

## 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

- Environmental education (an interpretive centre for the British Virgin Islands' wetlands; a conservation leaflet for the British Indian Ocean Territory)
- Monitoring and management projects for ecosystems (assessment and improved management of new and existing marine protected areas in the BVI; management guidelines for Bermuda's woodlands, management projects for Anguilla's coastal areas, St Helena's central peaks; 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 involving several UKOTs (planning for climate change in the Caribbean)

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](http://www.ukotcf.org). Click on 'OTEP'.



*The BVI is a partner in programmes to enhance sea turtle populations.*



*The BVI's endemic acacia, the Pokemeboy, is an important food source for its endangered iguana.*



## THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

A Partnership for Conservation and Sustainable Use of the British Virgin Islands' 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. The British Virgin Islands have been a Territory of the United Kingdom since the Seventeenth Century. Their well-preserved coral reef system, one of the most biologically dense ecosystems in the world, is one aspect of the BVI's importance to world biodiversity.



*West Indian flamingos have been successfully reintroduced to Anegada.*

Endemic species – those which occur in only one place in the world – are another important element of the planet's overall biodiversity. The BVI's terrestrial environment boasts both endemic animals such as the Anegada rock iguana and endemic plants such as the acacia Pokemeboy on which the iguanas feed. Under international treaties, it is the joint responsibility of the UK Government and the Government of the British Virgin Islands to care for this precious biodiversity.

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; the BVI's Charter was signed by the then UK Minister for the Overseas Territories and by the then Chief Minister Ralph T. O'Neal on 26 September 2001 (see centre pages of this brochure). The Charter includes guiding

principles and a set of mutual commitments by the UK Government and the Government of the British Virgin Islands in respect of integrating environmental conservation into all sectors of policy planning and implementation. The British Virgin Islands' 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. The Overseas Territories Environment Programme (see back page) is a key tool in meeting this commitment.



*The Anegada Rock Iguana is considered critically endangered.*

# Environment Charter



## BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

### Guiding Principles

*For the UK Government, for the government of the British Virgin Islands and for the people of the British Virgin Islands*

- 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.

**Ralph T. O'Neal**  
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS  
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 the British Virgin Islands' own plans for sustainable development.
- 2 Assist the British Virgin Islands in initiating, reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
- 3 Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to the British Virgin Islands and which the British Virgin Islands has the capacity to implement.
- 4 Keep the British Virgin Islands informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite the British Virgin Islands to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
- 5 Help the British Virgin Islands 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 the British Virgin Islands, 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 the British Virgin Islands' environment.
- 9 Help the British Virgin Islands 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 the British Virgin Islands 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 the British Virgin Islands 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 the British Virgin Islands; promote within the British Virgin Islands 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.