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Senator Jim Perchard
Sub-panel
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
States of Jersey

Our Ref: MSP/ab/DirS/TDF

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Dear Senator

Re: Review of Jersey Overseas Aid programme

The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust welcomes this opportunity to comment on the four objectives of the scrutiny sub-panel. Durrell is entering its third year as a recipient of grant funding to carry out work among very poor communities in Madagascar, in which infrastructure development in schools and villages, water schemes, literacy improvement and technical skill transfer all contribute to, and complement, Durrell's other direct actions in support of intact and productive ecosystems for the use of local people, with further global benefits.

Personally, I have had considerable experience in Africa in engaging with large bilateral aid donors in their support for wildlife conservation / natural resource management.

Our summary observations, spanning all four terms of reference is "While it would always be desirable to have a larger aid programme, aspiring closer to the 0.7% GNI target, this should in no way jeopardise the characteristics and values of the current scheme." There are several salient points about the current scheme, in which quality rather than quantity is evident:

1. The effectiveness of the JOAC administration is acknowledged. Direct costs are very low. Thus, almost 100% of the funds are applied to JOAC objectives. This is in contrast to the figure I have quoted to the JOAC that in some large aid organisations, £2 is spent on administration for every £1 that reaches the recipients.
2. The bulk of money disbursed is via blue-chip international charities, which will have the highest standards of governance and integrity.
3. The JOAC policies of giving to trusted intermediaries maximises good use of resources; Jersey is probably advantaged by not having overseas embassies or representatives involved in its official aid programme.



4. Within JOAC's parameters of preferred activities, its trusted charities are choosing priorities. This is in direct contrast to many bilateral agencies where applicant charities must flex their agendas and priorities to align with those of the donor.
5. As a small community Jersey is not able to lay down conditions about the sourcing of materials and equipment bought with aid funding: many bilateral agencies insist on home country sourcing, thus helping their own economies, with the undertone that much aid benefits the donor country rather than the recipient.
6. A unique attribute of the JOAC programme is the number of island residents who take part in overseas programmes; they return after a life-changing experience, increasing the effective contribution of Jersey and influencing the island and its society subsequently; this is a genuinely valuable impact.
7. The experience of community and individual involvement in overseas projects may well contribute to the island public's notable generosity for further appeals, as was evident with the Side-by-Side campaign.

Given the relatively informal administration of the aid programme, it is critical that the JOAC can assess results and ensure value for money. We make the following observations:

1. While an applicant charity must describe a discrete project, the intended activities may be part of a larger programme; in such cases, the reporting mechanism must ensure that JOAC monies are spent as applied for.
2. The application form asks of the envisaged sustainability of projects for which funds are requested; this must be so, but it may be hard to give a satisfactory report on this at the end of each year, or, indeed, be able to state categorically that improvements will persist if the funds end or the agency is no longer present; this is a major dilemma in rural development.
3. Reporting to JOAC should perhaps focus more on impacts rather than activities; it is easy to be busy, but harder to make a difference; but, the current website (www.jerseyoverseasaid.org.je) makes this point.

We have two further observations:

1. Does the JOAC insist on adequate recognition for Jersey at the sites at which its funding is spent? Through its international training programme, Durrell is familiar with the effect of a graduate trainee talking favourably about Jersey, based on his/her time in the island, often many years earlier. The JOAC programme can be used to promote the island and its interests, and doing so would support the States' Strategic Aim Seven "To develop Jersey's international personality", as in the Strategic Plan 2005-2010.



2. Jersey is a small island with evident environmental problems, and particular challenges in the face of imminent climate change and its consequences. As the recent Stern review shows, mitigation efforts must start through adaptation to low-carbon development paths. Curbing deforestation in developing countries is a major way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Exploration of these opportunities and links with Jersey could diversify the JOAC programme, put Jersey at the forefront of looking at the broader picture of environmental sustainability and lifestyles, and be the means for offsetting some of the undesirable results of a wealthy, consumer lifestyle in Jersey.

In summary, our conclusions on each of the Sub-panel's terms of reference are thus:

- a. *The States' policy for upgrading the island's overseas aid budget in line with GNI.*

While an increased budget would be desirable, it should not be increased to the extent of jeopardising the current effective administration of the programme; quality and effectiveness are more important than climbing the league table of donor nations.

- b. *The JOAC's policies and procedures for the distribution of its grant aid budget.*

The administration instructions to applicants are a model of clarity, simplicity and appreciation of the realities of working in developing countries that may require change and flexibility.

- c. *The methods for measuring the effective utilisation of the JOAC's aid budget by recipient.*

The JOAC must be assured of the probity of its aid recipients, as there is clearly a measure of trust by JOAC. The commission may well feel comfortable on this due to its process of meeting recipients and applicants each year.

- d. *The island's overseas aid contributions in comparison with other jurisdictions.*

The JOAC website shows the key figures; Jersey is currently in an enviable position, superseded only by countries whose generosity to the developing world is well known. We repeat our point in (a) above, that any increase in the aid budget should not be to the detriment of the present cost-effective system of administration and quality product.

Yours sincerely

Mark R Stanley Price
Chief Executive

