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Having a positive impact



Welcome to our latest newsletter

I know that many of you read our last newsletter and we received some great feedback from you. It is our aim to publish two or three a year, so welcome to the latest edition.

We focus on several things: what has been happening behind the scenes as the 2025 programme fast approaches, and we also show you some of the changes that we have made to it, and we talk

about the increasing importance of us trying to demonstrate the impact that the programme and our ongoing inter-action has had on you.

Showing that we can help you make a difference is key to our future. Importantly, we also highlight a forthcoming online alumni event, which will help you navigate what is an increasingly complex, volatile and chaotic world.



Gary Roberts, Executive Director

2025 programme reflects new challenges and opportunities

Session on how public servants can maximise interaction with politicians

In just over two months our latest two-week programme will take place here, in the Isle of Man, and at the University of Oxford. It will follow very similar lines to previous events but, as the challenges that we all face change, so does the programme.

This year, for example, we will focus a little more on the threats and opportunities posed by virtual currencies, with one of the world's leading experts running a session for us at Oxford.

We will also introduce a new element to the programme, where we will focus on how public servants in small democracies can best carry out their interactions with politicians. Managing the political interface is often key to many of the challenges that participants bring, and we aim to help build participants' skills.

Professor Tim Cullen has retired from teaching and, so inevitably, the negotiation element of the programme will change a little. Paul Fisher, our programme director, will take on this topic, which he teaches at the Said Business School.

Some changes from the 2024 programme have been continued. For example,



Images from the 2024 Small Countries Financial Management Programme



Lieutenant General Sir John Lorimer will talk again about lessons from military leadership that can be applied in the civilian world.

The 2025 group will also get the chance that their 2024 predecessors had to conduct a choir in the chapel of Balliol College and, in doing so, learn a lot about leadership and about themselves!

We can promise another programme of high quality, executive-level education, which will change the lives of those who attend. We hope, though, that the 2025 participants are treated to better, warmer weather than those who came here last year had. A freezing cold June and early July meant that keeping people warm became one of our most unexpected challenges.

Huge level of activity taking place behind the scenes

Challenges have been met to secure funding and reset key relationships

As in many organisations, the work of the Small Countries Financial Management Centre comes in a series of short, sometimes frantic, bursts.

This time of year illustrates that. In a few short weeks we have gone from advertising the 2025 programme, to booking complex travel arrangements for 24 participants from around the world, to finalising faculty arrangements and, at the same time, going through an external audit, preparing a revised organisational plan and submitting our annual report and accounts to our regulator.

So, I guess we are not so very different from many of the organisations in which you work. Yet, this year has been unusually difficult for us.

Our three-year funding agreement with the Isle of Man government ended with the 2024 programme. The generosity of the government had allowed us to do that for more than 15 years, but we knew that we would face challenges to obtain support for 2025 and beyond.

Not only have there been real pressures on the government's funding since the pandemic, but international development and aid budgets are increasingly vulnerable right across the world. Some politicians in many western countries now see the aid and development budgets as being a waste of money. At the same time – and this is absolutely right – politicians have to be assured that they are spending shrinking



Chris Brannigan: new executive director of external relations at the IOM Government

budgets wisely and to maximum effect.

Throughout 2024 we faced an uphill struggle to obtain further funding. Meetings, papers, formal financial bids occupied much of our time and the stage was reached where we advertised the 2025 programme before we had confirmation that funding was in place. This was a risk that we had to take.

Late last year two important things happened: there was a change of politicians in the Isle of Man Cabinet

Office and a new executive director of external relations was appointed. Both events have helped us to start to build a new form of relationship with the Isle of Man government.

We were given funding for this year and, as part of the agreement, that new executive director, Chris Brannigan, has taken a place on our board.

This is already helping to cement our links with the government and Chris will, in due course, report back to his minister about the benefits of our work and about the return that the Isle of Man government derives from the support that it provides. We believe that Chris's appointment marks a key moment for us.

Fresh opportunity to showcase the benefits of the Small Countries Programme

Join Chris for expert insight into our unpredictable world

Distinguished author and political scientist to deliver online alumni event

Chris Kutarna is a distinguished author, political scientist, TED Speaker and co-author of the international bestseller, *Age of Discovery*, and we are delighted to announce that he will be our latest presenter at an online alumni event.

Please join us at 18:00hrs BST (17:00GMT) on Tuesday 13 May to hear from Chris. At a time when the world is being turned upside down by unpredictable events, unpredictable leaders and changes in international power balances, Chris will offer us help to understand what is going on and what might happen next!

Chris is a Fellow of the Oxford University Martin School and Saïd Business School. Each year he helps thousands of senior executives from around the world to understand global patterns of human progress and the dynamics of geopolitical, technological, and social change. As a public speaker, Chris shares his perspectives and insights with a broad audience, from boardrooms to classrooms and cabinet offices. He is renowned for his ability to distill complex ideas into compelling narratives.

He's also the founder of New Geo, a global community of inquiry for people committed to finding new ways (i.e., who believe that making progress now is not simply a matter of more or faster, but differently).

New Geo's cohorts engage in deep exploration on hard questions: guided by expert facilitators, collaborating with peers, and in dialogue with topic experts.

With a PhD in Chinese Politics from Oxford University, Chris possesses a

SCFMC is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Speaker: Chris Kutarna

Date: 13 May 2025

Time: 6:00pm, London

Join: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87065138732?pwd=4Yc0wbgIGj3N0CX9AW3xLwDaKJnhsQ.1>

Meeting ID: 870 6513 8732

Passcode: 559900



nuanced perspective on international relations and global policy-making. He built, and in 2020 exited, a 150-million subscriber, multi-channel social media production company in China.

It served a unique blend of economics, finance and the social sciences content across all major Chinese social media platforms. Today its key online influencers continue to supply New Geo with a unique pulse on Chinese politics, business and society.

Chris is Canadian and lives in London.

We look forward to seeing you at this event please see zoom link above.

Chris is renowned for his ability to distil complex ideas into compelling narrative

We need your help to promote the SCFMP

The Isle of Man government has asked us to raise our game in terms of public engagement. They want us to do more to sell what we do via media and social media.

Starting soon before this year's programme and then running for a little while after it has finished, we intend to work with the government's media team to release information about our work.

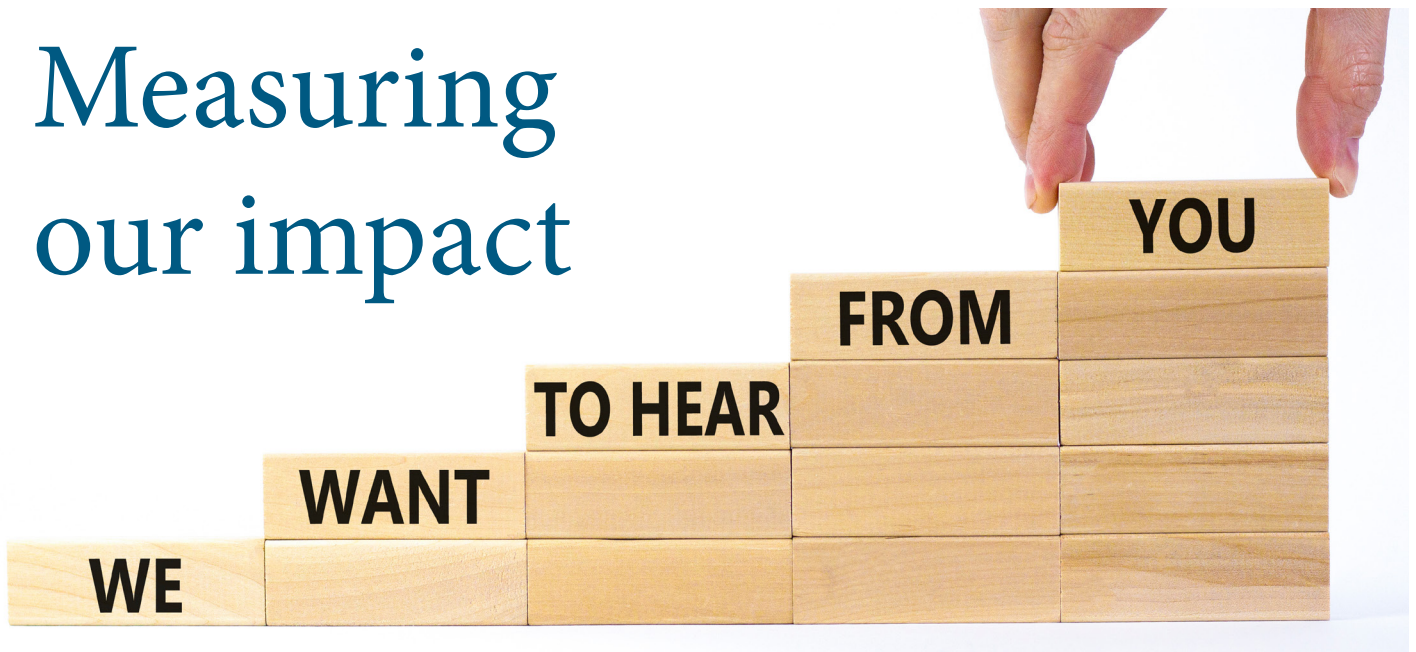
Some of this will focus on how the programme has changed

you as individuals and how it has helped your organisations through improved performance, or because of the completion of your challenge.

So, if you would like to help us with this, please let me or Elaine know. We will be asking you to contribute two or three sentences to show all of this or, better still, a voice-note from you that we could attach to a media release.

Any help you give would be greatly appreciated.

Measuring our impact



Your feedback will help to demonstrate how we make a positive difference

We often talk about how much of an impact we have on the people who attend the annual programme.

We talk a lot about how we help them to grow and develop. We can see them changing as the fortnight progresses and we react with pride as they are promoted into very senior positions. We all know these things. They are somehow evident to everyone connected with the programme. Yet, this isn't really enough.

The Isle of Man government is rightly asking us to show how what we do reflects on the investment that it makes. It wants to know that the financial support that it offers helps its reputation and that people across the world can look at the programme and say "because of the Isle of Man government things are better." Proving this will be key to our

future funding arrangements.

Starting with the 2024 group, we have tried to measure our impact on a more evidential basis. We have kept in touch with them and they have done some work in small accountability groups, where they discuss the progress they have been making on their challenges.

For the 2025 group we will try to do even more to try to understand the personal and professional differences that we make and to show the lasting impact of the programme.

We are starting to put together a really

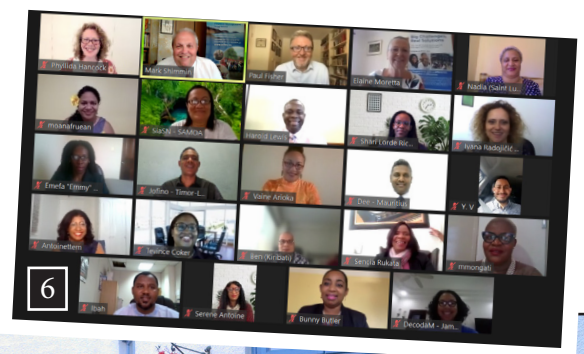
solid evidence base, but we need your help. If you have completed your challenge, then we would love it if you could let us know.

For example, we learned a couple of months ago about the final completion of a challenge by a participant from the Cook Islands, who had worked for several years on his challenge and which he has now completed to the great benefit of his community.

If you are making progress – if you have completed your challenge – then please let us know.

If you have completed your challenge, then we would love to hear all about it

We delve into our photo archives to remember some of the Small Countries Programmes from recent years. Please send any photos you would like to share for this section to elaine.moretta@scfmc.im



1. At the Nunnery in the Isle of Man 2013
2. Tree planting 2014
3. At the Oxford UNion 2016
4. The Sound, Isle of Man 2013
5. Harris College, Oxford 2018
6. Delivering the programme online in 2021
7. Government House, Isle of Man 2015