

British Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union
(BGIPU)



Strategic Business Plan

2019/20-2021/22

Advancing the parliamentary dimension of
Britain's foreign relations



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1. Introduction

This third Strategic Business Plan (for the period 2019/20-2021/22) sets out the high-level strategic objectives for the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) over the next three financial years, meeting the requirements created under successive Financial Memoranda with the House of Common and the House of Lords (the most recent signed in September 2017). It provides an effective rationale for BGIPU's programme of inter-parliamentary activities and identifies the requirements for funding by both Houses of Parliament.

This Plan seeks to define and prioritise the objectives and functions of the BGIPU in fulfilling its main inter-parliamentary and international relations tasks to achieve the Group's main aims. The key beneficiaries are all members of both Houses of the UK Parliament (comprising the full membership of the BGIPU), along with specific benefits for the UK Parliament as an institution in facilitating active engagement with counterpart parliaments and related bodies worldwide. In addition, there are a broader range of soft power and foreign policy benefits for the United Kingdom.

The main benefit to the UK's international interests is to ensure that the BGIPU remains an active, influential and leading member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), not least given the legacy that Britain is one of its two founding members (with France), but also importantly to advance the UK's democratic values given the fact it's one of the world's oldest parliamentary democracies. This advances the UK's key interests in ensuring democratic principles and representative governance are advanced and strengthened globally through the activities of the IPU.

In setting forth a vision statement, core values, an operational context and key strategic objectives, the intention is to inform the activities and set valid expectations for the outcomes of BGIPU's work. This task must, however, also recognise the importance of retaining flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs and

opportunities as they arise considering the increasingly global uncertainties created by the now ever-changing dynamics of international relations and events.

This Strategic Business Plan also provides a foundation for planning activities and anticipating likely expenditure for the three financial years ahead. While the specific details of BGIPU's annual Forward Programme of activity are ultimately determined by the regular deliberations of the Executive Committee, this business plan backs up and informs those decisions. The guidance outlined in this Business Plan is intended to provide a means of achieving the most coherent and comprehensive programme of work possible, reflecting agreed strategic objectives, balancing financial costs and operational effort and most importantly setting out achievable outcomes.

To that end, this Strategic Business Plan provides a three-year forward look with the main emphasis on the coming financial year, i.e. 2019-20. A fourth Strategic Business Plan will be prepared and submitted to the Executive Committee around the start of 2022 to cover BGIPU obligations for the period 2022/23-2024/25.

2. Vision Statement

The British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) aims to serve Britain's and the UK Parliament's interests through *advancing the parliamentary dimension of Britain's foreign relations*.

BGIPU will advance Britain's international interests through delivering a comprehensive programme of inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchange activities for UK parliamentarians. This is aimed at improving mutual understanding between them and their international counterparts on both common interests and differing perspectives on the broadest

range of bilateral issues and our respective global interests.

This programme is delivered through inward and outward parliamentary delegation visits, active engagement in the assemblies and meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and related foreign policy events. Such activities contribute to UK parliamentary objectives of supporting effective multilateral norms and defending international cooperative mechanisms for global security and prosperity, as well as championing democracy.

By determining a strategic focus for its work, BGIPU seeks to make the strongest possible contribution to the UK's international engagement, drawing on some 130 years of commitment to dialogue between UK Parliamentarians and their colleagues overseas. BGIPU's efforts remains an abiding commitment to advancing parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, promoting human rights, peace and development through encouraging better understanding and cooperation between nations.

BGIPU works to achieve the continued development of a strong parliamentary dimension to international affairs, particularly through the inter-parliamentary work of the IPU. As the international organisation of the world's parliaments, the IPU plays an important role in ensuring there is a clear parliamentary voice in the corridors and halls of the United Nations, bolstering multilateralism at a time when global norms and institutions are under increasing and serious threat.

Overall, our vision is to ensure the UK Parliament remains in the lead of the global parliamentary community, actively engaged and supporting activities and debates. This also ensures UK

parliamentarians can remain engaged and influential with their counterparts abroad. To this end, it is vital to have a cost-effective and appropriately skilled BGIPU Secretariat, providing high-quality administration of a programme of inter-parliamentary exchanges which serve the interests of and are highly regarded by all its members.

3. Core Values

The BGIPU Secretariat will be guided by the following core values in managing its day-to-day operations and undertaking its activities:

- Close attention to the constitutional importance and dignity of Parliament
- Abiding commitment to the highest standards of service to all UK Parliamentarians, the staff of both Houses and our overseas contacts
- Pursuit of professional excellence, innovative approaches and intellectual rigour
- Strategic, results-focused approach to all activities
- Behaviour based on honesty, transparency and political impartiality
- Open, transparent and accountable actions, with a key focus on ensuring value for money and the exercise of fiscal responsibility.

- Committed to a work environment based on a co-operative approach, mutual support, trust and effective team-working
- Dedicated to the professional and personal development of all staff
- Belief in the value of international parliamentary dialogue as a means of increasing understanding and avoiding conflict within and between states
- Commitment to the promotion of democracy and parliamentary governance with due regard to the diversity of forms this may take across the globe.
- Strong support for universal norms and standards and in advancing the efforts of the UN and other global institutions to promote and defend them.
- Respect for universal human rights and due regard for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in supporting democratic institutions and principles.
- Total commitment to the achievement of gender equality.
- Awareness in all respects of the environmental impact of our work.

4. Operational Context

What is the IPU?: The IPU is an international organisation comprising the parliaments of sovereign states which was established in 1889 in Paris by William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom) and Frédéric Passy (France). It was the first permanent

international political forum for multilateral dialogue and negotiations.

The IPU is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and activity, comprising the worldwide organisation of parliaments. In this capacity, it is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law. It develops standards, disseminates information on good practices and helps build parliamentary capacity and efficacy. Uniquely, it monitors and defends the human rights of members of parliament and it also promotes respect for universal human rights values, norms and principles. The IPU works in support of gender equality and to advance the full participation of women, minorities and indigenous peoples in political and public life.

Currently comprising parliamentarians from 168 Member Parliaments and 12 Associate Members, the IPU aims to complement international relations conducted at inter-governmental level by ministers, ambassadors and other state officials by establishing understanding, cooperation and friendship between parliamentarians on issues of common concern and international significance.

The IPU seeks to assist parliaments in addressing a increasing complex international agenda and in contributing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and related global institutions. In doing so, it works in close co-operation with the United Nations, whose objectives it shares. The IPU is supported by an International Secretariat based in Geneva since 1921 with responsibility for co-ordinating the IPU's global activities, including biannual Assemblies and other specialised meetings of parliamentarians.

Who are we?: BGIPU manages the UK Parliament's engagement with the IPU and comprises all members of both Houses of the UK Parliament, across all political parties and the cross-benches. It is governed by an Executive Committee led by a Chair, Vice-

Chairs and Honorary Treasurer. These Officers are elected at the Annual General Meeting as stipulated in the Rules of the BGIPU. Key stakeholders include the Speakers and senior officials of both Houses of the UK Parliament, all UK Parliamentarians, other inter-parliamentary groups and All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) of the UK Parliament. Cooperation and partnership with counterparts in foreign parliaments and close collaboration with the IPU President, Secretary General and Headquarters staff in Geneva are also central to BGIPU's work. BGIPU also works in close cooperation with the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and interacts with other government and non-government bodies working in the field of the UK's international relations, including to facilitate exchanges between parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organisations.

What does the BGIPU do?: BGIPU manages a comprehensive programme of inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchanges, with a specific bilateral focus on non-Commonwealth parliaments. This activity comprises a range of inward parliamentary visits to encourage encourage better understanding of the UK and its perspectives among foreign counterparts. BGIPU also coordinates outward delegations to advance Britain's interests abroad, including through increasing the engagement and understanding of UK parliamentarians in international relations. It also manages the participation of the UK Parliament in IPU Assemblies and other international meetings and administers the work of the Chair and Executive Committee in overseeing and managing BGIPU operations and activities. The Group manages the participation of the UK Parliament at IPU Assemblies and other international meetings on key global matters, including global meetings held under multilateral auspices, including at major UN-backed meetings such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), global climate change negotiations and major economic, trade and development events.

5. Current Policy Challenges

In its work, BGIPU draws on some 130 years of meaningful inter-parliamentary diplomacy stemming back to the late 19th century.

There have been occasions when its activities have actually made remarkable impact on the conduct of British foreign policy and broader world affairs. This includes in 1984 when the first official parliamentary contact between the UK and Argentina after the Falklands War occurred at the IPU Assembly in Geneva and later that year when then Prime Minister Thatcher met Mikhail Gorbachev under BGIPU auspices, famously saying "I like Mr Gorbachev. We can do business together".

Nevertheless, we must always reflect and review the effectiveness of our work to validate our use of public money and remain relevant to addressing the key opportunities and major challenges of our time. To do so, BGIPU must be able to demonstrate the value of its activities through both quantitative and qualitative evidence of effectiveness and relevance. At the strategic level, this requires close attention to the contribution to international affairs reflected in the stated objectives for the programme of work, balanced against the practical realities of the international environment and UK parliamentary agenda. At a functional level, it also requires detailed reports on visit outcomes, accurate records of member participation and close attention to the relevance and responsiveness of our work programme.

All organisations working in the field of international relations face risks and challenges which in recent times have grown in complexity and been compounded by unpredictable changes in the dynamics of relationships between nations. We face an increasingly uncertain global outlook, where threats to democratic norms have increased and the rules-based international system has been attacked and undermined by governments seeking narrow national advantage. Against that background, direct engagement between parliamentarians has never been more important in providing alternative means of contact and discourse not only to better understand such developments but also influence them towards better outcomes. Additionally, with the increasing importance of 'soft power' diplomacy in a multi-polar world, inter-parliamentary exchanges can play a key role in advancing national trade and cultural

interests and underscoring bilateral political and security commitments. Interparliamentary dialogue should also promote respect for universal human rights and the rule of law, as foundations for political stability, sustainable development and conflict prevention.

In support of this broader IPU agenda, it is also vital that the UK Parliament, through the BGIPU, plays a leading role in promoting key principles of representative governance in the world, including fundamental human rights and rule of law principles which underpin it. In doing so, we must be mindful of the need to be sensitive to particular national circumstances and recognise that no one size fits all when it comes to governance. Nevertheless, democracy, for all its faults and critics, is demonstrably proven to be better suited than any other systems of governance in advancing peace and prosperity and ultimately protecting human rights based on globally accepted norms and standards. Overall, our efforts need to be supportive of democracy as a process where people are given the freedom to choose who will govern them and how that government operates for the greater good of all. This principle was traditionally a key driving force in the IPU but this is being increasingly contested by some members and the UK must always play a lead role in its defence.

At the international level, the pre-eminent global body, the United Nations, by its very composition, remains a collective body of sovereign executive governments. It is important in that context that there are alternative mechanisms for global dialogue and discourse, where the views of parliaments and the people they represent, can be heard, underscoring the vital role played by the IPU. By holding national executives to review, scrutiny and account at a global level, parliamentary voices have shown their relevance be it in the context of the Global Goals, the climate change debate or the future direction of global economic and trade bodies like the G20 and the WTO.

In light of what has been a complex and contested Brexit process, the UK's overall international reputation will continue to benefit

from concerted effort through BGIPU to explain the important role UK Parliament has played in the process, dispelling misperceptions and explaining effectively what this means for Britain's future place in the world. Parliamentarians also have a role in capitalising on the key opportunities provided by the Brexit outcome in promoting the UK's interests and standing abroad, politically, economically and culturally. BGIPU's continued leading role in the IPU's Europe-based geopolitical grouping, "the 12 Plus Group" remains a major advantage for us and will remain a key priority in our work.

Beyond Europe, BGIPU remains uniquely placed to engage with key opinion-makers and decision-takers in a wide range of countries given the wide breadth of IPU membership. In our international engagement, we should highlight the Brexit debate, not for its fractious and complex nature, but for the demonstration it provides of how a democratic and representative system of government, underpinned by respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law, still provides the best, albeit at times imperfect, way for robust debate and decision-making. In doing so, we should highlight how the Westminster system has traversed the most complex of national issues facing the UK, avoiding public unrest and without need to suppress contrary views or ignore basic political rights as occurs in more autocratic states.

We must also be conscious that BGIPU operates in a UK domestic environment where there is significant scrutiny and attention to the activities and cost-effectiveness of the work of every parliamentarian. There remains strong scepticism of the actual benefits of overseas travel and international exchanges and the value this provides to the public at large. BGIPU must be open and accountable, able to fully explain and account for the benefits accrued through its activities and be able to prove the cost-effectiveness of its work. To this end, a key challenge is to make the BGIPU relevant and responsive in ways which are meaningful to the general public.

To that end, BGIPU activities must demonstrate clear benefits in advancing the UK's national interest in the world by expanding opportunities for trade and investment, consolidating existing or creating new international partnerships and by supporting the UK major objectives in its international engagement. This includes a definite role for BGIPU in boosting the UK's international partnerships, trade interests and cultural exchanges. More broadly, it also requires us to achieve better understanding among our interlocutors of the UK's fundamental beliefs and values in a world where such principles, norms and standards are being rapidly diminished.

6. Key Strategic Objectives

The Secretariat of the BGIPU has the primary goal of providing high quality policy advice and cost-effective administrative support for the activities of the BGIPU Chair, Officers and Members of the Executive Committee. Its main task, under the leadership of the Director, is to facilitate the engagement of UK Parliamentarians with their counterparts overseas, particularly through the auspices of the IPU. In pursuit of this goal, there are four equally important and inter-related objectives as listed below and expanded in Section 8:

- Objective 1: Provide effective financial management and human resources services in full compliance with BGIPU Rules and the Financial Memorandum with both Houses to ensure accountable and cost-effective use of public funds provided to BGIPU.
- Objective 2: Deliver high-quality policy advice and administrative support for the UK Parliament's engagement in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including in support of UK delegations to IPU Assemblies and other meetings.
- Objective 3: Ensure efficient administrative and policy support for inwards and outward visits for UK

Parliamentarians to advance Britain's foreign relations through inter-parliamentary exchange and dialogue.

- Objective 4: Administer an effective key events, information management and communications programme demonstrating the value of BGIPU activities to key stakeholders and ensuring active engagement by UK parliamentarians.

7. Priorities for Forward Planning

The respective prioritisation of the BGIPU's main activities is determined by the Executive Committee based on suggestions and advice from the BGIPU Secretariat and from BGIPU members themselves. Once approved these activities comprise an indicative Forward Programme which is reviewed and updated at regular intervals in consultation with BGIPU Officers and members.

To facilitate the effective forward planning of work, the Forward Programme lists endorsed inwards/outwards delegations, any short visits from counterpart Parliaments being supported by BGIPU, anticipated attendance of UK parliamentarians at IPU Conferences and other events, proposed seminars and conferences arranged in the UK by the BGIPU and any other agreed activities to be included on the work programme of the BGIPU.

In determining the focus of BGIPU activities, our key strategic priorities reflect the major role the UK plays internationally as an active and influential player in global affairs. Our key policy priorities are focussed on peace and security, economic prosperity and sustainable development, democratic governance and political empowerment and human rights and the rule of law. Reflecting these priorities. BGIPU gives attention to the full scope of peace, security and conflict resolution issues, including active engagement in recent debates at IPU Assemblies on global terrorism, refugees and migration issues,

human rights, climate change and emerging threats to peace and security. Defence of the multilateral system and promoting support for adherence to a rules based global system of norms and values has also been a growing increasing focus due to the impact of negative developments. BGIPU works to encourage partnerships and cooperation for more effective sustainable development, including through the comprehensive Global Goals adopted by all UN Members at its Leaders' Summit in September 2015.

BGIPU also strongly supports efforts to improve the participation of women in political and public life, including through a focus on the need for gender-sensitive parliaments and parallel efforts in the IPU to enhance the engagement of youth, including through support for young parliamentarians. Our support for the UK Parliament undertaking a gender-sensitive audit along IPU lines was a major achievement of our last three-year plan and such gender work, including BGIPU participation in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN each year, must remain a key priority. BGIPU remains firmly committed to promoting universal human rights norms and respect for the rule of law, including supporting the vital work of the IPU in protecting the human rights of the world's MPs and advancing the role of parliament in countries across the world under the UN's Universal Periodic Review process.

Taking into account recent past and any planned delegation activities, BGIPU will seek to deliver for members a bilateral programme which balances opportunities for visits to all five major regions of the world, namely Europe, Africa, Middle East, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific. Priority countries for inward/outward delegation visits should be selected based mainly on members' interests, but also reflecting timeliness in terms of bilateral relations, key developments in the country in question, including democratic transition/changes of government and creating opportunities to enhance British influence on core foreign policy priorities. As part of a strategy for post-Brexit engagement, bilateral exchanges with key European countries have been given greater priority in recent

years, along with enhancing the UK's leadership role and engagement in the 12 Plus geopolitical group of the IPU.

BGIPU's efforts through the IPU at the multilateral level will focus on ensuring better appreciation of UK perspectives among IPU members, promoting the IPU's important work in parliamentary strengthening and in promoting democratic objectives, ensuring an efficient and effective IPU serving all members equally and working to enhance IPU engagement with the UN and other multilateral bodies on global issues requiring meaningful parliamentary inputs.

In designing the Forward Programme, the BGIPU Secretariat will also consult with other inter-parliamentary groups and the Overseas Offices of the House of Commons and the House of Lords to avoid duplication and the FCO, or other relevant UK agencies, to better appreciate the UK Government's policy objectives and to seek support from UK missions abroad. A projected programme of annual activity is below:

Projected Programme of Annual Activity

- Five Inward Delegations
- Five Outward Delegations
- Two IPU Assembly Delegations
- Two 12 Plus Steering Group meetings
- BGIPU participation in relevant IPU conferences
- Annual international parliamentary conference on selected theme
- UK-based policy events, outreach and report-back meetings
- Annual diplomatic networking event for State Opening
- Web-based activity reporting and newsletter
- Twitter feed on key policy events and issues
- Annual Report and Financial Accounts
- Support for APPGs
- Support for other inward parliamentary visits

8. Objectives, Core Activities and Expected Outcomes

Objective 1: Provide effective financial management and human resources services in full compliance with BGIPU Rules and the Financial Memorandum with both Houses to ensure accountable and cost-effective use of public funds provided to BGIPU.

The BGIPU Rules set down the basic corporate governance arrangements for the organisation and guide the overall management and conduct of the Group's affairs. BGIPU also has financial, administrative and human resources obligations as a condition of the funding it receives from the House of Commons and the House of Lords. These are set out in the Financial Memoranda (current signed in late 2017) which, inter alia, require BGIPU to discharge its financial responsibilities with regard to the management of public monies procedures laid down in HM Treasury's guidance. Likewise, BGIPU is expected to employ and manage its employees on terms broadly in line with those set out in the House of Commons Staff Handbook, including using its pay and grading system. Additionally, the basis for travel costs undertaken by the BGIPU delegations must be consistent with guidance established by the House of Commons and House of Lords for overseas delegations to certain Parliamentary Assemblies. To meet these obligations, BGIPU has to demonstrate high-level financial management capabilities, effective administrative and programme planning skills as well as significant human resources expertise.

	Core Activities	Expected Outcomes
1.1	Management of the Annual General Meeting and all Executive Committee and other BGIPU governance meetings.	Full compliance with the requirements of BGIPU Rules and the Financial Memorandum, including effective coordination of governance arrangements to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee, the membership and both Houses of Parliament as funding partners.

1.2	Management of BGIPU human resources aimed at providing a work environment conducive to supporting a high performing team with fairness & attention to personal development.	Full compliance with the requirements of BGIPU Rules and the Financial Memorandum, particularly regarding employing and managing staff broadly in line with the standards of the House of Commons. Effective and efficient human resources management to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee, BGIPU members, Secretariat staff and both Houses of Parliament as funding partners.
1.3	Management of BGIPU Financial resources with close attention to attaining efficient, transparent and value for money programme expenditure.	Full compliance with the requirements of BGIPU Rules and the Financial Memoranda and effective and accountable utilisation of financial resources to the satisfaction of the BGIPU Executive Committee, the BGIPU membership, external auditors and both Houses of Parliament as funding partners.

Objective 2: Deliver high-quality policy advice and administrative support for the UK Parliament's engagement in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including in support of UK delegations to IPU Assemblies and other meetings.

As the body directly responsible for the UK Parliament's representation in the IPU, support for engagement in IPU activities and meetings remains a major task for BGIPU. As the world's pre-eminent inter-parliamentary body, the IPU brings together parliamentarians from around the world to discuss global issues, propose solutions to pressing international challenges and disseminate and promote democratic ideals and practices. Active engagement by the UK Parliament in the IPU provides key

opportunities for UK members to engage the international parliamentary community, contribute to global debates and solutions to international issues, to build networks, and to develop professionally drawing on good practice models at home and abroad. It also ensures that matters of importance to the UK are given due attention at inter-parliamentary meetings and that UK perspectives are advocated and better understood.

	Core Activities	Expected Outcomes
2.1	Manage all aspects of UK participation in IPU activities, including for annual Assemblies and other IPU meetings.	Effective and influential UK participation in IPU Assemblies and other meetings to ensure the organization is relevant and conducive to advancing Britain's global interests.
2.2	Manage UK's leading participation in the IPU's 12 Plus Group.	Major contribution to lead the work of the geopolitical 12 Plus Group in ensuring the IPU remains relevant, responsive and accountable to the interests of 12 Plus members.
2.3	Act as the main conduit for engagement between IPU and the UK Parliament.	Ensure the work of the IPU is valued in the UK Parliament and serves effectively UK goals to advance international peace and prosperity, human rights, the rule of law, parliamentary governance and democratic principles.

Objective 3: Ensure efficient administrative and policy support for inwards and outward visits for UK Parliamentarians to advance Britain's foreign relations through inter-parliamentary exchange and dialogue.

Inter-parliamentary exchanges promote the UK's national interest (and parliamentary democracy more generally) internationally, through its engagement with the global parliamentary community

by hosting inter-parliamentary delegation visits to the Palace of Westminster and bilateral visits abroad. Members of Parliament and others who visit the United Kingdom are given the opportunity to learn about our practices and parliamentary procedures, our history, culture and people and our politics and policy priorities. This serve to promote British values, highlight areas of common interest between countries, to strengthen bilateral and parliamentary connections and demonstrate the UK's open, pluralistic and multi-ethnic society. The UK Parliament also maintains a network of country-focused All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) and BGIPU support them in their complementary efforts to deepen relations with other countries.

	Core Activities	Expected Outcomes
3.1	Coordinate administrative and policy inputs for an effective Outward Delegation programme.	Results-focused delegation visits which provide UK Parliamentarians with improved understanding of key international relationships and issues, opportunities for improved bilateral dialogue and lead to substantive outcomes for advancing Britain's foreign relations interests.
3.2	Coordinate administrative and policy inputs for an effective Inward Delegation programme.	Effective delegation visits which ensure better understanding of UK parliamentary processes, promote bilateral dialogue on issues of mutual concerns and provide a substantive result in advancing British interests abroad.
3.3	Coordinate effectively other parliamentary visits on request and as resources allow.	To promote better understanding of UK views among foreign parliamentarians, provide cost-effective and informative short visit programs which allow better understanding of UK

		Parliamentary processes and create opportunities for dialogue.
3.4	Support the activities of All-Party Parliamentary Groups.	In full compliance with the BGIPU Rules, provide practical support and financial assistance to assist parliamentarians in advancing bilateral relations with countries in ways which complement the work of BGIPU.

Objective 4: Administer an effective key events, information management and communications programme demonstrating the value of BGIPU activities to key stakeholders and ensuring active engagement by UK parliamentarians.

Following the recommendations of the Executive Committee's Modernisation Committee, in October 2011, BGIPU implemented a move away from printed publications and reporting to comprehensive web-based reporting on a dedicated BGIPU website and through social media, supplemented by a shorter, more focussed Annual Report format. BGIPU also increased its number of targeted thematic events on key foreign policy issues for UK parliamentarians, including engaging with government and non-government agencies in highlighting current key themes in international relations. There have also been specific membership promotional activities in Parliament, to raise awareness and understanding of BGIPU's work and encourage higher levels of participation in BGIPU's work. In December 2014, the Executive Committee decided that all members of both Houses of the UK Parliament should be deemed to be members of BGIPU given the body is exclusively funded by both Houses for the service of all members and reflecting the specific inter-parliamentary nature of its work. There is active outreach with foreign policy related bodies, the devolved parliaments, key civil society groups and a responsive approach to public or media enquiries about the Group's work.

	Core Activities	Expected Outcomes
4.1	Deliver effective communications for members and UK Parliament contacts.	High levels of interest and engagement by UK Parliamentarians, including through good rates of nomination for activities and participation in events.
4.2	Convene thematic foreign policy-based activities and events.	Highly valued engagement with members on thematic foreign policy work and enhanced reputation for BGIPU in its areas of expertise. Good levels of cooperation with relevant organizations which enhance parliamentary engagement on foreign policy issues.
4.3	Administer BGIPU website and social media for members and public outreach.	Consistent and interested readership of BGIPU reports and publications and increased numbers of users on the BGIPU website and those following on Twitter.
4.4	Proactively manage media relations.	Balanced media coverage of BGIPU activities including a better appreciation of the public benefits stemming from the UK Parliament's engagement in international affairs.

9. Financial Arrangements and Funding Requirements

The first Financial Memorandum (FM) was produced in 2009 to underpin BGIPU's funding arrangements with the House of Commons and the House of Lords. There have been three reviews in March 2012, March 2014 and February 2017 reflecting 2011 decisions by both Houses on funding UK inter-parliamentary bodies. These decisions included that that revised financial memoranda should be agreed with the bodies, that detailed and costed annual business plans would be required in

addition to regular reports of outturn figures, and that there would be limits on levels of reserves. Under the most recent FM renewed in late 2017, there remains a requirement for the BGIPU to maintain certain financial and business policies, registers and/or guidance broadly consistent with those of the Parliament but proportionate and relevant to BGIPU's own circumstances.

In terms of financial management oversight, the Executive Committee created in 2004 an Audit Committee which is required to meet at least twice yearly. It is selected from members of the Executive Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Since its inception, the Committee reviews annually and updates the Risk Register and this is now linked to the Risk Management Strategy, first endorsed by the Executive Committee in 2011, which is also reviewed annually. To ensure appropriate levels of financial accountability, the BGIPU also employs external auditors. The external auditors since 2009 are Kreston Reeves & Co LLP. This annual external audit usually occurs in May and the Financial Statements, an Explanatory Commentary and Key Issues Memorandum are tabled in the Audit Committee each year, usually mid-year.

It is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to recommend approval to the Executive Committee, which formally approves the Financial Statements, which are signed by the Chair and Honorary Treasurer, together with the Letter of Representation. The Annual Governance Statement, Report of the Auditors and Financial Statements are published annually and circulated to all Members before the AGM towards the end of each calendar year. The external auditors attend the summer meeting at which the draft Financial Statements are considered. BGIPU was also subject to a full audit by its funding bodies undertaken by the House of Lords Audit Team in early 2016 with no major deficiencies identified but some subsequent suggestions, such as streamlining the Risk Register, duly implemented.

Full details of the BGIPU's estimated budget for 2019-20 were set out in the September 2018 Request for Funding to both Houses with a total nominal budget as indicated below, including

indicative levels for the subsequent 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years. These estimates provide a basis for future financial planning based on requests to funding bodies for allocations based on a “no real increase” basis (allowing for a maximum one percent increase each year), balancing estimated expenditure against anticipated funding levels across the period of this Strategic Plan. Based on past expenditure patterns and reasonable projections, we assess this funding will be sufficient to deliver BGIPU's agreed objectives and work programme priorities in line with this Business Plan.

BGIPU Funding Requirements and Forward Estimates

Budget Estimates (£)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Objective 1 <i>(Admin & Staff Costs)</i>	503,544	508,300	513,000
Objective 2 <i>(IPU Commitments)</i>	516,956	520,200	523,500
Objective 3 <i>(Bilateral Activities)</i>	278,500	283,500	288,600
Objective 4 <i>(Events/Communications)</i>	40,800	41,200	41,600
Total	1,339,800 (Approved)	1,353,200 (Estimated)	1,366,700 (Estimated)

(Based on Annual Request for Funding (2019/20) submitted to both Houses on 13 September 2018 and confirmed by funding bodies on 14 February 2019)

10. Secretariat Staffing

As at the end of FY 2018/19, the BGIPU Secretariat comprises nine staff positions as shown in the organisational chart below, noting there is a proposed part-time accounts clerk position vacant and one employee is on maternity leave with cover arrangements provided by the Executive Officer on an acting basis. A Human Resources Consultant advising and supporting the Secretariat's management of staffing-related matters is retiring at the end of the FY 2018/19, so this post is not shown in the future structure.

Some five years ago, a comprehensive review of Secretariat structure, pay and conditions of service was undertaken to ensure BGIPU fully meets its Financial Memorandum requirements to employ and manage staff broadly in line with the terms of the House of Commons. With Executive Committee approval in April 2013, these reforms implemented the recommendations of independent job-sizing review and adopted relevant House of Commons pay banding and remuneration outcomes. Subsequent salary decisions of the House of Commons have also been implemented as they occur. We also produced in 2014, a BGIPU Staff Handbook to ensure all staff are kept fully informed on human resources and general conditions of employment-related matters and this was comprehensively updated for circulated in early 2019.



