

Overseas Territories Forum

January 2023

Final Report



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About UKOTP

The UK Overseas Territories Project is a coherent programme of transformational activities that are enhancing good governance and oversight of public finances in the UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

In 2016, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch (CPA UK), National Audit Office (NAO), and Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) formed a consortium to deliver the UK Overseas Territories Project (UKOTP).

Now in Phase II, UKOTP works with parliamentarians, parliamentary and electoral officials, external auditors, and internal auditors from across the OTs to share good practice and exchange ideas. UKOTP is funded by the UK Government's Conflict Security and Stability Fund, administered through the Overseas Territories Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO).

For more information about UKOTP please visit:
<https://www.uk-cpa.org/what-we-do/uk-overseas-territories-project/>



About the Partners

CPA UK

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) supports and strengthens parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth. It focuses on key themes including women in parliament, modern slavery, financial oversight, security and trade.

Peer to peer learning is central to the work of CPA UK, an organisation that brings together UK and Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials to share knowledge and learn from each other. CPA UK aims to improve parliamentary oversight, scrutiny and representation; it is located in and funded by the UK Parliament. Further information can be found on the CPA UK website: www.uk-cpa.org

National Audit Office

The National Audit Office (NAO) is the supreme audit institution of the United Kingdom, with responsibility for the external oversight of central government. Annually, its 800 staff audit the accounts of all UK Government departments and many other public sector bodies, and complete over 60 value for money studies or investigations. It works closely with Parliament, in particular by supporting the evidence sessions of the public accounts committee.

NAO has had a long history of providing capacity-building support to supreme audit institutions and public accounts committees and has worked extensively with the Overseas Territories. Further information can be found on the NAO website: www.nao.org.uk

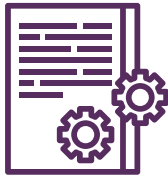
Government Internal Audit Agency

The Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) was launched on 1 April 2015. It is the largest of the UK Government's internal audit functions, providing internal audit and assurance services across a wide range of central government customers. GIAA strives to help accounting officers and management in our customers organisations to understand and manage their risks and to ensure exemplary standards of governance.

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations resulting in better public services delivery. Further information can be found on the GIAA website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-internal-audit-agency

Outcome and Outputs

The Overseas Territories Forum 2022 has the following outcome:



Outcome

Participants will more effectively scrutinise and deliver oversight and good governance within their jurisdictions.

The outcome will be achieved through the three following outputs:



Output One

Participants will have a better understanding of different approaches taken by UK Overseas Territories in enhancing partnerships for good governance, effective scrutiny, leadership, and public engagement.



Output Two

Participants will consolidate knowledge on public financial oversight in line with international standards and best practice, with a focus on addressing current global challenges.



Output Three

Participants will strengthen their networks and enhance collaboration with their counterparts across the UK Overseas Territories.

Themes of the Forum: A Summary

The three days of the Forum featured three themes: Partnerships for Good Governance; Scrutiny in Practice; and Leadership and Public Engagement. The first theme covered topics related to how delegates can leverage existing networks to improve the efficacy of their work, and improve their understanding on good governance in relation to topical issues such as energy security, the current economic context, and cyber resilience. The second theme focused on the role of scrutiny in parliament and internal and external audit departments. Finally, the theme of Leadership and Public Engagement covered topics related to enhancing public trust in government, cultivating citizen buy-in, and how parliamentarians can better engage with the public.

Delegate Feedback

CPA UK seeks to make our programmes as tailored and as relevant as possible to the needs of delegates. We do this through consultation with our key stakeholders and continuous learning from previous activities.

GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY SECURITY

↑ 26% Delegates' knowledge increased by 26.45% on the role of scrutiny in holding governments to account on climate change and energy security.

ENHANCING PUBLIC TRUST IN OUR GOVERNMENTS

↑ 20% Delegates' knowledge increased by 20.87% on the role of internal audit in enhancing public trust in government.

BEST PRACTICE FOR LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY

↑ 17% Delegates' knowledge increased by 17.86% on the fundamental processes of legislative scrutiny.

THE POWER OF NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

↑ 17% Delegates' knowledge increased by 17.24% on how well they can pursue collaborative solutions and leverage existing networks to improve the efficacy of their work.

THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT IN OVERSIGHT

↑ 8% Delegates' knowledge increased by 8.08% on risk management and the challenges of oversight in complex government organisations.

EFFECTIVE REPORTING AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

↑ 6% Delegates' knowledge increased by 6.22% on engaging the public with reports, and leveraging citizen buy-in to encourage accountability.

RISK BASED INTERNAL AUDITING

↑ 5% Delegates' knowledge increased by 5% on understanding RBIA, risk maturity, audit planning, and undertaking engagements.

Delegate Feedback

Delegates were asked to rate how relevant the Forum was to their role, and whether it met their expectations.

HOW RELEVANT WAS THE PROGRAMME TO YOUR ROLE?

91%
FULLY RELEVANT

9%
PARTIALLY RELEVANT

0%
NOT RELEVANT

HOW RELEVANT WAS THE PROGRAMME TO YOUR ROLE? (PARLIAMENTARY WORKSTREAM)

89%
FULLY RELEVANT

11%
PARTIALLY RELEVANT

0%
NOT RELEVANT

DID THE PROGRAMME MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

53%
EXCEEDED

47%
MET EXPECTATIONS

0%
DID NOT MEET

DID THE PROGRAMME MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS? (PARLIAMENTARY WORKSTREAM)

53%
EXCEEDED

47%
MET EXPECTATIONS

0%
DID NOT MEET

Partnerships for Good Governance

Official Opening

The discussion in the Official Opening focused on how partnerships are what makes the UK Overseas Territories Project (UKOTP) work so well. Thanks was given to the Consortium partners and the OT delegates for their engagement. A particular topic raised was the positive development of the partnerships between the OTs themselves, particularly through leadership groups. One delegate said

“We just moved to a ministerial form of government, and the training we have had through CPA UK has been invaluable.”

Another topic raised was the positive impact of the Project in supporting democratic processes, holding government to account, and ensuring public engagement. One speaker shared:

“Delighted to fund the work that you do that carries out the democratic processes and holding government to account. We are looking forward to the parliamentary linkups between parliamentary clerks and officials across the OTs” and that “The more informed your citizens are, the more confidence they will have in your work.”



The Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP speaking at the Official Opening of the Forum

Partnerships for Good Governance

Keynote Address:

Managing Public Finances and Climate Change in the Turks and Caicos Islands

Hon. Gordon Burton MHA, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), addressed participants on the challenges in managing public finances in the midst of climate change and a changing global landscape.

Speaking of the value of transparency in managing economies, he discussed at length a case study of a financial management system in TCI which prioritises transparency and accountability. He concluded that this was a factor in ensuring the long-term revival of the TCI economy. He also spoke of TCI's 'green revolution' and the several paths taken to improve climate resilience and adapt to climate change challenges.

He also highlighted that there must be a balance between economic stability and meeting the needs of the public and concluded that there is always value in transparency in managing public finances. He stated that, as Speaker, it was important for him to get parliamentarians the training they needed. To this, he mentioned that the training and resources provided by UKOTP has been invaluable, such as the PAC Training Workshops and a Post-Election Seminar.

“We consider the UKOTP team as invaluable to our development, and we trust that our collaboration will continue”



The Hon. Gordon Burton MHA of TCI speaking at the Keynote Speech for Day 1, OT Forum

Partnerships for Good Governance

The Power of Networking and Collaboration

Understanding the 'shadow network'

This session provided an in-depth discussion on the value of building partnerships, both within and across teams as well as publicly. One area of discussion highlighted the value of 'shadow networks', where an informal network is built or already exists across teams where technical and non-technical expertise is shared. The aim of participating in this network is to raise the quality of one's own work by accessing industry know-how that is relevant to strategic objectives.

Strategic use of online spaces for stakeholder mapping

Another area of discussion was focused on making connections online, particularly through LinkedIn. A social media strategy, therefore, is essential in reaching strategic objectives. However, this means investing time and attention into identifying stakeholders, counterparts, and communities online in order to make meaningful connections that can provide access to operational know-how. Doing this successfully can contribute towards building a stakeholder map as well as a value chain. If progress is slow toward reaching strategic objectives, it is worth re-evaluating the stakeholder map.



(From right) Jo Rowley, Mfon Akpan, Helen Haywood, Tracy Knight

Handling a high turnover of parliamentarians within a network

There was an interest from delegates in understanding how to handle a high turnover of parliamentarians within a network. The discussion in response to this covered two main propositions.

Firstly, the idea behind securing sustainable networks lies in the structure of a network, and not being overly reliant on individual members of that network. As such, it is necessary to establish regular contact through annual meetings or regular networking meetings to ensure there is a committee – even if there are positions open, the structure provides stability in keeping up momentum.

Partnerships for Good Governance

Secondly, it is necessary to accept that it is in the nature of working with parliamentarians that there is a higher turnover. It is also to be expected that a parliamentarian may change their stance or approach to a committee if their own role within parliament has changed. As such, there should be consistent access to training, such as post-election seminars, and other events which allow for networking between newer and more experienced parliamentarians.

Managing Public Finances in the Current Global Economic Context

Trends in the current global landscape

The session began with a presentation of the current global economic landscape. A speaker explained that globally, there has been a significant slowdown which has impacted the world, as since October 2021, there has been a huge increase in inflation, but a gradual decline is expected in 2023. The speaker also shared the UK is expecting a long but relatively mild recession, as the driving factors of this are the squeeze on household budgets, a drop in household income, and inflation.

The UK in recession and OTs mitigating economic shock

There were several questions from the audience on the UK entering a recession, and a speaker answered that the UK has technically entered a recession at that time, as there have been two subsequent quarters of negative GDP. In addressing the topic of interest, the speakers explained that as OTs are small, open economies, they are exposed to global economic forces and the impacts must be addressed. This could look like increasing tourism services or addressing issues with increased shipping costs due to global supply chain issues.



(From right) Samuel Edwards, Hon. Cole Simons JP MP, Dennis Tatarkov

Partnerships for Good Governance

It is advisable that OTs form an economic framework that addresses their needs within the context of the UK entering a recession. This framework could focus on three key metrics or indicators, such as: Ensuring debt is less than 8% of yearly revenue; Ensuring debt services are less than 10% of yearly revenue; and/or ensuring liquid assets are kept at 20% of yearly spending. However, this is advisory and not prescriptive.

Trends on refinancing debt to mitigate the rising cost of interest

A question was raised on refinancing debt so an OT can mitigate the rising cost of interest, as some OT fiscal instruments are aligned with the US Federal Reserve System. While one OT may have credit quality, another OT may not, so how to go about minimising the interest payments which are essentially exported overseas and less is spent locally? A speaker explained that a strategy must be implemented where an OT can clearly demonstrate that they can pay back the debt.

Action points raised:

- There was discussion around needing more dialogue between OTs and FCDO to ensure local voices are heard, and prioritising making local ways of working sustainable.
- There was an interest in gaining clarity on how an OT can secure financial intervention from the UK Government.
- There was discussion around needing more clarity on who is subject to financial interventions and how that is determined.
- There was discussion around the need for bridging the gap between parliamentarians, national secretaries, economists, and technocrats as personnel responsible for implementing the financial programmes, so that the programmes meet the needs of the people.



Hon. Susan Jackson JP MP, Bermuda poses a question to the speakers

Partnerships for Good Governance

Good Governance for Climate and Energy Security

Finding a balance between protecting the environment under budgetary constraints

The discussion focused on climate change-induced extreme weather, and how reports produced, as a result, may not fully address the issue or provide actionable next steps. There is a need for further action, beyond the creation of policy and implementation of legislation. This may be an investment into a green transition to net-zero. When looking into value for money, one must look at the long-term perspective. The long-term delay in action will require a more urgent transition, which can be more expensive. It could also be worth calculating the cost of not taking action at all, as the potential costs of climate change, such as flooding and responding to hurricanes, can be very high.

Comparing Parliamentary Systems

The challenges of small parliaments

This session focused on the parliamentary systems of the OTs and brought up the challenges of a small parliament. One delegate contributed that small parliaments can be dominated by the executive, which can create, in the minds of the public and parliamentarians, an image of rubber stamping.

Another challenge was that a small parliament dominated by the executive can lead to few fully functioning committees. Similarly, a small parliament, even if not dominated by the executive, is challenged in providing the numbers to provide necessary scrutiny. In both instances, bills could be passed extremely quickly, not allowing the time and space for detailed scrutiny.

Finally, another challenge was appropriate resourcing in setting up committees. Once again, this can be linked back to the executive dominating parliament, as they have a hold over the expenditure. A point about opposition members struggling to fund their own constituency work from their parliamentary balance was also raised.

Collaborating Effectively and Building Consensus

Building a culture of communication

One area of the discussion centred on building a culture of communication between PAC members and parliamentarians. In the UK, this is highly valued: MPs are invited to make contributions that can be used in the committee's work, either named or anonymously. One attendee explained that **“It gives us a richness of information”** and **“Helpful to inform discussion”**

Within this culture of communication, integrity is crucial. One speaker said that committee members trust that the 'lead members' will accurately reflect what happened in the room, regardless of which party they are from.

Partnerships for Good Governance

Remit of a PAC

Another area of discussion was the realistic remit of a PAC in carrying out their role. One delegate shared that as large projects take a considerable amount of time to deploy, by the time they are finished and the work of the PAC can begin, certain personnel may have changed positions, and may lose or lessen their capacity to engage.

To address this, it was shared that the UK PAC is very clear in that it does not investigate policy, but aims to measure the Government against their own treasury rules. Rather than waiting for a project to finish, investigate matters **“as soon as the pound hits the ground.”**

Timeliness of PAC reports

One attendee raised an issue around the time it takes to release a report, aging it in the process. To address this, one speaker explained that in the UK, the report will look into key priorities with a time limit on how far back the report will go and will draw on previously published reports where relevant.



(From right) Hon. Dame Meg Hillier DBE MP, Matthew Hamilton, Hon. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP

Partnerships for Good Governance

Summary of Day 1 meetings for internal and external audit delegates

In addition to the aforementioned sessions, four other meetings were held for internal and external audit delegates. These meetings covered a view from the financial reporting council, the role of internal audit in cyber resilience, and understanding risk.



Gillian Cook (GIAA) presenting on the role of internal audit in cyber resilience.



Andy Serlin (NAO) presenting to external audit delegates on performance audit



Liz Sandwith (CIA) presenting to internal audit delegates on risk

Scrutiny in Practice

Keynote Address: Day 2

Reporting and recording government interventions to encourage transparency

The speaker shared that, during the pandemic, reports that covered sensitive schemes, such as those covering border control schemes and passport schemes, were produced and published swiftly. They also shared that their team maintained a spreadsheet of all government interventions, how much they committed to spend, and how much they actually spent. This was turned into an online tracker for more than 400 programmes, which is now used as a tool for transparency. Moreover, the efficient use of data is important to maintaining transparency and trust in public money, so that the public feel confident in contributing taxes.

The speaker also shared that alongside their value for money reports, there were also 'lessons to learn' reports, by responding to requests about consolidating learning points into a single report concerning an issue, rather than several reports providing on similar topics presenting their recommendations.

Resilience challenges and risk assessments

One area of discussion focused on how risks to resilience of public finances and services in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic and energy crisis, were underestimated. This prompts the question – is your risk assessment adequate?

Understanding what can and cannot be bought, stocked, or sustainably moved along a supply chain provides a more thorough framework for a risk assessment.

Action point raised:

- The National Audit Office is currently piloting a new methodology to test risks from the national risk register. They are open to sharing this methodology.



*Gareth Davies, Comptroller and Auditor General,
National Audit Office*

Scrutiny in Practice

Using Accounts for Scrutiny

Changes in demands require changes in the working environment

One area of discussion focused on ensuring that the working environment matches the context in which the audit takes place. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, actions were taken to increase staff and funding. Another topic developing from the discussion was that the report should be mindful of scrutiny practices during unprecedented times. For instance, a report should be mindful that governmental teams are under pressure to deliver, likely allocating and reallocating staff, some of whom may take on certain roles for the first time under pressure. This also means being clear that audit's role is to ensure that procurement processes were followed, not to carry out a forensic investigation into contracts. As an auditing organisation, is important to work with government, not against them.

Audit reports should acknowledge the context of an audit

One topic developing from the discussion was the notion that the report should be mindful of scrutiny practices during unprecedented times. For instance, a report should be mindful that governmental teams are under pressure to deliver, likely allocating and reallocating staff, some of whom may take on certain roles for the first time under pressure. This also means not performing the audit role as a forensic investigation into contracts, but rather ensuring that procurement processes, for instance, were followed. As an auditing organisation, is important to work with government, not against them.

Audit reports are interlinked with business resilience

One speaker explained that by demonstrating that they were completing audit work to a high standard, they are enabling the environment for business and investment. This is also linked to developing a good relationship with the Auditor General, the PAC and staff, as this encourages good governance. When limitations and demands appear, one speaker shared that they were able to develop a draft plan and gain approval for this by Cabinet.

This opened up the space for people to contribute comments and complaints from public officers. When audit reports are public, there is more of an incentive for public officers to contact audit teams to ensure compliance from the start of their projects. One speaker shared that:

“There is an increased reliance on the Auditor General as there have been changes between [OT] and UK, and this goes to show that the support from UKOTP has improved our work tremendously in terms of the quality and standard in terms of the audits that we do.”

Scrutiny in Practice

The Role of Effective Risk Management in Oversight

Evaluating the effectiveness of frameworks

One area of discussion focused on risk, with a focus on the question: Is risk formalised if risk exists in all organisations? If so, are there tangible risk management structures? Value comes from effective risk management, and this requires going beyond only acknowledging the existence of risk. One must consider how effective and efficient the existing processes are. The existence of formalised risk management in itself does little, it is the effectiveness and efficiency of it which brings value. As such, there are three areas of consideration: Kit; People; Application.

Kit

- How good are the individual component of your risk management kit?
- How well do they work together i.e. systems, procedures, data?
- How can you assess the efficiency of these individually or collectively?

People

- How good are your people at performing their roles in the context of risk?
- How well do they work together within and across teams?

Application

- How well do your people apply your risk management kit to the underlying processes and decisions in government?
- How well are your people able to tune it in to different circumstances?

Risk management priority commitments to the UK Public Accounts Committee

There are three aims to consider, with the end purpose of enabling the government to ensure that high quality, effective risk management is made central to government planning, policy making, service delivery, monitoring, and reporting activities.

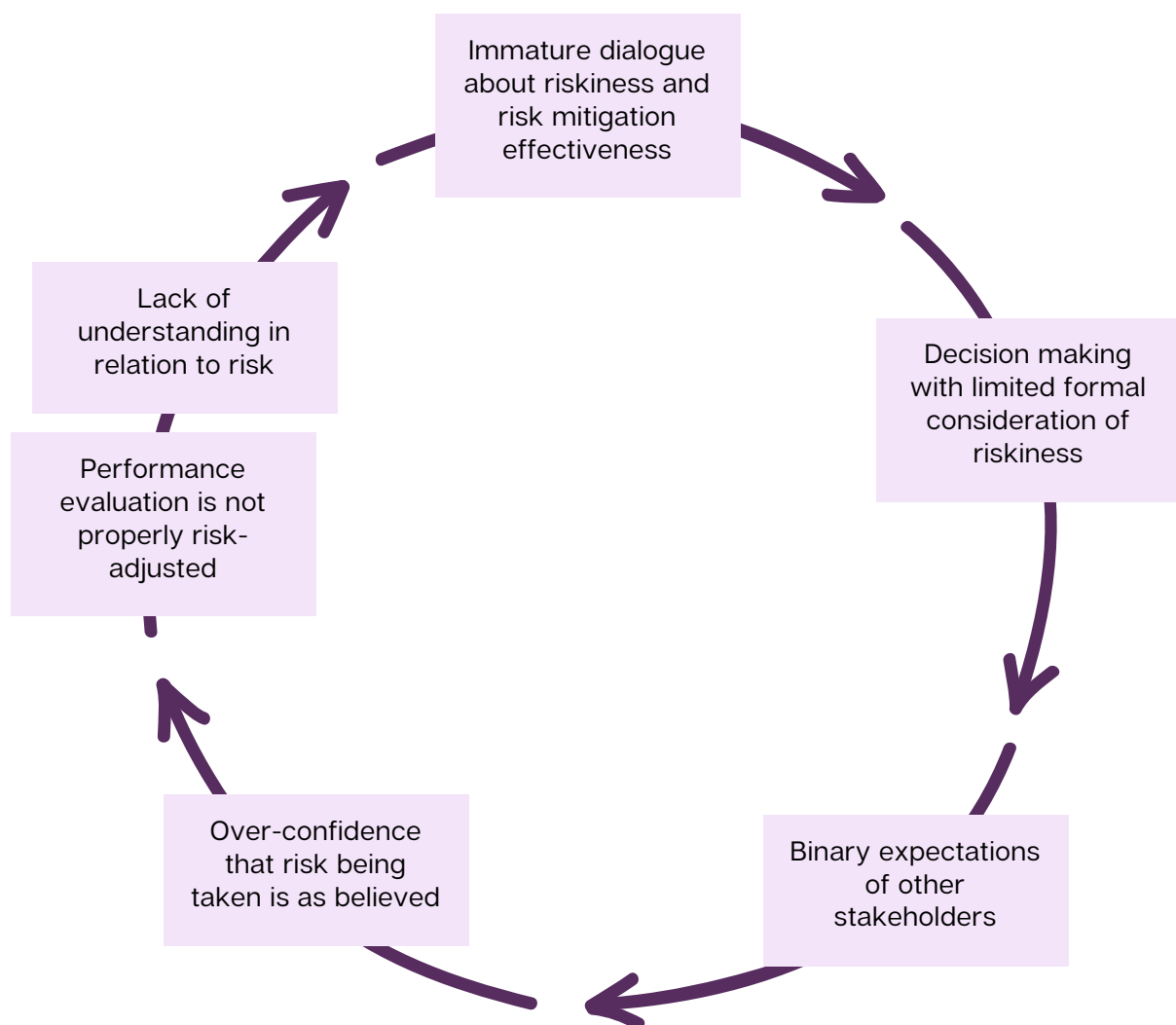
These three aims are: Strengthening leadership and enhancing credibility; Collaborating across boundaries; Enhancing capabilities and drive professionalism. Strengthening leadership and enhancing credibility could look like reminding people of the big picture, while helping them to adopt the right behaviours, such as enthusiasm and courage. Collaborating across borders could look like growing the risk management community, communicating, and creating opportunities to share. Risk Improvement Groups are an example - they are a monthly, online session for 900 risk specialists. The sharing of risk reports from different government units can also speed up work. Finally, enhancing capabilities and driving professionalism could look like assessing the impact and influence of training and use of self-awareness tools, identifying what people do not know, what they know but have not applied in practice.

Scrutiny in Practice

Improving the maturity of conversations about risk in the media

The discussion also covered how different organisations have different cultures and perceptions of risk management, as well as how risk can be communicated differently depending on the perspective of who is speaking. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, some conversations around risk were shallow. In the media, conversations about risk were not complex and often required binary answers, disincentivising politicians to improve the maturity of conversations about risk.

There is a cycle of how conversations about risk lose maturity: Immature dialogue about riskiness and risk mitigation effectiveness can begin when there is a lack of understanding about risk. This immature dialogue can lead to decision making with limited formal consideration of riskiness, which can lead to binary expectations of other stakeholders. These binary expectations can lead to over-confidence that the risk being taken is as believed, which can lead to a performance evaluation that is not properly risk adjusted. This can lead to a lack of understanding in relation to risk, which starts the cycle again, causing immature dialogue about riskiness and risk mitigation effectiveness.



Scrutiny in Practice

Innovations in Scrutiny Practices

Methods of holding governments to account

One area of discussion focused on how to hold governments to account. One speaker responded with the following suggestions:

Methods of holding governments to account

- Use written questions to share on the floor of the House
- Write to a particular Minister
- Take opportunities to encourage parliamentarians to start or contribute to a debate on issues that the government are required to respond to, or debates covering the main themes of a bill
- Exercise scrutiny of legislation in areas particular to parliamentarians, such as through proposing amendments to clarify the meaning of clauses or the overall aim of the bill
- Engage with select committees and their power to take evidence sessions. Select committees can be more effective than opposition Shadow Ministers in scrutinising Ministers and officials as they have more scope for scrutiny.
- Follow up on reports published by the government, and engage with a committee on this. If a committee establishes a pattern of requesting updates on how a government has implemented recommendations in a report, it can encourage future implementation of those recommendations.
- Go beyond parliament and engage focus groups or non-governmental organisations for on-the-ground information about certain topics.

Ensuring quality in internal structures and networks, and how they can improve methods of holding government to account

A point about utilising existing structures to find stability in holding government to account was also raised. While a formal committee structure is useful in scrutinising legislation, the way in which the legitimacy of that committee is perceived is also important. To this point, one speaker raised that if members of a select committee are elected by their peers, rather than nominated by a party leader, more credibility can be leveraged.

It is also suggested that the members are elected for the term of the parliament so other parliamentary commitments can be planned for accordingly, and that it is clear that party politics do not feature in the work of a committee member. It is important that others outside the committee understand and believe that information shared with the committee is done so in a context of trust and confidence.

Scrutiny in Practice

The Committee System

The committee system must work for the parliament of which it is part

In discussing committee systems within the Westminster model, one speaker shared that, in a small parliament, just having the committee system in place should not be the final objective, but rather to develop the skills and knowledge that make the committee system work. He said that the **“Importance is to learn how to do it, but not necessarily to copy how you do it.”**

In any case, it is suggested that committees are not split on party lines, and it becomes important to build consensus across different members within a committee on a report. This consensus is also linked to having the resources to ensure the report drafted is one all members can support. As such, this may be challenging for smaller parliaments, as a speaker explained the **“challenge of smaller legislatures is to cut the cloth and do what they can with the resources available to them.”**



(From front) Hon. Cora Richardson-Hodge MHA, Matthew Hamilton, Dr Stephen McGuinness

Independence of parliament from government

Another area of discussion focused on the link between resourcing and independence of parliament from the executive branch. Even when legislation to ensure independence of parliament from government has been crafted, it remains in the power of the executive to be released.

One delegate responded that in their parliament, the Speaker chairs a commission that decides a budget for funds requested that the government then approves. Another delegate shared that the PAC benchmarking reports from CPA UK helped significantly in their self-assessment of independence and that they are developing a business case for a parliamentary services commission.

Scrutiny in Practice

Standing Orders and Scrutiny in the Chamber

The utility of Standing Orders

Standing orders are vital resources as essentially ‘everything’ is outlined in there, However, one must be careful to not make standing orders so simple that it creates space for misunderstanding, as standing orders will be challenged and therein lies the potential for misinterpretation. In this case, the standing order must be amended to remove doubt. In the UK House of Commons, there is also a question of how much of the daily fare is dictated by standing orders as opposed to rulings of the past or common sense. For example, in the UK Parliament, there is no standing order that contains a written rule that one should not lie to the House or accuse others of lying!

The role of language in Standing Orders and the debating chamber

Developing from the discussion was a question about the perceived impartiality of the role of the Speaker. More than one attendee responded that the Speaker of the debating chamber should always be impartial and show themselves to be impartial. It is important that the Speaker remains neutral to ensure Members do not view their rulings through the prism of one view over the other.

Another question was raised about how Standing Orders guide the use of oral questions in a debating chamber. In the UK, Standing Orders do not dictate how initial and supplementary questions should be delivered, but it is a matter for the Speaker to judge as the current practices come from practice, rather than a list of rules in a Standing Order. The purpose of a question is to seek information, press for action, or make a political point.

Another area of discussion was how standing orders related to the formation and scope of a select committee. The discussion covered the issue of defining the scope of a select committee: The description must not be too broad while detailing the scope, but should leave some margin so that a select committee is not hindered in its ability to carry out its role.



Hon. Roy Clinton MP, Gibraltar, poses a question

Scrutiny in Practice

Best Practice for Legislative Scrutiny

This session was a presentation followed by an activity. The presentation, 'Best Practice for Legislative Scrutiny' covered several key areas, such as methods of scrutiny, accountability in the public interest, and the importance of debate as a core practice.

The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

The presentation began by covering the stages in passing legislation, with discussion on the value of debate and scrutiny through committees within that process. The presenters also spoke to the powers that parliamentarians have to call upon others to best scrutinise legislation in the public interest. This means that professionals or people with insight should be called to inform the committees or public hearings taken during the scrutiny process. The presentation also discussed the value of debate, elaborating that a debate can be a neutral ground for identifying and addressing areas of a bill that may be overlooked by the 'mainstream' people involved in it. It is advisable that parliamentarians understand how a bill may affect non-mainstream or marginalised communities.

When scrutinising legislation, there may be a tendency to look at the legislation line by line, but this is not the only way and not necessarily the most efficient way.

Another method of scrutiny raised by the speakers is to examine if the aims and principles the legislation rests on are appropriate.

This can look like examining what difference the legislation is trying to make, as well as thinking how the legislation can be consumed by the public and media.

In scrutinising legislation on the basis of its aims and principles, the speakers raised that this can prevent entanglements in legalese and details that may not manifest in reality.

Within this context, one can think about: What type of witnesses are needed; how they might be reached; in which context would they be best suited to speaking with parliamentarians; what questions to



Hon. Claude Hogan MLA, Montserrat

Scrutiny in Practice

put to those answering for the legislation; and how those questions may differ from person to person.

The presenters also highlighted that the words used and tone of voice in a debate is different from speeches made by parliamentarians during a political campaign. During a debate, the role of the opposition is not to score political points, but to raise questions that ensure the implications of legislation are considered appropriately. Building connections with relevant persons, such as ombudsmen or complaints committees are essential in this process.

The presentation then presented delegates with a debate practice session. Mr. David Melding OBE observed that:

“Good legislative scrutiny is key to improving outcomes for citizens. We must ensure that relevant questions are put to government ministers when they propose legislation.

I was very encouraged to hear members from the Overseas Territories’ legislatures suggesting excellent questions in our scrutiny exercise.

Why do we need this legislation? How will it achieve its aims? Are the aims the outcomes the public want? How much will it all cost? All these questions are at the heart of best practice scrutiny.”



David Melding CBE, former Member of the Senedd

Scrutiny in Practice

Summary of Day 2 meetings for internal and external audit delegates

In addition to the aforementioned sessions, five meetings were held for internal and external audit delegates. These meetings covered financial audit updates, a presentation from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, and risk-based auditing.



A group of external audit delegates in a meeting.



Debbie Edwards (NAO) presenting to external audit delegates on financial audit updates



Julie Kitchen (GIAA) presenting to internal audit delegates risk-based auditing

Leadership and Public Engagement

Keynote Address: Day 3

Enhancing Public Trust in Our Governments

On the morning of Day 3 of the Forum, E. Honer, the Chief Executive Officer of GIAA, delivered a keynote address on public trust in government.

The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Models of assessing public trust in government

The presentation began by covering why public trust in government is so important. Public trust in government, as Ms. Honer explained, is what drives voters to the ballot box and determines citizen compliance. It impacts whether governments can successfully implement policy, and if governments can be ambitious in their reform.

The presentation then introduced resources that indicate a global decline in public trust and a 'rise in suspicion', stating that despite increased transparency and improved methods of preventing breaches of trust, this suspicion remains. Ms. Honer then presented the four models of assessing drivers in public trust: The Nolan principles; OECD drivers; the 2021 Deloitte study; and a local government study. Analysis of these models identifies three common elements: reliability; transparency; and fairness.



E. Honer, Chief Executive Officer of GIAA, speaking for the Day 3 Keynote Address

A quote from a recent report from the INTOSAI and the IIA was shared, and Ms. Honer elaborated on that report to say that leaders must focus not only on what they do but how they do it, linking this back to the three drivers of trust: That services must not only be reliable and fair, but transparent. A link was made, from the report, between public trust and good governance, highlighting from the report that **“Good governance fosters operational excellence...help[ing] senior management...make well informed decisions... Awareness of public scrutiny further encourages better behaviours and performance by leaders”**

Leadership and Public Engagement

The role of internal audit in supporting public trust

AMs. Honer presented the GIAA's Insights 2022 report. Six common themes and risks were identified: People risks (attaining and retaining talent in a competitive job market); cyber-attacks; fraud risks; supply chain risks; commercial risks; climate change risks. To address these, strong public engagement is needed in supporting and complying with the ambitious reforms required from governments.

In order for governments to take risk responsibly, strong governance, effective risk management, and robust internal controls are required. This relates to the role of internal audit, as the INTOSAI/IIA report says, "central to governance is the provision of independent assurance and advice to senior management and the governing body." Three examples were then provided covering where the work of the GIAA has linked directly to the three drivers of trust. Ms. Honer closed the speech with a quote: **"Contrary to what most people believe, trust is not some soft, illusive quality that you either have or you don't; rather trust is a pragmatic, tangible, actionable asset that you can create."**

Questions from the audience

A question was raised about the relationship between internal and external audit, to which Ms. Honer responded that the GIAA has regular meetings with the NAO. They talk about their work programmes to avoid their work programmes conflicting, and customers feeling over-audited. It is aimed to be a productive relationship: In meeting counterparts, one should try to understand the context of the environments in which decisions have been made, with the mindset of looking for reliability, transparency, and fairness.

A question was raised on if the GIAA makes their reports public, to which Ms. Honer responded that the GIAA will publish documents as appropriate when it is in the public interest. It remains a priority that the GIAA need not have fear to provide full and frank advice.

A further question was raised on if the GIAA completes work commissioned by a Minister, and the answer was no, as a general rule. Instead, there is a sharing protocol that may release an internal report if a Minister asks for them. Ultimately, however, the final decision rests with the Accounting Officer.

Another question was raised on how the GIAA decides what to audit. The response was that it depends on what the priorities are and where the risks are to an organisation, so wider factors must be taken into account, not just things that are more accessible to audit. It is advisable to build a productive relationship where auditors are let in, and that, at times, can require a mindset change. A final question was raised on the GIAA's relationship with the Auditor General. A delegate raised that some Auditor General reports would showcase inefficiencies, so how would the GIAA address that? Ms. Honer explained that the GIAA will encourage the relevant audit committee to collate the recommendations from various assurance providers, and track this holistically as it might point to areas where the GIAA, as internal audit, would follow up.

Leadership and Public Engagement

Standards in Public Life

Standards of public life in the UK

In the UK, there is a patchwork of organisations that look at standards which has grown organically over time. For example, there is an Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, and a Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards whose work helps to ensure the Nolan Principles are upheld: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; and Leadership. There is no overarching strategy as to how standards are enforced, it is fairly informal as it relies on relationships between the Prime Minister and key advisors, and rests on the expectation that people are well behaved. Nevertheless, it may be more useful to look at the machinery of government rather than its individuals. There are areas for reform, but one must ask if the government has the political appetite for this, and if the opposition has the 'political clout' to enforce this.

One speaker put forward a report entitled 'Constitutional Guardians' as recommended reading.

Creating a robust standards system

While different societies and cultures will hold different expectations from their politicians, it is important that politicians are committed to standards that align with what that society expects, independent from political ideologies. There should be a balance between what the rules state a parliamentarian must share about themselves to join a committee on standards, and what interests they are allowed to keep. This point was raised after several attendees spoke of the issue that some parliamentarians were discouraged from joining a committee on standards as it may require an intrusive level of personal information made public, such as information about their family. In other cases, parliamentarians may be discouraged from joining such a committee because they would have to give up other interests, such as directorship on a company. This issue is heightened in small populations.

Nevertheless, there is a legitimate need to uphold principles of transparency, openness, and honesty. The standards system should work with the cultural and population markers, so if the rules are so onerous that they become draconian, steps should be taken to advocate for their amendment.

Lobbying

A delegate raised the issue that in a small parliament, addressing the practices of lobbying, and the issues that may arise from those practices, can be overwhelming. Another delegate contributed that there is an uneven playing field when it comes to which organisations lobby parliamentarians. This means that the attention parliamentarians have is skewed in favour of who is able to lobby. For instance, large financial services organisations face fewer barriers to lobby parliamentarians than teachers would. A speaker responded with the observation that an uneven playing field will come about when wealthier industries can pay to lobby while others cannot. This cannot be changed, but what can be done is to make transparent which ministers are meeting with which organisations.

Leadership and Public Engagement

Effective Reporting and Public Engagement

Engaging with the public at large

When engaging the public, it is important to ‘build a story’ and develop momentum as the public will likely not understand the differences between government and parliament. It is important to focus on the work being done, rather than explaining one’s role. In terms of journalists, there will always be journalists within a political ‘bubble’ who report on political activities, so it may be advisable to go beyond those journalists and reach out to more local or specialist writers. Beyond the public, internal or cross-team engagement is also important. For instance, engaging with another committee to share guidelines of what is expected of certain members or clerks.

Limited resources for communications

Another delegate raised that in smaller parliaments, there will be limited resources for communications and so there are not many dedicated communications teams. A speaker responded by explaining that the first priority should be to speak to members and discuss their communications objectives, and how this can help you meet your objectives. Using social media can be a low-cost way of engaging the public, as well as reaching out to stakeholders and asking them to retweet or share your online material.

Another speaker added that one can certainly have a communications strategy without a communications team. Firstly, the strategy itself must be decided. Secondly, one should invest in their brand to explain to people why they should engage. This creates ‘mental availability’ in the mind of the user. One should consider how that user can reach out if they have a query.



(From right) James Rhys, Benjamin Peters, Selsabil Amine, Gina Degtyareva, Pr. Darren Lilleker

Leadership and Public Engagement

Thirdly, once these steps are understood and complete, content can be promoted. Decide what percentage of time will be spent on communications, give people the tools to communicate, the ability to speak 'on-brand', and the messaging you want to spread, such as two or three bullet points. It is important to keep in mind that effective communications is about reaching the people who can influence the change one is seeking to make. This is best done by setting targets and evaluating them on why they were or were not successful. It is not advisable to chase national coverage for the sake of it.

To access communications resources, such as the OASIS Communications Strategy Template, email cpauk@parliament.uk

Improving Performance within a Small Organisation

A presentation was shared on improving organisation performance. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Meeting demand

Small organisations often find coping with the amount of work to be a major challenge, so to meet demand, there must be a clarity of purpose. This means that there is clarity about what the organisation does and how it does it. However, it can be difficult as competing priorities can all present themselves as the first priority all the time. To mitigate this, it is important to create alignment on the purpose of the organisation. This can be done by assessing what teams are prioritising which objectives, and how a particular objective is informing how work is done, and what can be done to create alignment.

Measuring what matters

Small organisations may also struggle with knowing if they are 'winning' or 'losing', so it is important to understand what direction the organisation is headed in. This means that an organisation should define what aspect of performance they are most interested in. These could be: The number of bits of work completed; If the work has been done correctly; The cost of completing the work; How people are feeling about their work.

Measuring what matters help team leaders make better decisions. There must be a focus on measuring the quality of input and quality of process in addition to quality of output. If not, then the sole focus on output may negatively impact the rest, which would negatively impact the output itself.

Leadership and Public Engagement

Parliamentarians' Public Engagement Workshop

A presentation and activity materials were shared during the workshop activities took place. The details of this presentation and activities are below.

The full presentation can be accessed [here](#), and the activity sheets accessed [here](#).

The value of public engagement

The speaker began by recognising that effective and constructive public engagement is a challenge for all parliamentarians, as it is about taking the public on the journey into gaining insights on big issues. There will often be competing priorities between pressing issues for parliamentarians and public interest issues. To address this, there are five interlocking reasons why effective public engagement is important for parliamentarians: Transparency & Accountability; An expression of values; Trust; Relevance; and Responsiveness.

Barriers to effective public engagement

However, there are barriers which could be rooted in citizens themselves or within the image of the parliamentarian or parliament more widely. For instance, a citizen may have low trust in politicians or have perceptions of corrupt processes. They may also perceive themselves to be marginalised where they may feel they are outside of the targeted majority or expect to be overlooked during public consultation practices. They may lack the confidence to engage due to a lack of access to information or means of engagement. Such are the signs of a non-empowered citizen, which is a failure of public engagement. On the other hand, issues around partisan divisions or opaque consultation processes may act as barriers even if citizens were more willing to engage.



Discussing the activity: delegates from Falkland Islands, Bermuda, St Helena, and the Turks and Caicos Islands

Leadership and Public Engagement

Communications for citizen buy-in

Citizen buy-in is paramount to effective public engagement. Citizen buy-in happens when their communication needs are recognised and met. As such, a communications campaign should have a clear plan of how inclusivity of all stakeholder groups is achieved. This means stakeholder-sensitive language should be identified and deployed within a campaign, and credible citizen representations are identified and engaged in the process.

Workshop activity and feedback

After the presentation, delegates had the opportunity to participate in an activity that addressed the information shared. A scenario was presented on the issue of healthcare reforms, and delegates were required to design a public engagement campaign to address citizen concerns. First, delegates were required to identify stakeholders and place them on an Influence/Interest Grid. Secondly, using the Influence/Interest Grid, delegates had to use the OASIS Communications Strategy Template to plan the public engagement campaign. Lastly, delegates were required to revise their communication plans when a fictional piece of breaking news disrupted their original plans.

Delegates shared that the scenario was **“thought-provoking”** and invited them to **“think about the other side...and demonstrate how you have to be ready to react at pace.”**

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Summary of Day 3 meetings for internal and external audit delegates

In addition to the aforementioned sessions, six meetings were held for internal and external audit delegates. These meetings were leadership group meetings for clerks, internal, and external audit delegates, as well as a discussion of UKOTP opportunities for parliamentarians, clerks, and audit officials in 2023-24.



Delegates participating in the public engagement workshop activity

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