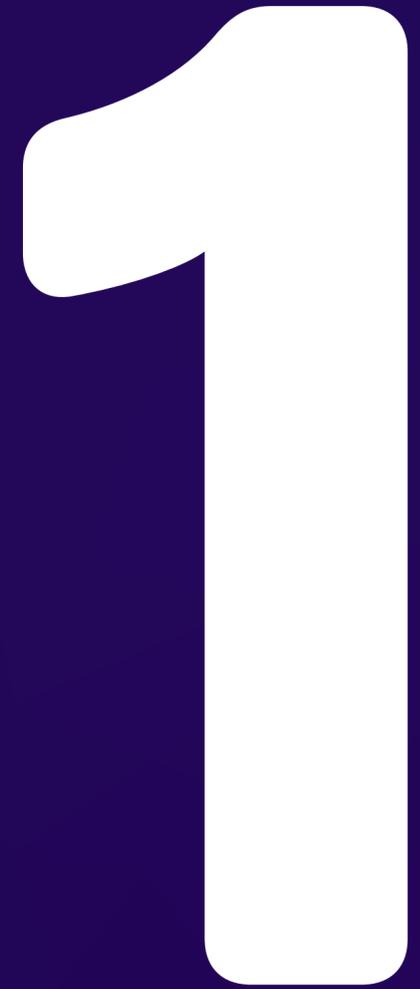


# Corporate Plan 2022–23 to 2024–25

# Contents

	<b>Section 1: Who we are</b>	<hr/>
Page 04		
Page 06		
	<b>Section 2: Our strategy</b>	<hr/>
Page 09		
Page 10		
Page 11		
Page 12		
	<b>Section 3: Focus on what we are best at</b>	<hr/>
Page 14		
Page 18		
Page 23		
	<b>Section 4: Operational focus for the year ahead</b>	<hr/>
Page 28		
	<b>Section 5: Risks</b>	<hr/>
Page 32		
	<b>Section 6: Financial outlook</b>	<hr/>
Page 34		

# Who we are



# Chief Executive's introduction

**Our Corporate Plan for the period 2022–25 sets out the British Council's strategy as well as providing detail on what we plan to deliver and how.**

It's a plan that takes account of the real world – a world that has changed over the last few years and months. If we are to prosper and deliver on our vision, we must be able to adapt to the unexpected, and to turn challenge into opportunity. The Corporate Plan describes our shift in focus while holding firm to our organisation's values and beliefs.

Our purpose is to support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the United Kingdom and countries worldwide. We will continue to operate at arm's length from the UK's political process to ensure we build long-term trust abroad, while supporting the international aspirations of all four governments of the UK.

We are an organisation with a turnover of almost £1 billion, employing around 10,000 colleagues across the world, including all four nations of the UK. We operate on a large scale, and while the work we do is focused on building trust, it also has significant value in terms of revenue to the UK. Analysis of our work in higher education, for example, demonstrates that over £400 million a year is generated for the UK economy through British Council activity.

We are thinking big, and we have set ourselves challenging targets. By 2025, for example, we will be engaging directly with over 100 million people a year, building and enriching a closer connection with the UK through British Council activity.

Our plan recognises the challenging external context in which we are operating, including geopolitical events, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and new technologies. The pandemic, in particular, has resulted in a shift in the way we deliver cultural relations, as we deliver more of our activity online. However, given the nature of our work, we are committed to maintaining face-to-face engagement and this plan sets out a unique hybrid experience for our customers and partners. We are developing, for example, our range of technology-enabled services for exams delivery, giving education institutions and awarding organisations greater choice and flexibility, with secure test centres and remote invigilation.

Over the next three years we will focus our energies and resources resolutely on the areas in which we excel, adapting our delivery to suit the changing external environment. We will build new approaches on very solid foundations: our history in every corner of the world, the millions of people globally who have had positive experiences with the British Council, and our support across the arts and culture, education and English language teaching sectors in all four nations of the UK.

# Chief Executive's introduction

**'With longstanding connections in every region of the world, an unrivalled history of cultural connection, and thousands of talented and committed colleagues, we are well placed to deliver an exciting agenda.'**

**Scott McDonald**  
Chief Executive

We will direct our programmes towards young people, influencers and future leaders, connecting them across local, national and international networks. As part of the Alumni UK programme, for example, we will support alumni from across the Asia Pacific region, home to an estimated 1.5 million graduates who have studied in the UK over the last ten years, as well as thousands of young people who have had a UK experience through a British Council-led programme. Through these networks we will enhance the career opportunities of our alumni while improving favourability towards the UK.

One of the targets for the British Council over the period of this Corporate Plan is to rebuild our finances so that we return to generating a net surplus by 2024–25. This will enable us to rebuild reserves, repay government loans and ultimately invest surplus in activities that build trust. The impact of the pandemic on our finances has been severe – many of our teaching centre and exams operations globally were forced to close temporarily. We are grateful for the continuing financial support from our sponsors at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which has been and continues to be essential in protecting our future. Over the next few years, we will transform our operations. We will use our global network to create more funding sources, accelerating our efforts to diversify and increase our income. Our operations will be strengthened by a lighter, more agile and digitally enabled global network, with a more efficient back office.

Finally, we will ensure that our people and our partners experience a culture that promotes excellence, respect, inclusion and diversity, and we are committed to operating in an environmentally responsible manner.

With longstanding connections in every region of the world, an unrivalled history of cultural connection, and thousands of talented and committed colleagues, we are well placed to deliver an exciting agenda for the current geopolitical context.

This is a time of great opportunity for the British Council. The need for intelligent and effective international relations has never been greater.

I look forward to this new chapter of the British Council with excitement, and with optimism.

**Scott McDonald**  
Chief Executive

# About us

## Vision

A more peaceful and prosperous world built on trust.

## Purpose

We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

# About us

## Facts about us

We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2021–22 we reached 650 million people.

The majority of our income comes from partnership agreements, contracts, philanthropy, teaching and exams and we also receive grant-in-aid funding from the UK government.

Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

## How we deliver impact

**We uniquely combine** the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language, our global presence and relationships in over 100 countries, our unparalleled access to young people and influencers and our creative sparkle.

**We share our values and explore ideas.** We have difficult discussions and find common ground. We create mutually beneficial relationships between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries. This helps strengthen the UK's global reputation and influence, encouraging people from around the world to visit, study, trade and make alliances with the UK.

**We work directly with individuals** to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications.

**We work with governments** and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors, in the UK and globally. Working together we make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

**We take a long-term approach** to building trust and remain at arm's length from government.

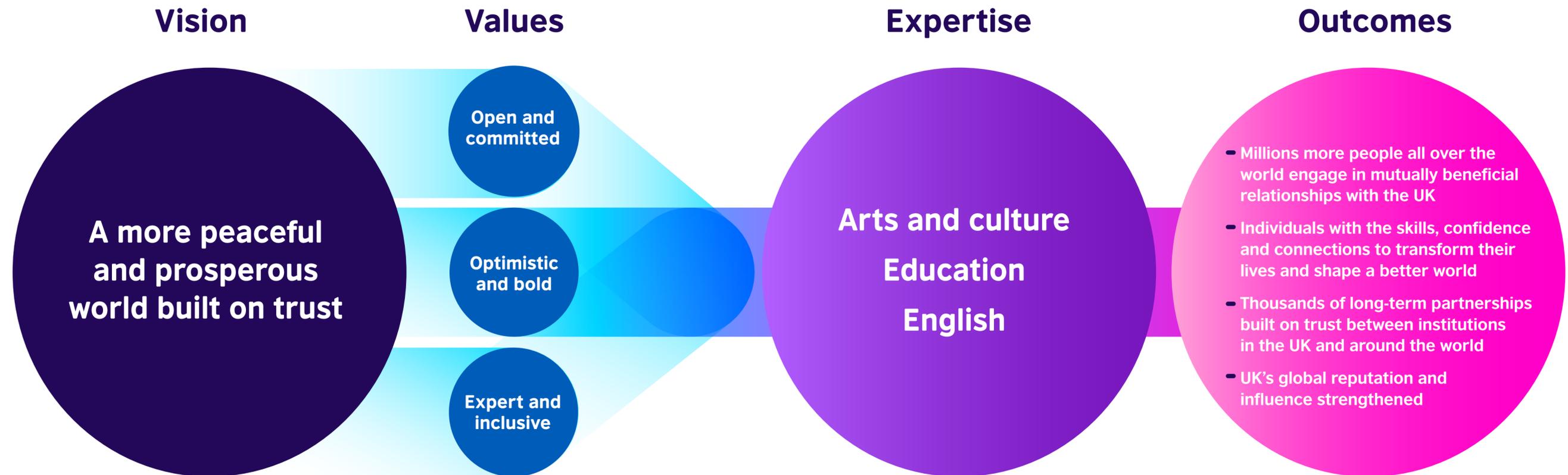
# Our strategy



# Strategic framework

**Our strategy creates new opportunities for people to share, participate, learn and co-operate with each other and with the UK for a more peaceful and prosperous world.**

With more flexible and convenient digital offers, we will reach even more customers in more places, even where we have no physical presence. We will deliver the international aspirations of all four nations of the UK, strengthening mutually beneficial relations with international partners and celebrating the diversity, distinctiveness, creativity and innovation of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.



# Strategic priorities

The following strategic priorities summarise our response to the changing world. They will help us make the biggest decisions and steer the development of our strategy and day-to-day actions.

## 1.

**Focus on what we are best at:**

We focus on young people, influencers and future leaders. We make an impact across arts and culture, education and the English language where we have global leadership, and we invest to maintain our competitive edge. We link our areas of expertise to make our offers distinct, connecting people across local, national, UK and international networks. We combine quality and creativity and stay relevant through changing times. We are well known in the UK and globally for what we do.

## 2.

**Deliver a unique mix of physical and digital presence:**

We maintain the broadest face-to-face network, complemented with an ambitious digital offering. This combination of face-to-face and digital sets us apart from our competitors and delivers a unique experience for our partners and customers.

## 3.

**Maintain collaborative independence:**

Our work supports the international aspirations of all four governments of the UK, and we operate at arm's length from the political process to ensure we build long-term trust wherever we operate.

## 4.

**Be one British Council with an attractive culture:**

We act as a single organisation to maximise our impact and efficiency, while allowing the flexibility needed for each area of our operations to thrive. Partners' and customers' journeys across the British Council are seamless. Our people and our partners experience a culture that promotes excellence, respect, inclusion and diversity. We are environmentally responsible.

## 5.

**Be professional and constantly learning:**

We will be financially sound, diversify our sources of funding, simplify and be agile. We focus on data and evidence. We constantly evolve and get better.

# Our targets for 2022–23

**We will reach over 650 million people, of which 94 million will be meaningfully engaged in new partnerships, study and learning with the UK.**

## In arts and culture

- **Over 17 million** people are meaningfully engaged through digital and face-to-face events, inspiring audiences, artists and creative professionals around the world to connect with the UK.
- **1,400** arts and cultural organisations in the UK and around the world are working together in partnership.

## In education

- **21 million** policymakers, school leaders, teachers and schoolchildren participating in our international education programmes.
- **Over 1.7 million** people are taking UK school, university and professional exams with the British Council.
- **27 per cent** of newly enrolled international students at UK higher education institutions surveyed highlight Study UK as an important source of influence on their decision to study in the UK.
- **18,000** UK alumni are actively engaged in British Council or UK government networking activities helping build long-term connections with the UK.
- **440** higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the UK and around the world are supported to work in partnership.

## In English

- **55 million** people connecting with the UK through our English language teaching and assessment and working with us as a trusted partner in quality English language education.
- **Over 1.7 million** International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests delivered.
- **240,000** students learn English with us through our teaching centres and English Online.
- **40** national education systems are supported around the world to strengthen English language teaching, learning and assessment.

# A unique mix of physical and digital presence

**We have a physical presence in over 100 countries and our digital programmes reach people in over 200 (or 80 per cent) of the world's countries and territories – strengthening the UK's global reputation for excellence in arts and culture, education, and English.**

We continue to place greater emphasis on the Indo-Pacific, in line with the UK government's 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. This is particularly relevant for our grant-in-aid programmes. By the end of the Spending Review period we will spend 37 per cent of our total grant budget in the Indo-Pacific and 18 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

We will spend over 50 per cent of grant-in-aid in 25 priority countries around the world, although we will retain the flexibility to shift resources as new priorities arise, for example in relation to Eastern Europe. These countries have been identified based on their importance to the UK government, and on the British Council's unique strengths in achieving impact for the UK. The priority countries are:

## Americas

Brazil, Mexico

## East Asia

China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam

## EU Europe

France, Germany, Poland, Spain

## Middle East and North Africa

Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia

## South Asia

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan

## Sub-Saharan Africa

Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan

## Wider Europe

\*Russia, Turkey, Ukraine

**Focus on what  
we are best at**



# Arts and culture

## We strengthen the creative and economic development of the arts, culture, heritage and creative industry sectors in the UK and internationally.

The arts, culture and creative industry sectors showcase the breadth and diversity of creativity. They support the free exchange of ideas, mutual learning and open markets.

Strong creative sectors benefit societies by increasing individuals' and communities' social and cultural capital, as well as paths to prosperity. By building, deepening and extending international connections and partnerships, we increase trust in, collaboration with and favourability towards the UK. We also open vital avenues for mutual learning so that the UK can benefit from best practice being developed and championed across the globe.

Our work contributes to the global growth of culture and creative sectors, especially given their roles as drivers of more sustainable and inclusive development.

To help increase scale and impact, we will increasingly work with partners and provide more new opportunities for arts and cultural organisations, and, through them, individual artists and creative professionals. This will rely on our unique knowledge and personal connections with the sector, our ability to make cultural relations happen and our work with the FCDO and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support cultural diplomacy.

We will continue to support and explore digital spaces for new international connections and to showcase the UK's exciting arts and culture to global audiences. We will expand the digital reach of our unique British Council Collection and use it to unlock global conversations about themes that affect all of humankind.

Our work will contribute to the worldwide recovery of the arts sectors from the Covid-19 pandemic. We will deliver an interconnected, relevant, inclusive and responsive arts programme that achieves impact in three areas:

1. Cultural exchange
2. Creative economy
3. Culture responds to global challenges.

# Cultural exchange

**We will build knowledge of a global sector which has been significantly changed by the Covid-19 pandemic.**

Through our work in cultural exchange we link UK artists, cultural professionals and organisations with their international peers through dynamic professional networking opportunities. We also support creative collaborations, showcasing and touring of work, allowing audiences worldwide to experience the transformative power of art.

We believe that recovery for the UK's arts and creative industries sector will rely on stronger international working and continuation of developing digital practices that emerged during Covid-19 restrictions.

We will use high-profile events and cultural programmes in the UK and internationally to create powerful platforms for cultural exchange. This builds on years of experience of bilateral seasons and festivals of culture, support for UK Cities of Culture, and contributions to international events such as the Cultural Olympiads of the Olympic Games and World Expos.

## Priorities

### **Showcase the UK's creativity and innovation at the Venice Biennale.**

At two of the world's largest and most important exhibitions in their field – the International Architecture Exhibition in 2023 and the International Art Exhibition in 2024.

### **Extend our programme of bilateral seasons of culture.**

In 2022 we will work with Ukrainian partners to showcase the culture of Ukraine in the UK. There will also be major programmes marking the 75th national anniversary of Pakistan and India's 75th anniversary of independence. In 2023 there will be arts and cultural seasons with Vietnam and with France in the run-up to the Olympic Games in 2024. We will also prepare the ground for a season with Poland in 2024–25.

### **Internationalise UK celebrations.**

We will support major civic cultural celebrations in 2023, including Leeds 2023 and Kirklees Year of Music, helping them to realise their international connections and ambitions. We will also support the 75th anniversary of the Windrush arrival and develop international plans with Bradford, the 2025 UK City of Culture.

### **Expand our partnerships with the creative sector.**

Creative sector organisations in the UK and internationally, and the artists that work with them, will be supported to play a much greater part in the design and delivery of our cultural exchange programmes. They will be working with us to develop innovative virtual platforms for connecting UK and international artists and providing global access to UK arts and culture. The British Council Collection will be opened up for galleries and curators to develop collaborative exhibitions – virtual and physical.

# Creative economy

**The British Council is at the forefront of championing the international creative economy. We focus on policy, research and advocacy, and use insight to build capacity for creative professionals and policymakers.**

The cultural and creative industries (CCI) represent around three per cent of global GDP and 30 million jobs.<sup>1</sup> The UN resolution announced 2021 as the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development and acknowledged the rising role of the sector on the global stage. Built on the efforts of micro- and small businesses, the creative economy is an economy of ideas, and a serious and credible driver of economic growth.

The UK is uniquely positioned to claim a high level of expertise in the creative economy. Over the last ten years the UK sector has grown at a rate of more than twice that of the total UK economy.

Our work will help quantify and analyse the impact of CCIs in priority countries and enable governments, funders and professionals in the sector to understand each other better and contribute to stronger creative economies. It will also continue to position the UK as a pioneer in understanding the power of CCIs and support future market opportunities.

## **Priorities**

**Develop a creative economy knowledge hub.** Providing insight on the creative sectors in fast-growing markets, which can be shared regularly with networks of UK sector organisations.

**Extend our work with policymakers and cultural leaders.** For example, through our Supporting the Creative

Economy programme in Wider Europe and Cultural Policy Leadership programme in the Americas.

## **Support creative entrepreneurs.**

We have an existing partnership programme with Microsoft in Sub-Saharan Africa providing e-learning for early-stage entrepreneurs, and we will explore the potential to adapt and scale this to other regions. In East Africa we will provide financing to small and medium creative enterprises to grow and support skills development, product visibility and policy reform. We will do this through the Ignite Culture programme, a partnership with the European Union (EU) and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

## **Expand our Festivals Academy work across India and South Asia.**

This will include offering UK higher education accredited digital training in business skills.

## **Develop cultural and creative sectors in the Western Balkans.**

We will launch a multi-year, EU-funded programme alongside UNESCO and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

## **Strengthen research on the social and economic impact of the creative sector.**

Given its geopolitical importance to the UK we will focus on work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the creative economy.

1. UNESCO. (2021) International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development.

# Culture responds to global challenges

**We support artistic and cultural expression, recognising its potential to challenge and change mindsets for a more inclusive and sustainable future. This encourages new ways of seeing and experiencing the world and building understanding of different cultures.**

This work focuses on the transformative power of arts and culture. It protects and nurtures valued cultural heritage, supporting environmentally sustainable development and well-being. It creates opportunities for people, institutions and communities to connect and respond to challenges with local impact and global relevance.

## Priorities

### **Support free creative and cultural expression.**

Through our partnership with BFI Flare: London we will continue to grow the international reach of Five Films for Freedom, which has already been seen by 17 million people in over 200 countries and territories.

### **Support the UK's role as a leader in cultural heritage protection.**

Extend the Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with DCMS. £30 million was awarded to further develop the programme during 2022-25 in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and for Emergency Response including Ukraine.

### **Build on the successful pilot protecting cultural heritage at risk from climate change and natural disasters.**

We will scale up the programme with the intention of awarding up to £7 million in grants each year over the next three years, including extending the geographic scope to South Asia.

### **Further develop our role as advocates and policy influencers.**

In 2022–23 we will commission a follow-up to the acclaimed *Missing Pillar Report*<sup>2</sup> exploring the role of arts and culture in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We will also host events alongside Mondiacult 2022, the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development.

### **Support disabled artists to showcase their work while promoting wider inclusion.**

We will consolidate our arts and disability work, building on the report *Reflecting on Change*<sup>3</sup> that highlights our success in bringing about significant long-term change.

### **Stimulate global conversations about climate change.**

We will extend the acclaimed Creative Commissions combining arts, science and digital technology for creative, innovative and inclusive solutions to address climate change. We are investing £300,000 in UK and international collaborations for COP27, including global commissions and bilateral commissions in Korea, Indonesia and Egypt, as well as additional funding for country and regional initiatives.

2. British Council, *Missing Pillar*.

3. British Council, *Reflecting on Change*.

# Education

**Education is particularly effective at building trust and understanding because it reaches young people at a formative stage and positive experiences stay with them all their lives. The UK's strength in education makes it an excellent partner for people-to-people, institution-to-institution and government-to-government connections.**

**Through our education programmes we want to ensure that:**

- each of the four governments of the UK sees us as the partner of choice for their international education ambitions
- overseas governments and international and multinational organisations see us as expert in our field and a trustworthy partner or service provider
- students, young learners and those that influence them see us as a gateway to engagement with UK education and qualifications, and a way of keeping in touch with the UK after their formal education is completed
- the UK education sectors see us as their source of knowledge, insight and expertise in the places that matter to them and as a reliable broker for international partnerships.

Our approach is guided by the Sustainable Development Goal to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. We will also seek to embed the goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls into all our programmes.

Our focus is on the following areas where our global footprint, longstanding relationships with overseas governments and the UK's education sector, and record of delivery give us a unique opportunity to make a difference.

1. Higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and science
2. Schools
3. UK qualifications
4. Youth skills, leadership and positive pathways.

# Higher education, TVET and science

We promote the whole of the UK as a destination of choice for international students, and support government-to-government and institution-to-institution partnerships between the UK and other countries.

Our work is fully aligned with the UK government's International Education Strategy and contributes to exports, soft power and development outcomes. We enhance the international reputation of the four education systems of the UK with increased opportunities to learn from global practice.

## Priorities

### Promote the UK as a world-class study destination.

We will increase the UK's share of the global market for international student recruitment by engaging prospective students through the GREAT Britain Study UK marketing campaign, and we will work with partners and influencers to strengthen the UK's international student recruitment ecosystem. This will include training agents and school counsellors, and working more with English language teaching (ELT) and pathway providers.

### Build favourability towards the UK by increasing long-term engagement with UK alumni.

As part of the global Alumni UK programme, in 2023 we will, for example, support alumni from across the Asia Pacific region, home to an estimated 1.5 million graduates who have studied in the UK over the last ten years. We will continue to engage actively with alumni networks across the Gulf to help maintain numbers of students coming to the UK under privately funded scholarship programmes.

### Develop stronger, more inclusive and globally connected higher education systems.

We will work to further the acceptance of UK qualifications, including supporting UK and Indian governments to sign a mutual recognition of qualifications agreement that will foster student mobility and benefit over half a million higher education students who have studied in the UK in the last ten years. Globally, we will support over

250 transnational education and research partnerships. Through our Innovation for African Universities project, we will continue to connect UK institutions with those in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya on entrepreneurship.

### Support market intelligence and the brokering of connections and partnerships with the UK sector.

In 2022–23, we will develop and establish seven regional Education Insight Hubs. In the Indo-Pacific we will create a platform for engagement through the Going Global conference in Singapore.

### Expand academic and scientific collaboration and mobility with the UK.

We will continue to support UK government initiatives to build research and innovation partnerships with low- and middle-income countries across the world.

### Develop demand-driven and inclusive TVET systems.

Through the EU VET Toolbox and our Going Global Partnerships Programmes we will continue to share UK expertise and support partnerships with low- and middle-income countries, primarily in Africa and South Asia.

### Support the next generation of experts in climate change, adaptation and resilience to face the complex challenges of future years.

We will support early-career researchers in nine Commonwealth countries through research collaboration and professional development.

# Schools

**We build lasting international ties by supporting the UK to learn and benefit from connections with school systems around the world, and for the world to benefit from UK educational expertise.**

The British Council has unparalleled access to, and strong trust-based relationships with, ministries of education globally and extensive connections with UK policymakers, schools and stakeholders across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

We will support school reform and development by responding to demand from countries worldwide for connection to UK expertise on key educational themes, facilitating these connections through policy dialogue, advocacy and technical assistance. In the UK, we will support the ambitions of the Department for Education (DfE) and the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive. We will help them to learn from the most successful school systems around the world to improve quality domestically, and enable schools to internationalise their curriculum, thereby supporting young people to become globally aware and globally competent.

## **Priorities**

### **Inclusive, quality education for all learners, including for girls and marginalised children.**

In Nigeria, our schools work will support this by enhancing the professional knowledge of schoolteachers, leaders and policymakers contributing to policy and curriculum reform.

### **Support ministries of education, teachers and school leaders as they rebuild in the wake of the pandemic.**

We will focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and the UK, including a new digital Education Exchange event series for educators and policymakers in over

100 countries. In the UK we will contribute to efforts to ensure all children across different socio-economic groups get a good-quality education and are ready for life and work in our interconnected world.

### **Support students, teachers and policymakers to learn about climate change and other key challenges.**

We will significantly grow the number of schools engaging with our climate change resources, education packs and professional development training courses.

### **Provide opportunities for schools around the world and in the UK to form international digital partnerships.**

These partnerships enrich the curriculum, build an understanding of other countries and cultures, and involve school students in taking action on global issues.

### **Support modern foreign language learning in the UK through research and practical programmes, contributing to the UK's international ambitions and creating work opportunities for students.**

This includes the DfE-funded Mandarin Excellence Programme, which provides intensive teaching and learning of Mandarin Chinese in 75 English schools for up to 7,200 new students and opportunities to visit China in partnership with the Institute of Education between 2021 and 2025.

# UK qualifications

**We create opportunities for people everywhere to achieve their potential by taking UK qualifications.**

We provide examination services to UK education institutions and awarding bodies, enabling them to access international markets and extend their reach. This includes school exams (GCSEs and A-levels), university exams and professional qualifications such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants qualifications.

Not only does this help strengthen the UK's reputation for quality education, it also generates significant export revenues of approximately £50 million a year for the UK.

## **Priorities**

### **Grow the influence and reputation of the UK.**

We will increase access to UK education and qualifications, providing secure access to international markets for UK education institutions and awarding bodies to enhance the reputation of UK education, exams and assessment.

### **Increase the number of individuals taking UK academic and professional qualifications.**

We expect to grow the number of people taking tests to help them advance in their career and/or education to two million people by 2024–25. We will support increased access to UK qualifications (school, university and professional exams) across Asia, Africa and the Middle East in particular.

### **Develop our range of technology-enabled services.**

This will give education institutions and awarding bodies greater choice and flexibility, with secure test centres and remotely invigilated exam delivery solutions. We will invest in providing an online portal dashboard for our clients and enhancing our client and customer websites.

### **Enable awarding bodies of UK school exams to extend their reach and grow their presence.**

We will continue to forge partnerships with awarding bodies of UK school exams, focusing especially on Vietnam with new and existing partner schools and extending the model to new markets such as the Philippines.

# Youth skills, leadership and positive pathways

**We support young leaders and influencers to contribute to trust-building, cohesion and stability in their societies and represent their communities on a local, regional and national stage.**

Young influencers are no longer restricted to particular social groups, class structures or traditional education pathways, and they no longer influence through traditional channels. The digital revolution has seen young people have more access to information and opportunity to interact globally with peers. Such interactions can be channelled to build trust and be extremely positive for the individual and society, but the opposite is also true.

We will support diverse young influencers and future leaders by offering new skills, leadership and positive pathways. We will help young people to develop their 'voice' and act positively on the big global challenges that affect their lives and communities. We will promote skills for life and work, building personal resilience and supporting young people to realise their potential and be a force for good. We will also help strengthen the ecosystems and networks that enable young leaders to thrive, fostering new coalitions between UK and international civil society, education, media and government.

We will engage and promote the UK's vibrant youth sector, raising awareness of what the UK has to offer to young people around the world, promoting UK values and nurturing a diverse group of international future leaders who are attracted to the UK and act as positive advocates in the digital space.

## **Priorities**

### **Supporting youth leadership and positive pathways.**

With UK assistance, we will provide opportunities for young leaders and influencers to develop skills and build consensus for change. In Myanmar (Burma), for example, the Myanmar Youth

Empowerment Network (MYEN) is a durable platform for UK outreach and cross-cultural engagement programming, linking the UK and the British Council with 12 local partner organisations located in provincial towns and cities across Myanmar.

We will support young leaders in Pakistan with learning, community action and collaboration opportunities which help them become change-makers in their communities. The AAWAZ programme, in partnership with the FCDO, focuses on shared values such as gender equality, social inclusion and reducing discrimination.

### **Building trust between young people.**

Through the £10 million, FCDO-funded, People to People project, for example, we will continue to use 21st-century skills and social cohesion to counter harmful, destabilising online narratives and disinformation which threaten peaceful co-existence in the Baltic States.

### **Support the next generation of climate leaders.**

Supporting them with resources, platforms and opportunities to develop youth skills to positively influence the climate debate. As part of that we will support YOUNGO\* as well as the Climate Youth Negotiator Programme – building skills and language ability of the next generation of climate leaders who participated in COP26, those who will participate in COP27 and beyond.

\* YOUNGO is a global network of youth and youth-focused organisations working on climate change and the official conduit for youth participation in the UN climate talks.

# English

**English is a global language for trade and the internet. It is the principal language of science and of higher education and academia. English language skills help increase opportunities for girls, women and marginalised groups across the world.**

We estimate that two billion people want to learn – or are learning – English.<sup>4</sup> English teaching and assessment is a global industry with an estimated value of \$38 billion, and ten per cent of this value is for digital services. Governments everywhere are looking for support to improve English in their education systems. Confidence in English is positively associated with trust in the UK and intention to engage and trade with the UK. It can help address issues of equity and change people's lives for the better by increasing their opportunity to study or work in their own countries or abroad.

Through our work in English language teaching (ELT) and assessment, we support a student-centred approach to learning, helping build core skills in critical thinking and shaping new ideas.

That is why we are working to grow the UK's reputation as a leader and trusted partner in English teaching, learning and assessment – both in our own teaching centres and in schools, universities, businesses and homes worldwide.

**Our work in English language focuses on three areas:**

1. English assessment
2. English language teaching
3. English Programmes.

4. Crystal, D, 2003, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

# English assessment

**English qualifications are at the heart of our cultural relations mission. They promote the English language globally, help change people's lives by enabling them to access life, study or work opportunities internationally or in their own countries, and are one of the most powerful drivers of improvements in teaching, learning and professional practice.**

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is the world's most widely used English language proficiency test for higher education and global migration. It is trusted by more than 11,000 organisations globally and recognised by educational institutions, employers, governments and professional bodies around the world. As one of the pioneers of English language testing 30 years ago, IELTS continues to set the standard today. The British Council co-owns IELTS with IDP Education Australia and Cambridge University Press and Assessment.

Aptis is the British Council's wholly owned and more flexible computer-based English language test for organisations and individuals, developed with input from leading English language assessment experts. It provides fast results reliably marked by our examiners and is trusted by governments and organisations in more than 85 countries for validating and raising the standards of English.

## Priorities

### **Ensure our customers are at the heart of everything we do.**

We are investing in the customer experience, in our own customer book and pay systems, test preparation offers, video call speaking assessment and improving the test day venue experience.

### **More people taking IELTS exams to improve their career and education prospects.**

We will grow the number of IELTS test takers from 1.7 million people in 2022–23 to over 2.2 million people by 2024–25. We will continue to support market growth, including across the Indo-Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and in the UK.

### **Help to improve English language assessment policy globally.**

We will influence and support English language assessment policy in important markets, including China and the Indo-Pacific region.

### **Grow Aptis into new markets.**

We will leverage the Aptis Ofqual recognition to support more governments, businesses and educational institutions with their assessment of English language capabilities.

# English teaching

We reach more than 100 million people through our digital channels and social media, and teach face-to-face in 170 centres across 76 cities.

Alongside our paid services, we provide free content online and through apps, helping learners to improve their English with bite-sized lessons, quizzes and games.

We also support the ELT community in the UK. Accreditation UK, for example, is a quality assurance scheme for UK providers of courses in English as a foreign language. We run it in partnership with English UK. The scheme gives an assurance of quality to international students who are taking or planning to take an English language course. This sector is worth £1.4 billion to the UK economy.

**The British Council is a world leader in ELT. Our English language courses, lessons and activities lead to internationally recognised qualifications across all life stages, from very young learners through to adults.**

## Priorities

### **Develop stronger customer relationships.**

We will refresh and diversify our service by offering personalised, more flexible and convenient learning of English – growing the number of students who pay for our services. We will focus on high-quality and accessible teaching using a blended model of face-to-face and adaptive online learning. We will refresh the course content and enhance the student experience by connecting classrooms from different parts of the world.

### **More people learning English through our digital platforms.**

We will leverage our brand across our English learning estate to create a seamless customer journey – from our free web and app-based services through to subscription for online teaching. This will more than double the number of customers using our online learning offers to 230,000 customers by 2024–25, including by extending our online English teaching offer to young learners.

### **Grow our young learners face-to-face teaching business.**

We will open new centres in locations which are convenient for our customers.

### **Teaching excellence.**

We will consolidate our position as thought leaders in teaching, learning and assessment.

### **Maintain high-quality inspection schemes for over 400 English language centres in the UK.**

Ensuring a safe and supportive English language learning experience for international students of all ages.

# English Programmes

**This work enhances the UK's reputation as a leader and trusted partner in English language teaching and learning. It supports new international opportunities for the UK's English and education technology sectors.**

We partner with state and national governments seeking to improve the quality of English teaching and learning in their formal education systems. We also support non-formal education systems. By strengthening access to quality English language learning, we help empower, provide agency and voice, and build the resilience of girls, boys and young people who have been disadvantaged, marginalised or affected by conflict.

We also engage with millions of English language teachers around the world who look to the UK and the British Council for quality professional development, teaching and learning resources, and opportunities to collaborate in professional communities of practice. By 2025, working closely with the UK ELT and education technology sectors, we will support over one million teachers in high-quality engagements and a further 25 million through wider publications, social media and online channels.

## Priorities

### **Improve standards of English teaching, learning and assessment and the teaching of other subjects through English.**

We will support governments in 40 countries, through partnerships with ministries of education and UK expertise. For example, we aim to reach all secondary school English teachers in Turkey and develop remote English language teaching models across the Americas. We will build on the 27 UK–East Asia research and innovation partnerships we supported in 2021–22. We will roll out English for Interfaith Dialogue to all Al-Azhar University campuses, engaging teachers and students from the Nile Delta and upper Egypt. As part of a UK consortium, we will continue to raise the quality of teaching in all Rwandan primary schools.

### **Support girls' empowerment, agency and voice.**

We will give thousands more girls from marginalised communities in the Indo-Pacific, Americas and Africa the opportunity to make more informed life choices by building their English, digital and other life skills.

### **Help boys, girls and young people who have been displaced or affected by conflict, hostility or misunderstanding.**

Our Language for Resilience programme supports refugees and their host communities to learn English and other languages. In Jordan we will expand our work with teachers who support young men and women who have been displaced or marginalised. We will provide opportunities for 15,000 Ukrainian English language teachers and teacher educators, and teachers of Ukrainian refugees to access high-quality professional development which equips them to deal with the current crisis and improve their learners' success.

### **Grow the world's largest online English teacher community and support the professional development of individual teachers and teacher educators.**

Capitalising on social media and mobile technologies, we will further expand our support networks for English teachers worldwide. By 2025, six million English teachers will follow our TeachingEnglish social media channels, up from four million today.

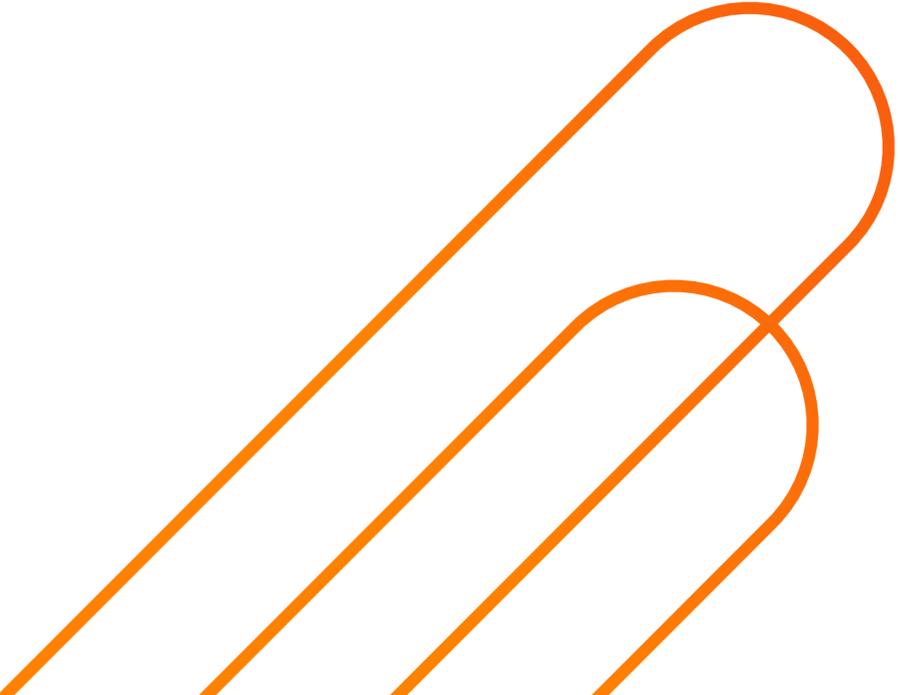
### **Address climate change.**

Over the next three years we will continue to support English teachers to integrate climate and environmental issues into their teaching. And we aim to grow engagements with our Climate Action in Language Education resources from 100,000 today to 500,000 by 2025.

# Operational focus for the year ahead

# 4

# Delivering against our strategic priorities



We are transforming our operations so we can continue to deliver on our purpose, grow our global reach and engagement, return to generating a surplus, and build our reserves.

In 2022–23, our operations will focus on the following areas of organisational change, all drawn from our five strategic priorities.

- A culture that promotes excellence, respect, inclusion and diversity.
  - We are environmentally responsible.
  - We will be financially sound.
  - We maximise our efficiency.
- 

## A culture that promotes excellence, respect, inclusion and diversity

**By 2025 we will grow our staff engagement score to 60 per cent from a 2021–22 baseline of 50 per cent.**

Professionalising, growing and investing in our talent is a priority. We will support career development and improved job satisfaction through a combination of learning, well-being, reward and flexible ways of working. To bring out the best in our diverse workforce we will continue to engage in open and honest two-way communication and increase confidence in our senior leadership. We will build a more evidence-led culture, enabling us to better demonstrate the value of our work.

At the heart of our mission is our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Our vision is for a fair and inclusive organisational culture. We want everyone coming into contact with us, off and online and regardless of reason, to feel respected, treated with dignity and to experience our stated commitment to EDI.

### Priorities for 2022–23

- Develop leadership capabilities and accelerate learning programmes to build our commercial and digital skills.
- Develop and promote our employment offer including well-being initiatives to retain, attract and support employees through transformation and beyond.
- Strengthen our own recruitment to create opportunities and remove barriers to progress for everyone, including people from under-represented backgrounds.
- Review and develop new flexible options for pay and reward.
- Develop and embed an updated global EDI action plan with clear, accountable targets to 2025.
- Ensure the British Council is anti-racist in its culture and practices.

## We are environmentally responsible

**On track to deliver carbon footprint reduction targets in 2025 towards a net-zero commitment by 2040.**

Climate change is a priority for our customers, stakeholders and colleagues, and we are responding in two ways.

We are bringing together new voices around the world to help strengthen global climate co-operation. We are providing opportunities for young people, students, artists, researchers, teachers, academics, leaders and policymakers across our global networks to find creative and collaborative solutions to climate change.

And for our own operations we are committed to net-zero emissions by 2040 at the latest. By 2025 we will have reduced our total carbon footprint by 33 per cent, eliminated single-use plastics in all our premises worldwide and reduced annual flight distance travelled by 50 per cent.

### Priorities for 2022–23

- Develop new offers for our customers and stakeholders and new opportunities which support climate change awareness, education and action.
- Strengthen our own organisational capacities and leadership to manage our climate change response.
- Develop new investment plans to deliver our environmental commitments to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Strengthen our global policies for a more environmentally sustainable operation. This will include reviewing and clarifying how and when we travel to ensure we maintain the optimal combination of face-to-face and digital cultural relations.

## We will be financially sound

### English language teaching and exams revenue will grow an average of 14 per cent year on year to 2025.

Our strategy for exams is to protect and grow the business, to diversify into new markets with new products and services, and to accelerate digital and online offers, systems and capabilities.

In English language teaching, we will prioritise the growth of our young learner offers operating in over 80 countries. We will focus on high-quality and accessible teaching using a blended model of face-to-face and adaptive online learning. We will continue to strengthen and build our English Online offer, supporting our students to create their own study plans and learn at their own pace with courses available 24/7.

We are developing a new strategy for partnerships, focused on developing and co-creating new programmes and opportunities with UK and international partners.

#### Priorities for 2022–23

- Optimise our investments for growth, including:
  - investing in the IELTS partnership, in new product development and system integration across partners
  - continued development and diversification of our English language teaching offers – face-to-face and online.
- Develop new strategic partnerships with corporates, trusts and foundations.
- Grow our global contracts business with greater focus on a smaller number of high-value opportunities in specific geographies.
- Increase our fundraised income through a strategy focused on our new global programmes.
- Improve the enabling environment so our commercial operations can compete more effectively.

## We maximise our efficiency

### We will develop new, more efficient operating models and processes to deliver increased value to our customers and savings of £185 million by 2024–25.\*

In 2021 we announced a restructuring programme to help secure our long-term future. This was in response to the financial impact of the pandemic and reduced grant-in-aid as public finances became increasingly stretched.

We are building a new global presence model, based on more flexible and digital ways of working to connect people seamlessly face-to-face and online. Our back office will be more reliant on shared services, standardisation and automation. And we are building a more mature control and compliance culture while reducing cost and effort.

#### Priorities for 2022–23

- Continued support to our colleagues and teams as we restructure across our commercial business, grant-in-aid funded operations and professional services.
- Rationalising our grant-in-aid funded programmes, reducing to approximately 15 global programmes delivering at scale and offering new opportunities for partnerships.
- Investing in systems and processes to continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations – including support to sales and marketing, to improve management information and to roll out a new English language teaching student management system.
- Simplified and streamlined control and compliance policies with increased automation.
- New data strategy and plan integrating and optimising the British Council's management of data.

\*. The £185 million target is based on savings made across the four years up to and including 2024–25.

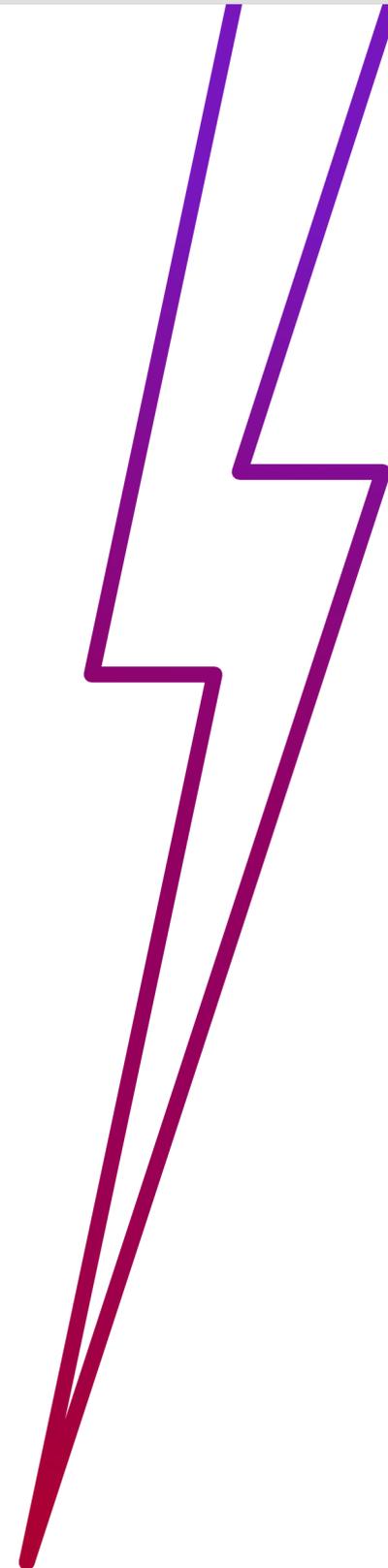
**Risks**

**5**

# Risks

**With a global presence and large, varied and often complex operations, the risks we face are significant, wide-ranging and at times conflicting.**

The pandemic has shown us that adverse events can, and do, happen, and that unforeseen risks can have far-reaching effects across the British Council. Now more than ever, effective risk management is a core part of building a resilient and successful organisation for the future. The world has changed, and we are facing increased scrutiny as part of a substantially increased risk environment. We recognise that to survive and thrive in the varied and changing environments in which we operate, and to continue to distinguish ourselves from both our commercial and soft-power competition, we have to adapt and transform our organisation. The British Council has a cautious and balanced appetite for risk. Our preference is for reduced risk and reduced uncertainty, but we accept that to be successful, we must at times embrace risk, be bold in our ambitions, innovate, and be creative, but also that we will not achieve success without understanding the risks we face, making informed decisions, and responding to risks proportionately.



## Principal risk profile

The following principal risk areas have been identified as having the greatest potential impact on the achievement of our strategic priorities.

We face risks related to:

- our ability to measure, demonstrate and communicate the impact and value of the British Council as it relates to the changing and diverse priorities of our key stakeholders, including all four governments of the UK
- the successful delivery of the benefits of our transformation programme
- our relevance to stakeholders in a digital world and building an efficient, data-led organisation
- our commercial performance across English and Exams in the face of increasing competition
- securing funding, from various stakeholders and partners, needed to sustain and grow the impact of our work
- organisational culture, and employee recruitment and retention
- our reliance on business performance in key geographies
- the integrity of our business, and our ability to meet regulatory, partner or contractual requirements through effective risk management, control and compliance
- the security of our IT systems and information assets
- our overall financial sustainability.

Each area has been assigned to a senior leader who is responsible for leading our response.

In line with good practice, we also track emerging risks. Primary among these is the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which is likely to represent a longer-term geopolitical shift and have a destabilising effect on the peaceful international order. Combined with other forces such as climate change, future pandemics, or other global disruption, there may be a prolonged or permanent shift away from Internationalism as the dominant global philosophy of the last 80 years, creating barriers to the British Council's core mission of building international connections.

Furthermore, the global impacts on supply chains, energy prices, and overall inflation, on top of economic scarring already caused by the pandemic, could affect our financial sustainability, disrupt operations internally, and cause economic hardship or famine in large parts of the world.

All risks are reviewed regularly, and we constantly monitor emerging risks. As such, our risk profile is dynamic and ever-changing – new risks may be identified, analysed, tracked and managed throughout the year.

# Financial outlook



# Financial plan

Our work is delivered through a mixed funding model comprising:

- fees from customers paying for services direct (the largest part of this is teaching and exam services)
- core grant-in-aid from the FCDO (allocated through the UK government Spending Review)
- funding for work delivered under contract to international and national bodies
- partnership income, including income-in-kind leveraged.

The British Council has agreed with Trustees and the FCDO a five-year business plan to rebuild and renew operations. An investment loan agreed with the FCDO will support a longer-term transformation programme in the future growth of income-generating activity, accelerating plans for digital development and supporting new operating models. Through this investment the British Council is planning to generate net surpluses from 2024–25 onwards.

The table shows the income and expenditure projection for the next three years, including the grant-in-aid funding. By the end of the Spending Review period, we expect 33 per cent of grant-in-aid funding to be allocated to our arts and culture programmes, 47 per cent to our education programmes and 20 per cent to our English programmes (subject to annual review of our priorities).

£ in millions	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
<b>FCDO grant-in-aid (ODA and non-ODA)</b>	164.0	161.5	162.5
<b>FCDO grant-in-aid (exceptional restructuring grant)</b>	11.5	11.5	-
<b>Earned income</b>	681.9	829.9	934.8
<b>Total income</b>	<b>857.4</b>	<b>1,002.9</b>	<b>1,097.3</b>
<b>Contract disbursements</b>	(23.0)	(13.0)	(12.7)
<b>Direct costs</b>	(665.3)	(773.2)	(841.1)
<b>Indirect costs</b>	(168.8)	(156.3)	(152.6)
<b>Tax</b>	(9.4)	(15.4)	(18.8)
<b>Other costs including interest, exchange rate movements and business as usual investments</b>	(29.7)	(16.9)	(15.5)
<b>Net (expenditure)/income – excluding transformation investments</b>	<b>(38.9)</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>56.6</b>
<b>Transformation investments</b>	(72.8)	(37.4)	(37.4)
<b>Net (expenditure)/income</b>	<b>(111.7)</b>	<b>(9.3)</b>	<b>19.2</b>

