



Preparatory Document

South Atlantic Overseas Territories Regional Biosecurity workshop

7th August 2015



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<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4079>

SOUTH ATLANTIC OVERSEAS TERRITORIES BIO SECURITY WORKSHOP – PREPARATORY DOCUMENT ¹

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POLICY BACKGROUND:

UK

- UK Government has adopted a strategy of supporting the OTs in their efforts to meet their international and national obligations in respect of biodiversity and wider environmental management.
 - One of the strategic priorities of this strategy relates to Biosecurity under the wider umbrella of invasive species i.e. *'preventing the establishment of invasive alien species, and eradicating or controlling species that have already become established'*
- The [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy](#) for Great Britain was launched in 2008. The [Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat](#) helps to coordinate the approach to invasive non-native species in Great Britain. They are responsible to a Programme Board which represents the relevant governments and agencies of England, Scotland and Wales.
 - Within the GB strategy there is an action that relates to Overseas Territories i.e. Key Action 12.3 *ensure that the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are kept informed of GB developments*. There is a section on the [GBNNS website](#) that does this.

REGIONAL

In 2010 a regional South Atlantic Invasive Species Strategy was created and has been endorsed by all of the governments within the region. A number of components of this strategy focus specifically on Biosecurity.

ASCENSION

Ascension Island already has one of the world's most heavily invaded terrestrial ecosystems with more than 90 % of higher plants and at least 70 % of invertebrates believed to have been introduced. The Territory also has no commercial farming or forestry sectors to provide economic incentives for developing biosecurity policies. These two factors have undoubtedly contributed to limited progress and a lack of urgency in advancing biosecurity. Nevertheless, there is a recognized need to rectify this situation and the development of a "focused

¹Note this is a working document and will be finalized during the workshop. Some of the content will be transferred into the workshop report.

biosecurity action plan that identifies and addresses key threats to marine and terrestrial ecosystems” is a key objective under the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

FALKLANDS

Since the initial habitation of the Falkland Islands by sailing ship from afar it was the long journey, the unique environment here, and the low volume of imports that enabled the country to remain fairly pristine. Customs then looked after biosecurity, but it was not until the report by Hellstrom & Simpson (2004) in the last few decades that an evolving biosecurity policy and dedicated officer have been in place. Concurrently a number of things happened to increase the need for biosecurity. The population grew and centred on Stanley and started bringing in a lot more food, it has become a popular tourist destination with sometimes thousands of cruise ship visitors coming on the busy days putting a lot of pressure on biosecurity resources, 3 or 4 incoming flights per week, regular cargo vessels bringing in containers from all around the world including oil exploration bringing in a lot of bulky materials, and fishing vessels coming fully stocked with their supplies of foods from Asia and Europe. Internal travel within the Falkland Islands is now also much easier with road, ferry and plane links within and between islands.

SOUTH GEORGIA AND SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

Under the 2010-2015 South Georgia strategy the following key biosecurity objectives were identified:

- Review the biosecurity regime annually, identifying any weaknesses and improve practices and strengthen controls
- Monitor and incorporate best practice from other comparable regions.
- Encourage the exchange of best practice and knowledge with other OTs and sub-Antarctic islands
- Develop robust monitoring and response systems for dealing with new introductions, especially for rodents

A new strategy for 2016-2020 is in review and is available at: http://www.sgisland.gs/index.php/%28g%29SGSSI_Draft_Strategy_2016-2020?useskin=gov²

Commitment to biosecurity is enshrined in in the Wildlife and Protected Areas Ordinance (2011). A person commits an offence who:

² NOTE: this is an overarching strategy and more detailed biosecurity objectives will be detailed in a National Biodiversity Action Plan.

- (a) keeps on board any vessel in the territorial sea or internal waters or lands or permits to alight on land or escape onto land or into the sea any animal of a non-native species;
- (b) plants or distributes in the wild in the Territory seeds or propagules of a non-native plant;
- (c) cultivates in the Territory any non-native plant; or
- (d) except by reason of unavoidable accident or unavoidable natural process, releases or allows any non-native micro-organism to escape in the Territory.

GSGSSI has various policies to ensure that it meets these strategic objectives and legal requirements. These include:

- Biosecurity protocols, self audit checklists and declarations for all visitors and vessels ([http://www.sgisland.gs/index.php/\(d\)Biosecurity?useskin=edu](http://www.sgisland.gs/index.php/(d)Biosecurity?useskin=edu))
- Internal policies on import procedures for fresh produce
- Internal policies on cargo handling and pre/post arrival checks
- Rodent biosecurity conditions on licensing and transshipping for fishing vessels

ST. HELENA

The National Biosecurity Policy (“Biosecurity St Helena“) was approved by the Economic Development Committee in October 2014. It was developed in collaboration with main stakeholders after a process of public consultation which took place over 2013. The policy sets the vision and overarching principles which guide implementation and are supported by the legal and institutional frameworks.

The purpose of Biosecurity St Helena is to provide the framework for mitigation against the risk of introduction of new potentially harmful pests to St Helena Island. It is part of a national reform programme which will transition the current model from one focused largely on intervention at the border for agricultural imports to a risk-based approach across the biosecurity continuum based on integrating pre-border (offshore), at our border and post-border (inshore) activities.

The policy recognises that the biosecurity system contributes to environmental, economic and social outcomes and provides the primary legislative basis for SHG’s role in biosecurity. It also outlines to stakeholders how SHG will manage compliance and enforcement of its biosecurity legislation.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

Under the ‘Biodiversity Action Plan for the Tristan da Cunha Islands (2012-2016)’ objective 4 ‘The impact of alien species is reduced or eliminated’, actions to address the threats posed to terrestrial and marine ecosystems are identified, including the following specific biosecurity actions:

- 4.1.6 A quarantine / biosecurity facility will be established for inspecting cargo and dealing with alien species when they arrive at Tristan
- 4.1.7 Funding will be sought for biosecurity training for Conservation Department staff

A National Biosecurity Policy ('Biosecurity Tristan da Cunha') is being drafted in collaboration with St Helena to provide a framework for mitigation against the risk of introduction of new potentially harmful pests to Tristan da Cunha.

TdC is looking to develop specific biosecurity legislation. Commitment to biosecurity is currently enshrined in the 'Conservation of Native Organisms and Natural Habitats (Tristan da Cunha) Ordinance 2006'.

A person commits an offence who would (excepting with a permit):

- 'import any kind of organism not native to Tristan da Cunha'
- 'liberate, disseminate or allow to escape into natural habitat or plant any kind of organism not native to Tristan da Cunha except in a garden or enclosed land or in areas used for residential, agricultural or horticultural purposes'

TDC has recently updated its Biosecurity Regulations with self-audit declaration for visitors and vessels.

WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

- Technical workshops have been held in the South Atlantic Region over a number of years, where regional and international technical experts and practitioners have come together to share best practice within the region. JNCC has, over the last few years focused on supporting OT technical workshops as a tool for input into biodiversity conservation in the OTs.
- A recent regional workshop (hosted by the Ascension Island Government and facilitated by JNCC in June 2014) focused on marine and terrestrial protected areas, seabird monitoring and sustainable fisheries. It was very successful, and seen as beneficial for the region and for the participants.
 - At that workshop Biosecurity was identified as the key area of focus for the next regional workshop.
- The UK and OT policy drivers, and the identification of Biosecurity as a focus at the last regional workshop, have led to the scheduling of this SAOT Biosecurity event.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the workshop are:

- To share experience and good practice in the region.
- To improve the Biosecurity of the participating Overseas Territories

- To explore the potential for a regional approach to Biosecurity building on the 2009 Regional South Atlantic Invasive Species Strategy.
- To identify next steps required and advice and expertise to address those next steps.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience will be environmental representatives from the UKOT governments (in particular those with a focus on biosecurity) and UK government staff with relevant technical expertise. A draft list is provided later in the document

KEY ACTIVITIES

The main activities will be:

- a. Develop a set of Biosecurity principles/strategy for the region.
- b. Run sessions on the current state of play and best practice/lessons learnt in each of the OTs present.
- c. Focus on each territory for individual sessions to understand situation and develop meaningful actions.
- d. Hold 'clinics'/group discussions where experts speak to practitioners to draft action plans and find 'quick wins' to address identified actions.
- e. Provide a more intense/specific focus on the host (Ascension) to include awareness raising with staff working at the airfield and the port etc... 1 day (or more..) specifically for Ascension.
- f. Address awareness/action within organisations that are regional (e.g. MOD)

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

Main measurable outcomes expected to be:

- i. A set of agreed biosecurity principles for the region
- ii. An action/work plan for each of the participating OTs for the next 5 years to address biosecurity issues (evaluated by the production of the action/work plans and by annual progress reports on key indicators)
- iii. Improved access to regional and international expertise and best practice to take forward effective biosecurity (evaluated by links to and use of international and regional experts)

THE WORKSHOP:

Dates: 14th and 18th August 2015³.

Programme: The detailed programme for the workshop has been decided through consultation with key stakeholders – based on their key issues as outlined in Annex 2 the content and format will be built around the following principles. There will be:

- a. Concrete outcomes in the form of actions
- b. Sharing of experience and good practice in the region
- c. Focus on each territory for individual sessions to understand situation and develop meaningful actions
- d. Provision of a more intense/specific focus on the host (Ascension) to include awareness raising with staff working at the airfield and the port etc... 1 day (or more..) specifically for Ascension.
- e. Addressing awareness/action within organisations that are regional (e.g MOD).

The programme is attached as a separate document.

BIOSECURITY PRINCIPLES – THE FOUNDATION:

- The workshop preparation includes the establishment of some basic biosecurity principles. A draft proposal of these principles (which builds on the commitments under the South Atlantic Invasive Species Strategy) is annexed here:

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The workshop will be hosted by the Ascension Island Government and co-ordinated by the JNCC. A Steering Group has been created with at least 1 representative from each of the South Atlantic Overseas Territories to:

- Progress the development and support for the principles
- Develop a meaningful programme for the workshop

Logistics will be managed through bilateral meetings between AIG and JNCC.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

OT Government support, and funding of participation would be welcome. In principle JNCC will fund participation of up to a maximum of 3 people from each of the SAOTs

ANNEX 1: IMPLEMENTING THE SOUTH ATLANTIC INVASIVE SPECIES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN⁴

Vision⁵: *“We will work together to maintain and restore native ecosystems, prevent further damage from invasive species and to support sustainable livelihoods through actions driven by local communities, coordinated regionally and supported internationally.”*

This agreement is being developed in order to implement strategic objective **C Prevention**: *“The Strategy will support efforts to prevent unwanted organisms from reaching the South Atlantic UKOTs or moving between islands and thus reduce long-term costs and other impacts to their communities and other stakeholders”.*

The governments and administrations of the South Atlantic UK Overseas Territories of St Helena, Falkland Islands, Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha, and South Georgia:

- Recalling the vision developed under the SA Invasive Species Project in 2010;
- Recognising that the SA UKOTs have high numbers of endemic species which are very vulnerable to the introduction of invasive pests, weeds and diseases;
- Recognising that invasive species also threaten livelihoods, amenity, health and social well being;
- Noting that biosecurity’ refers to measures designed to prevent the spread of invasive species across international borders, between Territories and between islands within the same Territory;

Agree to adopt the following overarching principles as regional biosecurity policy:

- Operate a “white list” approach, whereby permitted products and materials are identified;
- Make risk-based decisions, following a formal import risk assessment process;
- Make evidence-based decisions;
- Work along the entire biosecurity continuum, with pre-border and border controls, and post-border monitoring and surveillance linked to emergency response measures;
- Address invasive species threats in both the marine and terrestrial environments;
- Adopt the precautionary principle, recognising that prevention is far more cost-effective than cure;
- Not use as a trade barrier;
- Collect and share information between Territories and our trade partners;
- Commit adequate resources to protect our borders.

We also agree to include actions in existing (or if required develop new) national action plans, implementation plans or biosecurity strategy to achieve these overarching objectives.

⁴http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/SAIS_Strategy_Plan_tcm9-273308.pdf

⁵http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/SAIS_Strategy_Plan_tcm9-273308.pdf

ANNEX 2: PRIORITIES, ISSUES AND EXPERIENCES TO SHARE FROM PARTICIPATING OTS/PARTICIPANTS

Priorities, issues and experiences to share from participating OTs/participants – have been built into the programme.

- the top 3 priorities/issues that you would like to see addressed at the workshop.
- The top 3 experiences/expertise that you have to offer the workshop

ASCENSION

Priorities/Issues

- 1) Identifying high risk species and pathways (given the lack of an agricultural sector on Ascension and an already heavily-invaded terrestrial ecosystem). What do we need to keep out?
- 2) Once identified, determining what can be practically done to minimise risk with very limited resources.
- 3) Exploring ways to pool effort and resources across the Territory's in order to tackle invasion risks posed by mutual air and sea links.

FALKLANDS

Priorities/Issues

- 1) How to carry out import risk assessments
- 2) How to set up an effective BS framework – policy, structure and operations.
- 3) How to get stakeholders and the general public involved – in decision making and in abiding by the decisions made.

Experiences/expertise

- 1) Case study of wood imported for use in the oil industry – introduction of the false powder post beetle and how it was dealt with.
- 2) Planning for marine invasive organisms. This is important in the FIs because of the activity surrounding the development of a new oil industry and because of our important fishing industry.
- 3) Our experience of using the media (TV, radio, newspapers, information leaflets, posters etc) in getting the BS message across to importers and the general public. How does this compare with other SAOTs and the UK?

MOD

Priorities/Issues

- Biosecurity in construction materials.

SOUTH GEORGIA

Priorities/issues

- 1) Rodent detection on ships/ships sanitation
- 2) Response to invertebrate introductions/incursions
- 3) Risk assessment for fresh produce imports

Expertise/experience:

- 1) Rodent detection, monitoring, biosecurity and incursion response on land
- 2) Working with tourism industry to ensure awareness/compliance with biosecurity procedures for visitors
- 3) Working with suppliers and local population to manage biosecurity risk throughout the supply chain i.e. using policies, procedures and checks at different stages of cargo packing, handling, unpacking

ST. HELENA

Priorities/issues

- Import risk assessments for new products and commodities
- Maintaining political support (=funding)
- Maintaining public cooperation (importers and consumers) through compliance and enforcement

Expertise/experience:

- Development of the national policy (stakeholder consultations and workshops, institutional and legal frameworks, implementation plan)
- Communications (development of the biosecurity communications strategy, inter-agency and trader relationships)
- Procedures and protocols for both phytosanitary and zoosanitary risks (including development of import health standards for key risk species/commodities, import licencing system, inspection protocols)

TRISTAN

Priorities/issues

- Stopping things in Cape Town – someone checking in Cape Town.
- Building a biosecurity centre
- Biosecurity policy
- Training in St. Helena

ANNEX 3 BACKGROUND/REFERENCE MATERIALS

ASCENSION

Biodiversity	Action	Plan
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<http://www.ascensionisland.gov.ac/government/conservation/projects/bap/>

FALKLANDS

Falkland Islands Plan <http://www.falklands.gov.fk/self-sufficiency/the-islands-plan/>

SOUTH GEORGIA

South Georgia Strategy: A new strategy for 2016-2020 is in review and is available at: http://www.sgisland.gs/index.php/%28g%29SGSSI_Draft_Strategy_2016-2020?useskin=gov

ST. HELENA

All Biosecurity documents available at <http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/st-helena-biosecurity-service/>

TRISTAN

http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/tristan_BAPfinal_feb14_web_tcm9-370778.pdf

UK

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

OTHER ISLANDS

Pacific islands environmental legislation <http://www.paclii.org/>