



GOVERNMENT OF TRISTAN da CUNHA

Chief Financial Officer Role

Tristan da Cunha Overview

Background

Tristan da Cunha is an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom (UKOT). It is of volcanic origin and consists of four islands – Tristan (the main island), Nightingale and Inaccessible, which together form a group, and Gough Island which lies 220 miles to the south-east. Tristan is the only island with a permanent community: it has a population of around 250 people. **It is the remotest inhabited island in the world**, situated some 1750 miles south-west of Cape Town and only accessible by sea – 7 to 10 days sailing from Cape Town on a working fishing trawler. A harbour allows for access to the island for approximately 60 days of the year – all vessels are off-loaded onto rafts to bring goods and passengers ashore.

Tristan da Cunha offers expatriates opportunities for walking and occasionally visiting the nearby islands of Nightingale and Inaccessible. Of particular interest is the wildlife and it is possible to observe at very close quarters the beautiful Yellow Nosed Albatross and the Rockhopper Penguin. Fishing is a rewarding pastime both from the shore and at sea. The island people are fun loving, friendly, kind and generous and it is possible to enjoy a lively social life. In the village there is a pub, outdoor swimming pool, and museum/tourist centre. The one island shop sells most essential items and there is always an abundant supply of potatoes, fish and locally produced beef and lamb. There are six television channels provided by British Forces Broadcasting Service that carry UK television and news. Although the island is very remote the telephone service is good (with UK telephone numbers) and the internet is available, albeit quite slow. There is no mobile telephone service.

Tristan da Cunha is internally self governing and is part of the UK Overseas Territory of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. Constitutionally, executive authority rests with the Tristan Governor (resident on St Helena); in practice authority is delegated to an Administrator who is resident on Tristan and is the de facto Head of Government. The Administrator heads a locally elected Island Council, which is an advisory body on policy matters. The elected Chief Islander is the representative of the island. The Administrator and Council are supported by government departments. These include: Agriculture, Conservation, Education, Finance, Fishing, Medical, Post Office & Tourism, Public Works and Telecommunications.

There is one school on the island. St. Mary's School caters for children from the age of 3 years to 16 years. The school has an expatriate Head teacher and one other expatriate teacher. There are 6 other teachers and trainee teachers. None of the Tristanian teachers are qualified but some have benefitted from training in the UK or St Helena. There are currently 26 pupils attending the school. The 13 to 16 age range work towards IGCSE in only English, Maths, Geography, Biology and Creative Arts.

Tristan boasts a medical centre, with two expatriate doctors and two expatriate and 6 local nurses. It can undertake minor surgery, but serious cases have to be medically evacuated to South Africa – but this can only be once the next boat arrives.

Tristan's main resource is lobster fishing. The lobster concession is currently held by a South African/Isle of man company. The concession holder provides the electricity for the settlement, and provides employment at the factory. It also provides the shipping service – 8 ships per annum. Tristan also earns income from the sale of stamps, coins and handcraft souvenirs. Revenue also flows from tourism and visitor accommodation, although this has been hit by the restrictions put in place because of the COVID crisis. The UK Government provides some support in specific areas including funding expatriate positions in education, health and finance as well as funding for training and infrastructure, as well as specific funding for a variety of projects. 97% of the working age population are employed, either by the Government or by the lobster concession.

In 2020 Tristan established the largest Marine Protected Zone in the Atlantic Ocean (4th largest in the World). An endowment fund, set up by international environmental donors, will start to pay an annual revenue to Tristan from FY 2023/24.

The global downturn caused by the COVID crisis has hit the revenue from the lobster fishery and from the tourism industry. Both should recover during FY 2022/23 and beyond, but it is likely that the islanders will have some hard decisions to make over the next few years as the effects of the shrinking working population start to bite.

The Treasury/Finance Department, under the oversight of the Chief Financial Officer, manages every budget, and oversee spending across the whole of Government. The staff includes a Treasurer/head of department, a deputy head, and five other clerks. While staff members have undergone training, as yet none are qualified accountants. The current CFO has greatly improved the budgeting process, and the job-holder will be expected to continue the mentoring role to the island team to ensure the team have the confidence and understanding of correct financial processes. It is important to note that the Head of Finance's line manager is the Administrator not the CFO.

The Chief Financial Officer will be expected to work closely with the Administrator and the Island Council. The island will face a number of economic challenges over the next few years, and the CFO will be expected to be a major part of the decision-making process, especially from a financial and economic standpoint.

It is the long term aim to ensure that Tristanians can become fully qualified accountants and can manage the Finance Department without expatriate assistance. Although the Finance Department are very open and keen for change, it will be necessary to have a positive attitude to change and encourage all government departments to improve financial management. Strong interpersonal skills are vital.

Key Competencies Required for the Chief Financial Officer Roles

In order to deliver results the successful candidate will need to be very sensitive to the advantages and challenges of living in a small and isolated community.

It is vital to be receptive to the views of the stakeholders and work with them to develop plans for improvement. You will need to show extremely high levels of enthusiasm, energy and commitment and have the qualities of resilience, patience, adaptability and resourcefulness in order to cope with the island's remoteness, and the length of time that it sometimes takes to get resources in place.

The successful candidate will have to be fair and impartial with all employees, build productive working relationships, promote teamwork and encourage staff to take on responsibilities. Conflicts of interest will not be tolerated, and the successful candidate's actions must be beyond reproach. It is very important to respect confidences, and a good sense of humour is a distinct advantage.

Visit www.tristandc.com for further information on the Island.