

Scotland's International Development Alliance response to the National Outcomes call for evidence

June 2023

Introduction

This response draws heavily on a paper published by Scotland's International Development Alliance in February 2023, authored by Graham Long and John Davis, exploring how to [measure Scotland's global impact in the National Performance Framework](#) (NPF).

The Alliance is particularly interested in Scotland's ambition to "make a positive contribution internationally". In this paper we outline some concerns with the current international outcome indicators; suggest ways that all the national outcomes could be internationalised; present ideas for three new indicators; and make recommendations for a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill which would support the implementation of the National Performance Framework.

Our key recommendations are:

- Amend the international outcome to measure more relevant indicators, and align better with the Sustainable Development Goals
- Reflect global implications across all the outcomes to provide a more holistic picture across the NPF
- Introduce a new indicator to measure Scotland's material footprint
- Explore ideas for new indicators to measure Scotland's political voice and the impact of the Scottish private sector on low income countries
- Introduce a Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill to support robust implementation of the NPF

We begin by addressing some broader points which we believe would enhance awareness and implementation of the NPF.

Citizen engagement

The Alliance supports improved public engagement in the National Outcomes review and therefore encourages the Scottish Government to consider forthcoming recommendations from Carnegie UK on best practice approaches for public consultation. Public participation in defining the Scotland we want to see is vital and the National Outcomes review should be adequately resourced to enable consultation across Scotland, with different groups in different ways. This process should reach marginalized groups and demonstrate their role in affecting decision making. The Alliance has convened a [Global Citizenship steering group](#) comprising of representatives from voluntary groups, organisations, researchers and activists from global south diasporas and minority communities working to increase awareness of human rights, sustainable development, anti-racism, decolonisation, and local and global justice. This is one such group which could be meaningfully consulted with to provide diverse viewpoints on the way that global issues are dealt with in Scotland.

Name of the National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework is described as Scotland's wellbeing framework, explicitly including 'increased wellbeing' as part of its purpose. The NPF is also described as Scotland's way to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A name change to reference both wellbeing and sustainable development would clarify the meaning of the NPF and underline its purpose. A move away from National Performance Framework would also avoid confusion with the National Planning Framework. We do, however, believe that the Framework must remain focused on outcomes and indicators, and crucially, incorporate targets for improvement.

It should also be made clear that achieving the National Outcomes not only benefits the people of Scotland, but those outside our borders. The ways in which we achieve the National Outcomes must support global sustainable development, and ensure that decisions do not impact negatively on future generations or those outside Scotland.

International Outcome

The NPF has the potential to be a world leading approach to how we measure collective progress and, alongside the National Outcomes, has the potential to focus decision-making, policy and budgets on meeting challenges both in Scotland and globally. It is also the Government's intended method of domestic implementation of the SDGs.

As the Alliance report 'Measuring Scotland's Global Impact in the National Performance Framework' explains, the NPF faces serious challenges as a gauge of Scotland's impact on global sustainable development. The international indicators as they currently stand are imperfect and therefore should be amended. They neither align effectively with the SDGs nor measure anything that holds relevance to understanding our global contribution.

The current indicators include, for example, "population size", but it is not clear what this indicates about Scotland internationally. The reputation indicator looks at how people from 20 countries perceive Scotland which, again, is not an important measure. The indicator set also could do a better job of tracking the challenges for migrants to Scotland through improved disaggregation of existing data, and new data around migration – e.g. on remittances, sectors and skills, or on modern slavery.

The composite indicator "[Contribution of development support to other nations](#)" has little or no published data, despite quite clearly defined measures that should provide a comprehensive depiction of how Scotland contributes to international development, based on [research published in 2020](#). That research was commissioned by the Scottish Government in recognition that development is not only shaped by aid spend but that climate, trade and migration also play crucial roles.

This indicator should measure Scotland's activities as a 'good global citizen', focus on 'how Scotland can avoid harm to the development of other nations' and how 'Scotland supports their development'. However, it is unclear what data has been collected across any of the variables under each of these statements, and thus no clear picture or progress over 5 years exists at all.

The most serious sets of gaps and challenges remain around metrics addressing Scotland's 'spillovers': the ways in which activity in Scotland affects sustainable development beyond its borders. These global impacts are an important aspect of Scotland's claim to advance sustainable development.

Beyond carbon footprint, there is currently no sustained coverage in the NPF of the effects of Scotland's consumption and production on the global environment, no consideration of social and economic impacts on other countries involved in the production of goods consumed in Scotland, and no consideration of the global impacts of Scotland's main industries.

Here we outline some recommendations to improve the role of the NPF in understanding Scotland's global impact and the way we measure progress towards the National Outcome: 'We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally'. By doing this we believe we can more meaningfully track progress, and support other government commitments to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, move towards a feminist approach to global affairs, and work towards the SDGs.

Internationalising the National Outcomes

The Alliance report explains that Scotland's global contribution can be assessed outside the International Outcome and indicators, and a more holistic approach would be to consider the global impact across *all* National Outcomes.

There are indicators attached to the other ten National Outcomes which address Scotland's global impact. Examples given include the 'economy' outcome, which provides figures for Scottish exports, Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of GDP, greenhouse gas emissions, and the overall size of Scotland's carbon footprint. Data related to the quantity and quality of habitats in Scotland – as a contribution to global biodiversity – is also provided. The 'environment' outcome also includes indicators which reveal Scotland's global contribution and impact. For example, figures are provided for the proportion of energy produced from renewable sources, the state of biodiversity, the condition of protected nature sites, and the quality of Scotland's seas as well as the sustainability of fish stocks. A further indicator concerns total waste generated by Scottish households.

The report also outlines an opportunity to enhance understanding of the life changes and experiences of migrants in Scotland by joining up data collated across outcomes. There are two indicators under the "international outcome" addressing the experience of migrants to Scotland, and the number of Asylum Seekers settled in Scotland. But further disaggregation by migrant status across a range of indicators including under "education" and "poverty" - just as disaggregation is currently available by 'gender' and 'ethnicity', would allow for greater understanding. It would also allow intersecting aspects of disadvantage - for example, poverty, migration status, and gender identity - to be better addressed. The SDGs also have a global indicator on migrant remittances (10.c.1), and consideration could be given to how this could be tracked in Scotland.

Therefore, whilst we believe that are opportunities to improve the indicators in the existing 'international' outcome, a holistic, comprehensive approach to all of the outcomes could enhance understanding of Scotland's global impact.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

A more joined up approach speaks to the importance of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development as a way of shifting towards a more sustainable developmental pathway. [Alliance research](#) suggests that coherence does not appear to be a requirement of public policy, and the consideration of the impacts of one policy on others, or on those outside Scotland, is not a norm within the civil service. The NPF could and should put policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) at the forefront of government. The NPF should support a principle of interdependence and

indivisibility across public policy, meaning that policies are inextricably linked and require policy coherence for sustainable development in response.

Policy coherence is the consistency of public policy, whereby:

- no policy undermines any other policy
- where policy conflicts occur, the root cause of the conflict should be identified and efforts made to resolve it in a manner which:
 - minimizes trade-offs
 - maximises synergies.

Policy coherence for sustainable development must:

- support ecological integrity and social equity within Scotland, and elsewhere in the world
- support the self-defined sustainable development of other countries

The forthcoming Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill provides an opportunity to embed a PCSD approach in decision-making, through strengthening the legislative underpinnings of the National Outcomes by conferring a number of duties on Scottish Ministers. When reporting on National Outcomes, Scottish Ministers will have to explain how they are coherent and have supported PCSD.

International Outcome new indicators

1. Introduce an indicator on Scotland's "material footprint"

In our report 'Measuring Scotland's Global Impact in the National Performance Framework' we recommend a new indicator which would better track the environmental footprint of Scotland's raw material consumption, in line with existing UK practice and the SDGs. By focussing on what a country consumes rather than produces, and by accounting for inputs drawn from anywhere in the world, this measure provides a useful estimate of the total use of raw materials by a society which, in turn, represents a significant part of their overall impact on the planet and its people.

A country's material footprint, or raw material consumption (RMC), measures the amount of raw materials - both from home and abroad - that go into producing the goods and services used by governments, charities and private households in one year. By focussing on what a country consumes rather than produces, and by accounting for inputs drawn from anywhere in the world, this measure provides a useful estimate of the total use of raw materials by a society which, in turn, represents a significant part of their overall impact on the planet and its people. The ONS has published material footprint statistics for the UK since 1990 with the most recent data covering 2019. It presents this information, and the methodology underpinning it, on their SDG data website addressing SDG target 12.2. Material footprint statistics specific to Scotland, and covering the period 2011-18, have already been compiled by "Zero Waste Scotland" and their partners.

According to Zero Waste Scotland, in 2018 Scotland's Material Footprint (RMC) was 19.3 tonnes per capita, which can be compared with the 2018 ONS data for the UK as a whole, of 16.9 tonnes per capita and an EU average of 14 tonnes per capita.

As noted above, a measure of Scotland's carbon footprint is included in the NPF as part of the "Economy" outcome. This provides some indication of Scotland's material impact, albeit not as

comprehensively. The ONS has indicated that it will continue to publish material and carbon footprint statistics in the future. If this is the case and/or Zero Waste Scotland continues to collate comparable data with an acceptable level of rigour - perhaps through collaboration with the Scottish Government's statistical service – then inclusion of material footprint data in the NPF would be straightforward and would directly address a key gap in coverage of Scotland's spillovers.

There are various methods for calculating material footprint as [outlined by the ONS](#) and the Scottish Government will need to consider the pros and cons of each.

2. Introduce an indicator to measure Scotland's political voice

As mentioned above, we question the usefulness of the current reputation indicator as a meaningful way of assessing whether Scotland makes a positive contribution internationally.

This indicator could be improved with additional data to gauge Scotland's international impact, assessing both global perception and soft power. Potential avenues to achieve this could include monitoring international media coverage, more robust public opinion polling, and surveys that measure Scotland's brand reputation and political influence. Positive perceptions can indicate a strong international impact.

Scotland has a role in providing a voice on key global issues. For example, speaking out on loss and damage finance or in support of vaccine equity can and does have a positive impact globally. Scotland's commitment to upholding, and showing leadership in delivering, relevant agreements and conventions could be assessed. Tracking how Scotland has supported these commitments could reveal how Scotland has exceeded baselines, hitting the ceiling and not the floor of requirements. Scotland's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, to leave no one behind, and pledges such as Loss & Damage finance could be included.

A supporting role could be given to the Global South Panel, who could assess whether Scotland's international contribution has been positive or negative over a set time period in terms of its public stance on a range of issues related to global solidarity. The Scottish Government should find ways to assess whether the Global South Panel's interests align with the views of those in their respective countries.

This enhanced indicator would encourage and reward a strong global voice for Scotland.

3. Introduce an indicator that measures Scottish private sector impacts overseas

Understanding Scottish private sector impacts is critical to understanding whether Scotland makes "a positive contribution internationally". It is important to note that measuring the social and economic impacts on other countries can be complex due to the global nature of supply chains. Data availability and reliability can also present challenges. However, employing a combination of methods can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of Scottish business impact and inform actions towards promoting sustainable and responsible business.

A starting point could be to measure Scottish participation in global business human rights initiatives or corporate social responsibility reporting. Sources could include B Corps, Fairtrade certification, or participation in the UN Global Compact. This might also be incorporated into the Scottish Business Pledge. This measurement would give an initial gauge of Scotland's impact on low income countries.

Scotland could evaluate the social impacts on other countries by examining labour conditions and workers' rights in the supply chains of Scottish businesses. This includes assessing factors such as wages, working hours, occupational safety, and the prevalence of child labour or forced labour. Reports from labour rights organisations, international labour standards, and auditing mechanisms can provide insights into these issues. Modern slavery statements are currently [registered at UK level](#) and these could be assessed to understand the level of commitment from Scottish businesses.

A complementary approach would be to evaluate the CSR reports of companies involved in the supply chains of goods consumed in Scotland. Such reports often highlight the social and economic initiatives undertaken by companies to address the impacts on workers and communities in the production countries. Reviewing these reports can provide insights into the efforts made by companies to mitigate negative impacts and promote positive change.

Whilst not directly supporting an understanding of Scottish private sector impact, fair trade procurement and sales would be a way of building up a clearer picture of the impact of purchasing decisions made in Scotland. Despite differences in data available, existing reporting from public sector procurement offers some benchmarking. This could be tracked through either volume of fair trade products procured and/or commitments made in procurement policies. The Kantar Worldpanel used in the 2020 [Fair Trade in Scotland review](#) gives a percentage for Fair Trade purchasing choices made by the public.

Clearly, further development of these ideas would be required, but these suggested measurements would give an initial gauge of Scotland's impact on low impact countries.

Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill

As part of its 2021 Programme for Government, Scottish Government committed to 'move beyond GDP as the only measure of national progress.' Part of this response included the introduction of a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill which would place 'duties on public bodies and local government to take account of the impact of their decisions on sustainable development, in Scotland and internationally.

[Our research](#) recommends that an amended version of Part 1 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, concerning national outcomes, be transferred into the Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill. As the Bill is likely to contain clear definitions of wellbeing, sustainable development, sustainable economic growth, and policy coherence for sustainable development, it will help to ensure that there is no confusion or conflict in the development and implementation of public policy, as public bodies work to contribute to national outcomes.

The Alliance's report also highlights some conflicts between the various statutory duties conferred on public bodies and recommends provisions that will help to resolve these. It further proposes the creation of a Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Commissioner, who will both support and monitor public bodies' implementation of their duties and contribution to national outcomes. It recommends that a Commissioner assess any overarching policy framework, such as the NPF for policy conflicts.

A strong WSD Bill could improve performance and delivery of national outcomes for wellbeing and sustainable development. Unless Scotland's public policy framework is truly focussed on wellbeing and sustainable development, there would seem to be little chance of the promised transition to the wellbeing economy and for Scotland to make a positive contribution internationally. It must be a framework for wellbeing, rather than a framework for growth.

As well as providing a clear and coherent policy framework, a strong NPF could also support better accountability, transparency, and scrutiny.

The NPF is not currently effectively driving decision-making by Government nor public bodies. The proposed WSD Bill would provide a framework for ensuring that public bodies are required and supported to implement the NPF and that they transparently track the progress achieved. A WSD (or Future Generations) Commissioner would signal the importance the Government places on sustainable development; provide a space for learning to coalesce; hold public bodies to account; address the implementation gap in the NPF; and be an ambassador to engage the wider public.

About the Alliance

Scotland's International Development Alliance is the membership body for everyone committed to creating a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats. Our membership brings together a diverse range of organisations and individuals including NGOs, businesses, academic institutions and public sector bodies that operate in over 100 countries.

[Home :: Scotland's International Development Alliance \(intdevalliance.scot\)](https://intdevalliance.scot)

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