. 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. This includes at least 20 endemic bird species, as against zero in Britain, more than 200 endemic plant species and about 500 endemic invertebrates. It is the joint responsibility of the UK Government and the Government of each of the UKOTs to care for this treasure trove of biodiversity.



Preservation of critical terrestrial habitat such as tussac grass in the UKOTs is vital to the survival of both terrestrial and marine fauna worldwide.

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 (see centre pages of this brochure), each signed by the Government of the UK and of the Overseas Territory. Although there

are small differences to fit individual Territory circumstances, all Charters include guiding principles and a set of mutual commitments by the UK Government and the Territory concerned in respect of integrating environmental conservation into all sectors of policy planning and implementation. In each case, the first commitment of the Territory 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. The Overseas Territories Environment Programme (see back page) is a key tool in meeting this commitment.



The UKOTs provide nesting grounds for endangered sea turtles in three oceans around the world.

Environment Charter

UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Guiding Principles

*For the UK Government, for the governments of the Overseas Territories,
and for the people of the Overseas Territories*

- 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.

*Signed by the head or representative of
each local government in each of
the Overseas Territories
26 September 2001 (in most cases)*

*Signed by the Minister for the
Overseas Territories
UNITED KINGDOM
26 September 2001 (in most cases)*

The UK Overseas Territories (Those marked with an asterisk do not have Charters)

Anguilla	Cayman Islands	South Georgia and the South
Ascension Island	Falklands Islands	Sandwich Islands
Bermuda	Gibraltar*	Sovereign Base Areas on
British Antarctic Territory*	Montserrat	Cyprus*
British Indian Ocean Territory	Pitcairn Islands	Tristan da Cunha
British Virgin Islands	St. Helena	Turks and Caicos Islands

Commitments

The government of the UK will:

- 1 Help build capacity to support and implement integrated environmental management which is consistent with the Territories' own plans for sustainable development.
- 2 Assist the Territories in initiating, reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
- 3 Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to each of the Territories and which each Territory has the capacity to implement (and a desire to adopt.)
- 4 Keep the Territories informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite the Territories to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
- 5 Help each Territory to ensure it has the legislation, institutional capacity (technology, equipment, procedures) and mechanisms it needs to meet international obligations.
- 6 Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience between and among the Overseas Territories and with other 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 the Territories' environments.
- 9 Help each of the Territories 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 governments of the Overseas Territories 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 and environmental health 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 the Territory 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 each of the Territories; promote within the Territory 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.