



**BRITISH GROUP  
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
(BGIPU)**

**STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

**2022/23 – 2024/25**

*“Advancing the parliamentary dimension  
of Britain’s foreign relations”.*



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## **Introduction**

BGIPU's fourth Strategic Business Plan provides a three-year forward look with the main emphasis on the coming financial year 2022/23. This will be the first full year of operation since the end of the pandemic but with the outbreak of war in Ukraine, it remains extremely difficult to predict with any certainty the scope of all activities or anticipate often shifting objectives beyond setting the broadest principles and policy parameters.

Despite the unpredictable constraints and unprecedented restrictions created by the global pandemic, BGIPU's activities have still been able to contribute to the UK's core international interests by maintaining UK parliamentarians as leading and influential members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Recent years have seen emerging challenges to democratic principles and effective representative governance, including the growing influence of autocratic actors, global values being contested and geopolitical tensions rising. As a "force for good" internationally, continuing and active UK participation in the IPU remains vital to counter-balance such trends and challenges.

The primary beneficiaries of BGIPU's programme activities are members of both Houses of the UK Parliament (comprising the full membership of the BGIPU), along with specific benefits for both houses of the UK Parliament institutionally on the global stage. Overseas parliamentary counterparts also benefit from the ability to engage with UK MPs/Peers on a wide range of global and bilateral matters. There are also the broader benefits which complement the UK's overall foreign policy objective in multilateral affairs and by enhancing bilateral relations through inter-parliamentary engagement.

The next Strategic Business Plan will be prepared and submitted to the Executive Committee around the start of 2025 to cover BGIPU obligations for the period 2025/26-2027/28. The utility of this process remains debatable, however, not least given recent years' where a strategic plan was made impractical by overwhelming uncertainty and programme disruption created by global events. Such circumstances, instead required maximum flexibility and innovative approaches to activity and budget planning which is best achieved through the responsiveness of staff and innovative thinking of members rather than strict planning and forecasts.

## 1. 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 seeks to 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 with 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 broader UK objectives of supporting effective multilateral norms and defending international cooperative mechanisms for global security and prosperity.

BGIPU seeks to make the strongest possible contribution, drawing on over 133 years of commitment to dialogue between UK Parliamentarians and counterparts abroad. BGIPU has an abiding commitment to advancing parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, promoting human rights, peace and development through better understanding and cooperation between nations. This also includes imperatives to promote and defend shared "British values" of advancing democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

BGIPU has always been committed from its inception to maintaining a strong parliamentary dimension to international affairs, actively through the inter-parliamentary work of the IPU. As the international organisation of the world's national parliaments, the IPU still can play the key role to ensure parliamentary perspectives are heard and reflected in the work and objectives of the United Nations, bolstering multilateralism at a time when global norms and institutions are highly contested and facing severe threat.

Overall, BGIPU's core vision is to ensure UK Parliament remains a leading member of the global parliamentary community, actively engaged and providing positive examples to democracies and other legislatures worldwide. This also ensures UK parliamentarians can be engaged and influential with their counterparts abroad, drawing on a strong legacy of achievement and promoting values that support a more tolerant, peaceful, just and inclusive world.

## **2. Core Values**

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

- Strong advocacy of a values-based agenda to advance the UK's objectives in the world promoting global peace and security, sustainable development and trade, respect for the rule of law and inclusive justice globally.
- Respect for the universality of human rights and due regard for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in supporting democratic institutions and principles.
- Commitment to the promotion of democracy and representative governance with due regard to the diversity of forms this may take across the globe.
- Close attention to the constitutional importance and dignity of Parliament.
- Abiding commitment to the highest standards of service to all parliamentarians, the staff of both Houses and our overseas contacts.
- Pursuit of professional excellence, innovation and intellectual integrity.
- 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.
- Total commitment to the achievement of gender equality.
- Awareness in all respects of the environmental impact of our work.

### 3. Operational Context

**What is the IPU?:** The IPU is an international organisation comprising the national 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, the IPU monitors and defends the human rights of parliamentarians 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, young people, minorities and indigenous peoples in political and public life. Currently comprising parliamentarians from 178 member parliaments and 13 Associate Members, the IPU aims to complement international relations conducted by executive government, diplomats and foreign ministries 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.

After extensive consultations, the IPU adopted a new five year strategy in November 2021 at its 143<sup>rd</sup> Assembly in Madrid. This Strategy for 2022-2026 has five strategic objectives; 1) Building effective and empowered parliaments 2) Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments 3) Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments 4) Catalysing collective parliamentary action 5) Strengthening the IPU's accountability. These five objectives will be used to maximise impact in four equally important policy areas of: 1) Climate change 2) Democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation 3) Peace & Security 4) Sustainable development for all.

**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, three 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. Cooperative partnerships with counterparts and close collaboration with the IPU President, Secretary General and Headquarters staff in Geneva are central to BGIPU's work. BGIPU also works in close cooperation with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) 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 where there are common interest and objectives in sharing perspectives.

**What does the BGIPU do?:** For more than a century, BGIPU has managed a comprehensive programme of inter-parliamentary dialogue and exchanges, with a specific bilateral focus on non-Commonwealth parliaments. This activity had comprised a range of inward parliamentary visits to encourage better understanding of the UK and its perspectives among foreign counterparts. BGIPU also coordinated outward delegations to advance Britain's interests abroad and managed the participation of a UK delegation in IPU Assemblies and other international meetings, such as the IPU's COP26 event in Glasgow in November 2021. Importantly, BGIPU also guides the work of the Chair and Executive Committee in overseeing and managing BGIPU operations and activities. This physical delegation work was entirely suspended as a result of the global pandemic for 18 months but is resuming in the coming three year period.

#### **4. Current Policy Challenges**

The IPU 2022-26 strategy identifies the key global challenges being: (1) The need for immediate action on the global existential threat of climate change; (2) Growing social and economic inequalities including an increasing digital divide, further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; (3) Weakening public trust in national and global institutions of governance and increasing threats to parliaments and their ability to serve their constituents effectively; (4) Regression on key democratic, human rights and development achievements; and, (5) Growing threats to peace and security and peoples' yearning for a more peaceful and secure world.

##### *Honouring BGIPU's legacy*

In its work, BGIPU draws on a legacy of some 133 years of inter-parliamentary diplomacy stemming back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but also must reflect these current priorities of the IPU in the contemporary world in 2022. 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". This long history bolsters and informs our work in the current day with BGIPU facing key current challenges in the following areas.

##### *Promoting Representative Governance*

The UK Parliament, through the BGIPU, plays a leading role in promoting key principles of representative governance in the world, consistent with IPU objectives. We are 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. Regrettably, this view is no longer accepted in some parts of the world, being actively challenged in the growth of autocratic governments. As such nations increasingly use the IPU to assert their influence on the global order, we are obliged to respond to protect the credibility of a body founded by the UK to advance and defend representative governance globally.

### *Condemning Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine*

It is regrettable to see the United Nations suffering serious decline and paralysis with events in recent years only serving to highlight the inherent inefficiencies of having five permanent members, effectively blocking any serious or concerted action by the UN Security Council on many peace and security matters. The UN's inability to act in the face of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the mounting toll of war crimes in that attack has served to underscore concerns the UN is becoming increasingly irrelevant. Predicting the outcomes of events is fraught and only time will tell if the UN can regain some credibility in the face of such dire challenges, albeit with some hope stemming from its role in securing Russian cooperation in the evacuation of some victims in Mariupol. But the dismantling of many norms and processes of multilateral engagement under the influence of Russia and other autocracies remains a real and present threat to global cooperation.

### *Encouraging the US Congress to re-join the IPU*

A key priority BGIPU has pursued to counter such influences in the IPU has been to see the return of the US Congress to membership which will continue to be pursued, following up contacts made over the past year with US House Speaker Pelosi. Not least to counter the likes of China and Russia in their efforts to influence the direction and programme of the IPU, this objective will have even higher priority for BGIPU and other members, particularly in the 12 Plus Group, moving forward.

### *Advancing the Global Goals*

Nonetheless, it is important in the context of threats to multilateralism that there be some alternative mechanisms for global dialogue and discourse, where the views of parliaments and the people they represent, can be heard, which underscores the vital role it can play even at this time of great global tensions. By holding national executives to review, scrutiny and accountability at a global level, parliamentary voices have shown their relevance. In addition to matters of peace and security, the IPU's contribution to the cause of the Global Goals, its relevance to the climate change debate and its support for meetings in the margins of major events like the G20 and WTO Ministerial meetings show how we must continue to support the IPU's work.

### *Taking Concerted Climate Action*

Climate change represents a global existential threat. Given the urgency, the world's parliaments have stressed the need for the IPU to take urgent action to contribute to global efforts to restore the planet's ecological health. To uphold the multilateral consensus and accelerate the green transition globally, BGIPU supports the IPU helping parliaments to make progress on and increase accountability for the Paris Agreement and advance other climate-relevant treaties, accelerate decarbonization and reduce the carbon footprint within parliaments themselves. The ultimate goal of the IPU's action on climate change, as reflected in the COP26 interparliamentary consensus achieved in Glasgow and the subsequent Nusa Dua Declaration, is to allow all people to live on a healthier planet with warming limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

### *Expanding Democracy in Europe and Globally*

Likewise, BGIPU's continued leading role in the IPU's democracy-based geopolitical grouping, "the 12 Plus Group" remains a major advantage for us and will remain a key



priority in our work, particularly our involvement in its Steering Group and as one of its most influential members, a role recognised and welcomed by the current Dutch Chair with whom we enjoy close and constructive contact. 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 and the extensive network of UK interests being advanced by the FCDO. This includes in support of the Government's "Global Britain" agenda and the Foreign Secretary's recently outlined concept for the UK to lead a "network of liberty" across the world which aligns very well with the long-standing democratic objectives of the IPU.

## **5. Key Strategic Objectives**

The BGIPU Secretariat 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 under IPU auspices, but also bilaterally. In pursuit of this goal, there are four equally important and inter-related objectives as listed below and expanded in Section 8:

- Objective 1: 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 2: 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.
- 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: 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.

## **6. Priorities for Forward Planning**

### *Planning mechanisms*

The prioritisation of the BGIPU's main activities is determined by the Executive Committee based on the IPU schedule of meetings, suggestions from UK members and relevant advice from the BGIPU Secretariat. Once an annual programme is agreed in advance of each financial year, a running Forward Programme document is tabled at every Executive Committee meeting to approve inwards/outwards delegations, any short visits from counterpart Parliaments, and UK participation in IPU Assemblies, conferences and other events. A sub-committee of the Executive Committee makes specific selection decisions based on applications from interested members.

While almost all physical activities were cancelled through the period where global lockdowns and health restrictions prevented travel from early March 2020 until mid-

2021, BGIPU's activity programme was replaced by an extensive range of online inter-parliamentary events for members through online video conferencing. BGIPU has now returned to usual delegation travel processes in 2022 with the full resumption of inter-parliamentary exchange activities. While the risk of pandemic variants has receded, there still remains an uncertain global security outlook due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Nonetheless, the scope and direction of BGIPU's plans are firmer than they have been for some years, at least since before the 2019 general election.

#### *Priority policies*

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 climate change, peace and security, sustainable development and trade, democracy, political empowerment, respect for the rule of law and universal human rights norms. Importantly, many of these values are also reflected in the IPU's Strategy for 2022-2026 giving strong complementarities between the agenda of the global body and our own work. Defence of the multilateral system and promoting support for adherence to a rules-based system of norms and values will be a key priority despite the efforts of some countries to actively undermine, obstruct and potentially supplant long-standing adherence to international norms and global institutions.

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 previously and we had hoped to give even greater priority to BGIPU participation in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN each year, although this has not now been held since 2019. In a highly contested and fraught global environment, BGIPU remains resolutely 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, particularly using this mechanism to defend the rights of UK parliamentarians under attack by the national authorities of China.

#### *Priority countries*

As we work towards resumption of interparliamentary exchange 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 was given greater priority, along with enhancing the UK's leadership role and engagement in the 12 Plus geopolitical group underscoring the importance of continued cooperation in Europe.

At the multilateral level, BGIPU will focus on ensuring better appreciation of UK perspectives among influential like-minded IPU members, promoting a collective commitment to 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.

#### *Projected Forward Programme*

In designing the Forward Programme, in addition to the guidance and priorities provided by its membership, the BGIPU Secretariat consults routinely Speakers' Offices in both Houses, the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO), other inter-parliamentary groups and the FCDO, or other relevant UK agencies, to avoid duplication 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**

- Six Inward Delegations
- Six Outward Delegations
- Two IPU Assembly Delegations
- Two 12 Plus Steering Group meetings
- BGIPU participation in relevant IPU conferences/webinars
- UK-based events, membership outreach & report-back meetings
- Diplomatic networking events with UK-based Embassies
- Web-based activity reporting
- Twitter feed on key policy events and issues
- Produce accurate Annual Report and Financial Accounts
- Consider financial support for APPGs when requested
- Provide support for other parliamentary visits, subject to resources

## **7. 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 October 2020) 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.*

	<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 the major task for BGIPU, even when such activities had moved online. As the world's pre-eminent inter-parliamentary body, the IPU found new ways to bring together parliamentarians from around the world to discuss global issues, propose solutions to pressing international challenges and disseminate and promote democratic ideals and practices. With virtual gathering now possible, post-pandemic we can only expect more IPU meetings, not less. 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.*

	<b>Core Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
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.	A significant contribution to the effectiveness of the 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 engaging the global parliamentary community by hosting delegation visits to the Palace of Westminster and bilateral visits abroad. With full resumption of such activities, visiting delegations will again be given the opportunity to learn about UK parliamentary procedures, history, culture, people and political priorities. As it always has done, this serves 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 will likewise resume.*

	<b>Core Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
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	Effectively coordinate 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 programmes 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 stopped producing printed publications in preference to web-based reporting on a dedicated BGIPU website with social media, supplementing 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. In December 2014, the Executive Committee decided that all members of both Houses of the UK Parliament should be deemed to be full members of BGIPU given the body is exclusively funded by both Houses for the service of all members. While outreach and physical events were severely disrupted during the pandemic, BGIPU has now resumed such activities with a wide range of members-based activities proceeding on late 2021 and into 2022.*

	<b>Core Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
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 improved appreciation of any public benefits stemming from the UK Parliament's engagement in international affairs.

## **8. Financial Memorandum and Funding Requirements**

The first BGIPU Financial Memorandum (FM) was agreed in 2009 to underpin funding arrangements with funding bodies in both Houses a few years after responsibility for funding interparliamentary groups (IPGs) was transferred in full to Parliament from HM Treasury. There have been four reviews, firstly in March 2012, then March 2014, February 2017 and early 2020 although it was not finally signed until October 2020. In terms of financial management oversight, in 2004 the Executive Committee created an Audit Committee which meets at least twice yearly. It is selected from members of the Executive Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). This Committee reviews annually and updates the Risk Management Strategy, first endorsed in 2011, which is also reviewed annually. BGIPU employs Kreston Reeves & Co LLP as external auditors since 2009 and the annual external audit is undertaken each May with Financial Statements, Explanatory Commentary and Key Issues Memorandum tabled in the Audit Committee each year, subsequently presented to the Executive Committee, prior to

summer recess. This financial reporting schedule was maintained through 2020 and 2021 despite the working impacts of the global pandemic with the continued achievement of clean audit outcomes.

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 2022-23 were set out in the September 2021 Request for Funding to both Houses with a total nominal budget indicated below, including indicative levels for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years. At best, these estimates may factor in a nominal 1-2 percent uplift each year although in recent years BGIPU has been unable to expend large amounts of funding - actually refusing to take full allocations during the period of the global pandemic (taking just 65 percent of allocation for 2020/21 and only 90 percent in 2021/22) - to best manage reserve levels. As expenditure patterns were seriously disrupted by the global pandemic, these figures presume zero growth and are based on previous years of full inter-parliamentary activity rather than recent lower expenditure levels. An annual uplift of up to 2% in future bids would be subject to financial conditions applying within both Houses.

#### **BGIPU Funding Requirements and Forward Estimates**

<b>Budget Estimates (£)</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
<b>Objective 1</b> (Admin & Staff Costs)	525,774	541,500	557,900
<b>Objective 2</b> (IPU Commitments)	555,000	558,000	561,000
<b>Objective 3</b> (Bilateral Activities)	250,000	260,000	270,250
<b>Objective 4</b> (Events/Communications)	55,000	56,000	57,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	1,385,774	1,415,500	1,446,150
<b>Total Funding</b> (zero growth since 21/22)	<b>1,380,300</b>	<b>1,380,300</b>	<b>1,380,300</b>
(Estimated Reduction in Reserves)	(5,474)	(35,200)	(65,850)

**(Above based on Annual Request for Funding (2022/23) dated 15 September 2021)**



## 9. Secretariat Staffing

As of 7 June 2022, the BGIPU Secretariat has eight staff positions as shown in the following organisation chart. This is one fewer than in 2019 when the last strategic plan was adopted. Additionally, all human resources functions are now carried out in-house instead of through a dedicated consultant with, instead, a consultant Accounts Adviser supporting the Secretariat's accounts and budget functions which was assessed as a higher priority from the start of FY 2019/20 onwards.

**BGIPU Organisation Chart**

