



Centre for Environment  
Fisheries & Aquaculture  
Science

# Blue Belt Overseas Territory Work Plan: British Antarctic Territory

## Extended OT Plan

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This Work Plan has been developed on the basis of a Blue Belt Programme annual budget of £4m. The Work Plan detail is subject to updates to reflect ongoing delivery. The Programme budget for FY19/20 (and therefore associated activities for FY19/20) is yet to be confirmed.



# Document Control

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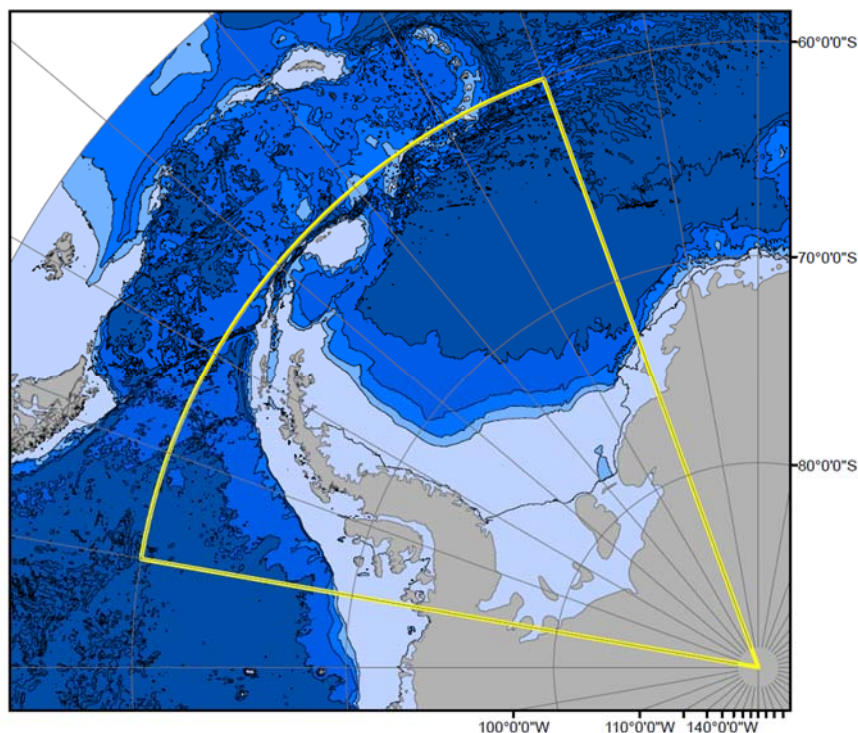
# Introduction

## Background information

The British Antarctic Territory (BAT) comprises the land region south of 60°S latitude and between longitudes 20°W and 80°W. The BAT includes the Antarctic Peninsula, the South Shetland Islands, South Orkney Islands, numerous other offshore islands and the Ronne Ice Shelf (Weddell Sea). The UK's claim to this part of Antarctica is the oldest of any made on the continent. The British Antarctic Territory overlaps with the Antarctic claims of Argentina and Chile. All territorial sovereignty claims to Antarctica are held in abeyance under the Antarctic Treaty 1959.

The BAT covers approximately 1.82 million square kilometres of land and is the largest of the UK's Overseas Territories (UKOTs). It has no indigenous population, but contains permanent British research bases as well as the bases of other nations.

The BAT is administered by a Commissioner in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), who is the Director of the FCO's Overseas Territories Directorate. The Territory has its own legal system and laws, but given the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty System, the Territory does not enforce its laws on foreign nationals. The South Orkneys International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category I (No-take) Marine Protected Area (MPA) was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR: Conservation Measure 91-03), which regulates the activities in the MPA, and is enforced through CCAMLR Member State domestic legislation.



## Biodiversity

The South Orkneys MPA protects benthic and pelagic habitats and a range of biodiversity representative of the Southern Scotia Sea region, including seasonal ice areas, deeper oceanic waters, areas of high primary productivity, frontal areas and penguin foraging areas. The geomorphic zones found in the MPA are cross shelf valley, shelf, gentle shelf slope, ridge, shallow flat ocean, and deep-water seamount ridges. Recorded marine species in the South Orkney MPA represent approximately 20% of all marine species found in the Southern Ocean.

## Fisheries

The principal fishery in the BAT region is a pelagic trawl fishery for Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*), which is managed in two zones around the Antarctic Peninsula (Subarea 48.1, 150,000t) and the South Orkneys (Subarea 48.2, 20,000t). There is also a small research fishery for Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*). The BAT lies within the area of jurisdiction of CCAMLR, to which the UK is a signatory. Consequently, all the fisheries in the area are subject to CCAMLR regulations.

All vessels are licenced by CCAMLR Member States and are required to carry international scientific observers, who record fishing activities and collect biological data. Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing is a significant threat within the BAT, particularly by vessels targeting the high value Antarctic toothfish. Whilst there is currently very little licenced fishing in the BAT, even a small number of illegal vessels could have a large impact on toothfish populations and associated ecosystems.

## Other activities

Tourism activities within the BAT are well-managed, with the majority of operators being members of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) which have extensive procedures and guidelines in place that facilitate appropriate, safe and environmentally-sound travel to the Antarctic.

## Local capacity

There is no local capacity in BAT, although British Antarctic Survey (BAS) operate three scientific bases in the Territory. Two UK institutes provide regional science and monitoring support. The Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) provides stock assessment, technical and management advice, whilst BAS undertakes biological research and monitoring of land-based predators. In addition, BAS also operates two ice-strengthened Royal Research Ships, the James Clark Ross and the Ernest Shackleton. The vessels are present in the BAT sector or wider Southern Atlantic region during the austral summer. The Royal Navy maintains an ice patrol vessel, HMS Protector, in the area during the austral summer.

## Current status (linked to FCO Mandate)

**Design:** The South Orkneys MPA, is an IUCN Category I (No Take) area and is designated and managed under legislation derived from Antarctic Treaty and CCAMLR regulations.

**Designation:** The MPA was designated by CCAMLR CM 91-03 and is permanent unless CCAMLR agrees to its termination. The MPA will be reviewed in 2019.

**Management:** CCAMLR management objectives are in place for the MPA and Conservation Measures apply to fisheries in the BAT sector.

**Monitored:** International fisheries observers monitor 50% of krill fishing vessels, this will increase to 100% coverage in 2020.

**Enforced:** All vessels operating in the CCAMLR area must have a Class A Automatic Identification System (AIS) broadcasting at all times and must have a tamperproof VMS system. The management system is based on a combination of CCAMLR regulations (Conservation Measures, CMs) and GSGSSI domestic law.

## Desired Outcome for 2020

*The BAT sector, including the South Orkneys MPA, has a marine environment that is managed to the highest international standards, with effectively regulated marine activities underpinned by robust science.*

## British Antarctic Territory Work Programme

This work programme has been planned to help FCO develop, implement and enforce marine protection strategies within the MPA, as part of the Blue Belt Programme. Proposed deliverables have been planned to meet FCO needs and comply with the objectives that underpin the Blue Belt mandate.

All work proposed as part of this plan is discussed and agreed with FCO. Quarterly update meetings will be held with FCO, MMO and Cefas to discuss issues, progress and changes to the work programme.

### Workstream 1: Legislation, policy and strategy

Activity: Advice on, and support for, the development of legislation, management strategies and policies

Within the British Antarctic Territory, the South Orkneys MPA is an IUCN Category I (No Take) area and is designated and managed under legislation derived from Antarctic Treaty and CCAMLR regulations. The MPA was designated by CCAMLR CM 91-03 and is permanent unless CCAMLR agrees to its termination. CCAMLR management objectives are in place for the MPA and Conservation Measures apply to fisheries in the BAT sector. The MPA will be reviewed by CCAMLR in 2019/20 and the preparation for the review will be supported by the Blue Belt programme.

Outcome	Activity	ID	Tasks / Outputs	Description	Deliverables	Mandate Objectives	When	Who
<b>LEGISLATION, POLICY &amp; STRATEGY</b>								
	Advice on, and support for, the review of the South Orkneys MPA	BAT 1.1	Ad-hoc support & advice	Advice on, and support for, the review of the South Orkneys MPA	Research reports and advice as required	Management	Annual	Cefas

## Workstream 2: Resource assessment and management

Activity: Determine sustainable harvests for fisheries and advise on sustainable fisheries strategies and management plans

The BAT lies within the area of jurisdiction of CCAMLR, to which the UK is a signatory. Consequently, all the fisheries in the area are subject to CCAMLR regulations.

Three UK institutes provide science, support and advice to the FCO at CCAMLR: The Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) - stock assessment, technical and management advice and British Antarctic Survey (BAS) – fisheries biological research, predator monitoring; with the Marine Resource Assessment Group (MRAG) (UK) and CapFish (South Africa) providing International Scientific Observers.

Consequently, there is no significant requirement for resource assessment, management advice to the FCO for BAT and therefore an ad-hoc support and advice task is included, as for the previous year.

Table 1. Planned tasks for the British Antarctic Territory *Resource Assessment and Management* workstream. The lead organisation or contact (where identified) is included in bold type.

Outcome	Activity	ID	Tasks / Outputs	Description	Deliverables	Mandate Objectives	When	Who
<b>RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT</b>								
<b>Ensure monitoring and sustainable management of fisheries.</b>	Determine sustainable harvests for fisheries and advice on sustainable fisheries strategies and management plans.	BAT 2.1	Ad-hoc support & advice	Ad-hoc support & advice on the BAT region	Research reports and advice as required	Management	Annual	<b>Cefas</b>

## Workstream 3: Biodiversity and habitat use

There were no activities identified as a priority in this workstream



## Workstream 4: Data systems and management

Activity: Capacity building, facilities and improvements to existing systems / processes

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) provide database support to the FCO and CCAMLR data are submitted and stored within an international database. The systems are fully developed and undergo regular review and revision; consequently, no activities were identified as a priority in this workstream. There will be a requirement for data storage from the survey, but that will be as part of the cross-project data storage capability.

## Workstream 5: Local capacity and training

Activity: Training, capacity building, facilities and local engagement

There were no activities identified as a priority in this workstream.

## Workstream 6: Surveillance, compliance and enforcement

Cross-cutting surveillance, compliance and enforcement activities 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 5.1, 7.1, 7.2 and 8.1 apply to the BAT area.

## Key Deliverables

There are a number of key deliverables that will indicate success of the Blue Belt programme in supporting BAT to achieve its overall desired outcome by 2020.

Deliverables identified for BAT include:

- D1: Provision of key advice (in the form of reports) to the FCO, for the review of the South Orkneys MPA, at CCAMLR EMM (July 2019) and the CCAMLR Scientific Committee meetings (October 2019);

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