

CONSULTATION

Response Document



United Kingdom Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy

Consultation on a new UK Overseas Territories
biodiversity strategy: Call for Evidence

Introduction to CIEEM

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), as the leading membership organisation supporting professional ecologists and environmental managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

CIEEM was established in 1991 and has over 5,000 members drawn from local authorities, government agencies, industry, environmental consultancy, teaching/research, and voluntary environmental organisations. The Chartered Institute leads the way in defining and raising the standards of ecological and environmental management practice with regard to biodiversity protection and enhancement. It promotes knowledge sharing through events and publications, skills development through its comprehensive training and development programme, and best practice through the dissemination of technical guidance for the profession and related disciplines.

CIEEM is a member of:

- Environmental Policy Forum
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- Professional Associations Research Network
- Society for the Environment
- United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 Network

We welcome the opportunity to participate in the consultation on implications of the UK Biodiversity Strategy in safeguarding the environment in British Overseas Territories (OTs). This response was produced by CIEEM's UK Overseas Territories Special Interest Group (SIG). The Overseas Territories SIG comprises volunteers who support our members who work in the Overseas Territories.

We would be happy to provide further information on this topic. Please contact Jason Reeves (CIEEM Head of Policy and Communications) at JasonReeves@cieem.net with any queries.

Questions

Please provide evidence to support your responses, and where possible refer to the territory/region.

1. Would you like your responses to be confidential?

No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason.

2. Who do you represent?

Professional Institute

3. Where are you based?

UK

5. In what way are you involved in biodiversity conservation in the OTs?

CIEEM's UK Overseas Territories Special Interest Group (SIG) comprises volunteers who support our members who work in the Overseas Territories. They provide a key role in knowledge exchange between members who live and work on the OTs and those who are engaged in research and innovation that might be pertinent to the OTs. The SIG also raises the awareness of the exceptional biodiversity of the OTs within the UK; provides support on best practice and guidance; and has a strong facilitation role running face to face conferences, meetings and webinars supported by stakeholders in overseas territories as well as in the UK.

6. Were you familiar with the current OT biodiversity strategy (published in 2009) prior to this call for evidence?

Yes

7. Have you previously used and/or referred to the 2009 OT biodiversity strategy?

Yes

8. If answered (Yes) to Question (7); how have you used the 2009 OT biodiversity strategy. Please explain how?

We have ensured that when we are planning activities and events, prioritising our inputs and focus that the actions we are proposing will help to move towards the vision and actions outlined in the 2009 strategy.

9. Below are the strategic priorities of the current strategy. Please indicate which of the strategic priorities you think are still relevant to biodiversity conservation in the OTs?

Please select those that apply. ALL of THEM!

- Obtaining data on the location and status of biodiversity interests and the human activities affecting biodiversity to inform the preparation of policies and management plans (including baseline survey and subsequent monitoring);

There are still baseline surveys needed. For example the amount of information known on insects, soil fauna and flora. Many of the baseline habitat maps and other surveys are old and perhaps out of date, considerable changes have happened on many of the OT, development, hurricane impacts and indeed the positive impact of restoration schemes. Updating and monitoring are needed to keep the data live and active. Professional ecologists have a role here but engaging and utilising a wide range of local resources is also vitally important.

- Preventing the establishment of invasive alien species, and eradicating or controlling species that have already become established;

This is ongoing and never-ending particularly when considering climate change impacts. Prioritising efforts to safeguard the most vulnerable and endangered species and habitats is key to using scarce resources to best effect.

- Developing cross-sectoral approaches to climate change adaptation that are

consistent with the principles of sustainable development;

Increasingly important and having a natural capital approach to ensure the widest range of benefits are secured.

- Developing tools to value ecosystem services to inform sustainable development

policies and practices;

Communication focused on increasing the value of the environment, particularly its role in increasing island resilience in light of climate change needs to be better understood. Island habitat and ecosystem service maps and datasets should be established and updated whenever new data becomes available to give the most accurate measures to inform policies and practices

- Developing ecosystem-based initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of

the marine environment.

Still very important especially linking climate action with biodiversity recovery in the marine environment.

10. Are there any other high-level priorities that should be included in the new OT biodiversity strategy? If yes, please explain (300-word limit).

While all of the above-mentioned priorities are still valid and essential to support the UKOTs biodiversity, we have come to understand that even if there is good quality data collection and adequate tools, resources and strategies in place to implement conservation actions along with well-trained people on the ground this will all be devalued unless significant changes are made to the way that UKOT Governments value biodiversity particularly when related to planning and development decisions.

While we know that the responsibility for the environment has been delegated to the UKOT Governments, significant progress still needs to be made to improve planning processes and to make biodiversity and the environment a significant component of the Governments thinking rather than an after-thought. The process of Environmental Impact Assessment is weak and not valued in some Territories. The environment and development are seen as being in competition with each other rather than components that can work together. We have observed that the people working on the ground fully understand this but it is at higher levels in government and the general public that still need to be convinced of the value of their island's natural resources. Working to support and facilitate ecological and environmental management best practice is a key role for CIEEM and our SIG can help support cross-fertilisation between the OT's sharing best practice examples.

Our experience in dealing with local people and professionals is that almost all wanted to see more cross-territory opportunities to share ideas and understand how others are dealing with common threats. CIEEM could help organise events that facilitate the sharing of outcomes from priority projects and work programmes and learn from those that have implemented similar projects in the region.

Creating long-term conservation programmes and initiatives and protection of important habitats and biodiversity is difficult. Work is very often project based. For example, invasive species eradications are great but these then require long-term commitments in staff and resourcing to ensure continued biosecurity. The UKOTS need to have self-sustaining environmental revenue

streams rather than always relying on projects for funding. Perhaps this strategy could help to identify such funding streams for example through biodiversity and/or carbon credits.

11. What do you think the limitations of the 2009 OT biodiversity strategy are (500-word limit)?

It is quite vague on how the objectives will be met. How can we tell if the strategy has been effective or not without measurable indicators?

12. What do you think would make a new OT biodiversity strategy more effective? Please structure your answer under the following headings where appropriate:

Structure and format of the strategy (300-word limit)

Make it SMARTER.

Provision of support and/or commitments from/between UK Government and the OTs

Clearer objectives on the support that will be provided, for example if improving legislation and enforcement is a priority action how will UK Government support this – through funding/training/outreach campaigns?

Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy (300-word limit)

It would be good to evaluate what had actually been achieved and what the gaps still are – and also to identify who have been major players making the changes – it seems local NGOs are often overlooked but they often have the greatest capacity to implement on the ground action and also to influence local communities. These organisations are important players, and their value should be better recognised.

Other comments on how to make the strategy most useful and effective (300-word limit)

It might be necessary to widen the membership of the steering group that oversees the implementation of this strategy. UKOTA may not be fully up to date with all environmental developments and certainly do not have any on-the-ground experiences. Cross-territory meetings with representatives from local governments and NGOs would be hugely beneficial and help drive the strategy forward.

13. Do you have any further comments or suggestions relating to a new OT biodiversity strategy? (500-word limit?)

Please grasp the opportunity to link biodiversity recovery with climate action and nature-based carbon capture and storage.

14. Please provide your details:

Organisation* [CIEEM's UK Overseas Territories Special Interest Group](#)

Name* [Jason Reeves \(CIEEM Head of Policy\)](#)

Contact email* JasonReeves@cieem.net

15. Do you give permission for us to contact you to discuss your response in more detail?

[Yes](#)

16. We may want to publish in part or whole, the responses from your organisation in our final report and on social media. Please can you confirm how you would like your response to be treated: *

[Publish my response, including the name of my organisation](#)