

**British Group  
Inter-Parliamentary Union  
(BGIPU)**



# **Strategic Business Plan**

**2016/17 – 2018/19**

**Advancing the parliamentary dimension of  
Britain's foreign relations**

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**British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union  
(BGIPU)**

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**2016/17 – 2018/19**

(Adopted by the BGIPU Executive Committee on 2 February 2016)



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## 1. Introduction

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This second **Strategic Business Plan** (for the period 2016/17-2018/19) 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 Commons and the House of Lords (the most recent being signed in March 2014) and providing an effective rationale for BGIPU's ongoing funding to undertake its inter-parliamentary mandates.

This Plan seeks to better define and prioritise the objectives and functions of the BGIPU in fulfilling its main inter-parliamentary and international relations responsibilities to ensure the achievement of the Group's main aims. The key beneficiary of activities is the BGIPU membership (i.e. comprising all members of both Houses of Parliament, although there are also clear benefits for the UK Parliament as an institution through facilitating its active engagement with counterpart parliamentary bodies worldwide.

Ultimately, this also benefits the United Kingdom's international interests overall, through ensuring BGIPU remains an active and influential member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), not least as one of just two founding members, but also in representing one of the world's oldest parliamentary democracies. This advances the UK's key objectives to see democratic principles and representative governance spread globally through the IPU.

In setting forth a vision statement, core values, the operational context and key strategic objectives, the intention is to inform the activities and set valid expectations for the outcomes of BGIPU's work, while always recognising the importance of retaining flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs and opportunities as they arise given the rapid and ever-changing dynamics of global events.

This Strategic Business Plan also provides a solid basis for plan-

ning activities and anticipating likely expenditure for the three financial years ahead. The specific details of BGIPU's annual Forward Programme of activity are ultimately determined in the deliberations of the Executive Committee but this business plan is meant to inform that process. In particular, the guidance outlined in this Business Plan is intended to provide a means of achieving a more coherent and comprehensive programme of work drawing on agreed strategic objectives and mindful of the desired outcomes.

This Strategic Business Plan will provide a three-year forward look with the main emphasis on the coming financial year, i.e. 2016-17. A new Strategic Business Plan will be prepared and submitted to the Executive Committee towards the start of 2019 to cover BGIPU obligations for the period 2019/20 - 2021/22.





## 2. Vision Statement

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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's main objective is to advance Britain's international interests through delivering to UK parliamentarians a comprehensive programme of inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchange activities aimed at improving mutual understanding with their international counterparts of each other's priorities and perspectives on both bilateral and global issues.

This programme is delivered through inward and outward parliamentary delegation visits, active engagement in meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and related international affairs-related events. Such activities contribute to UK parliamentary efforts to support effective international mechanisms for global peace, security and prosperity.

By pursuing a strategic policy focus to its work, BGIPU aims to make a concrete contribution to the UK's international engagement, drawing on more than a century of achievement and commitment to the intrinsic value of dialogue between UK Parliamentarians and their colleagues overseas. The core of the BGIPU's efforts remains an abiding commitment to advancing parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, promoting human rights and encouraging international dialogue to resolve conflict and encourage better understanding between nations.

BGIPU works to achieve the continued development of a strong parliamentary dimension to international affairs, particularly through the work of the IPU as the international organisation of the world's parliaments, including in continued efforts to enhance its partnership with the United Nations to ensure an effective parliamentary voice is influential in shaping and advancing the world's multilateral agenda.

Overall, our vision aims to ensure the UK Parliament remains a leader in the global parliamentary community, actively engaged in its activ-

ities and debates. This serves to ensure the UK maintains its highly-regarded reputation as a robust, innovative and effective democracy with parliamentarians actively engaged and influential with counterparts abroad. To this end, it is vital to have a cost-effective and appropriately skilled BGIPU Secretariat able to provide high-quality administration of inter-parliamentary engagements to deliver a programme of exchanges which will be highly valued by all its members.



Speaker Bercow and Lord Speaker  
D'Souza with founder Randal Cremer

### 3. Core Values

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The BGIPU Secretariat will be guided by the following values in managing our day-to-day operations and undertaking our 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 over-seas 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
- ▶ Respect for **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 forum for political multilateral negotiations.

The IPU, as the world organisation of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. 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



IPU President Saber H. Chowdhury MP



IPU Secretary-General Martin Chungong

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 170 Member Parliaments and 11 Associate Members, the IPU aims to complement international relations conducted at inter-governmental level by ministers, ambassadors and other state officials by establishing friendship, understanding and co-operation between parliamentar-

ians on issues of common concern and international significance.



Speaker Bercow at World Speakers' Conference in New York, Aug 2015

The IPU seeks to assist parliaments in addressing a growing international agenda and in contributing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral 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.

## 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 in the work of the BGIPU include the Speakers and senior officials of both Houses of the UK Parliament, all UK Parliamentarians and other inter-parliamentary groups of the UK Parliament. Partnership with counterparts in foreign parliaments and close collaboration with the IPU President, Secretary General and Headquarters staff in Geneva are also central to 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.



FCO Minister Hugo Swire speaking at Annual General Meeting (AGM), Dec 2014

## What does the BGIPU do?

BGIPU manages a comprehensive programme of inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchanges, with specific focus on non-Commonwealth parliaments. This activity comprises a range of inward parliamentary visits to encourage bilateral engagement and engender a 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



BGIPU hosting a Speaker-led delegation from Morocco, Jan 2015



George Soros speaking at BGIPU Seminar on Drug Policy Reform, Oct 2013

understanding of UK parliamentarians in international relations matters. 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. It can also contribute to parliamentary strengthening work being undertaken by IPU or other appropriate bodies.

Through its programme of activities, the BGIPU seeks to engage UK Parliamentarians in key global issues and works to expand awareness and understanding of foreign relations and the contribution to be made by the UK Parliament to consolidate parliamentary democracy worldwide.

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.



UK delegation at CSW meeting in New York, Mar 2016

## 5. Current Policy Challenges

BGIPU can reflect on a long and successful history of effective parliamentary diplomacy since the late 19th century. Indeed, there have been times when its activities have made a significant impact on the conduct of British foreign policy. 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”.



PM Thatcher with Mikhail Gorbachev on BGIPU visit in Dec 1984

Nevertheless, past successes can never be relied upon to validate current claims for financial resources nor be proof of organisational effectiveness. BGIPU needs to be able to demonstrate directly the value of its activities and show clear quantitative and qualitative evidence of its continuing effectiveness and relevance. At the strategic level, this



BGIPU meets Prime Minister Yatsenyuk in Kiev, Feb 2015

requires close attention to the contribution to be made to international affairs reflecting the stated objectives of its programme of work, balanced against the realities of the current international and parliamentary environment. At a functional level, it also requires us to prepare detailed reports of visit outcomes, main-

tain accurate records of member participation and keep under constant review the relevance and responsiveness of our programme of work.

Suffice to say, the challenges facing any organisation working in the field of international relations are complex, not least given shifts in the policy landscape and the constantly changing dynamics of the relationships between nations. Particularly in recent years, we face an increasingly inter-dependent yet uncertain world, where global events are more unpredictable with risks to democratic norms and diminished confidence in the protections provided to us by a rules-based international system.

Indeed, broader hopes for expanded democratic governance as a re-



sult of the so-called “Arab Spring” were dashed and, instead, increased instability and created deeper divisions which have been exploited by undemocratic and extremist forces. The rise of non-state actors like Da’esh and the creation of ungoverned regions and asymmetrical security challenges subvert the foreign policy and security preconceptions shaped by the conventional intra-state wars of the past. Conversely while the scope of violent conflict has changed, with most conflicts now taking place within nations not between them, the transnational impacts such as extremist terrorism and the forced mass movements of people have created serious challenges for countries located far from the scene of conflict, as shown progressively across Europe in 2015, under-scored by the terrorist attacks in Paris last November.

At a time when draconian, harsh and often nationalistic measures can be the knee-jerk response, and ignorance and intolerance risk exacerbating the divisions driving such conflicts, the continuing scope for dialogue and cooperation at an inter-parliamentary level becomes even more important. It provides an alternative platform beyond the formal diplomatic channels of governments, it encourages better informed debates in the parliaments of the countries involved and ensures parliamentarians have greater understanding of the challenges facing themselves and their counterparts in the real world. 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 security and political commitments.



UK delegation to Bolivia visiting a school in El Alto supported by Save the Children, Mar 2016

At the international level, the pre-eminent body, the United Nations, by its very nature, 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, such as the IPU. Just as in the national context, it is important in holding execu-





UK Delegation to IPU meeting at COP21, Dec 2015

tives to review, scrutiny and account, at a global level the recent prominence of parliamentary voices in the post-2016 global goals debate and the Paris outcome on climate change has shown the value of parliamentarians playing an active and responsible role in decisions affecting the future of the whole world.

In support of the 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 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.



Joan Ryan MP with Aun San Suu Kyi, Feb 2016

We must also be conscious that BGIPU operates in a UK domestic environment where there is appropriate 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 relevant and 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 promoting the 'Best of Britain' to the world, in terms of boosting partnerships, exports and cultural exchange but also ensuring better understanding of the UK's achievements and unique perspectives and in the promotion of fundamental British beliefs and values. There is also a unique and important role for the UK Parliament, so



UK Delegation visiting the new Angolan Assembly, Sep 2015

often described as the 'Mother of Parliaments', to stand in defence of democratic principles and institutions worldwide, no less important than UK standing in the IPU (with France) as one of the two founding member groups. Using BGIPU activities to promote parliamentary best practice, including drawing on key IPU surveys, findings and reports, is another important role in encouraging cooperation between legislative institutions and supporting the advance of democracy globally. BGIPU - working with the Commons and Lords administrations - should also provide what support we can to IPU efforts to undertake parliamentary strengthening programmes, including provision of specific UK parliamentary expertise where practical.

## 6. Key Strategic Objectives

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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 its primary stakeholders and ensuring active engagement by UK parliamentarians.

## BGIPU Chairs



The Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP (2004-2007)



Dr Roger Berry MP (2007-2010)



Robert Walter MP (2010-2013)



The Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP (2013-2015)



Nigel Evans MP (2015 - present)

## 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 for the focus of our foreign policy efforts are aimed at supporting the UK's major role as an active and influential player in global affairs.

Our **key policy priorities** are focused 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 immigration and arms control and disarmament. BGIPU also 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. 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 parliamentarians.

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.

BGIPU's efforts through the IPU at the multilateral level will focus on ensuring better **appreciation of UK perspectives among IPU members, providing support for IPU parliamentary strengthening and democracy objectives**, active efforts in support of developing a **more 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 key 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 nominal programme of annual activity is below:

### **Nominal Programme of Annual Activity**

- ◆ Five Inward Delegations
- ◆ Five Outward Delegations
- ◆ Two IPU Assembly Delegations
- ◆ Two 12 Plus Group meetings
- ◆ BGIPU participation in designated IPU conferences
- ◆ UK-based policy events 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 All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) activities
- ◆ Support for other inward parliamentary visits



BGIPU EXCO Members with the IPU Secretary General and Bangladeshi Speaker Dr. Shirin Chaudhury, May 2016

## 8. Objectives, Core Activities & 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 March 2014) 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.



## Objective 1: Financial Management, Planning & Corporate

	<b>Core Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
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.



Executive Committee Member Lisa Cameron MP, IPU Vice-President Ian Liddell-Grainger MP and BGIPU Chair Nigel Evans MP at the 133rd IPU Assembly in Geneva, Oct 2015



Andrew Gwynne MP and David Mackintosh MP attending Young Parliamentarians Conference in Lusaka, Mar 2016

## Objective 2: International Inter-Parliamentary Relations

	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 participation in the IPU's 12 Plus Group.	Significant contribution to 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.



Meg Munn MP and Chloe Smith MP at the 131st IPU Assembly in Geneva, Oct 2014

### **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.



Deputy Speaker Lindsay Hoyle welcoming Iranian delegation in Westminster Hall, Mar 2015

### Objective 3: Bilateral Relations

	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 its primary 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 focused 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.



BGIPU Information Stand in Portcullis House,  
July 2015

## Objective 4: Communications, Membership & Outreach

	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.



Baroness Hooper CMG and Baroness Northover  
with Dr. Hayat S. Sendi MP, Dec 2015

## 9. Financial Arrangements and Funding Requirements

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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 two reviews in March 2012 and March 2014 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 signed in March 2014, there is also 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.

Full details of the BGIPU's estimated budget for 2016-17 were set out in the September 2015 Request for Funding to both Houses with a total nominal budget as indicated below, including indicative levels for the subsequent 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years. These estimates provides a basis for future financial planning based on requests to funding bodies for allocations based on a "no real increase" basis, balancing estimated expenditure against anticipated funding levels across the period of this Strategic Plan which we assess as sufficient to deliver BGIPU's agreed objectives and work programme priorities in line with this Business Plan.

<b>Budget Estimates (£)</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Objective 1 (Admin &amp; Staff Costs)</b>	<b>466,325</b>	<b>456,700</b>	<b>463,000</b>
<b>Objective 2 (IPU Commitments)</b>	<b>518,075</b>	<b>529,900</b>	<b>536,200</b>
<b>Objective 3 (Bilateral Activities)</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>290,300</b>	<b>296,600</b>
<b>Objective 4 (Events/ Communications)</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>43,900</b>
<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>1,300,400</b>	<b>1,319,900</b>	<b>1,339,700</b>

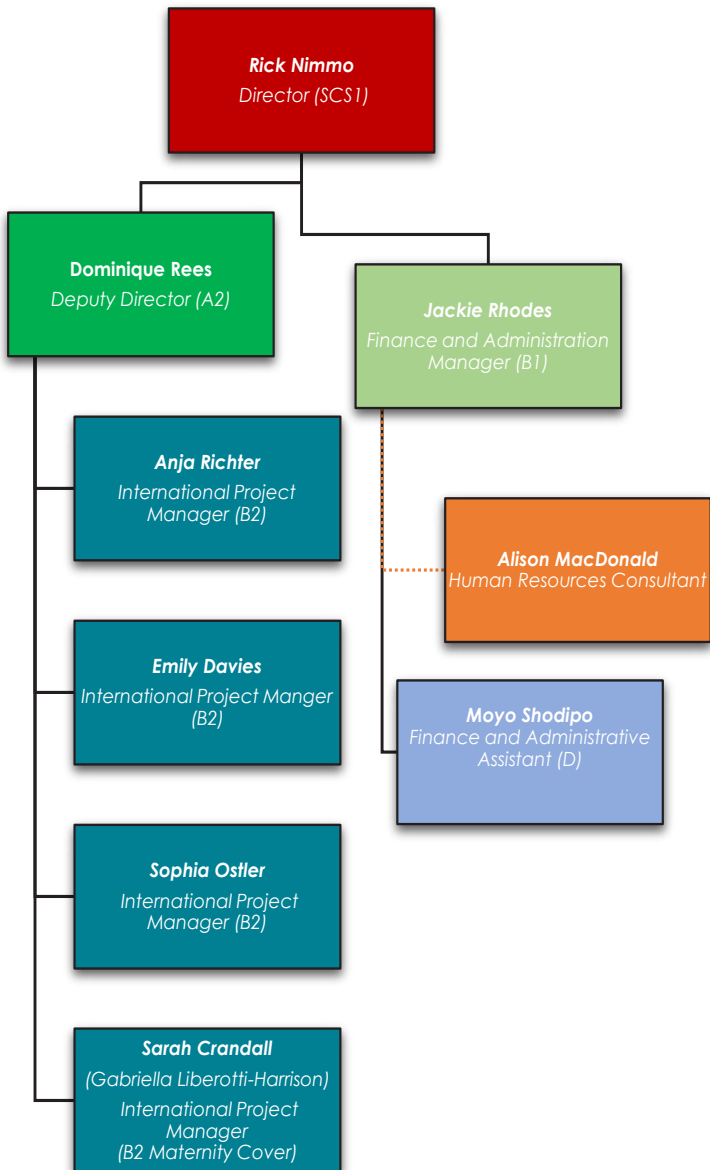
(Based on Annual Request for Funding (2016/17) submitted to both Houses in September 2015)

## 10. Secretariat Staffing

As of 2 February 2016, the BGIPU has eight permanent staff positions as shown in the organisational chart below, noting two staff members work reduced hours under flexible working arrangements, another employee works compressed hours to facilitate post-graduate study and one employee is on maternity leave with cover arrangements provided through a secondment from the House of Commons Overseas Office. A Human Resources Consultant works under contract to advise and support the Secretariat's management of human resources-related matters.

In recent years there has been a comprehensive review of Secretariat structure, pay and conditions of service 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 the approval of the Executive Committee in April 2013, these reforms included implementing the recommendations of independent job-sizing review and adopting relevant House of Commons pay banding and remuneration outcomes. 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.









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