



Staying Connected for Conservation in a Changed World: UKOTCF's 6th conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island states By Zoom 2nd, 3rd, 9th & 10th March 2021

Conclusions and recommendations – extract of recommendations to potential funders (other than UK Government)

In this document, 'UKOTs' means UK Overseas Territories, 'CDs' means Crown Dependencies, and 'territories' means UKOTs & CDs. The paragraph number (from the full document) and 'R:' precedes recommendations. The categories of persons or organisations to whom the recommendations are addressed are indicated by *bold italics*.

Main topic 1: Progress (or otherwise) in reaching environmental targets

1.09. R: *UK Government and other funders* should give more recognition of UKOTs'/CDs' importance in terms of endemic taxa, and provide support for increased resources and capacity for surveying and taxonomic work, and for conservation assessments (e.g. Red Listing) and appropriate conservation actions. In addition, they need a better understanding of territories and conservation challenges there, as well as importance of partnership working. For example, the facilitation and assistance roles fulfilled by NGOs, including UKOTCF, which for some territory bodies are essential for taking on innovation work and brokering relationships between the different parties for specific issues/ actions (including via organising conferences like this event and the write-up which, in turn, will help take things forward).

1.10. R: A comprehensive checklist of environmental needs should be developed for all territories, with funding targeted preferentially to fill gaps. This should not be a whole new exercise, but based on existing initiatives, such as the UKOTCF series of reviews of progress against Environment Charter Commitments and Aichi Targets; reviews of legislation; local reviews; information collated (but not published) as part of the EU Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the EU Territories (BEST). (*UK Government and other funders; Territories; UKOTCF*)

Main topic 3: Facilitating local leads in conservation

3.02. R: Projects in which local NGOs and their long-term supporting NGOs combine to empower local people in territories to take responsibility for conservation action are worth support from *UK Government & other Potential Funders* funds for several years in resourcing the technical guidance and project officers needed to draw in this huge and well-directed voluntary effort.

Main topic 4: Coping with recovery after hurricanes and natural disasters by building resilience

Legislation, EIAs and Policy

4.11. R: Longer-term funding is needed for projects that cannot reach their potential in 3 years – e.g. tree-growing and other recovery projects. A better mechanism would be for successful projects to be able to run for the time-frame necessary. Sustainability cannot be built in a three-year cycle for habitats that take 30 years or more to come to fruition. There is a need also to overcome the stalling of implementing policy after the project developing it ends. (*UK and Territory governments, and other funders*)

Wider Resilience

4.21. R: A need to work with UK Government to develop and support nature-based solutions on-island to help increase resilience. For example, how much mangrove and sea-grass restoration is achievable across the Caribbean, and what are the needs of peatland and kelp forests in the South Atlantic? More understanding is needed into the status and distribution of natural capital provided by terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, (*UK and Territory governments, NGOs, other funders*)

4.23. R: Conservationists should point out needs for action – identify the issues, establish realistic and achievable (not box-checking) targets, establish assessments that will be reported against, secure resources and then do them. Measures should be of long-term impact and not artificial ones to match short grant cycles. The scale of the problem is regional, rather than individual country-based and needs a regional plan to maximise benefits for all. Grey and green solutions, especially to coastal areas, need to be understood and implemented wisely. [Green infrastructures are naturally occurring ecosystems that perform significant functions in terms of flood-defence, water-purification, coastal stabilization etc., e.g. sand-dunes, mangroves). Grey infrastructure are man-made defences, e.g. sea-walls, water-purification plants, which perform these functions.] (*NGO and governmental conservationists, UK and Territory governments, and other funders*)

Main topic 5: Nature-based solutions for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration: Terrestrial

5.06. R: Resources must be made available for the management and eradication of invasive alien species, where these are possible, and appropriate methodologies used according to the specific context. (*UK & Territory governments; other funders*)

5.09. R: *Governments and NGOs* should participate proactively in ecosystem management, and seek partnership with *private sector entities* where appropriate.

Main topic 6: Nature-based solutions for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration: Marine

Urgent Issue No 1: Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD)

6.03. R: To enable ecosystem restoration, *Caribbean UKOT governments and NGOs* need to consider establishment of land-based facilities to grow stony corals to preserve genetic samples and eventual repopulation of reefs (environmental conditions permitting), learning lessons from established best practice within Caribbean UKOTs and the region, and *UK Government and other funders* need to support.

Main topic 7: Funding mechanisms – tourism and alternatives

Alternatives to Tourism

7.04. R: *Commercial enterprises* should contribute each time a protected area or threatened species appears in their adverts in order to raise money for protected area conservation, where the properly interpreted outreach education value does not provide such contribution.

Rethinking Tourism

7.09. R: *NGOs working in and for the territories and territory governments* should come together to develop cross-territory sustainable tourism guidelines/certification programme for tourism operators (for example, dive operators, tour guides, etc.), and take advantage of the IUCN publication *Guidelines on development in sensitive areas*. Such a certification programme will have wide recognition and could prove to be more

successful than single-territory certification schemes. NGOs can play a key role in building capacity and training. There are already case-study projects in this area which could trigger this process, but crucially we need to look at how to rebuild sustainable tourism in the light of Covid and developing models and putting NGOs in a key position in tourism delivery over the next few years. (*NGOs, Territory Governments and Potential Funders*)

Can UK Government grant-funding be made more effective for UKOT conservation?

7.12. R: Greater readiness is needed to fund projects which need to take place in stages over several years, even if individual grants need to be limited to only 2 or 3 years. (*UK Government; other funders*)

Main topic 8: Plugging the gap: innovative approaches and capacity-building

8.02. R: Biodiversity management should be established as a permanent cycle into which projects fit. A purely project- or programme-based approach risks unacceptable churn rates; any projects within the cycle run by regional or wider organisations should ensure data, research and know-how should be owned by the territories themselves. (*UK and territory governments; other funders; NGOs*)

8.10. R: Further development of volunteer work will be vital in overcoming capacity gaps. Volunteers should feel valued, and encouraged and supported in producing high quality practical outputs as well as citizen science work. This will require funding, and the development of suitable management structures. (*UK Government and other funders*)