

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.



Bermuda's endemic Cahow was once thought to be extinct, but is now the subject of a recovery programme and the population is growing steadily.

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'.



Bermuda's endemic Skink is endangered.



THE BERMUDA ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

A Partnership for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Bermuda'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. Bermuda was Britain's first colony and is today the most populous UKOT. Yet it supports over 8,000 plant and animal species. 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, including some 250 in Bermuda alone. As well as the better known cahow, the Bermuda cedar and other large organisms, Bermuda's caves are centres of high endemism of small creatures such as the shrimp shown below. Under international treaties, it is the joint responsibility of the UK Government and the Government of Bermuda to care for this precious biodiversity.



Bermuda's endemic Cedar tree was nearly wiped out in the 1940s by an invasive scale insect, but decades of planting schemes have greatly increased the population since then.

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; Bermuda's Charter was signed by the UK Minister for the Overseas Territories and by the then-Premier Jennifer Smith 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 Bermuda in respect of integrating environmental conservation into all sectors of policy planning and implementation. Bermuda'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. The Bermuda Biodiversity Project, conducted at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo, covers much of the ground that such a strategy requires.



Environment Charter

BERMUDA



Guiding Principles

For the UK Government, for the government of Bermuda and for the people of Bermuda

- 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.

Jennifer Smith

BERMUDA

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 Bermuda's own plans for sustainable development.
- 2 Assist Bermuda in initiating, reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
- 3 Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to Bermuda and which Bermuda has the capacity to implement.
- 4 Keep Bermuda informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite Bermuda to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
- 5 Help Bermuda 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 Bermuda, 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 Bermuda's environment.
- 9 Help Bermuda 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 Bermuda 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 Bermuda 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 Bermuda; promote within Bermuda 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.