

The following was submitted as a joint submission by three members of the Scottish Council of Global Affairs, forming Annexe B of the document CEEAC/S6/23/18/1.

The occasion was the meeting – June 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 – of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee; the Scottish Government is undertaking a review of its National Outcomes, the broad policy aims which inform its National Performance Framework (NPF).

Parliament page: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-constitution-europe-external-affairs-and-culture-committee/meetings/2023/ceeacs62318/agenda>

Full document: <https://www.parliament.scot/~media/committ/6032>

## 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 NonP5 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.

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