

Environmental Mainstreaming

What is Environmental Mainstreaming in the context of the OTs?

The Environmental Mainstreaming process is designed to assist individual OTs to identify the key issues that need to be addressed to ensure the environment is properly taken into account in all aspects of economic and infrastructure planning. The OTs are highly dependent upon the assets provided by their natural environment – their terrestrial and marine ecosystems – for their economic wellbeing. The long term management of these assets is essential for the development of sustainable ('Green') economies in the OTs

How does the mainstreaming process work?

The Mainstreaming process (implemented in the BVI and Anguilla as 'Green Economy' projects) follows a standard procedure designed to allow each OT to oversee the process and 'own' the outcomes, namely the environmental actions identified as priorities. The process involves an initial review of the extent of environmental knowledge in the OT, the legal capacity to protect the environment and the capacity of Government and Non-Government organisations to implement management measures. The review is undertaken by a consultant acting under contract to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and involves OT based, face to face, one to one, consultations with OT based stakeholders. The results of the initial consultations provide the basis for an initial report to an OT based oversight group. The consultation process is consolidated and validated by an end of project seminar (in the OT) which brings together stakeholders to discuss the preliminary results of the consultation. The results of the two day seminar form the basis for a final report, submitted to the OT Government and UK Government, itemising the priority actions and the basis on which they were identified.

How are the mainstreaming projects funded and managed?

The projects are fully funded by the UK Government through the FCO, Defra and JNCC. The JNCC manages the projects and lets the necessary contracts to facilitate the whole process and minimise the burden on the OTs. To ensure that the OTs involved have ownership and oversight of the whole process from beginning to end, an OT based Project Oversight Group is established at the beginning of the project. This group is chaired by a senior OT official (in the Falklands the Governor, in Anguilla the Deputy Governor and in the BVI a senior civil servant) and consists solely of OT based organisations with JNCC providing an administrative function. JNCC, as project manager, reports only to the POG and to the UK Government Departments sponsoring the work.

Why is the Joint Nature Conservation Committee managing these projects? Are the projects only about biodiversity?

The JNCC devised and developed the mainstreaming process and secured grant funding from the FCO to initiate the two pilot projects in the Falklands and the British Virgin Islands. JNCC managed these projects and is managing the Anguilla Green Economy project which is Defra funded. JNCC is the statutory advisor to the UK Government on biodiversity issues but in the context of the Mainstreaming/Green Economy projects its role is to manage the projects on behalf of UK Government. The Mainstreaming process therefore focuses on no particular set of environmental issues, rather it allows OT stakeholders to identify those issues which they deem to be important in the context of the future development of their economy and society.

Who decides what is an environmental priority for each OT?

The mainstreaming process is designed to allow an OT stakeholder group to identify priority environmental issues to be addressed in the short, medium and long term to ensure sustainable economic activity, activity which integrates environmental management with infrastructure and economic planning. The OT based and chaired Project Oversight Group has the exclusive right to identify legitimate stakeholders to be consulted through the process. The only constraint on this right is that the stakeholder list must include a full range of Government and Non-Government organisations and members of civil society. It is noticeable that with both of the pilot projects

(Falklands and BVI) and the project in progress (Anguilla) the stakeholder lists consist only of OT based organisations and individuals. The priorities that emerge from this stakeholder consultation therefore represent priorities identified by people living and working in the OTs concerned, not international NGOs, UK Government or its agencies.

What environmental priorities emerged from the two pilot projects?

The two pilot projects were conducted in the Falkland Islands and the British Virgin Islands. The priorities identified by the Mainstreaming process in these two territories were significantly different reflecting population size and the perceived pressures on the natural environment. In the BVI priority actions included the development of a sustainable development strategy, development of a green tourist strategy, improved infra-structure planning and, perhaps most urgent, the need for solid and liquid waste management strategies. In the Falklands priorities were for the Executive Council to routinely take account of environmental impacts when making decisions, to assess the costs and benefits of signing up to the Convention on Biodiversity, improve the application of impact assessments and for all departments to undertake 'environmental proofing' of their business plans.

Both pilot projects identified the need for a good understanding of the value of the natural environment (in financial and cultural terms) as a pre-requisite for all forms of environmental management, infrastructure planning and economic development.

Does the process only result in yet another report or is there real follow-up to address the priorities identified?

The Mainstreaming process makes provision for both immediate follow-up actions to address key priorities identified by the stakeholder consultation process and longer term support. In the short term, such support is potentially limited by the availability of funding but as a result of the two pilot projects environmental economics projects are now in progress in both the BVI and Falklands funded by UK Government. As a direct consequence of the Falklands project a seminar was held in Guernsey in October 2012 (supported by JNCC) at which officials from the Falkland Islands Government, and Government of Guernsey, were able to discuss the potential benefits of signing up to the Convention on Biodiversity. Officials from the Isle of Man and Jersey, states which have already signed up to the Convention, participated to share their experience of the Convention. Longer term funding for priority actions identified by Mainstreaming will become available through the new 'Darwin +' programme which specifically encourages project proposals based on Mainstreaming work.

What value does the process have to OTs that participate?

The Mainstreaming process has already generated a number of benefits to the OTs that have participated. There has been immediate financial and technical support for projects in the BVI and the Falklands as a result of the identification of key actions needed to integrate the environment into all forms of strategic planning. This includes support for environmental economics projects, assistance in considering the value of signing up to the Convention on Biodiversity and support for the development, in the Falklands, of the information management systems needed to underpin a wide range of environmental management work. In addition to these project specific benefits the Mainstreaming process, with wide stakeholder engagement and the involvement of all sectors of government, has significantly raised awareness of the need for effective environmental management if the OTs are to have a sustainable economic future.