

Minister for International Development



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Deputy David Johnson
Chair
Economic and International Affairs Panel

By email

21 October 2021

Dear Deputy Johnson,

I write in response to your letter dated 6 October 2021, to provide you with more information regarding the areas you have raised.

Jersey Overseas Aid Contributions

Reversing the decline in JOA contributions

Background: In 1970, at the UN General Assembly, economically advanced countries agreed to progressively increase their commitment to providing overseas aid in order to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The target was set at 0.7% of a country's Gross National Income and has been achieved by several countries, including Liechtenstein, Sweden and Germany. However, the current average amongst OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee) members is 0.31%.

Pre-2020, the funding allocated to Jersey Overseas Aid remained static and was set in accordance with the Government Medium Term Development plan. This meant that as the island's economy grew, the value of the island's aid budget decreased both in real terms and in relation to the size of the economy. This moved Jersey further away from international norms and represented a proportionate decline year on year, at odds with our pursuit of being a good global citizen.

In 2020, the States of Jersey agreed to formally tie JOA's budget to GVA and to commit to progressively increasing Jersey's overseas aid contributions from 0.26% of GVA in 2021 to 0.30% in 2025, which is a positive step towards reaching the OECD DAC average.

Please find attached summary for further information and breakdown of figures.

JOA's 4-year forecast budget is based on projections of Jersey's nominal GVA for each year and the percent of GVA that Jersey has committed to overseas aid for that year. However, JOA's actual budget is calculated annually, on the basis of forecast GVA for the following year. This means that if the 2024 projection for Jersey's 2025 GVA is not £5,587m, as is currently forecast, Jersey's overseas aid budget will be adjusted automatically.

This system means that JOA's aid can be compared with other countries' directly, but equally importantly the link to GVA means that our aid contracts if our economy contracts (as happened this year, when we received almost £1m less than planned) and expands when we can afford it.

The planned increases in JOA's budget (which are relative to its 2019 budget of £10.3 million, which had been stagnant for several years) will enable JOA to improve and increase its overseas assistance, reaching more people more effectively.

Breakdown of JOA's Budget

Through JOA, Jersey provides effective assistance for people living in poverty and crisis. This is primarily achieved through the following three funding streams:

- Humanitarian Assistance: Approximately 30% of JOA's annual budget is directed toward providing vital emergency assistance in response to prolonged crises and environmental disasters.
- International Development Projects: Approximately 50% of JOA's budget supports the implementation of multi-year projects that sustainably reduce poverty in three thematic areas, (i) Dairy, (ii) Financial Inclusion and (iii) Conservation Livelihoods.
- Jersey Charities: Approximately 15% of JOA's budget enables Jersey charities, working overseas, to provide life-changing assistance.

In addition, a portion of JOA's annual budget is used to provide opportunities for islanders, including internships, volunteer bursaries and community work project placements. Administration of JOA constitutes less than 4% of JOA's budget, significantly below the 7% international average.

Allocation of Budget Increase

The increase in budget will enable JOA to further develop and invest in its three thematic areas – Dairy, Conservation Livelihoods and Financial Inclusion - and undertake development projects that are increasingly targeted and impactful by playing to the island's strengths. The growth in JOA's budget will also enable Jersey to increase the island's response to environmental disasters, such as increases in droughts and flooding as a result of climate change, as well as provide urgent assistance in response to conflict, as was recently the case with Afghanistan.

JOA will also be able to give more money than ever before to Jersey charities, enabling leading organisations, such as the RJAHS, Durrell and Gurkha Welfare Trust to utilise their expertise to benefit thousands more people living in poverty and to facilitate the protection of key natural resources. The budget increase will also enable JOA to continue to reform its operations, improving the resources available to JOA's professional staff in order to ensure that governance and oversight processes are continually strengthened in accordance with best practice and JOA's responsibilities.

Heritage Arts and Culture (including Island Identity)

Planned projects – Heritage Arts and Culture

Whilst the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture has political responsibility for heritage, arts, and culture projects, I believe that the department has workstreams planned that consider and progress the Island Identity objectives.

Since the launch of the project, I have met with the Minister and Assistant Ministers to consider the recommendations of the Island Identity report and to be briefed on ongoing workstreams. The Ministerial team have stated their support for the project and are taking into account the ideas and themes in the formulation of policy, planned departmental activity and strategic plans.

The island's arts, heritage and culture will be promoted through deployment of the agreed 1% investment. The repair and maintenance of Elizabeth Castle has been named as a major project following commitment in last year's Government Plan (P.130/2020), which I wholeheartedly support.

I wish to take this opportunity to state how pleased I am to see ArtHouse Jersey's Skipton Big Ideas immersive exhibition consider 'identity' as a key theme. The exploration of the concept is an excellent example of an organisation contending with the ideas in this project and advancing them in a way that makes a genuine impact and that the island can be proud of.

Island Identity general update

Since launch on the 5th of May 2021, the Island Identity project has been open for public consultation. The consultation officially closed on the 12th of October 2021. During this period, we have engaged with many islanders to gather as much feedback as possible. We have also engaged and gathered views from various Arms Length Organisations, business leaders and third sector organisations. Following the consultation, we are in the progress of refining the 'next steps', or key deliverables of the project.

In parallel, we have continued meeting with Government departments to assist policymakers internalise and begin putting into practice some of the ideas generated throughout this project.

We have also initiated workstreams that will cement the overarching objectives and specific goals of the project:

1. Commissioning of Jersey-related resources for schools, civil servants, visitors, newcomers to the island, businesses, and anyone who wishes to learn more about the island. Once the work has been checked, this will be added to the Island Identity website
2. Mapping of educational resources that exist externally to areas of the curriculum that will help teachers teach about the Island
3. Commissioning of research into the experience of minority communities on the island through the Jersey Policy Forum
4. Gathering contributions from various voices from around the island and giving them a chance to contribute to an essay series concentrating on the project's main themes and publishing views on the Island Identity website and social media
5. Facilitating the distribution of children's books about the island
6. Providing the Youth Service with resources to aid young people in engaging of the concept of 'identity' through session plans
7. Meeting with stakeholder organisations to ensure and support the advancement of Island Identity through their own agendas
8. Translating the consultation into Portuguese, Polish and Romanian.
9. Engaging the public through Parish roadshows, the distribution of the consultation document to Parish halls and writing articles for Parish and Island-wide magazines

Through engagement so far, Government departments, ALOs and other organisations are considerate of identity in the formulation of policy pipelines. We are now well positioned to continue dialogue with relevant departments, providing research and support to stakeholders and the departments responsible for delivery.

I hope that you find the above of use, and please do advise if there is any further information that I, or my officers, might provide.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn', followed by a period.

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Assistant Chief Minister

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