

The UK Overseas Territories Fund – An update on the second round

(4 minute read)

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John Ellerman Foundation has had the enormous privilege of funding environmental work across the remarkable UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) for over a decade. The UKOTs are mainly small islands with vast ocean estates, home to 94% of the UK's unique wildlife. As part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, we launched a £1m UKOTs Fund in 2021 in partnership with two other funders. Not all interested funders were able to contribute to that first round within our timeframe, so given their ongoing enthusiasm, plus the large field of extremely strong applications we received (see [here](#) for more details on the first round), we decided to launch a second round in relatively quick succession in 2022. In this round we were delighted to be joined by the Postcode Planet Trust, funded by players of the People's Postcode Lottery, plus Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch) and an anonymous foundation, contributing to a total available funding pot of £794,000.

This round built on the successful first round and continued our bespoke approach. Specifically, we kept the one-stage process in recognition of the limited capacity of many UKOT-based organisations and emphasised our desire and willingness to fund those areas which the UK Government's annual Darwin Plus fund (the main funder of UKOT environment projects) is unable to support. In particular, this included contributing to core costs, policy, advocacy and campaigning work, organisational development and land acquisition.

We received 17 applications with a total request of £1,791,122. The applications related to work across 12 UKOT jurisdictions, and again for a very exciting range of marine and land-based work including:

- scientific research
- community engagement
- building organisational core capacity
- policy influencing work directed at the relevant legislative structures and frameworks
- support of existing teams and work so that great work can continue
- innovative new work relating to new technologies and ideas being implemented in pursuit of ambitious climate and biodiversity mitigation goals.

Much of the work shared is rooted in community and builds on expertise and insights that have already been gathered through the applicant and relevant partners. A lot of the work also speaks to the ambition held across the UKOTs to deliver work that responds to the climate and biodiversity crises and mitigates against the worst impacts of these crises for the benefit of not just their own Territory but the wider

planet. We were particularly pleased to receive a mix of applications from UK-registered charities and Territory-based NGOs, with a significant proportion of the latter having never previously applied to John Ellerman Foundation.

On 25th October, we met with funders from the organisations contributing funds directly, as well as an interested funder acting as an observer, to review and make decisions collectively on the applications received. We are delighted to announce the following nine delivery organisations have been awarded funding as follows below in alphabetical order. Several of the successful Territory organisations were not eligible to apply directly due to their in-Territory charity governance frameworks, so are being funded via a zero-cost conduit.

1. **Birdlife Cyprus (with RSPB as a conduit) for £85,000 over two years** for work in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) to support core salary contributions to continue science and advocacy work (habitat management & illegal bird-killing) relating to both Akrotiri and Dhekelia SBAs, and funding to commission an expert hydrological & wetland management study of the Akrotiri RAMSAR wetland complex.
2. **Blue Marine Foundation, £99,425 over two years** to work with the Cyprus SBA Authorities, Republic of Cyprus and local fishers to advance marine protections and strengthen the sustainability of artisanal local fisheries.
3. **Falklands Conservation, £121,100 over 16 months** for a project in the Falklands Islands that aims to support the safeguarding of two peatland mountain ranges via potential public land protections and a private land leasehold.
4. **Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, £50,305 over one year** for a project in Gibraltar that will utilise the technical expertise of Gibraltarian entomologists to increase capacity for invasive ant identification, survey and training and improve Gibraltar's resilience to invasive non-native species.
5. **Montserrat National Trust (with RSPB as a conduit) for £119,800 over three years** for work in Montserrat that supports costs relating to a Conservation Officer role in the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) to deliver its new 2021-26 strategic plan and build capacity.
6. **Protect Blue (with Blue Marine Foundation as a conduit) for £37,000 over one year** for work in the Pitcairn Islands to create a branding and communications strategy for the Pitcairn Marine Protected Area, one of the world's largest, that is co-created with, and implemented by, the Pitcairn community.
7. **RSPB for £76,370 over one year** for work in the Cayman Islands to support local advocacy and help them engage the public in decision-making around proposed motorway development through the Central Mangrove Wetland.
8. **South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, for £103,000 over two years** for work in the Falklands Islands towards salary contributions for a PA and Communications Officer, and an Office Manager.

9. **Turks and Caicos National Trust (with RSPB as a conduit) for £102,000 over two years** for work in the Turks and Caicos building capacity via funding salaries of a full-time Heritage Sites Operations Manager and a part-time Fundraising Coordinator, to implement the Trust's new 2021-25 strategic plan.