



Meeting 1

JNCC-NGO Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Group

8th January 2014

To find more about JNCC's OT and CD programme visit:
<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4079>

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Founded in 1986, the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) promotes biodiversity conservation in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) by *inter alia* supporting: capacity building; strategic planning; deployment of specialist volunteers; developing and managing conservation and education projects with local partners; sharing ideas and experiences; and providing advice to decision makers.

UKOTCF is a federation of organisations and other supporters. Our wide membership includes 33 organisations, mostly based in the UKOTs with some supporting ones in the UK, together with a wider network of experts and other volunteers.

Our priority approaches are:

1. To help local people form conservation NGOs where one did not already exist - some of our present partner organisations result from this.
2. To help these bodies (and often too the small local governmental conservation agency) build capacity to run themselves.
3. To help local bodies determine conservation priorities, design projects and other means to address these, help secure funding and other resources, and help manage such projects, adjusting the level of input to the developing capacity of local partners.
4. To raise awareness in Britain and elsewhere (especially amongst decision-makers and the conservation community) of the territories, their global importance for nature and for Britain's cultural heritage, and UK's shared responsibility for them.

The first two approaches are now largely achieved (although occasionally further help is needed and provided) and most of our efforts are now devoted to our third and fourth priorities achieved through single- and cross-territory projects and sharing common challenges and opportunities.

Our liaison work over more than 20 years, has included:

- Organising and chairing twice-yearly meetings between NGOs, UK Government and UKOT Governments, which were effective in co-ordinating efforts and eventually lead to the greater interest in UKOTs & CDs that we enjoy now;
- Workshop conferences, highly valued by UKOT conservationists in enabling on-the-ground projects;
- Proposing what became the Environment Charters, and facilitating the development of strategies to implement these through processes which were later partly copied in the current mainstreaming exercises;
- Stimulating government to start the Environmental Fund for Overseas Territories and then the Overseas Territories Environment Programme small grant programmes;
- Stimulating inter-territory co-operation and cross-territory projects;
- Facilitating sign-up to and implementation of international conventions.

Current priority work includes:

- Environmental education projects;
- Providing technical advice to territories;
- Seeking to resource a new workshop conference;
- Maintaining regional Working Groups and other opportunities for co-operation between partners;
- Stimulating and assisting the current Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry into sustainability in the UKOTs;
- Assisting project development, resourcing and management;
- Several current projects, especially in Turks and Caicos, Montserrat and with the Gibraltar Government.