



Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Review Hearing

Witness: The Minister for External Relations

Thursday, 16th November 2023

Panel:

Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade (Chair)

Connétable R. Honeycombe of St. Ouen

Witnesses:

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour, The Minister for External Relations

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Assistant Minister for External Relations

Ms. K. Nutt, Chief Officer, External Relations

Mr. F. Holmes, Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations

[11:34]

Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade (Chair):

Welcome to this quarterly hearing of the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel. The aims of this hearing are to understand the ministerial responsibility for external relations, gather evidence in relation to ministerial delivery plan actions, gather evidence in relation to trade agreements, and gather evidence in relation to the Government Plan 2023-2027 and the ministerial plan. So, I would like to just remind everybody that this hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. Please, all electronic devices, including mobile phones, switched to silent. For the purposes of the recording and the transcript, I would be grateful if everyone who speaks could ensure that you state your name and your role. If we can begin with introductions, I will suggest that the panel members introduce themselves first, followed by the ministerial team. So I am Deputy Moz Scott and I am Chair of the Economic and International Affairs Panel. On ...

Connétable R. Honeycombe of St. Ouen:

Constable Richard Honeycombe.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Who is also a member. Good morning. He is attending by Teams.

The Minister for External Relations:

First of all, good morning, Chair. I am Philip Ozouf, Minister for External Relations.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

I am Ian Gorst, Assistant Minister.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

Frederick Holmes, Principal External Relations Officer in Global Relations.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Kate Nutt, Chief Officer, External Relations.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Welcome, everybody. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have 2 hours scheduled for this hearing and we do have quite a few areas of questioning. If questions remain at the end of the hearing or there are areas needing more detail, we will send these to the ministerial team in writing. First of all, welcome back, Minister.

The Minister for External Relations:

May I say, Chair, that I am most grateful for your understanding for my period of absence, initially bereavement and then illness. I do understand that has been very difficult for you. I know that my role has been ... and I would take this opportunity of publicly thanking Assistant Minister Gorst, but he has a wealth of experience in External Relations, but also the Chief Minister, who both in their own way have covered my role in my absence. I have been back for 2 weeks. I am pretty well briefed thanks to the good work of my team. I will attempt to answer all questions but there may be some issues that I might not be fully up to speed with and I will ask the Assistant Minister or the Chief Officer or, as appropriate, Freddie to fill in. But I am most grateful for the period of absence ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

What we would appreciate most is succinct answers just so that we can cover as much ground as possible.

The Minister for External Relations:

Indeed.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

The panel understands that the separation of financial services from the External Relations ministerial portfolio has now been complete for some time. Minister, can you outline how the Assistant Minister and yourself will work together with the Assistant Chief Minister - sorry, am I reading the right one; yes - with responsibility for financial services to ensure the best outcome for the Island? So the general question is: what interaction will you have with the ministerial group for financial services?

The Minister for External Relations:

It is clear that the Chief Minister made a decision to bring financial services right at the heart of government, and that seems appropriate because it is the arrangement that existed when Deputy Gorst was Chief Minister. That meant by centralising it within the Chief Minister's Office she is able to delegate responsibility to Assistant Chief Ministers or Ministers as appropriate in order to cover what is a complex and, at the time, in the lead-up to Moneyval, which is obviously incredibly important for our outward image ... there was a huge amount of work that was done by Moneyval. External Relations has a role in ... if I was to characterise External Relations' role as giving increased access, visibility and connectivity to the Island generally. To serve Ministers' individual requirements, the financial services Minister or Ministers, we remain at their disposal for assistance in all manner of connectivity and access and visibility either within the U.K. (United Kingdom) Government's sphere or within the wider global diplomatic sphere, of which there are obviously representatives in London.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thanks. Is there some sort of apportionment in terms of like, you know, this particular work between you and the Assistant Minister when it comes to the financial services representation?

The Minister for External Relations:

It is probably important to say that there is one important area within, you could describe, the trade in services sector, which is the separate sanctions responsibilities that we have. Those fall squarely within External Relations and that is, I think, an important segregation of duties. So I discharge that and not the financial services Minister. Deputy Gorst is an Assistant Chief Minister who looks after jointly, with Deputy Miller being in the lead, most financial services matters but overseen by the Chief Minister. So now I am returning, I understand that I am to join that financial services group as appropriate as the Chief Minister and the new Chief Executive think forward as to how Government

is going to be structured going forward with the best way. If you think about, for example, my Gulf trip that happened in February, that was an External Relations trip but, of course, it has a number of financial services aspects to it by way of market access. The Chief Minister and the Minister for the Environment are going to C.O.P. 28 (Conference of the Parties), which is in the U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates). That is one of our principal jurisdictions in financial services and so there is a whole series of relationships which are assisted. We are assisting that access, visibility and connectivity in all manners and where we can help the financial services sector, but our role in External Relations is not purely financial. We have now, by virtue of the publication, which we may come on to, of the global relations strategy, we are making it very clear that we want to focus on the economic but also almost the ... I would describe it as soft diplomacy, the other areas, the importance of cultural, the diaspora, et cetera, but we will come on to that in more detail.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Sure, absolutely. We are going to have to work on a bit more succinctness in our answers as well to catch up time.

The Minister for External Relations:

Okay.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So earlier this year, the panel noted R.83/2023, which delegates the full range of functions and responsibilities relating to External Relations to Deputy Gorst. Previous delegations had a time limit, so why was one not included in this case?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think because of the uncertainty of my own absence. That is something that we will review but going forward it is very clear that the Minister for External Relations is rather different to other Ministers because they are concomitant with the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is also the higher authority in terms of External Relations, and in Deputy Moore's case she has been very active in relation to a number of External Relations matters in my absence.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I think you are straying off the answer, if you do not mind.

The Minister for External Relations:

Okay.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

That is okay, I just want to ...

The Minister for External Relations:

No, no, just tell me. That is fine.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes. Is there some sort of protocol whereby Deputy Gorst exercises these delegated powers? So in a sense it is like who is answering to whom and ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, he stood in. Deputy Gorst has stood in as ... and as a very experienced Minister he is able to do that uniquely. So he stood in as the Minister for External Relations, working with the Chief Minister. Going forward we will find a way of an appropriate segregation of ... appropriate sharing of duties between myself, the Assistant Minister and the Chief Minister.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

How will you do that?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, I think it is through discussion.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

We will do it together.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. Is that scheduled?

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

As the Minister said, the delegation that you referred to was very much in place while the Minister was rightly on absence. That does not mean to say even during his absence through the Private Office he was not apprised from time to time of things that went on. That is the right approach to take. Now as the Minister is back we will then work through exactly what it is that going forward he would like or not like to delegate and I stand ready to support him and the Chief Minister in any way they see best.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Sure. Okay. We just want to be sure that the ... you know, we do not have 2 kind of like cart horses pulling in the other direction.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think by virtue of the previous relationship I have had with Deputy Gorst we are one cart with 2 wheels.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Pulling in the same direction.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

That makes a chariot, does it not? I do not know. Anyway ... **[Laughter]**

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, whatever, but we work very closely together and ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Let us move on from gladiators to ... we are going to talk about the Government Plan ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Of course.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... and the ministerial plan. So, Minister, what discussion and influence have you had in the formation of the proposed Government Plan 2024-2027?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, I was aware of the bids that were necessary for External Relations to maintain its continued operations prior to my leave of absence.

[11:45]

During my absence there have been discussions among Ministers about how to deal with the various quite significant demands for extra revenue expenditure and the capital issues. In relation to the bids that have been made for External Relations, I am pleased to have understood that they have been accepted in full. The letter that I know that you have just received gives the background to that. It is probably just worth adding one thing. External Relations finds itself in a slightly different position than other departments because, by virtue of our overseas offices, we have both premises and staff that are not subject to the automatic allocation of additional monies for staff payments and for rent, which otherwise is within States buildings. So we find ourselves in the position of having to

bid for what other departments would have as automatic. But I think the Treasury has accepted that and they have, therefore, kindly allocated those additional growth bids. Our growth bids in total, it should be said, simply keep our existing ability to do what we have been doing. The challenge I think our Chief Officer has is that there are more and more demands placed upon External Relations and we try and do our best, whether that be the additional work in sanctions or whether the additional requests by Children and Education for better links with education organisations, and the Economy Department in relation to their desires to increase French trade, and the Minister for the Environment in relation to the windfarm and what we have to plan for that. That is subject to States debate in February of next year. So there is a lot more work we are asked to do within ... in real terms. I was discussing with the Chief Officer yesterday in real terms we have seen effectively a cut in the overall monies to External Relations. I am not complaining about that. We just, I think, show that we have tried our best within, in real terms, a limited budget compared to 10 years ago.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can I just take this opportunity to thank your Chief Officer for the assistance she gave us while you were away as well, as she did help brief us.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. I should have added my thanks, too.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So perhaps you could just talk us through what consideration ... the consideration you undertook in terms of looking at these growth bids and proposing the expenditure?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, the growth bids that were deemed to be bids that would have in another department been automatic were explained as automatic. So that meant premises and staff. In addition to that, we sought an additional bid for enhanced French engagement. That post is now happily filled and I think will meet the requirements of the Economy Department, Environment and others.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Just to clarify on that point, Minister, it is a part-time post. We are currently recruiting for it.

The Minister for External Relations:

Oh, right. Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, absolutely. I was going to follow up but that is another question down the line, I think. How does the proposed revenue expenditure meet the ... and I am referring to the terms of reference of our review here. How does the proposed expenditure meet the objectives of the Common Strategic Policy 2023-2026; for example, to develop a more sustainable, innovative, outward-facing and prosperous economy?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, you are quite right, Chair. The common policy of the Council of Ministers 2022-26 was the subject of a States debate. In parallel to that, the common External Relations policy ... which is not subject to a States debate but we made a decision to effectively make it a States debate by having an in-committee debate and taking on views of Members and we published that. That is all about supporting those very words that you quite rightly highlight, which is effectively what does the future economy look like in a rapidly changing post-COVID, post-further financial turmoil world, and that increased need for connectivity, access to markets, is at the heart of what we do.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great. The ...

The Minister for External Relations:

We take that very seriously and all the work we are doing - we are going to come on to F.T.A.s (free trade agreements), et cetera - explain that in more granular detail.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I would not doubt that you would take it seriously. We are going to move on to overseas offices ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Lovely.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... as part of the Government Plan and these funding bids. So please could you briefly outline the purpose of the proposed increase in funding to overseas offices?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, there are 3 overseas offices: one Jersey London office, which I am sorry that we have not celebrated our 10-year anniversary after its start in September 2013. Then, of course, we have the 2 additional offices, the Brussels office and then the Bureau des Iles Anglo-Normandes. Those offices are run by non-natural organisations that are overseen separately. They are subject to leases for rent. They are the same offices that have been in place since their commencement, really, and

rent increases which we have seen arising and unexpected inflation increases, they have to be met. So we have continued with all of that and staff pay is also a subject which is needing to be dealt with. Employees of External Relations are employed out of those offices but it is very much a unified team.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So if you can confirm, so basically these bids are to compensate for inflation. Other than, I understand, the recruitment of additional officer or officers ...?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

One officer, part-time officer.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... one officer part-time and that recruitment of the additional part-time employees, is this a measure to expand the resources, no?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Not of the overseas offices. So that is a Jersey-based person who will be on-Island to support the delivery of the European relations strategy, to assist with managing our honorary consul network, to support our French office particularly, which is very small, so supporting on things like in-bound visits, Deputy, which have been quite frequent, supporting delivery of the European relations strategy overall. But it is a part-time grade 7 post so it is relatively junior.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right, okay. I think you answered this, so forgive me. You are saying that that has not yet been recruited?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Not yet, no.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. So when is it anticipated that that is going to be filled?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I would think first thing in the new year, so Q1.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. So how do you know that you need the support? Because I understand that it is 2 staff in the French team?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

That is right.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

That is shared or ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Jersey/Guernsey.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Perhaps you could explain just why ... how you identify that need.

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, first of all, I am in awe of the 2 individuals that we have, the director and the attaché, about the work that they have done. Without their assistance I do not think the Minister for the Environment and I would have been able to deal with the French fishing issues as successfully as we have. That has been successfully done and, in addition to that, there are a number of ongoing issues. From the start of the term of office the Chief Minister said she desired that we effectively reset our relationship with France, and I think we have successfully done that, both by way of visits, myself appearing in French national newspapers, meeting French Ministers, and now I am back we are certainly going to be continuing that over the next 12 months.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We are straying off topic because I am just trying to understand how you identified that need.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Do you want me to come in?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, please.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The French office, which is currently 2 members of staff, obviously is split. So it serves Guernsey and Jersey. So as the Minister explained, post-Brexit we have had to put a huge amount of investment into rebuilding the relationship with France. You think of the portfolio of subjects that the

French office covers, so you have trade, you have fisheries, you have free movement of people, education, emergency planning. I mean, it is a very long list and they are picking up all of that for both Islands in terms of regional engagement. So that in itself is a stretch for the office and they are under-resourced to cover the amount we are asking them to.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

But we are talking about a part-time employee here?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

We are.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So what I think we are trying to identify is that need that you have here to do that support. How have you identified that?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

So one of the key pieces of feedback from the French office I think was that the ... how can I put this in the right way? I think the ask of Government of Jersey in respect of briefings and reporting and feeding into the centre is quite high, certainly higher than Guernsey, our Guernsey counterparts. So one of the things that that officer would do will be to support, when we have inbound visits, on briefing, for example. I mentioned management of the honorary consul network as well. So it is not just France, it is actually broader European relations support. But there is a whole pot of work that we need filling here that will support the operation of ... in part support the operation of B.I.A.N. (Bureau des Iles Anglo-Normandes).

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right, okay.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

But it is part-time and it is a relatively junior role.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So you want to stop sleeping at the office, is that ...? **[Laughter]**

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I do.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it is probably worth adding, if I may, I welcome the fact that a member of our London team is now also spending a period of time in the French embassy in Paris. That certainly supplements ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The British embassy.

The Minister for External Relations:

Sorry, thank you for the correction, the British embassy in Paris. That I think is a welcome additional connectivity access point and awareness that we have a Jersey individual in Paris once a month in order to apprise themselves of the ongoing and important issues that the French Parliament and French Ministers have. So we are both doing at a regional level and at a national level for the first time.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right. Thank you. So can you identify if there are any interns employed within the overseas offices and, if so, what is the cost of employing them?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Even here.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So there are?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Interns in the overseas offices, we welcome interns. They provide much needed additional temporary support and also it is just a very good thing to do. I do not have the costs, Deputy, but we do have an intern currently ... we are recruiting for an intern in the French office and I think we currently have one in Brussels as well.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So we give them some sort of retainer, then, is that ...?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

It would be ... of course, there is some remuneration attached to it but it tends to be relatively minimal. Of course, with both of those offices it is split with Guernsey as well. But if helpful I can revert with the costs of the last interns that we had, which will give you a ballpark.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Sure. Does this growth bid cover that as well?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

No. That is absorbed within the existing ...

The Minister for External Relations:

They are very impressive graduates that are invariably on an international course of some description, so they bring a huge wealth of ... and they assist these 2 individuals that are permanent. Without them, I think ... well ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Just in France then? Right. Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

But that is in Caen ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Caen, yes, and Brussels, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

... and as the Chief Officer says, there is that additional individual in post. But we welcome interns. It is part of the overall ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Any in London?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Not at the moment, no.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. Right. I am going to hand over to Constable Honeycombe, who is going to continue a bit more of this questioning on the overseas offices.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Good morning, Minister. I apologise I am not with you this morning in person, just we have had some severe flooding in the parish overnight.

The Minister for External Relations:

Sorry to hear that.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I have been clearing drains since 8 o'clock so I have not had time to get into town.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is good to hear you.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Minister, the Government Plan annex identifies minimal uplift in the funding for the overseas offices. However, a grant of £200,000 was funded in the last Government Plan. Please can you explain why additional funding is now required?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

To the extent you may already have done so, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, I was just checking that. So that was a rather difficult issue. Under the last Government a number of cuts were advanced, and one of them was that the Jersey office in London would be shared with Guernsey. When I found out about that, I asked whether or not that had actually been discussed with Guernsey. I was unaware whether or not it had or had not. All I know is that there was not an appetite for Guernsey at that stage to do that. So effectively, having lost the £200,000, we were faced with the invidious position of having to bid back for what we already had but the saving was not something that either was supported by External Relations ... I do not know whether the Assistant Minister, who was the Minister for External Relations at the time, could shed any light on it, but it was a rather uncomfortable position. But the £200,000 was the reinstatement of a cut.

[12:00]

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

It was a cut that was never agreed by the then Minister or the department, never believed that it could be delivered, and the agreement that we thought we had in place that it would be met from other budgets within the Office of the Chief Executive did not happen. So the incoming Minister was left with the problem whereby he had to bid for the money just to keep doing the same thing that he had been doing the day before. So it was not really ... it was classified as a growth bid and it was not a growth bid.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Interesting kind of insight there.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Can you confirm if costs included within the justification business case are exact or estimated; for example, in the case of rental charges?

The Minister for External Relations:

The cut was £200,000 and would have been part of both rental and the Chief Officer ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

I think he means this year.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We have moved on to ... yes, we have moved back ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Oh, the current bid, right, yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... to the current business case. You were talking about inflationary ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Apologies.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So perhaps we could just follow up in terms of were they ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

So the rent for the London office will be exact because we had negotiations with the landlord on that. At the time we wrote the bid I believe that the costs for Brussels and France were estimated based on discussions that they had had with the landlord but they could not be confirmed at that time.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Thank you. We had previously questioned via letter what feasibility analysis was undertaken in the decision to not progress with the joint London office. What actions have you taken to consider what Jersey's London office achieves in order to demonstrate value for money?

The Minister for External Relations:

Looking back, Connétable, and having been involved in the allocation of the money right ... and the discussions of the allocation of the money for the London office, its genesis was originally when the coalition Government of David Cameron and the Liberals ... was that the Ministry of Justice, which is our major interlocutor partner, had originally a number of staff within the M.o.J. (Ministry of Justice) to cover the insular authorities, as they were referred to, and saw a significant budget cutback. We then at the time ... one of the reasons, but not the only reason, was that we realised that we needed to do more and be seen to do more in London, and that was the original genesis of the idea of setting up a London office, not to replace the staff that had been cut within the M.o.J. but almost a greater, better solution that was paid for by Jersey and Jersey only. Since the office was established we have realised the benefit and when the then Chief Minister and myself were at Downing Street we were asked and really challenged quite hard on the status of Jersey and whether or not we were an international finance centre and what benefit we brought to the United Kingdom. We said at the time that we would need to explain that better. The Value to Jersey Britain report then came. A number of other reports were then made that for the first time quantified the value of Jersey to the British economy in terms of G.D.P. (gross domestic product) and jobs. That has been the subject of a refresh and that shows the value that Jersey brings to the wider British economy in a way that had not been done before. We have explained that and we continue to explain that. The fact that we are part of ... they sometimes call it the Westminster bubble. I do not regard our staff in London as being in the Westminster bubble but they are certainly aware of what is going on.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Minister, can I bring that back to the question? It is about the value of the London office because ...

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not think you can put a price on it. I could not imagine us living without it now. It is so valuable in terms of its ability to communicate both with Government directly, with Parliaments both of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and as well as being part of the diplomatic community. It covers a huge amount of work.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So maybe just to expand on that you could explain the difference that that presence makes as opposed to attempting to communicate from here so that we can understand better.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think having an address, having a place, means that you are regarded, like the overseas territories, as being part of that group of individuals. We seem to get as a result of that ... and the former Minister is next to me, and Deputy Bailhache as being the second post-holder after Senator Cohen, over the period of years we have now got to a position where last year we had an E.U. (European

Union) ambassadorial event which virtually every single E.U. country attended because they wanted to. Next week we are having an event in London hosted by the German ambassador because of his visit earlier this year, where all the E.U. ambassadors are going to be there, where we will have an opportunity to engage with each one of the E.U. ambassadors. That is just one example.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I believe that your Chief Officer was going to chip in here or did I ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I was simply going to say that effective foreign affairs, to be really effective in what we do, it is all about relationships. It is about having really good, strong relationships and the best way to have strong relationships is person to person engagement. We did the best we could during COVID, managing everything virtually, but there is no substitute in foreign affairs for having the one to one, which is why countries around the world in terms of their foreign affairs function have offices based overseas.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So you have officers there. How many doing what?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I have at the moment 11 officers I think based in London. So you have 4 in the London office covering the U.K. portfolio, and then I have officers covering global relations, which is about the rest of world. I have officers covering European relations as well and international compliance. So it is a real split in London, yes. Also officers here as well covering those areas, too.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I was just trying to think, just to get that picture. Excuse me, Constable. You have officers in the London office, and in terms of that presence and what they are doing and what additional value they have added, whether you could just perhaps say what they ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

What they ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Rather than being on a phone, as opposed to being on a phone and in Jersey.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Do you want to pick up on ...?

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Could I just pick up? I think, and both the Minister and I have experienced this, there is a ... often in ministerial engagement officials are engaging as well, but the ambassador or high commissioner or Minister or parliamentarian will say: "We have something in the morning, Minister, you are very welcome to come to" and we will have to embarrassingly say: "I am terribly sorry but I am on a flight home this evening." What happens, though, is our London-based staff can pick that up and there is not really a night of the week or an afternoon or a morning of the week where those staff across the full range, so either in Parliament or at embassies, be they global relation embassies or European embassies, they are not in a meeting speaking face to face or at an event or at a speaker thing which you just ... with the best will in the world, even with 2 Ministers doing External Relations, the Minister cannot be in London all the time. The Chief Minister cannot be. So it is that value that you cannot ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So they are amplifying the representation.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Back to you, Constable. Sorry about the interruption.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Noting the political change in Guernsey, has there been any change in their position on this matter?

The Minister for External Relations:

Not that I am aware of, Constable. Not that I am aware of. What effectively happens is that we seek to get a common position across the Crown Dependencies when the U.K. Government, when H.M.G. (His Majesty's Government) asks for something. So we often find ourselves as the 3 Crown Dependencies meeting in our London office prior to an important meeting with the M.o.J. or the Treasury or Home Office Minister. We seek to use that London office, of which they are very welcome. It is our office but they are very welcome. I think that Guernsey and the Isle of Man ... the Chief Minister ... there is not an External Relations Minister in the Isle of Man. There may well be in the future. My counterpart, Deputy Le Tocq, and I speak very regularly and we always attempt ... it is difficult for the United Kingdom with the ... we are going to come on to talk about free trade agreements. Brexit has changed the way that the U.K. regards itself in the outside world. We have to remind, very respectfully, H.M.G. that they are responsible for our international agreements.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Let us come back to the question. You said that you are not aware of there being a change in their position on this matter. Do you see any value in enquiring? In other words, whether that might be something to consider now or is there a case for saying it is better not to have a joint office? Could you please inform ...

The Minister for External Relations:

I would like to think that ... I cannot speak for Guernsey, Chair, Connétable. It is a matter for them. They are currently involved in very difficult budgetary debates and I think it would be wrong for me to speculate as to their decisions because it is their decision. We work together. Whether they have a physical office or not, we work together with them and it is very important that we display a joint approach.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So is this something you might be enquiring into?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, it is difficult, is it not, because I cannot speak for Guernsey.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

No, that is why I am asking would you be enquiring. You do not need to speak for them.

The Minister for External Relations:

I constantly speak with them but I do not think in their case ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Is it a question you are going to ask the Minister? That is all I am asking.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is an ongoing question we are in discussion about, both with the Isle of Man as well.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right. Thank you. Back to you, Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What interaction do other overseas offices have with Guernsey?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, Connétable, as the Chief Officer was explaining, the benefit of our French B.I.A.N. office is that it is a Channel Island office and as well as our Brussels office is a Channel Islands one. Maybe the Chief Officer can explain how she works with her counterparts in Guernsey.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, as you said, Minister, the French and Brussels offices are 50:50 split. We have a board that oversees the operation of both those offices, and I sit on that board along with my counterparts in Guernsey. So we have very regular engagement about the operation of those offices to make sure they are delivering in line with our respective objectives. I also at the moment speak to my counterpart in Guernsey at least once a week, but at the moment given the weight of work it is daily. We have a very, very good relationship with them. In terms of London, quite often when we are attending events or meetings we will do it jointly with Guernsey, too.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What, if any, funding does the States of Guernsey provide towards any of these offices?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

In terms of France and Brussels it is a 50:50 split.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What proportion of staff costs do the States of Guernsey pay towards the French team, the Bureau des Iles Anglo-Normandes?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

It is 50:50.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Okay. Thanks. What key performance indicators will you be tracking to evidence the benefit of the proposed additional revenue expenditure in addition to the funding allocated in the previous Government Plans?

The Minister for External Relations:

I would say, Constable, that if one were to take one area, and this is just one, is continued good relations in respect of fisheries. You will recall, Constable, that we had a debate in the States about a further regulation that the Minister for the Environment brought in relation to fishing. There is an ongoing and clear direction of travel that there is going to be enhanced and increased safeguarding of fishing resources where we very much need to communicate what we are doing locally and

understanding what the French are doing there. Clearly, the move to net zero is going to see a very significant change in the type of fishing boat that fishers use, and I must say in the meetings that I attended prior to my leave I was very impressed to see the advancing of technology in Normandy in terms of hydrogen and other alternative fuels for fishers in the future. There is a lot of change ahead for our fishing community. From a Jersey perspective, I want to see that access point in Granville. We are working hard with our French counterparts. We have support in Normandy for the sanitary inspection post in Granville. That is now sitting in Brussels. We would like to see that because that is going to help our local fishing sector. That is just one example. Other examples are joint working with net zero fleet and also the individual species that are going to need to have enhanced oversight for conservation of fishing stocks.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So in terms of quantification are you thinking about particular agreements, protocols, things that ... how do you mark this? Because I know it is probably hard. It is like saying how long is a piece of string, but just in order to just say right, okay, how have you quantified success?

[12:15]

The Minister for External Relations:

I think Deputy Sir Philip Bailhache in the States described the work of External Relations as the hidden work of avoiding a problem, and avoiding a problem is what we do. We see a problem in sight and we avoid it happening. So a lot of the work we do, it will not be ... it will have been noted to you, Constable, that there has not been a problem in relation to the fishing industry where the Prime Minister has sent a warship. We have dealt with the fishing industry. Do we get any credit for it? Probably not, but we know the work we have done and we have done it well and it has been done properly.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So it is like check the list off, no war yet. Right.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Would you like me to come in? We do have specific K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) that are published every year. So the K.P.I.s for the department ... and you are right, it is difficult in foreign affairs. So they are around meaningful engagement, so the access that we have ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Could you provide that to us?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Sorry?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Could you provide that to us?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, they are published and I absolutely can. We publish annually.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

If you would, that would be useful.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

They are around meaningful engagement. They are around agreements, you are absolutely right, how many agreements we conclude during the year. They are around visibility of the work of External Relations and the Island, so how positive, for example, media is on-Island and internationally.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. Back to the Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Is the proposed additional revenue expenditure sufficient to meet the aspirations of the Government of Jersey, overseas offices and Ministers?

The Minister for External Relations:

It would be easy for me to say, Constable, that we would welcome more funding than we have, but we have to work, like other ministerial departments, within the envelope available. The Chief Officer is right when she says that there are K.P.I.s. If I look at the list of international agreements which we are seeking to get agreement of, we have 4 bilateral investment treaties with Ghana, Rwanda, Singapore, Qatar. We work jointly with our Treasury team in relation to D.T.A.s (double taxation agreements). There is a D.T.A. with Ghana, Kuwait, Oman, Mauritius, Ireland, Nigeria and Kenya, all under discussion. That is ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Have you got enough money?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, we have to work within the budget we do. What we are saying is in addition to the F.T.A. programme, which no doubt we will come on to, I think that would give you an indication of just the scale of work that we do with what is a modest resource. But I am not complaining about that resource. I am delighted that our growth bids have been accepted and we will work ... but we work hard to achieve those other ministerial aspirations.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can I let your Chief Officer chip in?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Helpfully, with the growth bids agreed, I think we do have sufficient funding to deliver.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right. Okay. Back to the Constable.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

You will be pleased to hear. [Laughter]

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, I agree.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What actions are being taken by overseas offices to prioritise the work they undertake?

The Minister for External Relations:

That is a very good question, Connétable. We divide up the world into regions. We take the U.K., we take Europe and we take the rest of the world. If we look at global relations following the common External Relations policy, there has been the publication of a more ... and you may or may not have read this, Connétable. There has been the updated External Relations global relations strategy, which sets out in ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We have questions on that later.

The Minister for External Relations:

Okay, you have questions on it. That basically indicates ... all these strategies are now published in line with the Chief Minister's desire to be more open and transparent.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

In terms of prioritisation?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, the prioritisation is set out very clearly in these documents. I can go into detail but ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Fine, okay. Well, let us move on.

The Minister for External Relations:

... the documents speak for themselves, yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Let us move on. Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What alternative means of funding levels and corresponding outcomes did you consider prior to proposing the additional revenue expenditure?

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not think there is any alternative but to ... I mean, what we are doing is we are basically prioritising the staff that the Chief Officer has in line with the current needs of the Treasury, the Economy Department and the Chief Minister's own objectives in terms of enhancing our relations with different jurisdictions, particularly France.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

So as we have talked about, given the growth bid was to maintain the operations of the offices because of inflation and cost of living salary pressures, the alternatives essentially would have been that we would have had to either reduce the staffing footprint, we would have had to move offices to cheaper accommodation. It is those sorts of things. We have not bid for more money to expand. We have bid to be able to keep doing what we are doing. So there were few alternatives, unless we are going to reduce ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can I just say here for the benefit of any public listening that the business plans that the panel get are confidential, so when we ask some of these questions it does help to explain the process. Back to you, Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Do the offices hold any reserve expenditure?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

They do hold some reserve expenditure. I believe there is a ceiling of 20 per cent of the annual grant. I do not have the reserve figures to hand at the moment, though.

The Minister for External Relations:

But we can provide them.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

But we can provide them if that would be helpful.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Was that taken into account in your growth bids?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, but that money helps to present a buffer, for example, against exchange rate fluctuations ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Also the payment ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

... and unforeseen spend.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, and also payment when there has been payment delays from the centre to the offices themselves. There is needing to be a buffer.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thanks. Back to the Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What would the ramifications be should the proposed additional revenue expenditure not be approved?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

In addition to potential job losses, anything else?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Well, as I said, we would have to look at cheaper premises, reduced travel. It would have a quite significant impact on operations.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Disruptive then.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not think it would meet the future economy needs of Jersey, Constable. We have to step up and do more, not less. So we are doing more with the existing resources.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

What quantitative analysis has been undertaken to determine the potential economic impact of the proposed additional revenue expenditure?

The Minister for External Relations:

I would almost say, Constable, that it is not just the slight increase in revenue expenditure. We have explained why the revenue expenditure is necessary for staff and accommodation. The Chief Officer has explained the additional post. I would say that almost we have done a complete refresh of what External Relations is doing in order to ensure that it is prioritised against the Government Plan priorities. So everything is aligned. I do not think I can see or think of one thing that External Relations is continuing to do that it ought not to be, given the priorities. If you think just in terms of the ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can we go back to the question because I think it probably is more or less like a yes or no that the ... you know, it is: has there been any quantitative analysis to determine the potential economic impact of this revenue expenditure or is it just too difficult? You know, just basically that if we could so we could move on.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Given that the monies ... the quantitative analysis relates to essentially the bills that we have to pay. So I have a rent figure and that is X and I have a salary figure and that is Y, and that is what the money is going towards. So I am not quite sure, unless, Ministers, you have ...

The Minister for External Relations:

I mean, I understand the question ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, so it does not sound to be part of the process ... yes, okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. I can understand why those questions are very valid for bigger departments. We are quite small compared to others and we just have to deal with what we have to deal with. We are very responsive.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

They are valid in terms of our terms of reference so we need to ask them.

The Minister for External Relations:

Absolutely. A very fair question.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We are going to move on to the section on ... we are moving on. We are still on the Government Plan area. We are going to talk about the intellectual property framework bid.

The Minister for External Relations:

Lovely.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So please can you briefly outline the purpose of the proposed revenue expenditure relating to the intellectual property framework?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, what a timely question because I have ... so intellectual property falls within the responsibility of the Minister for External Relations.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Minister, it ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

No, the Minister for Economic Development.

The Minister for External Relations:

Sorry, it falls within the ... it is the responsibility of the Minister for External Relations to bring forward the legislation. The work is done, however, by officials that sit within the Economy Department.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes. I am not sure that the entirety of the legislation would necessarily be brought ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Perhaps we could just ... let me come back to where ... how I understand it from the panel. Perhaps your Chief Officer could just explain because it was a bit curious the way it has been presented in the Government Plan. Originally was it a M.E.D. (Minister for Economic Development) matter, and then we were referred to you. So maybe you could explain just a bit better what your ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I agree, it is a strange situation. Intellectual property sits within the Economy Department, so the intellectual property team report into the Chief Officer for Economy. But as the Minister said, there are some ministerial responsibilities that sit under the Minister for External Relations. So it is a bit of a hybrid.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

That is in relation to the treaty aspects, yes?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, the treaty aspects.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Because I will just move on to the next question because it might be a bit more on point. Is this framework being created to meet trade agreement obligations that Jersey is part of?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Cool. Will this ... I probably should not say "cool". Will this be required for Jersey to take part in agreements made by the U.K. Government?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great. Is this ... I am really liking your concise answers, by the way. Is this funding ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

There is a slight caveat to that: dependent on which parts we wish to be included in.

The Minister for External Relations:

Correct.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

The Minister is very clear that we want to be included for services, and in order to be included for services this work needs to be undertaken.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

What is the agreement we are talking about, for good measure?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, the fact that we were not able to demonstrate compliance with I.P. (intellectual property) in the discussions with the C.P.T.P.P. (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) meant that Jersey, unlike Guernsey and the Isle of Man, could have been in a position that we would not have been able to comply. As things have turned out, what we are doing is we are accelerating our work with I.P. It just seems to me obvious, if I may say.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So is this funding for the creation of a full-time equivalent role or a consultancy resource? Because basically you are asking for ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Going right at the top, what we are aiming to do is to bring our intellectual property legislation up to date with the global standard. That is a requirement that sits as a requirement, as you rightly say, with free trade agreements, but as a standalone issue that could be of benefit, which is a matter for the Economy Department, as a standalone additional economic add-on, if you like, to trade in services, et cetera. I am not the person dealing with that. All I am concerned with is making sure that our legislation, including the number of treaties ... I think there are 5, and I have been briefed this week on the Gantt chart of what we are going to do and when. It is a big piece of work.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Coming back to the question, what we are trying to understand is clearly there is funding being sought to update our intellectual property law and who is going to do it? Presumably, the funding is for somebody to do this work and who is going to do that?

The Minister for External Relations:

There are 2 officials ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Are you going to employ somebody or are you going to get a consultant? Why are the Law Officers not just doing this? Just an understanding here would be useful.

The Minister for External Relations:

I can paint a picture if that is helpful. We have originally one official in the Economy Department who covered both competition and intellectual property. Economy have now additional ... have doubled that resource, so there are 2 individuals but covering a lot of work. They have procured outside advice, legal advice, as to where Jersey would need to make legislative changes, enact further extensions of treaties, and I have a Gantt chart - I would be very happy confidentially to send it to you, Chair - of exactly all the steps that are going to be taken.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, please.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it is vital that somebody champions this and I have said I will champion it and I will lead it because I have done it before.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So the funding, is that for the recruitment of the officer in the Economy Department then?

The Minister for External Relations:

It covers everything. You are quite right, and I added also the important work of the Law Officers, which is not a paid resource because the Law Officers covers that. I am delighted and I met yesterday a former retired Law Officer of distinction. I will not name him, but he is now acting as the Law Officer adviser on intellectual property.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right. Some people already are here to do that work. What we are just trying to understand is this growth bid is ...

The Minister for External Relations:

It is to meet compliance, international compliance.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, but that is not sufficient for me to understand. Would anybody like to step in just to explain? Are we paying for an extra officer?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Deputy, I think it is a mix.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

A consultant? The money is going to be spent on something to produce a result.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

It is, it is a mix, I think, of in-house resource and external consultancy to deliver.

[12:30]

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So the recruitment of somebody where?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Into the Economy Department.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Into the Economy Department to do this?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I believe so, yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

An element of consultancy, too?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, I understand ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So how have you quantified that need?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, we ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Or is it the Economy Department that has done that and you are just basically saying yes?

The Minister for External Relations:

No, no, we do not say yes. I do not think ... it would not have been for the ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right, we will go back to quantification if you can.

The Minister for External Relations:

Let us be clear. The Chief Minister has said that we must comply. She expects us to be able to be fully compliant in order to get ourselves into the position where we can be part of F.T.A.s. We also need to be seen to be a compliant jurisdiction for intellectual property. That is the starting point. How do you do that? I am not going to look back. It was not done. It needs to be done and that falls within the Minister for External Relations, and I am working with 2 very good officials in order to project that.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Minister, who has presented the estimates to do this work?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The Economy Department. The expertise sits within the Economy Department.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right, so that is the Economy Department?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

I reviewed them when I was Assistant Minister in the absence of the Minister, so as the Minister has said earlier, they are there. I have not got them with me but I have no problem in ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, just off the top of your head then ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

... in providing ... no, I do not have them with me. I do know that there was a lot of downward pressure on the original number and we settled. We settled on this number with the minimum number of people and the minimum requirement for consultancy.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

So basically to produce the work ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

But it can be provided to you, Chair.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, if we could have those. We would be grateful for these responses ... well, I would say by the beginning of the week. We have very short time to review this.

The Minister for External Relations:

Happy to do that. I was talking about the ... there is the Gantt chart. I can send you the Gantt chart of all the work that is going to be done between now and getting there, and they are serious and they are getting on with it and I am very pleased with them.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We just need to, Minister, just understand that processes have been followed and that there has been some sort of thought given. That is really ...

The Minister for External Relations:

I think you will be impressed.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... what we want to do. I am sure I will be. I have been impressed by much of what we have seen as well. So is the proposed additional revenue expenditure sufficient to meet these aspirations? I know it is the Economy Department.

The Minister for External Relations:

We jolly well hope so, but I must say after my meeting with the officials this week and the Law Officer I am very confident that we are going to be able to get ... but it is a big piece of work.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Let us understand. You know we are saying it is a bit kind of like complicated, seeing, right, whose expenditure is this? Is this the Department of Economy? Is it yours? Where will any further revenue expenditure on this project be met from?

The Minister for External Relations:

I hope it is not necessary and, if it is, I will go to the Economy Department and ask for it.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. What alternative funding levels and corresponding outcomes were identified in the application for the additional revenue expenditure, alternative ways of funding?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Again, I think it is probably ... this is one for the experts to answer, so it probably is one for the Economy Department to respond on.

The Minister for External Relations:

We can provide you with a written note, I think.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

That is right, but they did look at their existing budget and whether they could deal with it within their existing budget and their existing headcount. As the Minister has just said, they took an existing person to start doing that work, so they have moved from one job to do another, but we can provide you with a full note.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I am going to ask a question now just in light of the panel's experience that we seem to be sometimes chasing one department for information, being told it is another and this sort of thing, whether we might consider when it comes to the next Government Plan a more co-ordinated way in which we might discuss these things. So I think maybe I will request that now ... yes, at least you are nodding so we can look at that.

The Minister for External Relations:

I hear the reasons and I am sympathetic to the reason why you ask. It is confusing as an incoming Minister to know where ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I think we might follow that up because sometimes we find that with the Treasury and the A.L.O. (arm's length organisation) stuff that we are ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Anyway, so what would be the ramifications should the proposed additional revenue expenditure not be approved? I know you are going to be saying you will not be able to ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. I think you know the answer to the question, Chair. I hope the Constable is satisfied as well by that answer.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes. What quantitative analysis has been undertaken to determine the potential economic impact of this proposed additional revenue expenditure, if any?

The Minister for External Relations:

There has been an economic analysis done by an external ... I think it was Frontier Economics, a report was provided. It may well be confidential but we can provide that to you. It provided the future; it provided the options.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, please. All contributions gratefully received, thank you, as we continue on in our quest to scrutinise you, Minister. Will the framework allow the Island to enter into a range of potential future agreements? Yes, you are all nodding.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, and that is what I was referring to. I can name them to you but I do not know whether you want me to, but Madrid and Budapest convention. I will not name them but there were 5.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great, okay. Right, you cannot name them, 5.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

They are the treaties that we will then comply with.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, I think you have mentioned that.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

But we might follow up. The Government Plan annex summary suggests: "Potential revenue streams could be gained through this expenditure, as well as opportunities to promote and protect innovation on this Island." Would you please elaborate, Minister?

The Minister for External Relations:

I am going to plead the Fifth Amendment and say that that is a matter for the Economy Department and I do not want to speak for the sustainable Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture because it is his team. But I will undertake to get a written note to you about what they think they can get in terms of additional. My role is to make sure this legislation is passed and it complies with the requirements of the U.K., who must effectively conduct an audit of Jersey's compliance, together with Guernsey and the Isle of Man's compliance, in order for us to be able to be part of the F.T.A.s that require intellectual property compliance.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, thank you. How long is it anticipated before the framework is brought to the Assembly and implemented?

The Minister for External Relations:

I refer to the Gantt chart that is going to come in a number of propositions, I am afraid, and it is going to be a maximum of 2 years but I am hoping to beat that.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. The bid is for additional revenue expenditure of £300,000 per year for the timeframe of the plan. Can you please identify to what extent this covers the costs of production of the framework and explain the ongoing funding requirement?

The Minister for External Relations:

That is what I was alluding to, it is all the different work streams, every single bit of legislation. If I send you the list I think it will be clear. It is plant varieties, it is patents, it is acceptance of patents and something called the Geneva-Hague Protocol. It is really quite complicated but it is not that complicated if you break it down into bite-sized chunks, and we are going to break it down into bite-sized chunks and get it done.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

A bit like everything in life then.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

All right, okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

But we are going to do it and I am very confident and I am very impressed by the officials and the Law Officers' assistance in doing so.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great, okay. I am going to go back to the Constable, who is going to come on to the subject of value for money.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Minister, the Government Plan identifies value for money savings within the Ministry for External Relations of £45,000 in 2024. Can you outline how these savings will be made?

The Minister for External Relations:

I will hand over to the Chief Officer for that, can I?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, of course. I will look to meet those efficiencies via avenues such as vacancy management. I will look to perhaps trim some of the spend on our bilateral co-operation fund, for example, possibly reducing the travel budget down a little bit. We will absorb it within the current operation.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Thank you. Could the External Relations Ministry not have reduced the department's growth bids, along with reserves?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think we have answered that, Constable, in relation to the reserves that are held by the 2 officers; we just do not have any. I do not know what the position is at the year end. The Minister for Treasury and Resources is sitting next to me. We will know what the likely carry on, carry forward amounts are, but certainly, as has been a theme of a number of answers given, we are doing the very best we can with limited resources. That is not a complaint, we are dealing with it, and I am in awe of what the scale of work with both the Chief Officer and staff like Freddie Holmes does. They cover a multitude of portfolios, they work together. There was an away day last week demonstrating just how interrelation ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, we are straying off subject a lot.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, well, they work together.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

But basically in short, the growth bids, do they take into account these savings already or ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

They do, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

They have to.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, okay, back to you, Constable, the ministerial plan, okay.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Moving on to ministerial plan, is there sufficient funding in the proposed Government Plan to meet all the priorities identified in your ministerial plan?

The Minister for External Relations:

I hope so, Constable. I fully intend to deliver the ministerial plan.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

All right.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Good answer. You identify in your ministerial plan at page 27 that you will be improving value for money in the future. Can you explain how?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think the Chief Officer has explained that and in a sense we are asking our staff to cover not only their own parts of work but, effectively, work together and it is by working together across all those officers, across all those portfolios, that we get joint working. Teamwork is better outcomes. We have a small but very cohesive and joined-up staff and we are asking a lot of them. I am sure that they will deliver. They will certainly get the ministerial support both from myself, the Assistant Minister and the Chief Minister. I think the more the officials see us and that we are interested and that we are willing to attend those events ... the Chief Minister was in London last night, where I am in London next week. The Assistant Minister is in Dublin next week. We are covering an awful lot and the officers have got to know that we are interested in the work that they do because they are working jolly hard.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Back to you, Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Yes. We note many of the actions within the 2023 ministerial delivery plan did not have a timeframe in which they will be delivered. Why is this the case?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Would you like me to pick that up, Minister?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, please do.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

A lot of the work of External Relations is rolling work, so there are relatively few defined projects for programmes that we deliver in the same way as other departments. If you take something like U.K. engagement, that does not begin or end, it continues on a rolling basis. That is really replicated across all areas of the department and that is why it is very difficult to put end dates on what we do.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Will you commit to next year's ministerial delivery plan, including more specific timing for actions?

The Minister for External Relations:

We will try but I think one thing that we may well cover during this session, Constable, is the Israel/Gaza events that really sort of were unexpected. But that alone has commanded a lot of attention from both the Chief Minister, the Assistant Minister and myself in an appropriate response for both domestic purposes. We are a sub-sovereign, we are not a nation state. But just the Israeli/Gaza implications for both our local communities has had to require a response and it has had that and you cannot predict that. Similarly, the war in Ukraine, that is now an ongoing issue. We do not know when that is going to end.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

It is not about so much what we intervene but really the actual look of the ministerial plan and the extent to which it could have more in the way of deadlines, particularly in respect of particular projects.

The Minister for External Relations:

We are often in the hands of other countries. We have a list of those bilateral investment treaties. We have that list of D.T.A.s. But at the end of the day - and Freddie Holmes, who is very much involved as the head of the department that deals with global relations ... we are very much at the hands of the other counterparty, whether that is Kuwait or Oman or Ireland, in relation to when we get responses. Is that a fair thing to say?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Dealing with those parties outside your control. Back to you, Constable.

The Minister for External Relations:

But we are quite persistent.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

You are. Back to you, Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I will move on to French engagement strategy. The ministerial delivery plan identified abandonment of a French engagement strategy. Will you please update us on the progress of this development?

[12:45]

The Minister for External Relations:

In my absence I am pleased to note that the Deputy Chief Minister has been stepping up to the plate. He has made a couple of visits, I think, to France; I am just going to my notes. In fact, I think he is there today, Constable. The joint regional meeting with Brittany was held in Guernsey. I attended the Normandy one and I was able to and fully intend to during the course of 2024 to prioritise our French relations. I find that a little easy because I speak French. I think if we look back to where we were in July 2022, where our French relations are, the warmth of the reception that we get in France is completely different. If I would say one ambition, that would be the French ambassador has indicated that she would like to come to Jersey and if there was one ambassador I would like to see coming to Jersey in the course of the next 18 months it would be the French ambassador. It would be incredibly significant and important and I hope she is able to attend our event at the German embassy next week. We will be able to fix a date.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Do you think your knowledge of French and being able to speak in the native tongue assists at all?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, it is said ... (French spoken 12:46:42). I can speak French. I think that does help and it does mean that I can hold discussions with our French counterparts in the language of their native tongue and I can do the same in German. The German ambassador speaks to me in German and I just happen to be a linguist, so that might be a benefit and if it is a benefit and if they ... the Canadian High Commissioner the day before yesterday when he came out of his car, I welcomed him in the French language, because Canada has 2 French official languages, and he was quite surprised. I just think languages are important. I do not criticise those that cannot do it but I have been blessed with an education that does, so I use them.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

It would be good.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think they make a difference.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Yes. How are you interacting with other Ministers to ensure collaborative working on this issue?

The Minister for External Relations:

I have said, I think, in previous sessions, Constable, that External Relations stands ready to assist other Ministers in their priorities and that is very much the way we work. The Minister for the Environment required a lot of joint working with External Relations in relation to fisheries. The

Minister for the Economy with his ambitions for increased trade with France, we stand to assist him. We work with our Treasury colleague in relation to D.T.A.s. I am delighted that the Assistant Minister in his Treasury role is going to be signing an agreement with the Republic of Ireland in the next few days. That is an example of joint working between 2 Ministers and their officials.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I think this still relates to the French bit, the actual question, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

The French bit ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I think you did mention the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, so unless you have anything to add there I suggest we move on to the next question.

The Minister for External Relations:

Fair enough.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

There have been media reports that you have indicated you would like to see the length of time that French passengers with only an identity card can visit extended from one to 2 days. Can you update the panel on this?

The Minister for External Relations:

I have not yet spoken to the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs but I am very pleased that following my unfortunate departure after a bereavement that the Minister was able to announce at least visitors coming on a day trip. I note with interest that Guernsey followed very quickly. I note that Guernsey has extended that for a further year. At my level we held discussions both in Paris and in London and at the regions. They were very keen for it to happen, that it should be in time and when appropriate be proven that they were safe to do so. You could extend it from just a day trip to an overnight stay. That is a matter for the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs; she will be advised by her officials as to the acceptability of that. My own personal view is that it would be great to welcome French visitors with an overnight so that they can enjoy our wide range of food and beverage offering and overnight hotel stays. That is not just in the summer months, it is all year round.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Are you aware of any actions being carried out to allow Islanders to travel to France without use of their passports?

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not think that is going to be a realistic possibility, Constable, because we do not have identity cards and that is the one difference. The French, together with a number of European countries, have a national identity card; we do not have that in the British tradition. There has been certainly some very strong voices raised when that prospect was raised under the Blair Government and I cannot see us ever for the foreseeable future having identity cards. If you do not have an identity card, you do not have an alternative for a passport. A driving licence is not a valid document that is equivalent to an identity card. I just do not think it is possible to do it. I think the thing that is going to be an issue we are going to deal with - but I am not apprised of the latest numbers - is that the E.U. itself is going to replicate what the U.S. (United States) have in terms of an E.S.T.A. (Electronic System for Travel) visa arrangement and that in itself is going to present some challenges for inter-European travel from the United Kingdom.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I think we have got a question on that in a minute.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. I will not be able to answer it because I do not know what the updated ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

We will try you.

The Minister for External Relations:

It has slipped effectively ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. Let us continue with the question.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

When I was much younger they used to issue day passports for travellers from Jersey to France. You do not think there is any way forward with that?

The Minister for External Relations:

The Immigration Department, if you lose your passport the Immigration Department does issue a temporary passport, but that is only if you lose your passport. I think realistically, as Islanders, we have to accept the fact that if we want to travel outside the Common Travel Area we are going to need a passport. I do not know what the percentage of Islanders that have got passports are but I

imagine it is much higher than the 59 per cent in France, because we need them. I just do not think there is an alternative because we do not have identity cards.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Are there any plans to extend this to other European nations who use national identity cards, as opposed to passports for travel within the E.U., such as Spain, Portugal, Poland or Italy?

The Minister for External Relations:

It has been asked, Constable, and certainly a number of the E.U. Ambassadors have raised it but that is a matter for the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs and her team. I think getting over the line the French I.D. (identification) identity card was the most important. I genuinely think it has been a game-changer for the hospitality sector. Speaking with the visitor services manager from Jersey Heritage, they have seen a significant increase in visitor numbers, which is very welcome. I think it proves that we were right to advance it, to push it and to get it to a conclusion. I would just like to see it more, if I may. I cannot dictate to the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, it is her decision, but I think that there would be no doubt an economic benefit for Jersey if we can get an overnight stay. I extend that to not just French visitors but obviously we have responsibilities at the border and the Border Force will advise the Minister as to what is safe.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

The panel understands that French tourists will require an Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme, despite the trial where French day-trippers can travel to the Island using a national identity card. What actions are you undertaking in this regard, Minister?

The Minister for External Relations:

It is their decision, is it not, Constable? It is the E.U. that is going to, effectively, as you rightly say, which I alluded to earlier - I was getting ahead of myself - effectively replicate the U.S. system of an E.U. style E.S.T.A. It seems to be delayed because it is quite a big technological investment that is required. I simply do not know as of today whether I can provide you with a written note as to when the expected date is but I know it has been put off. I do not know. Chief Officer, do you know? It seems to be constantly put off.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

Yes, I do not have that.

The Minister for External Relations:

We need to understand when it is going to happen, Constable, and when we do we can work on what we are going to do around that and how we can facilitate. But we are in exactly the same

position as the United Kingdom because we are British, so our passports will be subject to the same issues there.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Thank you.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. Just to wrap up on this particular section, could you please update us on actions to carry out discussions in respect of the nature and extent of fishing rights?

The Minister for External Relations:

Those are matters which firmly sit within my good colleague, the Minister for the Environment. We support him. When we were speaking about the work of our 2 staff in the B.I.A.N. office, they provide intelligence on the ground, connections, and our abilities ... when I was able to go to Granville, my visit was known about very quickly I think because of the actions of our 2 employees. I spent a very happy 24 hours in Granville and at other seaports around there to see for myself the practical realities that our fishers were facing. I referred earlier to the issue about the sanitary inspection post. I want to see that advanced if we can.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Given when you said about the role that you have had in terms of improving French relations, is the Minister for the Environment, Minister, seeking your help here and as a resource?

The Minister for External Relations:

We work very well. The Assistant Minister could comment about how well in this term of office the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for External Relations has worked. We have benefited hugely from the wisdom of Deputy Gorst in this. I think in the last term of office we faced a very difficult and challenging time. I think that ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

On one hand you see we have got this question about can you update us on actions to carry out discussions in respect to the nature and extent of fishing rights. We understand that you have a role in terms of smoothing the external relations, but you have referred us back to the Minister for the Environment in terms of understanding what actions you will be carrying out in respect of the nature and the extent of fishing rights.

The Minister for External Relations:

We have a ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Where exactly are you in terms of your understanding what he is going to look for you to do?

The Minister for External Relations:

Since I have been back I have not had a briefing.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Right.

The Minister for External Relations:

But the practice that we had was that I had ... at the very time when key decisions were made we were meeting every 2 weeks to update each other. The Minister has been in constant contact with me, despite my absences, and he has kept me apprised of any issues and asked my views. I do not know whether, Chief Officer, you can ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I was just going to say certainly at officer level we attend all meetings in conjunction with our Environment colleagues, having updates with Brussels and with France and the U.K. over the last couple of months. There was a meeting in Brussels I think in September. There was a virtual meeting last month. There is another meeting due at the end of this month as well. External Relations is working very closely with environmental law officers at officer level on this.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

What next steps do you contemplate?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

At the moment I think we are in a really good ... I do not want to tempt fate but we seem to be in much calmer waters, if I can say that now. We had correspondence from the E.U. Commissioner earlier this year with responsibility for fisheries saying that he thought that things were in a good place and thanking us for our co-operation; that was in April. We continue to discuss with French regional authorities, with Paris and with the U.K. the implementation and extent and nature and at the moment it feels as if all parties are content with the way things have landed.

The Minister for External Relations:

But one tangible example, the Minister for the Environment has published his Jersey Marine Spatial Plan and I would take the view that when the publication of that happened it should not have been a surprise to French fishers. Because of the good working relationship that we have got with

Environment and officials it was not. If it would not have been pre-explained, if that work would not have been done, we would have had a problem. I think French fishers understand it because they are having also to deal with the French Government's requirements of conservation. I think the fact we have not had an issue - and I do not want to tempt fate like the Chief Officer - but the fact that we are really engaging in very good relations and I think there is aspiration with the Minister responsible, Hervé Berville, to try and derogate as much of the day-to-day issues to the regional authorities in Brittany and Normandy and we would support that.

[13:00]

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. I am going to move on to the subject of Global Relations strategy.

The Minister for External Relations:

Good.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Freddie, prick up your ears.

The Minister for External Relations:

I am impressed you know who does what.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

It is part of my job, is it not, Minister? The panel notes the publication of the Global Relations Strategy earlier this year. What, in your view, are the main differences from the Global Relations Strategy 2019?

The Minister for External Relations:

It was in my name but I will make a couple of remarks and then Freddie, please, with the oversight of the Chief Officer can make his own remarks. I think that this one is much more reflecting of the fact that we want to just not be about finance and financial services, much as I support that. It identifies the importance of cultural matters and what I generally call cultural diplomacy. If you see, Chair and Connétable, on page 3, figure 3, you can see just how many interlinkages there are between what Global Relations does. I think that figure really well explains it in a way ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Back to main differences, please.

The Minister for External Relations:

Inclusion of cultural and education would be 2 changes that maybe were not reflected previously.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

The largest change is in the name, so we previously had global markets, which insinuated a focus on commercial activity, commercial operations. We rebranded that as Global Relations to reflect the wider engagement that as a department we do with other Government departments and A.L.O.s. It is not solely about commercial activities, that is an element of it, but is also about engaging with other departments to help them realise their objectives.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Anything else to highlight in terms of main differences?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

I think we engage with broader stakeholders across government. We have certainly expanded our engagement domestically and internationally. I think we have increased our geographic engagement, so we are now engaging across 5 regions, so the Americas, that is North and South America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia, South-East Asia, which is a new area for us as well.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

How does the strategy interact and align with the common policy for External Relations?

The Minister for External Relations:

Squarely, absolutely. It is part of exactly that common External Relations policy which seeks to frame and explain and which is, effectively, an Island which has ambitions to develop its international financial services industry in new markets. We have seen the growth of the North American markets that Freddie alluded to. The Assistant Chief Minister, who has responsibility for financial services, will speak, I think, probably better than I can about the ambitions of our trade and services sector and their increased globalised approach, whether that be Vietnam, whether that be Malaysia, whether that be other countries. We are growing and we are becoming more global.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Let me rephrase the question: why do we have both? Why do we have both a common policy for External Relations and a Global Relations strategy? What does ...

The Minister for External Relations:

One sits above. The Global Relations is one of the sub-strategies that sits below the common External Relations policy. The common External Relations policy sets the high-level objectives and almost the individual strategy explains in more granular detail the priorities and the areas that we are going to cover, as Freddie has explained.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great. How do you select which countries you will target as part of the Global Relations strategy, which seems to be covering your whole world anyway?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. That is the issue, is it not, is that we cannot cover the whole world?

Deputy M.R. Scott:

How do you prioritise? Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

The approach is set out in page 7 of the report that you referred to: "Protect, promote, pursue and prioritise." We prioritise against where there are ... and that is all explained and you do not want me to repeat it.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I wonder if it would be helpful, Minister, to bring Freddie in.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, go on.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Because we have quite a mature approach.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

Yes. I will not go into specific countries in this session but annually we run approximately 117 countries through a very comprehensive analysis of economic metrics but also risk metrics, what we call value of Government engagement: how engaging are these jurisdictions with Jersey as a jurisdiction? We do that annually and that gives us quite a detailed breakdown of countries in terms of where we think we are going to get the best bilateral engagement versus economic variables. Are they performing well economically? Will they perform well in the future? How risky are they? Do they pose a risk to the Island reputationally, politically? That gives us a R.A.G. (red, amber, green) rating. Jurisdictions are rated as green, amber and red depending on where they fit on that

scale and that helps us as a small team to focus our priorities and resources on engaging those countries that we think will be able to deliver the most for the Island.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Has there been a shift in activity from the international finance emphasis of the Global Relations Strategy 2019 and the regional priorities identified therein, Africa, Middle East, Asia and North America, towards Europe as a result of work on the common external policy?

The Minister for External Relations:

I did not get the first part of your question, I am sorry.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

What it is saying is that you mentioned the international finance emphasis of the Global Relations Strategy 2019 and that had regional priorities, identified Africa, Middle East, Asia and North America. In light of that, has there been a shift in activity in the department as a result of the work on the common external policy towards Europe?

The Minister for External Relations:

You have got the separate European policy as well and so we are not reducing ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Can I just mention - perhaps it will help - much of the discussion even today has been about France and these things. Is that really where your focus is really?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it is worth pointing out that within the European area we have to be aware of the rolling presidency of the European Commission itself. The presidency is currently held by Spain. It was no coincidence that the Minister for External Relations of Guernsey and I attended upon the Spanish permanent representative in Brussels well ahead of that presidency. In my absence the Assistant Minister and Chief Minister welcomed for the first time, I think, in many years, if ever, the Spanish ambassador to Jersey. You can get the picture of what we are doing in terms of how we look forward to see the rolling presidencies within the E.U., what their priorities might be and then attending to both the bilateral Jersey-Spanish relationship, as well as responding to their own priorities as they hold the presidency for the 6 months term that they do.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

The picture seems, from what you have even described right now, quite Europe-focused. I think the question is: to what extent are you anticipating work in areas like Asia and outside?

The Minister for External Relations:

We have to do both.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, but what do you contemplate doing?

The Minister for External Relations:

Both and both in the way that Freddie has very ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Specific actions maybe.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Agreements, for example.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, it is agreements.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Agreements like ... okay.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I have agreements, particularly at the collaboration space that the team are pursuing that ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, and I set out earlier the ambitions of bilateral investment treaties, E.T.A.s ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Minister, it might help that your officials are with my officials in Oman right now seeking to negotiate an agreement with that.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

That is, again, finance like base ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

That is an interesting relationship. It really falls across all of the areas of the Global Relations strategy. They are a very important holder of neutrality in the Middle East.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

They are very well connected with all those countries across the Middle East. The treaty that is in negotiation is a double taxation agreement, which is why my officers are there with your officers, Minister.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

They have had a very good round of negotiation that they reported just back on this morning, I think that was. But the relationship obviously with the United Kingdom and Oman goes back many, many years and is deep and broad. An engagement with Oman is either in or in London. They are very interested in broad engagement as well around education, around culture, around hospitality.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you ...

The Minister for External Relations:

As the Minister said, Oman is one of the U.K.'s most trusted parties in the Middle East and it is noteworthy that the main Navy, both the U.S. and British naval ports are now through Duqm in Oman and moving round so that they do not have to go through the Strait of Hormuz at all with the problems that have been associated with going in because of the Iranian border issues. Oman is seen as very much a gateway for both military and trade into the Gulf and so a relationship with Oman, as the Assistant Minister said, is both direct in terms of financial services ... they are not a big finance centre but they almost are incredibly important strategically for the United Kingdom. Us having relations there, I have been to Oman both privately and officially on 2 occasions and I predicted that Oman was important and I think I was right.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. Freddie, yes.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

Can I just build on the Minister's comments there? We talk about treaties and international agreements as a deliverable for the department and that is, by and large, double taxation. It is bilateral investment treaties and trading agreements but there are also these wider outcomes, and I use memorandums of understanding and that is a key area that we work on as well with other partner jurisdictions. I think a good example of one of those would be the Antigua and Barbuda hospitality M.o.U. (memorandum of understanding) that sort of bring workers from Antigua and Barbuda to work in Jersey in hospitality sector. It is not just about these financial agreements.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is also signalling, is it not? It is about signalling that Jersey has its relationship which is complementary, which is part of overall British foreign policy. We know the British have this longstanding relationship with Oman where they are doing a complementary and additional relationship and that is welcome by both the United Kingdom and in our own right; it is a win-win.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great, okay, thank you. I am going to move on to the next question. We are still on the same topic. To what extent is consideration being given in External Relations activity to the Island's one technology ecosystem, the jurisdictions which have a key role in providing and supplying technology which the Islanders find most useful in a home and workplace? I think we are talking about potential business opportunities here.

The Minister for External Relations:

Chair, Connétable, you will know that I have long held an ambition to embrace and learn from the experience of Estonia. I maintain the view the moment that I set foot in Estonia and saw they are a member of the D5, together with the United Kingdom and South Korea and New Zealand; that is one example. I know that the Chief Executive of Digital Jersey shares my ambition and I just look forward to persuading ministerial colleagues and their officials of the real opportunity. We had the Estonian ambassador to Jersey; he was impressive in what they are doing. They are without doubt the leading E.U. nation. They have rolled out for Ukraine government services and they can help us and I would like to persuade the Minister responsible for I.T. that an example of I.T. in Estonia is there. They are wanting to help us.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

You are answering perhaps a different question because I was talking about basically in what you would say in tech circles is looking at what we, as an Island, who ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Okay.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

... that supplies the techs and who we are reliant on and the way in which we can build on those sort of systems in terms of business opportunities but also in terms of our own security. You may be aware that our panel is doing a supply chain review in these things. Yes, it is the extent to which we are identifying, if you like, these networks that we rely on but also the way in which perhaps we could talk about something like Amazon.

[13:15]

Amazon Global has a centre in Saint Lucia, possibly Guernsey, I am not sure, not here. Things like that that basically in terms of whether that has even been considered in terms of your portfolio at the moment.

The Minister for External Relations:

All I know is I stand ready to enthusiastically support the furtherance of what I have always regarded. I was the Minister at the time that put digital when the Chief Minister was there, we put digital at the heart of the Government strategy for the first time under your leadership, the Chief Minister of the day. We then saw the ...

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

As a Chief Minister to ...

The Minister for External Relations:

We did, we then rolled out fibre. We set up Digital Jersey. But I am finding still that we have got somewhat of an analogue Government.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes. Well, we will not go into history, we are just talking about the present. That seems like it is not really on your ...

The Minister for External Relations:

No, but there is a lot to do.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, sorry, yes.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

I think explicitly not at the moment but we have forums that bring together stakeholders. The Global Co-ordination Group is one of those that aims to bring stakeholders together to work on objectives and agendas like that; that is a key forum to develop those initiatives.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. Who is in this forum?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

It is across government, A.L.O. ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, all right, so that is not exactly on the agenda yet or it has not been ...

The Minister for External Relations:

But it has been put on the agenda by the Future Economy paper that basically says we have a problem with an ageing society and we have got to be more productive. Productivity is something that I have always believed in advancing, together with my colleague to the left, and we have got to do it and technology is the solution.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

The question is about technology, how technology can assist.

The Minister for External Relations:

But it does not happen overnight.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

But I think we have got an answer for now. Right, the strategy identifies a number of elements of risk, compliance and governance. Which are the key points in your view?

The Minister for External Relations:

I would need to have them ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Really what would you like to highlight in terms of the particular things you might focus in those areas, risk, compliance and governance?

The Minister for External Relations:

Go on, Freddie.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

Risk is a key element of consideration in any strategy and that is something that we have to do on a bilateral basis with those partner jurisdictions, whether that is political risk, financial risk, human rights risks. They are all considerations that we have to take into account when we are opening those relationships. In terms of governance, I think that is a key element of what we do as well. We have oversight groups, International Trading Advisory Group, meeting us there to make sure that the activities that we are doing as a team in global relations specifically ... I cannot talk for my other colleagues, but to make sure that those objectives are contained in a strategy and the relationships we are building are done with the Government sign-off. I think risk and governance are key in that.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Thank you. The strategy outlines that: "The team identified specific key performance indicators to measure activity aligned to the 3 objectives of the overall strategy." What are these?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

You asked me ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

What are the specific key performance indicators that you identified?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

K.P.I.s, so they are team K.P.I.s feeding into the departmental service performance measures, which the Chief Officer made reference to earlier. That is around making sure that we have the right access to the right people, the right Ministers overseas, making sure that we have a continual positive message about Jersey internationally, and also around making sure that we have the right connections, agreements, i.e. D.T.A.s, the F.T.A.s, M.o.U.s in place with those partners.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

How will these be published?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

They are published quarterly, I believe, on gov.je.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great. My officer might need to follow that up in terms of where. Will the strategy be updated upon evaluation of the results of any performance monitoring?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, it is regularly updated.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

If so, when would this likely be?

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

We look at it on an annual basis but the current strategy runs for a 3-year period until 2026.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Great. How will you be providing political oversight of these K.P.I.s?

The Minister for External Relations:

I have a weekly meeting, well, 2 weekly meetings, one on a Monday and one on a Friday, and the objectives that the department set and the ministerial plan is at the heart of everything that the Chief Officer and I and the Deputy Chief Officer and Freddie discuss. Everything we do is aligned with that and if it is not there we do not talk about it.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

As Freddie said, we also have the International Trading Advisory Group within ministerial cover and we regularly update on delivery against the Global Relations strategy on that.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay. Do you have any specific targets in mind?

The Minister for External Relations:

They are all set out, there are lots of them.

Principal External Relations Officer, Global Relations:

We do and I think they are published as well on the gov.je website.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. They are published by way of generic ... we have not come on to F.T.A.s yet but to keep up with the F.T.A. programme it is to deliver these bilateral agreements.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The departmental service performances are definitely published.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

I would need to double-check. I am not sure that the individual K.P.I.s are for each area of the department.

The Minister for External Relations:

But they exist.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

But there is no reason why you should not have sight of those.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, my officer will follow up on that no doubt.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I am going to hand over back to the Constable. Constable, I am just aware we have got 10 minutes left of this hearing. I am not sure about your own ability to stay much longer, given the problems in your parish, but we will continue, but we may need to pause and follow up in writing after that.

The Minister for External Relations:

With written questions we will provide our written answers to any outstanding questions.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Of course. Right, so back to the Constable.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Okay, we are moving on to Island identity. What benefits have been gained through the Island Identity Project?

The Minister for External Relations:

The Island Identity Project, Connétable, as you will be aware, has been led by the Minister for International Development. We are a willing partner in that and we have been recently ... when I stood for the role of External Relations I said that diaspora is important. I was not aware of the Island Identity because I had not been in office. But the Island Identity Project is led by the Minister. I was speaking to her only yesterday at one of my regular catch-ups with her explaining to her ... and I will give you one example. The diaspora project is about identifying and then finding a way of ongoing engagement with people that regard their connection with Jersey as important, either by birth or by length of residency, et cetera. An initiative called Jersey Connections is going to be launched by the end of 2023. That is being overseen and run very ably by a member of our team. That is a visible part of Island Identity, building a diaspora contact database to be able to communicate with those individuals through various media, such as social media. I think it is going to be really exciting to see how we can identify individuals that can be true champions, almost sort of informal consuls or informal representatives in many countries across the globe. We are busy assessing this at the moment and I am looking forward and we will enthusiastically update the panel about that Jersey Connections in the next couple of months.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Thank you. You have answered my next question. We understand that a revenue growth request for the Island Identity programme under the Minister for International Development was unsuccessful in being included in the proposed Government Plan 2024-2027. Does this impact on the work of External Relations?

The Minister for External Relations:

We are going to do everything we can to support the Island Identity Project. I am a very big supporter, as I am sure the Assistant Minister is. I know the Chief Minister is. We are going to do everything we can to do that. I think you scrutinise the Minister, do you not, International Development? I would expect her to say that she has got a willing partner in External Relations and that the Chief Minister and the Minister for Treasury and Resources to do it. It is not just about money, it is about effort and it is about speaking about the things that matter.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Thank you. How are you meeting the relevant commitments within the Island Identity report more widely?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think we have just given you one example. I know that we are short for time. If there is any other bits and pieces we will provide that in a note but I do not think, Chief Officer ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes, we are supporting other areas. For example, we have helped to produce ambassador packs which are useful to support outlying engagement as well. Where there have been commitments from us we have ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, and there is also the briefings that we have offered to give to Members of the Assembly who are going overseas with C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) visits and A.P.F. (Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie) visits; that is 2 more for you. The more informed States Members can be in the countries they go to, it is better for us and we respond. I know officers do but I do and I am very happy to do so. I know Deputy Gorst has in his time.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I do not know, Chair, whether you want to go on to economic productivity or around British-Irish Council Summit, being short of time.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Why do we not do the British-Irish Council Summit?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Okay, fine. The panel briefly discussed the British-Irish Council Summit in its hearing in November last year. Can you confirm what the benefits were for the Island in hosting this summit?

The Minister for External Relations:

It was the first time we had held this summit for a number of years. We were overdue and I think I congratulated all of those staff, which was run by External Relations, in the way that they did that. The feedback that we got from the participants, whether or not it was the Right Honourable Michael Gove to the Taoiseach to the First Minister of Scotland, the Northern Irish representatives, and they were all incredibly impressed. I do not know but the fact that the Minister for Treasury and Resources is signing a D.T.A. with Ireland, you cannot put a definite link on it but certainly I have met the Irish Ambassador in London. It is all of these things when we talk about connectivity and contacts. It is all that that you cannot really measure but it certainly worked and certainly our relations with both the Scottish, the Northern Irish, Welsh and the whole of the British-Irish Council,

quite apart from our work with the C.D.s (Crown Dependencies), it worked. I think that it was done brilliantly, if I may say.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Do you have any plans to host similar events?

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not know when we are up for it next, so if we can persuade the Minister for Treasury and Resources to give us a budget to do it, but I think it was money well worth spending.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

He is sitting next to you.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Have to take our turn, Minister, anyway.

The Minister for External Relations:

We do have to take ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Another 4 years I think it is.

The Minister for External Relations:

Another 4 years, yes, yes. But it was a huge effort, Constable, and I think it was a job well done. If nobody said just how well done it was, I will say, though, today because I think the Chief Officer and her staff did a fantastic job.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I understand that a number of ambassadors visited the Island during the year, Estonian, Belgian, et cetera. What are the values of such visits? You have probably answered that previously.

The Minister for External Relations:

We have just had one this week, Constable. We have had the High Commissioner for Canada. Here on a full day after another full day in Guernsey, he was very remarkably informed of the previous relationship. I will not bore you with my knowledge of the cod fishery and the fact that he had marked to market the cod fishery in 1880 to today's value would be greater than the finance industry but it is true. I know a lot about it but that is the past; it is the future. What the High Commissioner said was their relations with the U.K. are vital as one of the Five Eyes. The economic

ties between Canada and the U.K. on both economic and security is stronger than ever. We had the 21-gun salute and I asked whether or not it was for the King of England or the King of Canada. We agreed that it would be both and that we would commit to working with Canada as one of our largest employers. You will be aware, Chair and Connétable, that the Royal Bank of Canada is one of our biggest employers. There is indirect employment with very significant funds deposited here from Canadian pension funds. They are looking, just as we are - we were referring to earlier - is I.T. We are the number one jurisdiction in the world for internet connectivity. Canada is trying to do the same and the future of productivity and I.T. is important. We have got, as a result of that visit, an open door with the Canadian High Commission and we will not be shy to use it; that is just one visit. There is a very significant ambassadorial visit programme and each one has a reason, each one has a lot of work behind it, and we are grateful for the support that we get to do that.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Are there any actions being undertaken to host further dignitaries to the Island?

The Minister for External Relations:

As I say, Connétable, there is a whole list of them.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Are there any key ones you want to mention?

The Minister for External Relations:

The Canadian ...

[13:30]

Deputy M.R. Scott:

The Canadian is history, let us move on to the future.

The Minister for External Relations:

No, no, he wants to come again, which is good.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

All right.

The Minister for External Relations:

When they want to come back that is really good, like the Estonian. We are going to see all the U.S. ambassadors next Tuesday in London at the German embassy. I know a number of them want to

come. Whether or not I am going to surprise the Chief Officer by saying a number of them want to come at once, like we did with the Gulf Corporation Council once. But, no, there is a significant thing and the importance of their visit cannot be understated. At the end of the day what they do, Constable, is that they will write a note back to their home government to say what their experiences are and that note is important because it sets the tone of the relationships between Jersey and that country.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

In the diary we do definitely have the Dutch and the Swiss at the beginning of next year.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Sorry, the Dutch ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The Dutch ambassador and the Swiss ambassador ...

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Okay, right, so that is next year.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

When?

Chief Officer, External Relations:

February for the Dutch ambassador and March for the Swiss ambassador and potential inbounds as well. We are quite in demand, so the Italian and Portuguese and indeed the French ambassador, as you mentioned earlier, also would like to visit.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I am going to bring this to a close now. As you are aware, we will be following up with written questions that will be published ...

The Minister for External Relations:

Please send your outstanding questions which we have not because of my slight verbosity. If you want to put your outstanding questions that you wanted, please put them in writing and we will answer them.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Yes, we will be doing exactly that, as I have said. We thank you very much, Minister and Assistant Minister, for attending our hearing today and officers, too, and for addressing the panel's questions. Thank you to all the supporting Government officers who have contributed today, including from the Greffe and our excellent panel officer. To any members of the public who have watched this hearing or indeed are watching it or are going to watch it, thank you for your interest, too. I am going to declare this to a close now. Thanks again.

The Minister for External Relations:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:

Thank you.

[13:32]