

PROGRESS AGAINST JOINT MINISTERIAL COUNCIL 2012 COMMITMENTS

UK

Jobs and Growth

Increasing investment and trade

The UK Government is committed to supporting Territory governments to agree clear and transparent policies to incentivise inward investment and to put in place domestic policies which foster economic growth and avoid unnecessary red-tape and restrictions on economic activity.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has nominated a contact point (Dave Joseph, dave.joseph@bis.gsi.gov.uk) to signpost Territory governments to the relevant people to speak to on investment policies, and a contact point (Shirley Letts, Shirley.letts@bis.gsi.gov.uk) to provide advice on better regulation.

The UK Government has increased its support to help Territory companies to trade internationally. In July 2013 the UK Government issued instructions to all UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) teams and UK Embassies, High Commissions and other Posts to clarify that they should assist bona fide Territory companies and government/business delegations in accessing overseas markets. Some had already been doing this. The assistance could include:

- providing general off the shelf material, information and advice that might normally be provided free of charge to UK companies;
- assisting Territory companies experiencing market access difficulties;
- Assisting Territory Governments or trade promotion agencies wanting to establish a presence in a market.

This work is already happening. The British Consulate-General in Hong Kong helped BVI set up an office in Hong Kong and the Consul General hosted a reception to welcome the BVI Premier when he arrived to open the office. The Consulate in Cape Town has been helping St Helena and Tristan da Cunha, who have their own Commercial representative in Cape Town, particularly with contact building with the Western Cape Government and Agencies.

Certain UKTI offices have been nominated to support Territory Administrations through a “buddying” system. The support that these UKTI offices can provide will vary from place to place, but could include:

- disseminating information about business/investment opportunities in the Territory to UK companies
- promoting the benefits of exporting and sharing best practice in trade & investment; and
- Offering ideas on developing or improving the business to business support which might be available.

Montserrat and UKTI Barbados have already worked together to publish a hospital tender as a business opportunity, to attract possible UK investors.

The FCO and UKTI will evaluate the progress of this initiative after a trial period of one year.

The FCO has led the organisation of an Overseas Territories Business Forum on 28 November in London, which will promote trade and investment opportunities in the territories to UK businesses and investors.

Supporting international trade

The UK Government has continued to support OT Governments to engage with international partners. The UK continues to support TCI on trade and, through the British Embassy in Washington and Governor's Office in Grand Turk, have secured an invitation for TCI to take part in the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a scheme which provides tariff and trade benefits with the United States.

After a complex EU accreditation process, Tristan da Cunha has made excellent progress towards securing Commission approval for the export of its world famous lobster to the EU.

Developing entrepreneurship and small businesses

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has nominated a contact point – Erica Mallon (Erica.mallon@bis.gsi.gov.uk)- to advise the territories on small business growth and enterprise when required.

Supporting sustainable economic growth

The Department for International Development (DfID) has emphasised sustainable economic growth in its budget support programme for the 'aided' territories, with a view to achieving greater economic self-sufficiency.

In St Helena, DFID's budget aid settlement for 2013/14 was the second settlement since the airport contract was signed and continued to lay the foundations for economic growth. This year, the St Helena Government (SHG)'s budget focused more resources towards the island's development agency – Enterprise St Helena (ESH) with its wide remit to: support Saint businesses; up-skill and train Saints; finance Saint businesses; promote tourism; attract investment; and develop fisheries.

In addition to budgetary support, DFID is currently in the process of approving a new project of support for ESH that will provide up to £4.821m over the period until the airport opens in 2016. Investing in ESH supports the UK's £250 million investment in the airport by helping to put the island in the best possible position to take advantage of the growth opportunities that air access will bring. In the longer term, the economy should develop, expand and transition from public sector dominated to private sector driven, leading the way for eventual financial self-sufficiency. However, it should be noted that in the two years since the airport contract was signed, tourist-related investment has not materialised as quickly as expected. SHG and DFID are now refocusing their efforts and considering what additional action, if any, could and should be taken.

Construction of the airport in St Helena continues to time and budget. The total workforce on St Helena (including sub-contractors) is now 450, of whom 304 are Saints. This year, agreement has also been reached with the contractors over the design of the permanent wharf in Rupert's Bay that will bring additional economic benefits.

DFID continues to provide substantial levels of technical co-operation to St Helena in order to bring international expertise to the island and increase the capacity of the government to prepare for the future. In 2013/14, DFID has also been working closely with SHG to improve their management of a large array of capital projects and has increased its financial support significantly to this sector to over £5 million this year. Getting the island's infrastructure in better shape to accommodate both the needs of islanders and the needs of greater numbers of future visitors is a key component in DFID's support to sustainable economic growth.

The UK Government agreed with the Government of Montserrat a Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (signed on 01 May 2012). We are committed to making investments, if they are financially and economically justified, in geothermal, port and town

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infrastructure, and improvements in access to and from Montserrat. The Government of Montserrat agreed to implement reforms that would make Montserrat (i) a better place to do business in and (ii) attract private sector investment to the proposed port and town development.

Drilling for geothermal energy has now been completed following which both wells will be tested to confirm their productivity (estimated power generation output). A further phase of planning, design, and appraisal is required to determine the most appropriate route to production funding (public, private or a mixture).

DFID has worked with Montserrat to improve both air and sea access. In May 2013, DFID approved an additional £0.6m to help procure a bigger, better, faster, more comfortable ferry service operating five days a week to facilitate its tourism sector. This ferry is now in service.

Montserrat has been without international fibre connectivity since the deactivation of the Eastern Caribbean Fibre System following the volcanic eruptions in 1997. DFID is currently working with the Government of Montserrat to complete a request for proposals from the private sector to establish their interest in participating in this project.

DFID and the Government of Montserrat have also worked together to complete a master plan for a new capital city in Little Bay and design of a port in Carr's Bay; and to strengthen the investment climate.

The UK has continued to support the Montserrat Development Corporation (at £4.6m over three years) , in recognition of its role at the heart of the SGP as a facilitator and project manager with responsibility for supporting foreign and local private investment in pursuit of sustainable socio-economic development.

Meeting international standards on tax co-operation and financial sector regulation and combating financial crime, bribery and corruption

The UK Government, through our chairmanship of the G8, gave a strong lead to international work to tackle tax evasion and tax avoidance and to strengthen international financial regulation. We believe that well run international financial centres play a vital role in supporting international economic growth and tackling poverty. A critical tool in the fight against tax evasion is the exchange of information between jurisdictions. We see the developments in tax transparency as setting a new standard. HM Treasury are working with the OECD and the G20 to develop a global model for automatic tax information exchange. Illicit finance is a global problem that can only be tackled effectively through collective action. We are seeking action through the G8, the European Union and the G20 and we are making progress. We encouraged all G8 countries to publish Action Plans setting out the concrete action with respect to ensuring that companies know who owns and controls them and that this information is available in a timely fashion to law enforcement and tax authorities. The UK Government is leading by example in our implementation of the Financial Action Task Force standards. The Prime Minister announced in October that we are committing not only to establish a central registry of company beneficial ownership information, but also to allow public access to that registry. We are encouraging all jurisdictions at international fora to commit to these enhanced standards.

HM Treasury worked closely with those Territories which host international financial service industries in the run up to the G8, and Territories responded positively and speedily to the tax and transparency agenda outlined above and committed to join the pilot automatic tax information exchange, produce Action Plans on Beneficial Ownership and join the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. HM Treasury and the FCO are continuing to work in partnership with the Territories as they implement these commitments.

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The UK is working to ensure that the same international standards apply to all jurisdictions and that competition is on a level playing field.

There are a number of Conventions/Agreements covering financial crime, bribery and corruption which, if extended to the Territories, would provide further evidence that they are good places for financial services but vigilant with regard to financial crime. The OECD Anti Bribery Convention has been extended to Gibraltar and the British Virgin Islands during 2013 and good progress has been made towards extending the UN Convention against Corruption to the Cayman Islands. The UK will continue to work with Territories offering guidance and support as well as technical assistance to enable extension of these Conventions.

Similarly the UK stands ready to advise the Overseas Territories with a financial services industry on the UN Convention on the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism and the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime to allow them to seek extension. Unfortunately little progress has been made on these during 2013.

The Environment and Green Growth

Sustainable Fisheries

The UK Government is supporting St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, Pitcairn and the Turks and Caicos Islands to establish baseline information on fisheries resources and scope opportunities for developing sustainable fishing industries. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the public body that advises the UK Government on international nature conservation, is currently developing a marine framework to identify, through consultation, priorities for marine biodiversity conservation in the UK Overseas Territories (OTs). JNCC is organising a seminar in the UK on 28-29 November to discuss the use of Marine Protected Areas in marine biodiversity and fisheries management. This is intended to be the first in a series of technical workshops, bringing together UK marine experts, including those from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Territories. Other issues to be addressed, based on consultation with OT specialists, will be fisheries management and cetacean conservation. These workshops are expected to continue into 2014 and early 2015.

Renewable Energy

Many of the Overseas Territories have the potential to exploit renewable energy and reduce their dependency on fossil fuels, for example Montserrat is looking at the potential for geothermal energy and St Helena is developing solar and wind energy. The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is prepared to provide advice and policy expertise where possible in matters relating to energy and climate change and have established a single point of contact, Darren Freezor (ISCU@decc.gsi.gov.uk), for any enquiries.

Strategic Approach to the Environment

At the 2012 JMC we agreed to adopt a more strategic approach to the management, protection and conservation of the natural environment. To facilitate this, the UK Government has been working with a number of Territories - including British Virgin Islands, Falkland Islands, Anguilla, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands - to support mainstreaming of environmental policy. The UK Government would like to extend this initiative to other Territories and use this to develop a shared agenda for sustainable environmental management.

Identifying and sharing best practice

Several initiatives are in progress:

- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has funded two workshops in the Caribbean Territories (February and July 2013) aimed at assessing the scale of the lionfish invasion in the OTs and identifying research and training needs¹. Work is in progress to assess the potential economic impact on the fisheries and tourism industry;
- The JNCC has facilitated the participation of Territory representatives in the review of the UKOT Biodiversity Strategy held at Kew Gardens in March this year. This was the first time for a number of years that relevant experts from the Territories had been brought together to discuss the Strategy and share best practice²;

¹ Reports available on: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/ot_LionfishWorkshopAnguilla_20130602.pdf

² Report available on: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4374>

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- In October the Government of Gibraltar hosted a two day workshop to discuss the use of Geographic Information systems (GIS) in environmental management. Attended by representatives of eight OTs, the meeting discussed the cost benefits of 'open source software', the detailed application of GIS in addressing specific management issues in the OTs, and the role of such systems to inform decision making. The workshop also discussed how to develop and maintain a network of specialists to ensure future collaboration between Territories.
- Three pilot projects are in progress in the Caribbean OTs to assess the economic and social values of the natural environment (ecosystems) to demonstrate how these values underpin OT livelihoods and to develop tools suitable for use in more detailed studies.
- Defra currently co-funds a JNCC officer in the Falkland Islands, who works with the Falkland Islands Government on issues related to the conservation of endangered albatrosses and petrels.

International Commitments

Officials across Defra have continued to support the Territories in implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements including fulfilling legislative requirements of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Equally a number of Territories provided consultation responses ahead of the CITES Conference of Parties which took place in Bangkok earlier this year.

Defra's lawyers have drawn up guidance for Territories considering extension of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and several other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding on Migratory Birds of Prey (Raptors MoU), the African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Guidance on extension of the International Plant Protection Convention is in the process of being developed. Defra are also working actively with Territories to which CITES has been extended to ensure that their legislation meets the four basic requirements of the Convention.

The CBD has set a series of targets (the Aichi targets) for the conservation of global biodiversity. These targets provide a potential mechanism for all of the OTs to monitor progress in conserving and managing their biodiversity. An initial review of OT perceptions of the role of these targets was recently completed and will be used to develop, through consultation, a strategy for their use by the OTs.³

Representing Territory interests internationally

Officials from the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) continue to engage with the Territories to inform them of the UK negotiating position under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. DECC provided briefing notes to Territories on Government priorities ahead of the Conference of Parties in Doha, giving the Territories the opportunity to provide their views and also reported to them on the outcomes of the conference. DECC provide similar documents for this year's Conference of Parties, held in Warsaw.

DECC has also consulted relevant Territories who participated in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands and Gibraltar), on whether they would be content, in principle, to participate in the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

³ For report see: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/ot_AICHIREPORT17-07-2013-14-04-submitted.pdf

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DECC officials will further consult Territories over the possibility of extending the second commitment period to these Territories.

Defra has put in place processes to ensure that the Territories are consulted prior to and following major international meetings. In addition to this consultation process, Defra included a marine expert from one of the Overseas Territories in the UK delegation to the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Hyderabad, India, in October 2012. Territory interests were also represented at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the CITES, held in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 2013, for example in respect of work regarding the queen conch, which is of significant economic interest to some of the Territories.

UK Government assistance

Defra announced in April the funding of 18 new projects in the Territories totalling £2.6 million. This included 14 projects under the new Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (known as Darwin Plus) which is co-funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), FCO and Defra. These projects and other Defra funding will support many of the actions identified in the JMC communiqué, in particular:

- Sharing knowledge and best practice - most of the Darwin Plus projects are collaborative involving UK and Territory partners.
- Sustainable fisheries and marine management – projects in BIOT, St Helena, Cayman Islands and Pitcairn.
- Strategic environmental management – including environmental mainstreaming in Anguilla and projects in Ascension and Montserrat; and sustainable use and management projects in Pitcairn and Tristan da Cunha.

Separately, DFID is contributing £900,000 to St Helena's Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Project (LEMP) to support the re-introduction of indigenous and endemic plants in and around the airport development area.

JNCC continues to support small projects in the OTs through its Training and Research Programme and the travel and subsistence costs for OT personnel attending training courses and conferences.

Support from International Organisations

Strengthening relationships with the EU, Commonwealth and other international organisations

After many months of negotiation, the UK helped secure agreement to an ambitious new EU Overseas Association Decision (OAD) that is due to come into effect on 1 January 2014. The OAD is the legal instrument that links the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of the UK, France, Netherlands and Denmark with the European Union. It covers, trade, aid, economic development, energy, environment, health and crime. The OAD provides for access to other Horizontal EU funds, such as the Erasmus higher education fund and the da Vinci vocational education fund, subject to the rules establishing those programmes.

The UK has negotiated on behalf of the Overseas Territories significant improvements in access to the EU single market for goods and services from the Territories and a significant increase in EU financial support. In the negotiations for the 11th European Development Fund the FCO helped secure an extra €58.8 million for the OCTs, bringing it to a total of €364.5 million. In parallel, the UK ensured that the OTs are now eligible for biodiversity funding in the LIFE programme and the Commission is committed to opening up the environment and biodiversity funding streams of the EU Development and Cooperation Instrument to the OTs.

We continued to explore the possibility of strengthening the links between the Territories and the Commonwealth, following the Commonwealth Secretary General's attendance at the JMC in 2012. The FCO will now alert Territories every year in advance to the Ministerial-level Commonwealth meetings that they can attend. We also sent the draft agenda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to the Territories, and invited comment. We had a detailed discussion with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Territories about practical ways in which links can be strengthened to mutual benefit; and will continue to explore the possibilities in more detail.

In the coming year we will look more closely at where the Territories can play a fuller role in other multilateral organisations such as UN agencies and the OECD.

We are exploring with BIS and the Territories mechanisms to keep the Territories informed on discussions in the World Trade Organisation that affect them.

Better Government

The UK Government is continuing to help Territories abide by the same high standards of good governance as the UK. The UK hosted a meeting of OT Heads of Public Service in London on 7-8 October 2013. This meeting took stock of progress since the previous meeting and provided a forum for the exchange of experience between the Territories, the Crown Dependencies and UK Departments. It identified a number of practical proposals for further cooperation including peer reviews of procurement, public financial management frameworks, and codes of conduct and integrity; a review of secondments between the Territories and the UK encompassing an assessment of the UK Government's Jubilee Programme; and a project to support strengthening the work of audit bodies and public accounts committees or their equivalents, with the support of the UK National Audit Office (NAO).

Codes of conduct

The UK continues to encourage all Overseas Territories to adopt and implement codes of conduct for all Ministers, Legislators and Public Servants. In most territories, all areas of public life are now governed by codes of conduct which are based on the seven principles of public life. The Cabinet Office has identified a contact point – Sue Gray (sue.gray@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk) – to provide advice on codes of conduct.

The public service

The UK is assisting the Territories in numerous ways to further modernise and professionalise their public services. The UK facilitated contacts between OT Heads of Public Services and officials in the UK Cabinet Office to share experience of reform programmes, and initiatives to further transparency, integrity, efficient service delivery and accountability in public services.

The UK NAO has undertaken scoping and preparatory work for a 3-4 day workshop for the OTs on auditing, which is being planned for early 2014.

The Jubilee Programme, with an annual budget since its launch in 2012 maintained at £0.5 million for 2013-14, continues to promote good governance and to support the professional development of OT public servants. Examples of recent projects under the Jubilee Programme include:

- In St Helena it has provided the funds for the Government to hire and train a professional public relations officer to maximise the opportunities that will come when the territory gets its first ever airport in 2017.
- It has been used in several Caribbean Territories to develop their criminal justice systems, e.g. training in the UK for staff from Anguilla allowing the establishment of a Parole Board. In Montserrat it has paid for the secondment of a local police officer to the Bermuda Police Service. And it will allow for officers elsewhere to attend the Bramshill Command and Control course in early 2014.
- It also funded the visit to the Cayman Islands by Election Monitors earlier this year.

The FCO continues to fund access to the Civil Service Learning portal for territory governments' Civil Servants. Take up has been strong across the territories, with over 650 registered and active users.

Public financial management

The UK Government continues to work proactively with Territory Governments on strengthening public finances. Since 2012, the Governments of Anguilla and the Falkland Islands have joined the

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Virgin Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands in establishing Fiscal Frameworks, which have at their core, medium term planning, value for money and accountability.

Stronger and Healthier communities

Sport

Following positive discussions at the JMC 2012 about a desire to increase sporting participation for people of all ages and abilities, and build upon the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) undertook to produce a guide on sports organisation for the Overseas Territories. The guide, which is being produced in partnership with UK Sport and Sport England, will provide advice on matters relating to sporting participation, governing bodies, legacy and elite sport. DCMS and FCO are exploring the possibility of staging a meeting for sports experts from the Territories in order to brief everyone on the contents of the guide and signpost where further support might be available and how they might access it.

The Queen's Baton Relay, staged as part of celebrations heralding the start of the countdown to the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, is due to pass through nine Overseas Territories as part of its journey of 190,000km. Its first visit to an Overseas Territory will be St Helena on 19 February 2014.

The Territories will be able to send teams to the Commonwealth Games and have been additionally invited by DCMS to participate in the Sainsbury's 2014 School Games in Manchester for the first time. The multi-sport event, which is organised by the Youth Sport Trust and held annually, aims to give the UK's elite young athletes the chance to compete at the highest levels of their sporting disciplines against fellow school-age children. The 2013 event in Sheffield attracted over 1,600 competitors and it is anticipated that the event next year will attract an even higher turnout.

International Sporting associations

We agreed in the 2012 communiqué to work together with the Territories to encourage, as appropriate, international sporting associations to recognise the Territories. We are pleased that the Gibraltar Football Association has now been admitted as a full member of the Union of European Football Associations, which means that Gibraltar and its club teams can now play in tournaments organised by UEFA. DCMS and FCO will continue to consider all requests for support from Overseas Territories wishing to join international sports federations, managing them as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

Disability

The UK stands ready to offer advice and expertise to the Overseas Territories to help them explore opportunities for people with disabilities to become more integrated and participative members of society. For example, the Department for Work and Pensions met the BVI Health Minister in July to discuss disability policy and programmes.

Older people

The Department for International Development has provided funding for a Senior Social Worker to support the development of a strategic framework in Montserrat for integrated social services.

The Department for Work and Pensions is prepared to advise Overseas Territories interested in developing a sustainable pensions programme.

Child safeguarding

Child protection is a key concern in the Overseas Territories and was raised by Territory leaders at the JMC in 2012. UK Government Departments have demonstrated a determination to work in partnership with the Territories to develop and implement effective cross-government child safeguarding strategies. DFID, for example, has worked with FCO to provide support, expertise and funding on child safeguarding initiatives in the Overseas Territories since 2005, most recently the “Safeguarding Children in the Overseas Territories” (SCOT) programme, which ran from 2009 until 2013, and focussed on capacity building, strengthening inter-agency collaboration and awareness raising. DFID is currently exploring the potential to establish a new follow-up project, which would seek to build upon the previous projects.

Meanwhile, through budget aid settlements, DFID continues to provide technical advice to Pitcairn, St Helena and Montserrat. This includes periodic risk assessments and technical assistance to Governors’ Offices and Territory Governments, with particular emphasis on strengthening public sector service delivery in this area. For example, they have placed a senior social worker in St Helena to develop a strategic framework and to improve child safeguarding and in Montserrat, has approved funding towards a Child Safeguarding Specialist, who is expected to lead the development of a new multi-agency Child Safeguarding framework.

Tackling Discrimination

The UK stands ready to offer advice and expertise to the Territories as and when they require. For example, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) assisted Bermuda with their anti-discrimination legislation.

Safer Communities

Strengthening coordination on tackling crime

The UK has continued to work in partnership with the Overseas Territories governments to tackle threats arising from international terrorism and serious & organised crime.

The FCO funds a Law Enforcement Adviser for the Caribbean Overseas Territories and Bermuda, based in Miami, who coordinates, manages and facilitates training and strategic advice to introduce new techniques and skills for the Territories' law enforcement agencies. An adviser is also available to the non-Caribbean Territories.

The Caribbean Commissioners of Police now meet quarterly. A system of Working Groups, each chaired by an individual Police Commissioner, examines current business areas such as serious and organised crime, training, armed policing, procurement, software systems and performance management.

A key element of helping the Territories has been participation by Territory officers at conferences, seminars and workshops. Over the past year, with more planned for next year, officers have attended training in command, financial crime investigation and witness protection. They have also focused on maritime intelligence and security. In early 2014 a seminar on border security issues for customs and immigration officials will take place, co hosted by Home Office immigration investigation specialists.

The Law Enforcement Adviser is also working to broaden the range and depth of support available to the Caribbean Police Commissioners. A MoU with the new UK National Crime Agency is being negotiated to provide investigation support and advice. He is also developing links with the UK Association of Chief Police Officers, as a further source of advice and assistance.

The UK Crown Prosecution Service has provided support and training to the Director of Public Prosecutions Office in the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat and to the Attorney General's Chambers in Anguilla over the past year, with more in the pipeline.

The UK Ministry of Justice is playing an active role in supporting the Territories as they develop their own Crime Reduction Strategies.

The UK MoD is also available to assist the Police Commissioners across several technical disciplines.

Work is underway to extend the UK Extradition Act of 2003 to those Territories that want this, which will enhance their ability to tackle trans-boundary crime.

The Caribbean Territories in particular benefit from excellent operational, strategic and developmental links with international partners such as US agencies and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Prisons and probation

The FCO also funds a Prison Reform Coordinator with a Caribbean Territory and Bermuda focus. He provides a wide range of support and advice to Territory prisons, probation services, parole boards and other agencies, detailed below.

Over the past year the final training programme to equip prison and probation staff to deliver accredited cognitive behaviour programmes has taken place in the last two Territories that lacked such programmes. This is a significant step in seeking to better prepare prisoners for release, in reducing reoffending rates and in protecting the community. Other prison and probation training

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has covered a range of management and operational areas, training in risk assessment and advice on the detention of juveniles. The formal Inspection of the Cayman Islands prison by Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons will continue with a follow-up inspection in 2014.

UK prison staff have been seconded to various Territories throughout the year providing support to improve prison operations with a number of Territory prison and probation staff from inward secondments in England and Wales. All Territory prisons now belong to the International Corrections and Prisons Association with senior staff attending the last two annual training conferences in order to develop their knowledge and skills.

Increased cooperation between prison services in the Territories has led to a regular transfer of prisoners, mainly to support witness protection arrangements and the dissemination and sharing of best practice, helped by the launch of a website which is accessible to prisons, probation services, parole boards and others throughout the Territories.

The process by which prisoners are assessed and released continues to be strengthened and all Territory parole boards continue to benefit from a high level of support and advice. In Anguilla, the first parole hearings were held successfully this year and parolees are supervised effectively in the community. Anguilla presented a paper on its experience of introducing a parole system at an international conference. Further work in this field includes specific issues relating to life-sentenced prisoners, drafting revised legislation and training for supervisors of parolees.

In the emerging area of alternatives to custody, a serious issue given the high incarceration rates in many Territories, several administrations are exploring additional community sentencing options such as better use of technology, with the use, for example, of electronic tagging increasing after FCO-funded pilot projects.

Disaster preparation and resilience

The UK held a successful hurricane preparation exercise in Montserrat in February. In 2014 we hope there will be further exercises jointly planned between the territories and the UK and that territories will hold smaller internal exercises.

The 6th annual Miami disaster management seminar, funded by the UK Government, was held in Miami in May and included representatives from all Caribbean territories, Bermuda and Gibraltar. This year's focus was the Caribbean hurricane season and preparing for cruise ship and other shipping incidents.

HMS Lancaster and RFA Wave Knight are on patrol in the Caribbean and North Atlantic to provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance to UK Overseas Territories should they require it. They are also engaged on counter-narcotics and interdiction patrols. Both ships have made reconnaissance visits to all Caribbean Territories and Bermuda to improve their co-ordination with local disaster management bodies.

Health

Strengthening public health systems

Health was identified as an area of acute interest at the JMC 2012 and the priority actions which emerged from discussions reflect not only the level of importance placed on each individual action listed but the challenge, shared by most Overseas Territories, of producing high quality health systems in typically small communities. The UK Department of Health (DH), which underwent significant changes to its own core structure in April 2013, plays a role in signposting support for Overseas Territories and providing advice and information where possible. Individual Overseas Territories are also building their own relationships with NHS organisations.

DH also plays a central coordination role for Overseas Territories in relation to the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Directing Council, which this year was attended by representatives from Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

On the issue of access to treatment, residents of the Overseas Territories remain able to use the NHS as chargeable patients. DH is currently reviewing the quota system that is currently in place for the six OTs to access treatment on the NHS (Anguilla, BVI, Falkland Is, Montserrat, St Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands).

International Health Regulation compliance

DH is committed to working with the Overseas Territories to ensure that they are compliant with the International Health Regulations (IHR) by June 2014. For example, it commissioned the Health Protection Agency (now Public Health England) to conduct a gap analysis for UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies in order to assess their current levels of compliance with IHRs, following which it asked them to complete individual action plans to demonstrate how they proposed to address the identified gaps in compliance. DH has received responses from the majority of Territories and will continue its engagement with FCO and DfID to discuss how to manage the gaps.

Procurement of medicines/vaccines

DH has recently assisted St Helena with the provision of vaccines and is more generally looking at the possibility of coordinating procurement processes across the Territories after inviting them in the autumn to complete a questionnaire in order to identify potential options.

Education

Strengthening participation and attainment

The Department for Education (DfE) is discussing with Ofsted the support that they could offer with regard to developing approaches for monitoring education standards in the OTs. They have, for example, helped Tristan de Cunha to identify and access relevant expertise in the fields of special educational needs, early years and curriculum reform as part of work being undertaken following an independent review of its education system.

The DfE International Division has committed to producing a quarterly International Evidence Bulletin to be circulated to education officials in the Overseas Territories. The Bulletin will provide the Territories with up-to-date details on International Education Research.

DFID advisers continue to provide support to education authorities in the “aided” territories.

Early childhood education

DfE’s Special Education Needs team has supported BVI on autism issues. The team hosted a meeting with key education officials to discuss autism provision in the UK and the upcoming changes to SEN provision within the current Children and Families bill. DfE has committed to follow up from that meeting by supplying BVI Representatives with key SEN Department documents and guidance.

Tertiary education

The FCO continues to support opportunities for tertiary education to outstanding graduates and young professionals from across the world and including from the Overseas Territories through the Chevening Scholarship programme. In 2013/2014 Chevening scholarships were awarded to students from the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat. Territory students continue to enjoy the same rates as home students when enrolling on UK university courses.

Lifelong learning

DfE has worked with the International Business Unit at the National College to discuss a range of products and policy support that can be made available to the Overseas Territories. The National College is now able to offer free membership to the OTs (a saving of £140 per person per year). Tristan de Cunha, for example, has since expressed interest in taking part in one of the National Colleges’ training programmes as part of the membership, which would involve, among other things, senior leaders from the island visiting the UK to gain more training on leadership in education.

DfE has confirmed that they welcome approaches from the Overseas Territories for secondment opportunities.