

**OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (OTEP)**

**UKOTCF COMMENTS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2005 REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME AND OTEP SECRETARIAT RESPONSE**

| Rec No                         | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Headline Recommendation</b> | <b>After only two years of operation, OTEP has become a highly valued source of support to environment stakeholders in the OTs – both governmental and non-governmental – and is a particularly key player in biodiversity conservation. With increasingly urgent needs to address a breadth of OT environmental challenges now clearly apparent, we strongly recommend that the programme should continue.</b> | We welcome this conclusion by the independent reviewer, which formally confirms views expressed by many partners both in the territories and elsewhere. FCO have secured funding from the Global Opportunities Fund for the continuation of their component of OTEP, subject among other things to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007. DFID's current 3-year funding commitment runs to March 2007 but it is intended to seek an extension to the existing programme from FY 2007/08-2009/10. | We welcome this conclusion. We consider that one reason for the programme's success has been the continuity provided by UKOTCF, and its advice to this programme and the fore-running FCO ones. We regret that the Review appears to overlook the Governmental/UKOTCF partnership which has underpinned most of the successful environmental work in the UKOTs in recent years.  |
| <b>3.1</b>                     | <b>Focal themes – building on the biodiversity conservation niche</b>   |   |  |
| 3.1 (a)                        | <i>Continue OTEP's clear niche in biodiversity, but broaden its scope from species and habitat conservation to include sustainable use of biodiversity for economic and livelihood purposes. A clear OTEP biodiversity prioritisation framework is needed – either a global assessment of biodiversity needs, and/or scientific criteria.</i>   | OTEP has operated to date on a reactive, demand-led basis, following the pattern established in earlier FCO-funded programmes, for example the Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, whose emphasis was predominantly on biodiversity projects, often with a species conservation objective. The OTEP Programme Memorandum provides for a much wider approach, both to biodiversity and other environmental issues, including sustainable use. We accept that if the                                       | UKOTCF notes that it has been involved in, and advised on, projects and potential projects which explore expanding work into these areas. However, the present project cost limits and time limits, as well as the overall budget available to OTEP, make most such projects impracticable for OTEP to fund and for potential project managers to implement. As we have pointed out in other fora, major increases in funding by this or another programme would be required.<br><br>With regard to process, UKOTCF is far from convinced that a totally reactive model is the best to |

| Rec No  | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|---------|--|---|---|
|         |  | <p>current reactive process is to continue, the OTs will need to be reminded of, and possibly steered in the direction of these wider opportunities. We agree that a prioritised framework and, possibly, a more proactive approach could be helpful. We also need to keep in view the diverse needs and varying stages of progress in each territory, and limited capacity within the OTEP secretariat to respond to competing priorities. We will review the nature of our support for biodiversity conservation initiatives both in the light of demand from the territories and in consultation with relevant specialists, with a view to introducing any changes that may be indicated.</p>  | <p>achieve the ends required. There were distinct advantages in the more pro-active approach used in FCO's former EFOT, in which FCO environmental personnel and UKOTCF personnel jointly worked with UKOT partners to identify needs and develop projects. We accept that, especially with cut-backs in environmental staffing in FCO, there may not be adequate capacity in FCO and DFID to do this alone, but UKOTCF remains ready to re-instate the more joint arrangement of the past, combining UKOTCF expertise with HMG resourcing to return to a more pro-active model, reflecting better UK's shared responsibilities in these areas.</p> |
| 3.1 (b) | <p><i>Actively seek to support other environmental issues (brown and blue as well as green) but only where their priority can be demonstrated in an OT and funding levels allow. Examples include waste management, water and air quality, and possibly built heritage. Selection should refer more to the OT context, seeking input from Governor's Offices and development actors.</i></p> | <p>The existing Programme Memorandum provides for a much wider range of environmental management and capacity-building activities than have to date been taken up by the territories. In the examples mentioned in the recommendation, however, care would need to be taken not to fund activities that should more properly be core functions of OT government departments. For example, assistance with the preparation and introduction of a national waste management strategy might be appropriate for OTEP funding, whereas the financing of physical works to improve a landfill site almost certainly would not be. We agree that dialogue, within the OT context, might be more likely to lead to the identification of projects with more</p> | <p>UKOTCF largely concurs with the OTEP response. UKOTCF considers that, with existing levels of funding, it would be unwise to spread this even more thinly. At present, the scope of small projects addressed is undertaken well. It is better to continue to do these well, than to spread the inadequate resources more thinly and do more things less well.</p> <p>On a lesser point, UKOTCF notes that recommendations would be clearer if they avoided using (in this case, metaphorical colour coding) jargon which means different things in different subject areas.</p>  |

| Rec No     | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment   |
|------------|--|---|--|
|            |  | potential for positive strategic outcomes.  |  |
| 3.1 (c)    | As a result, whilst 75% of projects currently focus on biodiversity conservation, this might be expected to be about 50% in the next 2-3 years   | We agree that a better balance probably needs to be struck (without necessarily setting specific targets) between biodiversity conservation (particularly species protection) and activity to meet other objectives of the Environmental Charters.  | For the reasons indicated above and elsewhere, UKOTCF considers this recommendation profoundly misguided, and inconsistent with other conclusions in the report, unless the funding to OTEP were more than doubled.  |
| <b>3.2</b> | <b>Focal activities – complementing ‘soft’ awareness work with ‘hard’ capacity installation</b>  |   |  |
| 3.2 (a)    | <i>Continue work in improving awareness, but strengthen its focus on senior decision-makers in development positions, both governmental and private sector. Whilst OT-level activities will be appropriate, regional or OT-wide seminars etc might also be offered by OTEP.</i>                              | We agree with this recommendation and will encourage those territories that perceive this to be a significant local issue, to seek support from OTEP. In fact one of the approved projects for one territory in the 2006 bidding round aims to run an environmental awareness course for the political directorate and senior managers and opinion formers, focusing on strategic local and global issues of environmental sustainability such as the MEAs. | UKOTCF concurs. This is one of the areas where UKOTCF has taken a leading role. We have to note, however, that such exercises generally need long lead-times and some continuity to be effective. The short-term nature of proposals allowed under present OTEP procedures is not conducive to this. An ability for OTEP to plan for a forward projection of a proportion of its funding into 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> years, as used to be normal HMG practice, would enhance both implementation of this recommendation and cost-effectiveness generally. |
| 3.2 (b)    | <i>Put much more emphasis on building OT environmental systems and capacities – environment policies, laws, plans, institutions, and their links to development. Whilst many stakeholders agree that government capacity is the most critical need at present, efforts to broaden the civil society base</i> | We have always welcomed proposals that build capacities and environmental systems in the territories, particularly those at a strategic level. We agree with the reviewers, however, that Government capacity currently remains less than optimal in several territories, and that civil society drivers of environmental action may operate under significant institutional or funding constraints. We   | UKOTCF concurs. Much of the progress that has been made in environmental conservation, education and civil society participation in the UKOTs results from the efforts of the UKOT-based members of UKOTCF, supported by the Forum and its member organisations based in UK. There are still major challenges in several UKOTs where the governmental institutions do not yet see the benefits of civil society organisations and may even be negative towards them. This situation needs  |

| Rec No  | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response  | UKOTCF Comment   |
|---------|---|--|--|
|         | <p>which 'drives' environmental concern are also welcomed. Irrespective of what environmental themes are chosen, a 'local capacity utilisation and development' objective would be helpful in most OTEP projects.</p>   | <p>will therefore continue to support 'home-grown' initiatives, particularly those which help develop local capacity and confidence.</p>   | <p>considerable improvement, which would be to the benefit of all. In dealing with UKOTs, OTEP needs to recognise civil society organisations as its partners on an equal footing to official bodies.</p>  |
| 3.2 (c) | <p><i>Ensure that any field activities (i.e. in specific sites) play a very strategic role</i> in relation to the points above. In other words, they should either be critical sites in their own right judged against environmental criteria, or be strategic vehicles for awareness- or capacity-building judged against visibility/exemplary criteria.</p> | <p>The OTEP assessment panel has paid particular attention to the application of this principle and we envisage that it will continue to do so in the future. Panel members have welcomed comments by Governors' offices (and equivalents) on the potential strategic value (or otherwise) of applications submitted to OTEP. We will, however, encourage applicants – including through strengthened guidance notes – to apply appropriate 'strategic value' tests when they are developing project concepts involving site-specific interventions.</p> | <p>UKOTCF concurs. UKOTCF has played a major role in helping UKOTs develop their strategic approaches, from <i>Fragments of Paradise</i> in the late 1980s, through <i>A Conservation Review</i> in the mid-1990s and continued as part of its web-site, the concept of Environmental Charters in the late 1990s, and the facilitation of the development of strategies for implementation of these, to the development of senior personnel strategic training. It has also helped provide wider frameworks to use in such strategies, such as its 1998 Review of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UKOTs, its 2005 review of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in the UKOTs &amp; CDs, the 2006 review by its member organisation (RSPB) of Important Bird Areas, and strategic workshops in its conferences in 2000, 2003 and planned for 2006.</p> |
| 3.3     | <p><b>Strategic engagement with OTs – introducing complements to competitive, applicant driven projects</b></p> <p>The first two OTEP objectives of 'advice, support and funding' will not always be best delivered through competitive models and/or scattered applications. Consideration could be given to:</p>  |  |  |

| Rec No  | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response  | UKOTCF Comment   |
|---------|--|--|--|
| 3.3 (a) | <p><i>Offering central OTEP schemes based on common needs.</i> For example, some capacity development activities will not be efficient if confined to an individual OT. There is a strong demand for short courses in 'hot topics' – notably climate change, EIA and SEA, and economic aspects of environmental issues – both in the UK and within OTs and especially to engage senior decision-makers. A further suggestion is an OTEP job swap/job shadowing scheme.</p> | <p>We accept that the competitive demand-led model is not necessarily the best or only approach possible and that there is probably a latent demand for cross-territory initiatives of the type recommended. We also recognise that individual territories may find the tasks of mobilising interest among a group of potentially like-minded territories and coordinating a common application to OTEP, too daunting, not least because of capacity constraints. We therefore agree that OTEP should attempt a more proactive approach to multi-territory capacity-building activities. But it has to be recognised that the OTEP secretariat is itself capacity-constrained, and that the organisation and delivery of such activities will have to be contracted out. We are not sure how a job-swap or job-shadowing scheme might work in practice, but would be open to suggestions from the territories.</p> | <p>Please see UKOTCF's comment at 3.1 (a).</p> <p>In addition, UKOTCF notes that this is one of the main sort of projects in which it has more experience than others. It has to say that OTEP procedures are not conducive to such proposals because of the call for support from each Territory involved. The logistics of this are very complex, so that the projects potentially of the widest benefit are most difficult to propose. The requirement also runs counter to experience: many of the most successful ideas are ones for which Territories eventually using them did not initially recognise the need. This is therefore again a strong argument for a more proactive approach. However, we agree that the OTEP secretariat does not have the capacity. A reinstatement of the earlier partnership that UKOTCF had with FCO (and now including DFID) could be an effective approach – and far less expensive than contracting out to a commercial organisation not already committed to progressing this area on a non-profit basis and without UKOTCF's unrivalled contact network amongst the UKOT partners. We are less enthusiastic about job-swaps and shadowing, for the reasons that our UKOT partners point out how impractical this is given their staffing levels; key personnel generally have no back-up. We think that there is more prospect in the use of experienced volunteers and donated secondments, areas which UKOTCF and its members are currently exploring and piloting.</p> |
| 3.3 (b) | <p><i>Achieving OT stakeholder agreement on how to implement Environment Charters.</i> If the OTs have limited capacities, as a minimum they need to agree</p>   | <p>The desirability of having national stakeholder groups, convened by national focal points, has always been central to the OTEP approach. The Programme Memorandum (in para 4.1.11) called</p>   | <p>UKOTCF concurs, with some puzzlement, as it has played a facilitating role in helping some UKOTs to implement this approach. If the recommendation means that more is needed, that is clearly the case. UKOTCF did, some years ago, propose an approach</p>   |

| Rec No  | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|---------|---|---|---|
|         | <p>their environmental priorities so they do not waste effort on less important issues. Ideally they would also work to 'create a vision to offset the dominant crude models of development' – which is an overriding need according to one very senior OT informant. Thus OTEP should consider supporting a multi-stakeholder <i>Environment Charter Forum</i> in each OT (or similar environmental leadership groups, learning groups, or shared facilities) as well as their coordinators.<sup>1</sup></p> | <p>these <i>national steering committees</i> and it was envisaged that they would assist in defining priorities for raising awareness, building capacity and training, as well as in prioritising and coordinating specific project proposals to OTEP (and others potential funders). These groups would comprise a range of environmental and other professionals from OT governments and NGOs. It was felt that, wherever possible, advantage should be taken of existing institutional structures rather than the creation of new ones. Such groups do exist, and operate effectively in several territories, as evidenced by the coordinated approach those territories adopt when submitting applications to OTEP. We would be pleased to assist and support the establishment of more such groups, where desired by the territories. We also note that not all territories make use of the Environment Charters as intended, and that, nearly five years on from the time when they were signed, they are becoming neglected in some territories. We will consider whether a rededication to the Charter principles by OT political directorates might now be timely, perhaps at this year's Overseas Territories Consultative Council.</p> | <p>which would help extend this to other UKOTs, but it did not find favour with HMG at that time. UKOTCF agrees that HMG could do more to encourage a higher degree of implementation of the Environment Charters in the UKOTs, but that will require high-level commitment – and continuity of this – in HMG as well as in the governments of UKOTs. Meanwhile, UKOTCF continues to encourage and assist implementation where it can, and is also attempting to develop ways of monitoring progress (see below).</p> |
| 3.3 (c) | <p><i>Supporting any overriding priority that has been agreed within an OT. A mechanism</i></p>   | <p>We agree in principle with this recommendation, provided that it is consistent with other recommendations</p>  | <p>We concur with the recommendation as amplified by the response, provided of course that such a group within a UKOT is clearly drawn from across the</p>  |

<sup>1</sup> Staff Officers could also have a role in facilitating such groups.

| Rec No     | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|------------|---|---|---|
|            | might be developed to favour applications that have gained clear multi-stakeholder backing through e.g. a Charter Forum (as above).   | for prioritisation and sharper programme focus. It raises again the issue of how best to balance proactive approaches on the part of OTEP with the demands of the territories, while maintaining a fair and equitable distribution of resources among the territories. As part of our response to those approaches and procedures highlighted for our attention in this review, we will consider how best to resolve this issue.  | stakeholders and not dominated by an official view or particular lobby.   |
| <b>3.4</b> | <b>International engagement – raising the profile of OTEP</b>   |   |   |
| 3.4 (a)    | <p><i>Ensure OTEP makes an increasingly major contribution to global environmental services – particularly for biodiversity.</i></p> <p>OTEP has the potential to offer far more than a set of small, unrelated conservation projects. In part this will mean the secretariat engaging with the multilateral conventions on biodiversity, climate change, etc, accessing internationally significant environmental information and intelligence on funding, and enabling OTs to engage with global initiatives. It may also mean inviting the scrutiny and gaining the recognition of global institutions such as IUCN and WWF.</p> | <p>Given the recommendation made in para 3.1(c) above that local biodiversity conservation content of OTEP should be scaled down, we may have some difficulty in reconciling the objectives of this recommendation which promotes even more attention to biodiversity albeit at a global level. We agree that this is a worthy aim, but it is one that would require the OTEP secretariat to take on considerable additional work, for which it is not resourced. We will, however, explore possibilities for deepening our relationships with other institutions, as suggested (and including the Joint Nature Conservation Committee), particularly in the matter of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements.</p> | <p>UKOTCF supports the view that OTEP make an increasingly major contribution to global environmental services, particularly biodiversity. We have argued elsewhere that HMG's contribution in this area is extremely inadequate, and needs a separate fund for major programmes, as exists within domestic UK. However, we have noted that, for small projects, OTEP is extremely effective for those it can afford to resource, largely because of the huge complementary volunteer effort that these leverage. It is important to build on this success. Many OTEP projects extend from this base in biodiversity conservation into other areas such as sustainable development, education and capacity building. Success in these difficult areas is more likely to be achieved by building on this base than by moving away from it.</p> <p>UKOTCF has put considerable amounts of unpaid effort into helping UKOTs relate to, join, and make use of multilateral conventions, and will continue to do so. However, if the recommendations mean that the OTEP secretariat should deal more with the secretariats of such conventions, we do not agree.</p> |

| Rec No     | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|------------|--|---|---|
|            |  |   | There is likely to be little value added here to the links already made by other HMG colleagues and by UKOTCF. OTEP secretariat time would be better focused on the UKOTs.  |
| 3.4 (b)    | <i>Improve efforts to reduce OTs' isolation from other OTs and from key non-OT neighbours and peers, where this is relevant to the theme at hand (e.g. supporting initiatives that link OTs with the OECS or similar, and with SIDS).</i>  | We agree, in principle, with this recommendation, while recognising that it is (or should be) easier for the Caribbean territories to communicate effectively among themselves and with neighbouring independent states. OT members of Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States are already formally linked. The Atlantic territories, although individually more geographically isolated, seem to maintain effective professional networks.  | UKOTCF concurs with the principle and notes that it has been, and continues as, the facilitator of many such contacts. It is proud to have been commended by both governmental and NGO colleagues in UKOTs for this work, and for helping to establish some of the first links between UKOTs in the environmental field, both for official and voluntary partners (in many cases also helping regional links). UKOTCF looks forward to further support for such work. |
| <b>3.5</b> | <b>Further improving OTEP's management – options to consider</b><br><br>Section 2.6 gives rise to some more specific management suggestions:   |   |   |
| 3.5 (a)    | <i>Capacity support: We propose supporting permanent salaries for positions that can be demonstrated as absolutely key in Environment Charter implementation (such as a coordinator). One option would be to fund positions on a sliding scale, reducing over time, as operated by the Good Government Fund.</i> | As a matter of policy (and because of resource constraints) OTEP does not support permanent salaried positions such as Environmental Coordinators. It is our view that if governments in the territories are sufficiently committed to their Environment Charters, they should support such positions from their own resources, as indeed some already do. We will, however, continue to provide short-term technical assistance where appropriate (either through projects, or otherwise), and will use our best endeavours to source expertise from | UKOTCF agrees with the Secretariat response, although it notes the potential value of not excluding automatically projects which offer initial (and declining) contributions to start-up salaries of environment charter co-ordinators, provided that the UKOT government commits itself to the long-term maintenance of the post, beyond the OTEP contribution.  |

| Rec No  | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|---------|--|---|---|
|         |  | other agencies or charities.  |   |
| 3.5 (b) | <i>Communication: We propose a more active communication with development stakeholders through the Governors' offices and DFID, OT media, and the FCO's Good Government and Economic Diversification mailing lists.</i>      | While not disagreeing with the general point made that we should always strive to improve communication, it should be noted that the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) are currently contracted by OTEP to provide this service. As the UKOTCF website is the natural first point of reference for conservation issues in the UK Overseas Territories, it may be that it could be more widely linked; we will explore this possibility. | UKOTCF supports any wider dissemination, provided this does not detract from resources needed for implementation. We continue to review our web-site (which has been undergoing recent revision, although that will not be apparent until the revision goes live). The hosting of the OTEP web-site gives the latter many cost benefits as well as sitting within the most accessed site in this subject-area. UKOTCF is exploring with OTEP secretariat several specific points.   |
| 3.5 (c) | <i>Proposal form: We propose one slightly shorter, more concise proposal form, plus promotion of the facility to contact FCO/DFID informally beforehand. Suggested amendments to the proposal form are noted at Annex 3.</i> | We agree that streamlining the application form would be beneficial and will attend to this using the helpful suggestions provided. We also intend to place a limit on the number of words that can be used in certain of the boxes. We will also consider, as we revisit the balance between demand-led and OTEP-led approaches, adopting a two-stage application process in future bidding rounds.  | UKOTCF considers that the question of the form is best addressed after higher level issues, such as the pro-active/re-active balance are addressed. We consider that it is premature to consider a two-stage process until this fundamental point is addressed. UKOTCF agrees strongly that the form be simplified – to the benefit of both applicants and assessors. UKOTCF will comment further on this once the higher level questions have been addressed. UKOTCF does not agree with limiting the number of words in certain boxes; this generally creates more complications for applicants than it addresses; it is important that OTEP utilises the experience of those who make applications and manage projects in finalising the form. |
| 3.5 (d) | <i>Proposal assessment: We propose further enrichment of the Assessment Panel with economics, development and 'brown/blue' environment skills. We encourage Governors' offices to provide more complete advice</i>           | We believe that the panel composition in the first two rounds of OTEP broadly reflected the subject matter of the applications received. Blue environmental issues have been adequately covered to date. We agree with the recommendation that the addition of an external panel  | As noted earlier, UKOTCF regrets the use of these ambiguous colour terms, which confuse the meaning. Assuming that we have guessed the meaning correctly, UKOTCF concurs in general with the OTEP response.   |

| Rec No  | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response  | UKOTCF Comment   |
|---------|--|--|--|
|         | on proposals.  | member with expertise on sustainable development might be appropriate. Governors' Offices have limited capacity, and not all are necessarily well placed to contribute more than they do. But we have had some excellent insights from some Governors' (or equivalent) offices which would not otherwise have been available.  |  |
| 3.5 (e) | <i>UK institutional involvement: We propose that OTEP puts in place checks and balances to ensure there is no token involvement of OTs in UK-led regional or OT-wide projects. Furthermore, that feedback on the utility of UK institutional roles in OTEP projects is sought from the OTs.</i>            | OTEP already has checks and balances to reduce the risk of token involvement of OTs in projects inspired by UK institutions (eg questions on application form, opportunity for Governors' Offices to comment). This review has, however, revealed at least one example of a cross-territory project in which some participating territories felt that the UK lead institution could have involved them more and kept them better informed. We have not, however, received any complaints from territories to this effect and are not aware that there has been any neglect amounting to tokenism. We will nevertheless keep this point in view for the future. | A fundamental basis of UKOTCF's approach is that the need for work should be UKOT-led. We concur with the OTEP response in that we consider good checks are generally in place and that continued vigilance is necessary. We agree with the response that additional procedures are unnecessary, and could compete with the resources available for real projects, which are the core of OTEP's success.   |
| 3.5 (f) | <i>Outsourcing: We propose that any out-sourced central OTEP services, such as communications and a regular OT-wide forum, should: (a) be run as distinct OTEP activities with their own clear objectives, irrespective of who has the contract to run them; and (b) that the contractor does not face</i> | We infer from this recommendation that the reviewers had some concerns about the institutional relationship between the UKOTCF and OTEP, particularly in the context of the contract awarded by OTEP to the UKOTCF for the management of the OTEP Communications Strategy. It seems to be implied that the objectives of the two entities are at risk of becoming muddled and that OTEP publicity should   | UKOTCF notes the implication in the recommendation, helpfully detected in the OTEP secretariat response. UKOTCF considers that this implication, which appears to underlie some other comments, reveals a fundamental flaw in the review. The reviewer appears to view UKOTCF as some sort of external body to OTEP. The reviewer implies that HMG, the UKOTs, UKOTCF, its member organisations in the UKOTs, and those in the UK are operating in some sort of commercial relationship, or in the near- |

| Rec No | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response  | UKOTCF Comment   |
|--------|--|--|--|
|        | <p>any incompatible incentives to apply for OTEP competitive grants.</p> | <p>not be subsumed into UKOTCF activity. At the outset, there were strong arguments in favour of placing OTEP information material and data on to a single website, and as noted above, the UKOTCF website has become the focal reference point for conservation and associated information on the Overseas Territories. It was our view at the time that the UKOTCF would welcome additional resources to further expand its database and increase its utility even further. The contract was awarded with very clear objectives and we are not aware that the contractual relationship has compromised the UKOTCF's ability to carry out its role as a campaigning NGO. In view of the comments made, however, on outsourcing OTEP services, we will revisit, with the UKOTCF, the state of our current relationship and make any necessary adjustments accordingly, once current contractual commitments have been completed.</p> | <p>commercial bidding situation of research institutes and the Darwin Initiative. This is at variance with reality.</p> <p>UKOTCF is itself a non-profit charity. It is a partnership, its members being most of the NGOs active in conservation in the UKOTs, both those based in the UKOTs and those others supporting them. It also brings into its network many of the governmental actors in UKOTs, HMG departments and many active and experienced individuals, generally working voluntarily in support of conservation efforts in the UKOTs.</p> <p>UKOTCF has long considered itself a partner with HMG in OTEP and its forerunners. Before 1999, UKOTCF worked with FCO colleagues both to identify jointly with UKOT partners the needs for resourcing and to help deliver it, both from the very limited FCO budget and from UKOTCF's NGO members. UKOTCF also worked with FCO colleagues to secure from 1999 the first ring-fenced funding in this area, the Environment Fund for Overseas Territories. UKOTCF worked closely with FCO on the operation of EFOT, including a strong proactive element, noted earlier. UKOTCF has tried to bring to OTEP its continuing contribution of its unrivalled network of expertise in this subject area as well as the contributions of both human resources and funds from itself and its member organisations, although this has been more difficult in the more formalised and reactive mode into which OTEP has found itself constrained.</p> <p>UKOTCF considers that it would be ludicrous to attempt to impose an independent contractor model on this situation, which (1) has worked better in a collaborative pro-active mode, (2) has a non-profit network bringing together most of those with relevant expertise, and (3) lacks other consultant</p> |

| Rec No  | Recommendation   | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment   |
|---------|--|---|--|
|         |  |   | bodies with relevant expertise. It is questionable whether it would be possible to run OTEP effectively without UKOTCF and its network of member organisations. It would certainly be difficult for many of the UKOT partners to work without the involvement of UKOTCF and its member bodies. With regard to independence, UKOTCF does not normally regard itself as a campaigning body, except as a matter of last resort. By coincidence, two such rare issues arose during the course of the review process. In common with other mature governmental or NGO bodies, UKOTCF does not find it difficult to keep its stance on the few issues of disagreement separate from the large areas of common working. |
| 3.5 (g) | <i>On-call technical advice: We propose that the OTEP secretariat should explore possible sources of technical advice within FCO, DFID and elsewhere in order to 'fill the gap' between very occasional (perhaps once-per-project) field visits and full-time (UK) technical partners.</i> | In short, this is what happens. Both FCO and DFID seek technical advice as required from relevant specialists at, for example, JNCC, Defra, RBG Kew, ZSL etc.   | UKOTCF considers that this is another case where the Review misunderstands the partnership arrangement between HMG and UKOTCF in promoting OTEP. It is surprising – and rather ill-informed – for the review not to make reference to this. UKOTCF concurs with the OTEP Secretariat response, which mentions some of UKOTCF's member organisations.   |
| 3.5 (h) | <i>Reporting by OTEP projects: We propose a simple 'traffic light' system for quarterly reports.<sup>2</sup> We also propose a short mandatory final report, illustrated with photos and other evidence, in a form suitable for generating 'OTEP News'. Clarity must be</i>                | We agree with all these points. A final report format is now being developed to replace the <i>ad hoc</i> arrangements formerly in place. Monitoring and follow-up is undertaken to the extent possible given OTEP's limited staff resources. | UKOTCF concurs with most points. There seems to be an implication from the reviewer that he is dissatisfied with the route of an OTEP section of <i>Forum News</i> , without indicating why. It is open to OTEP to generate a separate editorial and circulation function, although this seems to UKOTCF a mis-use of public funds and counter to the partnership approach. As advised to the reviewer (but not noted  |

<sup>2</sup> For example, 'Green' signifies progress to schedule, with a very short note of any key achievements. 'Amber' warns of possible delay or constraint, with a short note explaining its nature and severity. 'Red' is a major blockage requiring mandatory action by both the project manager and OTEP.

| Rec No  | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|---------|---|---|---|
|         | <p>offered on what key outputs to submit, and how to communicate key lessons. Finally, there should be a more systematic follow-up to projects, inquiring as to use of the outputs.</p>   |   | <p>in his report), UKOTCF proposed to OTEP that it chase project outputs from project managers and include them in the web-site. This is in progress, but subject to delays because this was not specified in original OTEP contracts with individual project managers.</p>                               |
| 3.5 (i) | <p><i>Other funding sources: We propose that OTEP advises key UK, EU, US and international funding sources of OTEP objectives and potentials, and reports to them on OTEP project achievements. OTEP should, in turn, inform both Staff Officers and OTEP project implementers of the range of other international funds available. The FCO's Good Government and Economic Diversification Funds should aim to identify and support environmental governance needs and sustainable use potentials respectively.</i></p> | <p>Now that a number of OTEP projects are nearing (or have reached) completion, we agree that success stories and lessons learned should be disseminated more widely. It should be recognised, however, that a number of project implementers – particularly those, such as the RSPB, who have their own sophisticated publicity mechanisms – will be doing this of their own accord. The recommendation opposite implies that there is a range of international funds available for the OTs to access, whereas our experience suggests the opposite, ie that the OTs are generally denied access as a consequence of their constitutional relationship with the UK. In view of the comment made, however, we intend to respond by commissioning a short study to identify any sources of funding for environmental projects for which the OTs would be eligible. The FCO's GGF and EDPB are already used as a complement to OTEP, and those territories in receipt of bilateral development assistance from DFID also benefit from sustainable development projects funded through that route.</p> | <p>UKOTCF notes that the Review seems in this area also to be poorly informed of previous and current efforts, and seems to assume that OTEP is the only agency active in this area (as opposed to the only regular source of funding). UKOTCF concurs in general with the OTEP secretariat response.</p> |
| 3.5 (j) | <p><i>Other Government Department roles: We propose that Defra be</i></p>   | <p>We agree with the recommendation that progress against the Environment</p>   | <p>UKOTCF fails to understand the logic underlying much of this recommendation. The Environment</p>   |

| Rec No  | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response  | UKOTCF Comment   |
|---------|---|--|--|
|         | <p>requested to consider a lead involvement in reviewing progress in the Environment Charters (both OT and HMG commitments), perhaps through the JNCC. We further propose that the case for larger or more routine funding from HMG is explored, particularly for capacity development, in which the Environment Agency would be well-placed to play a technical role: a submission to the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Working Group on Biodiversity should be considered.</p> | <p>Charters should be reviewed and we would support the suggestion that the JNCC involvement might be useful. But we are also aware that the UKOTCF has already started to develop some indicators to help map progress with Charter implementation. We will explore with both parties (and possibly others) how this exercise might best be taken forward. The matter of longer-term and more substantial HMG funding for biodiversity conservation and environmental management in the territories is one that has been raised by NGOs at the regular six-monthly meetings between the UKOTCF and representatives of HMG departments. We understand that the UKOTCF may be considering an approach to ministers.</p> | <p>Charter progress should clearly be reviewed. UKOTCF had advised the reviewer that a mechanism for this was being developed, and is surprised that this fact was not mentioned in the review. UKOTCF notes that review of progress in the charters by a department or agency of HMG would not be considered appropriate by many UKOTs, because that would constitute a review by one party of implementation by the other party and by itself. UKOTCF is not a party to the charters, and has sought to be supportive to both parties. Its independent approach to this process has been welcomed by several UKOTs, and HMG's statutory advisors, JNCC, have commented favourably on the preliminary draft structure with part of the contents, published in <i>Forum News 28</i> (February 2006). UKOTCF does not see the benefit in attempting to deploy English/Welsh or other domestic GB/NI governmental agencies with no experience in this area, especially given the training costs that would be involved. In respect of resourcing, UKOTCF has indeed raised with ministers and departments the need for a separate fund for major programmes, which would need to be at least an order of magnitude larger than OTEP if UK is to have any chance of meeting its international biodiversity commitments (in addition to any others). UKOTCF will continue to do so, but also stresses that this need should not divert OTEP from continuing its important small project work. It would be unrealistic to expect OTEP to expand to address this need.</p> |
| 3.5 (k) | <p><i>Strategic overview of OTEP: We propose that DFID and FCO build on their very effective collaboration by focusing more on maintaining a joint strategic</i></p>  | <p>We agree. Now that we have two full years of operational experience with the implementation of OTEP, the secretariat is better placed to determine priorities for the application of its limited resources to</p>   | <p>UKOTCF welcomes this general approach, but notes that it suffers from the major failing of this review, lack of understanding of UKOTCF's role in the partnership. Apart from this being gratuitously insulting to UKOTCF, it also represents a danger to</p>   |

| Rec No | Recommendation  | DFID/FCO Response   | UKOTCF Comment  |
|--------|---|---|---|
|        | <p>overview of OTEP, largely through improved monitoring that builds on the current Review. OTEP might organise a 'lean' annual review that addresses (a) Environment Charter progress, (b) progress in a <i>sample</i> of OTEP projects – covering process, outcomes and impacts, and (c) the cross-project composition at Programme level. For both deeper and broader reflection, a (triennial) OTEP programme conference might be considered.</p> | <p>monitoring and evaluation. This report provides a good basis for instituting a regular joint strategic overview process at the programme level and we now have a better feel for what is practicable by way of monitoring of individual projects in the field. It is clear from the report that more frequent field visits of a technical advisory nature would also be welcomed by several implementers. We will therefore make every effort to increase the frequency of field visits to reasonable accessible territories, both for monitoring and for advisory support purposes.</p> | <p>the success of OTEP. UKOTCF would prefer to remain as a partner in this venture, and would prefer a restoration to the closer partnership which was previously so helpful to a proactive approach in fore-runner programmes.</p> <p>UKOTCF also regrets the reviewer's final comments which again tend to isolate OTEP from other environment work in UKOTs. This is particularly surprising in view of positive comments from the reviewer about the triennial conferences organised by UKOTCF (the most recent noted by one senior FCO official as the best conference on any topic that he had ever attended). UKOTCF has ensured that Environment Charters played a key role in each conference, and the most recent conference undoubtedly played a key role in securing part of the funding that became OTEP. To generate a triennial conference devoted solely to OTEP would effectively prevent any more of these successful conferences. UKOTCF is surprised that the review should make such a recommendation without noting these undesirable consequences.</p> |