

CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023, Session 6

1 June 2023

**National Outcomes**

1. The Scottish Government is undertaking a review of its [National Outcomes](#), the broad policy aims which inform its [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF).
2. To input to that review, and in light of our [Inquiry into the Scottish Government's international work](#), the report we published in April 2022, the Committee will focus on the current National Outcomes and Indicators relating to international policy.
3. The areas on which we are taking evidence in June will cover—
  - An overview of the Scottish Government's international work in relation to the National Outcomes and Indicators (with this panel session on 1 June)
  - A focus on how trade and culture are promoted (on 15 June)
  - A look at how Ireland measures and evaluates the impact of its international work (on 22 June).
4. The intention of this inquiry is to enable the Committee to consider such questions as—
  - How the Scottish Government's international work should be evaluated and what measurable outcomes could be developed?
  - What is the intended impact of diplomacy and soft power? And how could this be measured?
  - What economic related outcomes and targets are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of external affairs policies from that perspective?
  - How should the National Outcomes inform the work of the Scottish Government's international offices and how could this be evaluated?
5. SPICe has prepared a briefing for this opening evidence session at **Annexe A**.
6. A joint submission from the three witnesses – Professor Stephen Gethins (University of St Andrews), Professor Juliet Kaarbo (University of Edinburgh) and Professor Peter Jackson (University of Glasgow), all members of the Scottish Council on Global Affairs – can be found at **Annexe B**.

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## **Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee**

**18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Thursday, 1 June**

### **Inquiry into the National Performance Framework international outcomes and indicators**

#### **Context**

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on a review of the National Outcomes, a key aspect of the National Performance Framework (NPF). Following this public consultation, it must consult the Parliament on any proposed changes arising from that review. Consultation with the Parliament is likely to take place after the summer recess and the Finance and Public Administration Committee is expected to lead the parliamentary process. This Committee will have an opportunity to provide its views which will be informed by this short inquiry.

#### **Today's evidence session**

The Committee will take evidence from three academics who are closely involved with the [Scottish Council on Global Affairs](#). The Scottish Council on Global Affairs (SCGA) is the first all-Scotland international relations institute providing a hub for collaborative policy-relevant research. The three witnesses today represent each of the three founding partners of the SCGA - the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow and the University of St Andrews.

Today's evidence session is an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the Scottish Government's role as a paradiplomatic actor and why soft power is a key aspect of this. It is also an opportunity to discuss what the intended impact of Scotland paradiplomatic and soft power approach is and how this can be effectively measured.

Linked to the measurement of impact, the evidence session provides an opportunity to discuss whether the current national indicators in the external affairs sphere are

appropriate and what new indicators might be developed in this area. Linked to this, the Committee might wish to discuss what work academia has undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of external affairs policies.

The Committee may also wish to discuss how the Scottish Government is working with the UK Government in pursuing international engagement and how the effectiveness of this engagement can be measured within the framework of the National Performance Framework.

The evidence session also allows the Committee to explore with the witnesses whether there are examples of good practice from other countries and regions in how they evaluate their international policies.

### **The National Performance Framework**

The [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) is used by the Scottish Government to evaluate the outcomes of its policies. The current NPF has 11 National Outcomes. The most relevant National Outcome for the Europe and .External Affairs elements of the committee's remit is:

- **International:** We are open, connected and make a positive contribution Internationally.

The Scottish Government's vision which [sits beneath this National Outcome](#) states:

"We pursue happiness and quality of life as legitimate social goals. Our family, communities and people are important to us and we are committed to being fair and socially just. We are respectful of all who chose to visit, live and work in Scotland and acknowledge the positive contribution they make. Our visitor economy is thriving.

We are proud of our achievements and are confident, ambitious and positive about the future. We are regarded as a vibrant, modern country and have positive international relations, influence and exchange networks. We recognise the inter-connectedness of people and the obligations which flow from this and play a valuable role in providing aid and supporting developing countries. We are committed to promoting peace, democracy and human rights globally."

Beneath the National Outcomes are a number of [National Indicators](#) which are used to measure performance. In total there are 81 indicators. Under the International National Outcome there are 6 indicators:

- **A positive experience for people coming to live in Scotland** - intended to measure one important dimension of migrants' experiences in Scotland – a strong sense of belonging.
- **Scotland's Reputation** – intended to measure Scotland's reputation against 60 countries across the world on the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM)

- **Scotland's Population** - measures the number of council areas experiencing population decline.
- **Trust in public organisations** – no indicator has been developed
- **International networks** – no indicator has been developed
- **Contribution of development support to other nations** - a composite that measures Scotland's international development activities. It provides a comprehensive depiction of how Scotland contributes to international development.

Of the 6 indicators, no detailed indicator to measure progress has been developed for two of them.

There is also an indicator related to international trade which is relevant to the Scottish Government's international policies:

- **International exporting** - measures the annual value of international exports (not including the rest of the UK or Oil and Gas exports) as published in Export Statistics Scotland.

In [its Inquiry into the Scottish Government's International Work](#), the Committee recommended there should be a clear link between the Government's international work and the NPF:

“We consider such an approach – that all Scotland's international policy should be linked to the NPF and centred on the revised International Framework – necessary for a clearer understanding of the Scottish Government's priorities. Otherwise, for the Committee, and anyone else interested in this policy area, it will be difficult to find answers to fundamental questions such as what we are doing, why we are doing it, how well we are doing it etc.”

In [response](#), the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture told the Committee:

“The ability of a country to deliver its domestic objectives is invariably impacted by wider regional and international factors, and it is crucial that Scotland remains active and effective in how it carries out its international activity. As such, in line with the committee's recommendations, the Global Affairs Framework recognises the interlinkages between our domestic and international work and is rooted in the National Performance Framework.

Our international work will contribute to meeting the objectives outlined in the National Performance Framework, for example, through supporting the creation of good, green jobs, reducing child poverty, gender and other inequalities at home and overseas, and sharing Scotland's experience in policy-making, while learning ourselves from others.”

In written evidence to the Committee, Professor Juliet Kaarbo, Chair in Foreign Policy at the University of Edinburgh highlighted the connections between and among the National Outcomes writing that:

“international’ is appropriately separate but has obvious connections to education, culture, economy, environment, health”.

Professor Stephen Gethins, Practice in International Relations at the University of St Andrews highlighted that the measurement of international work by any government or sub-state government is difficult to evaluate. He added:

“However, there are issues that can be taken into account when considering the success or otherwise.

Much of this should be considered in terms of the Scottish Government’s objectives overall and how its international work helps meet its policy priorities and other commitments. In this regard, it is no different from other state and sub-state governments who use their international outreach to meet domestic policy objectives.”

## **Scottish Government approach to external affairs**

### The Scottish Government’s Global Affairs Framework

On 9 May 2022, the Scottish Government published its new [Global Affairs Framework](#). The new framework sets out “the values and principles underpinning the Scottish Government’s international work and the basis on which the Scottish Government will prioritise its international activity”.

The framework sets out to support the Scottish Government’s domestic agenda including the “creation of good, green jobs, reducing child poverty, gender and other inequalities at home and overseas”. The Government’s international work is also intended to help contribute to the achievement of both the domestic National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, there is no detail setting out how the international work will help meet these goals.

Whilst the new framework sets out a number of ambitions, it does not set out any targets or indicate any ways by which success can be evaluated.

There is also no detailed description setting out how the new framework will relate to the Scottish Government’s five country engagement strategies (United States, China, Canada, India and Pakistan).

From a parliamentary scrutiny perspective, the lack of targets within the framework and the absence of a clear link with the country engagement strategies means scrutiny is challenging. These were issues previously highlighted by the Parliament’s [Committee in its Inquiry into the Scottish Government’s International Work](#).

## The Scottish Connections Framework

On 11 April 2023, the Scottish Government published the [Scottish Connections Framework](#), which sets out the Scottish Government's approach to engaging with Scotland's diaspora.

The Framework includes a number of commitments from the Scottish Government setting out how it will seek to engage with Scotland's diaspora.

The Framework is less clear on what measurable benefits Scotland will see from this engagement. Whilst there is a commitment to review the Framework every two years and a number of specific commitments are included, there is no articulation of what the Government hopes will be achieved in economic and cultural terms from deeper engagement with the diaspora.

The written evidence provided to the Committee for today's meeting highlights the role Scotland's diaspora can play in helping Scotland achieve its international policy aims.

SPICe has published the following blogs on Scotland's international engagement:

- [Engaging with Scotland's diaspora – the Scottish Connections Framework](#)
- [The Scottish Government's international footprint](#)
- [The Scottish Government's new approach to its international work](#)

## **Paradiplomacy**

Paradiplomacy is the term often used to describe sub-states and regions engagement with international affairs. By adopting an external affairs policy (outlined in the Scottish Government's [Global Affairs Framework](#)) and establishing a number of international offices, the Scottish Government is clearly a paradiplomatic actor.

Measuring the impact of Paradiplomacy is more challenging. In its inquiry report into [the Scottish Government's International Work](#), the Committee welcomed the Scottish Government's commitment "to inform the Committee of developments, and further encouraging the inclusion of measurable outcomes in its strategic aims and policy objectives" (paragraph 131 of the report). The Committee also concluded that:

"The Committee would encourage the Scottish Government to continue to explore how best it can assess the impact and influence of its external affairs work. We have already recommended publication of an Annual Report to set out the contribution made by the international offices (see paragraph 72).

In response, the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture [wrote](#):

"I support the idea of an annual report and the Committee's recommendation echoes work which is being undertaken by my officials. All the Scottish

Government's international offices measure their activities, output and successes to inform the focus, prioritisation and rationale for their work."

## Soft power

By engaging in Paradiplomacy, one of the Scottish Government's objectives maybe to develop Scottish soft power. The British Council [describe the purpose of soft power](#) as:

"Soft power builds a country or a region's attractiveness and influence through culture, public diplomacy and positive global contribution. Countries, regions and cities around the world are using soft power to improve international relations and bolster trade and tourism."

A 2018 report for the British Council "[Gauging International Perceptions: Scotland and Soft Power](#)" found that Scotland's greatest soft power resources included Education, Enterprise and Digital whilst more work was needed to bolster international perceptions. The report found that the exercise of soft power suited Scotland as a devolved nation:

"Soft power is ideally suited to Scotland's unique status as a devolved authority that has many features of an independent country, though remains within the structure of the United Kingdom. Unlike hard power, soft power does not rely on military, economic sanctions, or financial incentives to change behaviour and influence international outcomes. Obviously, Scotland cannot bring any of these elements to bear in its pursuit of international objectives. Soft power, however, relies on attraction and persuasion to change behaviour and influence international events." (page 6)

As with Paradiplomacy, this Committee recognised the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of soft power:

"We recognise the challenges in measuring the impact of diplomacy and soft power. Much of the work of pursuing foreign policy objectives may be difficult to quantify as direct and immediate benefits. That said, we heard from several witnesses about the enhanced possibilities offered by "pracademics", the use of perceptions surveys, and the potential of the proposed Scottish Council on Global Affairs." (Paragraph 132 of the report)

In response, the [Scottish Government wrote](#):

"The Committee's report, as well as contributions made during the debate, importantly recognise the challenges in measuring the impact of diplomacy and soft power, as well as quantifying areas through metrics and performance indicators as direct and immediate benefits. We are committed to a continuous process to ensure that our work is measurable, transparent and available to the public."



## Scotland's international engagement

The Scottish Government's Global Affairs Strategy sets out that the purpose of its international engagement is to support Scotland's domestic priorities by contributing to Scotland's National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework along with the Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of direct outcomes from the Government's international policies, the Global Affairs Strategy states:

“Through our international work, we can support the creation of good, green jobs, reduce child poverty, gender and other inequalities at home and overseas, and share Scotland's experience in policy-making, while learning ourselves from others. In this way we can make a contribution to the world that is welcomed and valued.”

In written evidence, Professor Peter Jackson Chair in Global Security at the University of Glasgow highlighted the Scottish Government's emphasis on being seen as a “good global citizen”. In this space he suggested there were a number of measurable areas the Scottish Government could work with international partners in such as conflict resolution, Feminist Foreign Policy, the promotion of human rights and climate justice.

## Working with the UK Government

During the inquiry into [the Scottish Government's International Work](#), the Committee heard that “in respect of UK foreign and diplomatic policy, there was agreement amongst respondents that the Scottish and UK Governments shared many of the same priorities”.

For example, [Dr Kirsty Hughes suggested that](#) “in many ways, there is clear complementarity between Scottish Government and UK Government policies in external affairs”. She added that in principle, both governments want to support and promote key areas notably trade, human rights and climate change.

A number of the Scottish Government's international offices are housed in UK embassies, and previously the Committee has heard about ways in which the Scottish Government and UK Government cooperate internationally.

In written evidence for today's meeting, Professor Kaarbo highlighted that one measure of the success of the Scottish Government's international policies is in being able to influence UK foreign policy:

“Scottish foreign policy influence can also be assessed in terms of influence on UK foreign policies, post-Brexit future of UK foreign policy conversations; cooperation/coordination with other regions/cities.”

**Iain McIver, SPICe Research**



Scottish Government National Outcomes and Indicators

**Professor Peter Jackson, Chair in Global Security, University of Glasgow**

**Executive Director, Scottish Council on Global Affairs**

The Scottish Government's effort to take the notion of acting as a 'good global citizen' has contributed to enhancing Scotland's reputation abroad. But this work could be amplified and its benefits multiplied through the identification of potential international partners and the formulation of a systematic policy objectives policy to promote the ideas and values underpinning initiatives such as

- Conflict resolution, particularly between sub-state and non-state actors in conflicts. As a Non-P5 nation with long-standing international traditions and a global presence, Scotland has the opportunity to play a distinct role in providing a context in which sensitive negotiations can take place. This is already happening with institutions such as Beyond Borders. Scottish Government support for these activities is a measurable form of activity with potentially enormous medium-term benefits.
- There are also a wide range of potential international partners for initiatives linked to the agendas of Feminist Foreign Policy or the promotion of human rights as well as climate justice.

There are obviously constitutional limits to the scope of such initiatives that restrict the type of work the International Relations Department can undertake. But the opportunities to enhance Scotland's international standing are real.

Relations to facilitate alignment with Europe

Promoting relations and interactions of various kinds (formal and semi-formal; one-offs and ongoing) between Scottish civil society institutions and associations and cognate European institutions and actors. These interactions should be measurable if they are monitored or if the organisations in question provide reports on their activities, publish accounts or their interactions.

Promoting similar links between Scotland's research and development sector and partners and potential partners in Europe. This includes formal and enduring partnership arrangements as well as temporary exchanges of research expertise to provide a force-multiplier to research in Scotland.

- This can be facilitated by Scottish Government representatives posted abroad (and is already bearing fruit from the efforts of the Scottish Government representative in Ottawa).
- The slow and inadequate effort to replace Erasmus and related mobility schemes has had a measurably deleterious effect on collaborative efforts, the limits on Scottish access to the European Research Council has been even more harmful. These dynamics have only begun to affect research collaboration and other types of exchange. Their effects will widen and compound as time goes on. This is an area where International Relations could contribute in decisive and measurable ways by facilitating contacts, visits and more formal arrangements with potential partners in the EU.

There are more opportunities to encourage inward investment in the Scottish economy, as well as Scottish civil society and academic institutions, through more systematic and broader engagement

with the Scottish diaspora. Development of a bespoke policy (though one may already exist) with clear and measurable objectives is another way to assess the achievements of the Scottish Government's work in the realm International Relations.

**Professor Juliet Kaarbo, Chair in Foreign Policy, University of Edinburgh**

**Co-Director of the Scottish Council on Global Affairs**

These notes are based on academic work on sub-state diplomacy and on soft power, and more generally on research on foreign policy (although, of course, the Scottish context of external relations has distinct characteristics). From this background, I would be happy to discuss the following topics:

- connections between and among National Outcomes— 'international' is appropriately separate but has obvious connections to education, culture, economy, environment, health;
- connections between domestic/internal 'values' and external relations; human rights, climate justice, equality, education; advantages but also challenges to a value focus in external relations;
- thinking of International Outcomes in terms of Principles, Power, Profits, and Pride/Prestige
- International Outcomes as networks and coalitions;
- international contributions (and power) in the form of data/information/intelligence, policy examples;
- strategies and effectiveness shaped by domestic politics —public opinion, multicultural communities, national conversations, stakeholders, leaders, diplomatic service ;
- International Outcomes dependent on other international actors (and these can be a range of other actors, including other sub-state regions);
- Scottish foreign policy influence can also be assessed in terms of influence on UK foreign policies, post-Brexit future of UK foreign policy conversations; cooperation/coordination with other regions/cities;
- goals in terms of substantive policy areas can be prioritised (but still global), following/setting trends/adaptive (but not headline-driven); addressing enduring policy areas (climate, health, global inequalities); focus on internalisation of international (including EU) laws in devolved areas;
- leaning into small size advantage – external relations community small, usually consensus-minded; prioritisation expected; trust and impartiality 'easier' to establish/maintain; adaptability; international forums/coalitions; more feasible/convincing policy leadership;
- moving away from soft power capabilities to strategic narratives/communication statecraft and/or reputation.

**Professor Stephen Gethins, Practice in International Relations, University of St Andrews  
Scottish Council on Global Affairs**

It is difficult to fully evaluate the international work of any Government at a state or a sub-state level especially in the short-term. However, there are issues that can be taken into account when considering the success or otherwise.

Much of this should be considered in terms of the Scottish Government's objectives overall and how its international work helps meet its policy priorities and other commitments. In this regard, it is no different from other state and sub-state governments who use their international outreach to meet domestic policy objectives.

- The Scottish Government has limited resources and should therefore prioritise the areas of work in which it can realistically be expected to be involved. Some of these areas that might be considered priorities where and could be measured might include:
  - Trade and investment – in what way does Scotland’s international outreach contribute to the Scottish economy;
  - The Climate Emergency – how does the Scottish Government’s international work meaningfully contribute to international and domestic efforts to tackle climate change;
  - Alignment with the European Union – the Scottish Government’s stated aim is to maintain alignment with the EU as a means of maintaining relationships with EU partners and remain competitive at home. That objective will become more difficult if there is greater divergence from the EU as the time that the UK has spent outside the EU grows;
  - Scotland’s international brand image – the Scottish Government is not solely responsible for Scotland’s international brand but can contribute to it as a means of benefitting Scotland and its sectors.
- Diaspora engagement – Scotland has one of the largest and potentially most useful diaspora networks in the world. Successive governments have rightly sought to engage with that resource. Any diaspora policy will necessarily be light touch, but this is an area that could be considered and other countries provide useful templates.
- Soft Power – all governments seek to boost their soft power to deliver both political influence and economic opportunity at home. This is sometimes closely linked to the country’s brand and Scotland has a particular opportunity given the strength of the country’s brand for example food and drink, education and culture, tourism, sport etc.
- Different perspectives – Scotland’s particular needs and perspectives will differ in some ways from those of the UK as a whole, the devolution settlement reflects that. How does that different perspective deliver for taxpayers and in meeting the Scottish Government’s goals.

May 2023

*John Edward, Head of Operations, Scottish Council on Global Affairs*