



## Sustaining Partnerships: a conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities

Gibraltar  
11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Organised by:

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and HM Government of Gibraltar Department of Environment, with the support of Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society

### Conference recommendations to UK Government

The full set of conference conclusions and recommendations are at:

<http://www.ukotcf.org/pdf/2015conf/SustainingPartnerships2015Concl&Rec.pdf>. Here are reproduced those directed to UK Government. For more context, see the full document. Because this document is an extract of that, the numbering here includes gaps.

It is important to note that not all conclusions and recommendations will apply to every territory. They all differ and any kind of “one-size-fits-all” approach would be unlikely to be successful.

The conclusions and recommendations have been grouped into sections, some fairly closely related to the conference sessions, but others cutting across several. The categories of organisations to which recommendations are directed are indicated in bold italics in the text or after it. The session(s) in which the conclusion or recommendation arose is indicated by the session number(s), as indicated in the programme.

#### C. Environmental Education and Awareness

##### **C2. Resources and funding opportunities**

013. *UK Government* should end urgently its 5-year block on grant-funding for environmental education and awareness for the UKOTs. (We recognise that consultants are expensive, but NGOs, like UKOTCF doing this work with local partners, are good value for money.) (To: *UK Government*) (13)

##### **C5. Other public awareness raising actions (including field trips, outdoor classrooms, exhibitions and open days)**

037. Communicate regularly with stakeholders. (To: *NGOs, UKOT/CD Government Departments of Environment and Education, Project designers and managers, Governors' Offices*) (13)

#### D. Renewable Energy

051. Capacity building, including ensuring that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward (10)
052. Assistance with policy and development of an enabling regulatory framework (10)
053. Technical expertise and support – providing feasibility studies, grid integration studies, thereby de-risking projects for the market (10)

- 054. Business advisory services – developing the go-to-market strategy for projects (10)
- 055. Communications and marketing, noting the points at 051 (10)
- 056. A possible role in progressing the economic viability of other technologies such as Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) (10)
- 057. DECC should follow up on the post-JMC Renewable Technologies workshop, with a view to developing renewable roadmaps for all interested UKOTs/CDs. (10)

## E. International agreements

- 084. It is recommended that the **UK Government** promotes the value of the Environmental Charters especially in relation to the MEAs and continues to support monitoring of progress, such as that in progress by UKOTCF, but also links the commitments to CBD monitoring and achievement of the Aichi targets (as the current UKOTCF exercise incorporates). (4)

## F. Using informed decision making to manage development sustainably, including Environmental Impact Assessments

### F1. Legal Status of Environmental Impact Assessments, and of Environment Charters

- 091. Fulfil UK's Environment Charter Commitments 2, 5 and 11, under which *the UK Government* must assist the UKOTs to review and update their environmental legislation, institutional capacity and mechanisms (including regulations and policies) to reflect the mandatory components of the Charters, including EIA as well as the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. (12)
- 092. Fulfil UK's Environment Charter Commitment 7, under which *the UK Government* must give technical assistance to enable (amongst other things) the *UKOT governments* to (a) establish best practice EIA protocols and (b) assess EIAs submitted by proposed developers. (12)
- 100. *UKOT Ministers*, while recognising the commitments of their own governments under the Environment Charters (agreed with the UK Government in 2001), should continue to press the *UK Government* to fulfil its commitments under the Charters, including in relation to:
  - Technical assistance, especially regarding technical and scientific issues like renewable energy, fulfilling commitments numbers 1, 5 and especially 7;
  - Use 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.
  - Assistance with updating environmental legislation, fulfilling commitments 2 and 5
  - A ring-fenced fund to support 'projects of lasting benefit to the Territories' environments' (commitment 8). (This is worth a note. When the Charters were written in 1999, environmental projects in the UKOTs were funded by the FCO Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, so the treaty referred to that fund. By the time we met in Bermuda in 2003 that fund had been cancelled, to universal consternation. So, as a result of the Forum conference in 2003 in Bermuda, the Overseas Territories Environment Programme was started, with funds from FCO and DFID. This fund provided an accessible, ring-fenced fund for projects in the UKOTs, was managed initially through an open process through in which experienced NGOs and local Governors' offices played an important role, involved a level of bureaucracy that was suited to the UKOTs and provided funding for small-scale projects which were manageable by individual UKOTs. This was cancelled unilaterally by FCO in 2011 and replaced, after a year without a fund, by Darwin Plus (Defra/FCO/DFID), whose decision-making process is less open.)
  - Facilitating Territories' inclusion and compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (commitments (3 and 4).
  - Promoting cooperation and sharing of experience/expertise among the Territories (including by helping to fund regular UKOTCF conferences like that hosted by Gibraltar in July 2015) (commitment 6: to '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.') This is why UK Government should continue to fund conferences of this sort. (12)

101. **UKOT governments** should implement their commitment to ensure that future development plans must provide for mandatory EIA as required by the Environment Charters and general international law. In accordance with Environment Charter Commitment 2, the **UK government** must assist the UKOTs to review and update environmental legislation to be consistent with general international law. (12)
102. With respect to the particular challenges of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the **UK and UKOT governments** should draw upon, second or otherwise leverage the technical and broad SIDS expertise of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UNEP and other multi-lateral institutions in accordance with Environment Charter Commitments 4, 5, 6 and 7. (12)

#### **F4. Importance of a model for sustainable development planning**

118. **UK Government** should fund the development of a model that addresses the needs of UKOTs for sustainable development planning. This is urgently needed if biodiversity and ecosystem losses are to be slowed. Such a model should be inexpensive, easy to implement and readily accessible to decision makers of all technical capacities. (12)

#### **F5. Role of Civil Society**

121. **Managers** must develop creative ways to engage the public, and to make complex technical information accessible to both the public and decision makers. (12)
124. Organisations that bring together UKOT and CD representatives and member organisations and individuals could help with informed decision making by sharing case studies of good and bad practice, and **UK & UKOT Governments and other funding bodies** should resource this. (12)

#### **F6. UK Government should address its priorities:**

125. The key to sustainability is in ensuring that development in UKOTs is appropriate to a country's needs, while maintaining the ecosystem services on which economic growth depends. This cannot be accomplished without adequate development planning, based on environmental variables and followed up with a rigorous environmental impact process. Given this reality, the **UK Government** should prioritise assisting UKOTs with developing strategic sustainable development plans and devising effective environmental impact assessment and other planning processes. An audit of existing policies for all UKOTs would provide a starting point for this, which could be followed up with assistance for filling gaps. This would lead to a much more effective use for Darwin Plus funds than the current basis on which funds are currently allocated, which has been described by reasonable people as piecemeal and unintelligible. (12)

### **G. Stakeholder and User Stewardship**

136. A model of a systematic approach for engaging the community in stakeholder stewardship is being devised, e.g. with TCI's Community Conservation Partner Program and UKOTCF; however, initial funding is needed to establish project protocols, procedures, legislative framework and training for all participants. Once developed, this model can be applied across territories. Funding could be provided by **UK or UKOT governments or other funding agencies**. (7)
138. Anguilla's Constitution gives significant rights to land-use, which brings frequent legal challenges by stakeholders in relation to what and how they can use their registered land. This can be detrimental, economically and socially, but on the other hand it can be beneficial. UKOTs' Constitutions should be amended to ensure that environmental management and conservation of ecosystems and their services are enshrined in their Constitution. Furthermore, it should be the Constitutional Right of Nationals to ensure that this happens. Hence, the Nationals will be held accountable for their practices on each parcel of land. (To: **UKOT and UK Governments**) (7)

### **I. Economic and Intrinsic Value of Sustainable Use**

163. Economic and intrinsic valuation can and should inform the development of what some territories term National Sustainable Development Plans (but note that such terms may have different meanings in different places); however, such valuation is costly. A gap analysis of where such information is needed in UKOTs would be a good subject for Darwin Plus funding. (To: **UK Government**) (7)

164. Gap analyses, economic valuation and sustainable national physical development planning (noting again that precise terminology may vary between different territories) are primary components of sustainability and should be prioritised by the UK Government for funding purposes. (To: **UK Government**) (7)
165. One way to get Governments to address actively issues of environmental degradation is by having stakeholders being the advocates for the change in commonly used practices. For example, the loaning regime now being implemented by the World Bank, through its lending agencies such as the Caribbean Development Bank, requires the governments/countries to have in place key policies/legislation focused on the environment and factoring in some element of climate change. This is a condition under which a loan is given. The **UK Government** could institute similar conditions, but such conditions should be coupled with economic and technical assistance where needed. (7)
167. NGOs, such as UKOTCF should be resourced so as to be able to continue to play the role of sharing positive outcomes, new methods and lessons learned among territories. (To: **UK Government and other funding bodies**) (7)

## J. Invasive species

193. Promote prioritising system(s) to determine which islands or areas across territories have the highest priority for eradication as this is of strategic importance to determining the allocation of limited resources to achieve maximum conservation benefit. (**NGOs, UK Government & other funding bodies**) (4)
195. Secure funding to conduct eradication/control of invasive species that are impacting on key biodiversity sites and endangered species, and to develop/enhance capacity in the UKOTs to manage such invasive species. (**UK Government and other funding bodies**). (4)

## K. Biodiversity data

201. Development of biological indicators to measure progress. The UK indicators tend to focus on certain groups (farmland and woodland birds, bats and butterflies) where there are well defined monitoring schemes, but historically 'BAP reporting' used a slightly more subjective 'expert view' approach to assess the priority species. A basket of key species and/ or habitats could be selected and trends measured using various surveillance approaches. An example of such surveillance is remote sensing. Assessment of whether trend analysis would be useful and, being really ambitious, 'target statuses' could be set for a range of species against which progress could be assessed. **UK and UKOT Governments and NGOs** need to discuss and research what could be considered achievable short term, and what might be needed to develop more ambitious approaches could be instructive. (4)
202. It is recommended that territories' data are shared with UK, regional and global databases, particularly in relation to the highest priority species such as endemics. (**UKOT and other Governments, NGOs, other researchers**) (4)
205. Under the UN Law of the Sea, UKOTs/CDs are entitled to access data collected within their EEZs and **UKOT governments** should establish the necessary mechanisms for accessing this data with the UK Government. **UK Government** should provide guidance/advice as to how international legislation (e.g. UNCLOS) may provide UKOTs with access to scientific data within their EEZs. (8)

## L. Other aspects of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources

217. Recognition by international bodies of often limited resources in the UKOTs/CDs is critical, and the need for the **UK Government and international institutions** to engage in full dialogue with UKOT governments and NGOs to understand priority issues and align research with the specific environmental needs of the territories is essential. UKOTs/CDs to develop catalogue of data needs and disseminate (**through UKOTCF**). (8)
218. The socio-economic vulnerabilities of small island communities need to be understood, and responsibility for ensuring full stakeholder consultation in the management of the shared marine resources must be taken by **UK and UKOT Governments** (i.e. a transparent 'EIA' approach should

be adopted when seeking to implement significant conservation measures to ensure environmental and socio-economic impacts are widely understood and assessed). (8)

221. **UKOT/CD Governments** should strengthen/share with other UKOTs contingency planning (with support from the **UK Government** where relevant with regards to international relations) for major marine incidents. (8)
222. **UK and UKOT Governments**, supported by NGOs and others, should continue to explore ways of strengthening surveillance of illegal fishing activities for resource-poor UKOTs, investigating a range of methods, such as satellite-tracking, use of UK Government naval or other resources etc. (8)

## M. Capacity and resource issues

249. A greater understanding of the role of organisations like UKOTCF should be shared. **Funding bodies** need a better understanding of UKOTs and conservation challenges there, and the facilitation and assistance roles that some governmental and NGO bodies in the UKOTs look to in locally experienced umbrella conservation bodies. (4)
252. The Conference acknowledged the importance of continued funding for research, education and implementation of conservation measures for the environment of the UK Overseas Territories. Difficulties of access to UK and EU funding streams were highlighted as there are restrictions because of the constitutional position of both funders and the Territories. Specific Overseas Territory funding was therefore particularly supported by the Conference. (To **UK Government, EU, other funding bodies**) (11)
253. Concern was expressed widely at the conference that the recent June 2015 launch of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Darwin Initiative for developing countries had not been complemented by the launch of the next round of the UK Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus). The persons expressing this concern asked that letters be sent to Ministers of Defra, DFID and FCO on this point, noting that the £2m fund enables Overseas Territories Governments, local NGOs and UK Institutions to work together and deliver concrete results for the internationally important environments of the Territories, which hold 94% of the globally threatened species for which the UK is responsible; and that the constitutional position of the UK Overseas Territories makes funding in these areas exceptionally hard to obtain. If this fund is not available, crucial environmental projects will have no obvious funding stream. Funding from UK Government in this way is a commitment by UK Government to meet international requirements. (**UK Government**) (11)
254. It is recommended that biodiversity and its ecosystem services are included in national accounting systems to ensure biodiversity is fully valued for the long term benefit of the territories. (**UKOT/CD Governments**, with support from **UK Government**) (4)
255. A checklist of environmental infrastructure (e.g. sustainable physical development plan, habitat and ecosystem services mapping, legislative framework, etc.) should be developed for each UKOT. Rather than allocating scarce funding resources on a “winner takes all” basis, UKOTs can advocate allocation of funding where it is most needed. In some cases, this will be UKOT governments (which will anyway be involved re permits etc.), but in other places, funding will be better allocated to NGOs that can work among and between governments effectively. (To: **UK and UKOT Governments and other Funding Bodies**) (7)
258. The Sustaining Partnerships Conference itself provides an important format for the exchange of ideas and the development of future collaborations, Mr Victor Brownlees, Alderney’s Chief Executive, noting “Knowledge is at its most powerful when shared.” All conference delegates were encouraged to focus on the development of future projects during and following the event. (**Conference participants**) (11 & 15)