



**Wilton Park**  
Harnessing the power of dialogue

## Guide for partners on working with Wilton Park

Information and guidelines to ensure successful programmes



Wilton Park has been a British soft power asset for over sixty years and as an executive agency, it is a front-line resource for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It supports strategic foreign policy priorities by engaging key communities of experts in dialogue which addresses and resolves issues of critical importance to global security, prosperity and justice. Wilton Park uses the trust and the global convening power that it has acquired through decades of engagement in the more gritty dimensions of foreign affairs.

Key values of Wilton Park:

- While benefitting from its UK government connections, Wilton Park maintains a degree of independence and neutrality which allows it to bring together diverse groups of experts. By engaging and maintaining these unique networks Wilton Park creates challenging conversations which shape the debate on difficult policy issues.
- Staff are updated on policy development which enhances its abilities and relevance to foreign policy objectives. Wilton Park off the record dialogue promotes open, honest discussion between international representatives from all fields of expertise.
- The Wilton Park team is extremely professional; their knowledge of and power to convene influential communities around the world is unique. Working in tandem with UK Embassies and High Commissions overseas allows them to create an enviable global expert network.

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## What is Wilton Park?

Wilton Park is a [tried and tested asset](#) for global foreign policy development, providing a [cost-effective](#) and flexible way to advance thinking and policy on key issues, and ultimately to deliver results.

Holding over 50 strategic policy discussions a year in the UK and overseas, we provide leading thinkers on foreign policy with a neutral environment for frank discussion, time to reflect and unique access to groups of experts brought together from our extensive network.

Wilton Park convenes around 3,000 key representatives and opinion formers from the worlds of politics, business, academia, diplomacy, civil society, defence and media, representing over 100 countries per year.

We [work closely with our international partners](#) on [long-term, policy focused projects](#) enabling them to reality test new policy strategy from the earliest planning stages through to implementation. Our experienced [teams](#) are flexible and can react quickly to changing priorities, creating events to a tight schedule depending on the [budget](#) and resources available.

Our [discussions](#) range from 90 minute round-table meetings in London to three day residential meetings in [the UK and overseas](#). The wide range of facilitation techniques we use ensures full involvement from all participants to achieve the most productive discussions.

This guide explains how we can work together to achieve our shared objectives. If you would like additional information or services, please [contact us](#) to discuss the possibilities.



## **Our focus on foreign policy priorities**

We work regularly with international partners to design, organise and run high quality meetings addressing UK and overseas foreign policy priorities. Our expert networks and convening power allow us to hold events on a wide range of issues. Recent topics include:

- Security and defence (particularly WMD, NATO, CT, cyber)
- Conflict prevention and post conflict transition (eg Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen)
- Global prosperity (eg trade, energy, climate and resource security, global agriculture)
- Human rights, governance, soft power and the role of faith in international relations

We develop and organise discussions on themes recommended by partners, and on ideas that we initiate and discuss with the UK government. Objectives and outcomes are discussed and clearly defined at the outset to ensure maximum impact. These include:

- bringing together international groups of experts to discuss particular issues ahead of major international meetings (eg Nuclear non-proliferation Review Conference);
- reality testing new FCO thinking (eg Rules based approaches to global economic governance);
- convening expert communities to explore policy innovation (eg The future global trading system);
- promoting new initiatives (eg Preventing sexual violence in conflict afflicted areas);
- seeking expert input on key issues (eg How to reform the United Nations Security Council);
- supporting regional collaboration (eg The economy of the Maghreb);
- promoting dialogue focused on less high profile regions (eg Caribbean; small island states);
- the WP Annual Address given by heads of state during official visits (eg Presidents of Turkey and Indonesia).

## **Partners' involvement**

Partners are encouraged to work closely with WP during the initial planning stages, after which the level of involvement is agreed. The WP team is highly experienced at the policy and logistical management of events, and partners usually leave us to lead and manage the entire process, offering advice on programme, speakers and participants where appropriate. WP will update their nominated partner contact about relevant developments on a regular, agreed basis.

## **Costs**

- Wilton Park will draw up a budget for the proposed event taking into account likely participant numbers, length of event, venue, international flights, interpretation and other requirements.
- The budget covers programme development, managing the invitation process, organising logistics, arranging and paying for accommodation, meals and local travel for participants, chairing and hosting the event, and completing a report.
- Securing the full funding for an event will ensure the best possible expert group of participants can be brought together. Where this is not possible, WP will help identify potential co-sponsors, eg other governments, OGDs or non-government organisations. Additional funds can be raised by inviting members of our network and charging a registration fee.

## Wilton Park style

We have developed a renowned and respected style for our events:

- round-table format for plenary sessions to encourage full participation;
- to increase interaction between participants, different formats are included in the programme (eg working groups, world café style breakout sessions, dinner discussions) and facilitation techniques ranging from hands-on to high-tech are used where appropriate (eg PinPoint boards, NetBooks);
- there are usually no more than four 90 minute sessions per day with one or two speakers per session, speaking for no longer than 30 minutes to allow up to an hour of discussion; PowerPoint presentations are used where necessary, but are generally discouraged;
- a senior member of WP staff normally chairs all sessions;
- numbers are usually limited to 70 to ensure maximum involvement from all participants;
- discussion is off the record and held under the [Wilton Park Protocol](#);
- ample time is built into the programme for informal networking;
- discussions are held in English, with interpretation for up to two further languages possible.

## Venues: Wiston House

We host the majority of our residential events at Wiston House, a modernised sixteenth century Grade I listed building in West Sussex, set in secluded parkland at the foot of the South Downs. Wiston House is a major soft power asset in its own right and is recognised across the world as Wilton Park's home for over 60 years. Benefits include:

- exclusive use of the house with professional, security cleared staff, high quality facilities and private gardens;
- 48 ensuite bedrooms and associated four star amenities;
- all meals and refreshments prepared and served on-site;
- conference room with seating for up to 70 people; additional rooms available for meetings, break-out sessions, media use, prayer-room etc;
- support for audio visual requirements, video conferencing, interpreting;
- reception service and overnight security;
- free internet and Wi-Fi facilities;
- 90 minutes' drive from central London, 45 minutes from Gatwick, 90 minutes from Heathrow.

## Other venues: London and overseas

We regularly organise events in London and overseas with UK Embassies and other partners. In London, we have held one day events at venues such as King Charles Street, Lancaster House, the Royal Society, the Institute for Government and the Queen Elizabeth II Centre. We have organised events in many countries including Turkey, South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, China, Japan, Brazil and throughout Europe.

WP works with UK Embassies and High Commissions to choose appropriate external venues, ensuring that location, airport travel times, security, accommodation and restaurant facilities etc, are taken into account. Overseas events take additional planning time and greater engagement with partners.

## Preparing for the event

Each team is headed by one of our Programme Directors (PDs), who is responsible for each event within their area of expertise, working with Directorates and Posts, discussing objectives and designing the programme. The Programme Manager (PM) is assisted by our Delivery Team, and ensures that preparations are well managed and successfully delivered.

## **Timelines**

- no later than three months before an event: confirmation of funding and dates (shorter timescales may impact upon the availability of key speakers and participants);
- no later than two months ahead: finalise the programme, invite speakers and participants.

## **Designing the programme**

The PD will discuss the objectives, formulate key themes for discussion, identify suitable speakers and prepare a draft programme with the partner. The PD may also discuss the programme with other interested parties, including the FCO and other government departments, other governments, international organisations, NGOs and academics.

The PD will consult with partners to determine the best format for the programme, chairing, use of working groups, facilitation techniques etc, to achieve optimal outcomes.

## **Issuing invitations**

- WP can use its wider network to attract high level expert participants, and to ensure a balance of nationality, organisation, profession, gender, etc.
- Partners may nominate speakers and participants and alert their networks to the event.
- For fully funded, invitation only events, 100 invitations are normally issued to secure 40-50 participants; reserve lists are also recommended.
- WP will manage the invitation and registration process for speakers and participants, following up and seeking replacements as appropriate.

## **Organising logistics**

WP will:

- Organise local travel as appropriate, including a courtesy bus between the main airport and venue (eg Gatwick or Heathrow and Wiston House);
- coordinate international travel for speakers and participants whose flight costs are covered by funding, arranging to reimburse costs directly or via sub-head if locally bought tickets are cheaper.

## **Managing the budget**

WP will manage the overall budget, deciding who is offered travel assistance and agreeing participation fees when applicable. The partner is usually entitled to two places, depending on the budget available.

We will agree additional expenses with the partner, eg a speaker insisting on business class flights. An invoice based on actual costs is issued following the event. If for any reason the meeting is postponed or cancelled by the partner, WP may seek financial compensation for costs involved and income lost.

## **During the event**

WP staff will:

- provide a booklet with programme and speaker biographies, name badges and nameplates;
- chair all sessions, unless other arrangements have been agreed;
- host and ensure the smooth running of the event;
- be responsible for the comfort of guests, dealing swiftly and professionally with issues or requests.

## **Post-event**

WP will:

- ask participants to complete questionnaires while on-site to provide immediate feedback;
- provide all participants with a contact list to support on-going networking;
- produce a short report for electronic distribution to all participants and publication on WP's website;
- publish presentations on the WP website, if appropriate and agreed;
- request partners' evaluation of the event;
- share monitoring and evaluation (M&E) findings with partners. (Nb. WP has introduced one of the most effective M&E processes in the UK public sector under the guidance of Professor Bob Picciotto, former Director General of Evaluation at the World Bank.)

## **Public profile and media**

- The WP Communication Team can work with partners to create a media plan, discussing communications initiatives from the planning stages, offering advice on publicising the event through print, broadcast and digital media, as well as established networks.
- The event and programme will be promoted via the WP website if appropriate.
- Partners will be acknowledged on written materials and the website; co-sponsorship and branding will be discussed in advance.
- On the record speeches by prominent speakers may be highlighted on the FCO and WP website to reach a wider audience.
- Podcasts, photography, interviews and filming can be arranged in advance.

## **Wilton Park Protocol**

WP events are designed to be as interactive and frank as possible. All speakers and participants are encouraged to participate in their own personal capacity, rather than as representatives of their governments or organisations.

Discussion in all sessions is 'off the record'. Participants may use the information and views discussed in the event, but no individual speaker or participant should be quoted (nor their identity or institutional affiliation revealed) without that individual's express permission. This protocol applies to all discussion during sessions, as well as discussion outside the conference room, whether during or after the event (for example on blogs, Facebook, Twitter etc.)

Should a speaker wish or agree to talk 'on the record', the Chair will make this clear at the beginning of the session. In such cases, the speaker may be identified and quoted. All subsequent collective discussion reverts to the standard 'off the record' format. Journalists, and other participants, are welcome to seek individuals' agreement to conduct 'on the record' interviews with speakers or participants for which we shall provide space and facilities. If any technical assistance is required, please consult the Programme Manager or Reception.

Participant lists will not be circulated beyond those individuals who attend.



## **Case study 1**

### **Preventing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations**

#### **Objective**

To support the British Government's commitment to preventing sexual violence in armed conflict during the run up to the 2013 UK Presidency of the G8 during which this will be a key initiative. The meeting aimed to raise global awareness and promote international efforts to tackle the culture of impunity around sexual and gender based violence; identify what mechanisms and legal frameworks need to be in place to maximise protection and ensure accountability; and consider the practical and institutional changes needed to establish a new culture of deterrence.

#### **FCO involvement**

The event was held in collaboration with the Rt Hon William Hague's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) Team which contributed £95,000. The project was led by Fiona Paterson, and the team were heavily involved in developing the programme and structure of the discussions. Posts were invited to nominate regional specialists which resulted in participation from a unique group of expert participants. Participants attended on a fee-waived basis. The Rt Hon William Hague was the keynote speaker.

#### **Outcomes**

Building visible international awareness, cooperation and commitment to the issue as an international peace and security priority and to the PSVI. Recommendations will be generated on how best to galvanise concerted, effective international action and global leadership on this issue in order to promote conflict resolution and reconciliation. Capacity building for key actors working with those affected by these issues will be emphasised. The meeting was part of the wider effort to solidify international human rights norms and standards pertaining to sexual violence, by improving legal frameworks which will help increase protection and ensure accountability. Consideration of practical and institutional changes needed to establish a new culture of deterrence and to bolster UN and NGO efforts. Further outcomes will be identifiable in the coming months.

#### **Rob Williams, Chief Executive Officer, War Child UK**

"The Wilton Park discussions on Sexual Violence in Conflict have already led to some important developments in the way War Child works to keep children safe from rape and abuse in conflict zones. The conference brought together key players in this complicated subject in a way which was unique in its range and which enriched the thinking of everyone. As a learning and sharing opportunity it was fantastic, as well as being a place to develop relationships which will lead to some good outcomes in the future."

## **Case study 2**

### **Economy of the Maghreb**

#### **Objective**

To address ways of developing the Maghreb's economic potential and encouraging intra-regional co-operation. The meeting was built on WP discussions on Libya held between 2004 and 2009, was postponed due to the Libyan intervention, re-scheduled and served to indicate support for the process of change, characterised as the "Arab Democratic Wave" throughout the Maghreb.

#### **FCO involvement**

HE Mr Tim Morris, HMA, Rabat, was the primary FCO contact and was responsible for leveraging funding from the FCO in London and other regional Embassies. There was considerable FCO support both in terms of intellectual partnership and funding. The FCO contributed £25,000 and the Embassies of Mauritania and Libya contributed £1,000 and £4,000 respectively. Shell and Unilever each contributed £10,000. The majority of regional specialists from the region were nominated by Posts which resulted in a unique group of expert participants.

The meeting was opened by Mr Alastair Burt, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Lord Green, Minister of State for Trade and Investment also spoke. FCO partners were: the Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan Embassies. FCO participants included the following: Mr Hamish Cowell, Head of North Africa Department; Mr Martin Hetherington, Head, Middle East and North Africa Research Group; HE Mr Tim Morris, HMA, Rabat; HE Mr Chris O'Conner, HMA, Tunis; Ms Jenny Pearce, Arab Partnership Department; Mrs Jacqueline Perkins, Head of Partnerships Team, Arab Partnership Department; HE Mr Martyn Roper, HMA, Algiers; and Mr Irfan Siddiq, Head, Arab Partnership Department.

Embassies in London represented included Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. Regional governments were also represented by the Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco; Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs, Algeria; and the Minister of Economic Affairs and Development, Mauritania.

#### **Outcomes**

The discussions encouraged participants to focus on what can be done to promote greater economic integration, rather than concentrating on political obstacles. The FCO's decision to hold the meeting as a signal of confidence in the region and support for the process of change underway was greatly welcomed by participants. The event generated real in-depth discussion on the potential for regional integration as a key factor in economic development and produced concrete suggestions on how to move this forward. There was a good balance of participation between officials, economic experts and business people as well as a number of female representatives of key institutions, such as the African Development Bank. WP was critical in allowing for dialogue among participants from countries that do not have a history of freedom of speech. There have been requests from Unilever, the FCO and participants, to hold follow up discussions and monitor progress on the subjects discussed.



## **Case study 3**

### **Global constituencies in the NPT regime**

#### **Objective**

To assess ways to increase and enhance the capacity of developing states to participate in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, with particular reference to strengthening support for, and constructive positions on, the NPT ahead of the 2015 Review Conference.

#### **FCO involvement**

There was considerable financial support with less direct involvement in the intellectual development of the programme. The FCO contributed £25,000 and their association with the event helped WP leverage funds from other organisations such as the Norwegian MFA who contributed £30,000 to sponsor participation from developing countries. FCO were involved in certain aspects of the programme such as specifying the requirement of participants from certain key regions/countries. The programme and other relevant information was run past them for feedback and approval, which allowed the FCO to be involved without dedicating large amounts of work and time. WP approached Posts in relevant countries to nominate regional specialists enabling us to convene a unique group of expert participants. Posts nominated participants from Algeria, Brazil, Malaysia and Morocco and nominated and funded participants from China, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines.

#### **Outcomes**

Building on the October 2011 event on bridging divides in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the March 2012 discussions on Africa's role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, this meeting identified ways to enhance the capacity and expertise of governments in developing countries to participate fully in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and how the fulfilment of its obligations can be strengthened. The meeting also addressed how constructive positions on the implementation of the NPT's 2010 mandate can be developed in the run-up to the 2015 Review Conference. The event offered the opportunity for networking and a forum for informal discussion of key players in the nuclear regime in view of the 2015 Review Conference. Participants included a large number of officials, analysts and civil society participants from 32 countries.

## Testimonials

“When I was first invited to attend Wilton Park's public diplomacy/soft power conferences I used to look at my budget and wonder whether I could afford to go. Having attended four such conferences I now know that I can't afford not to go.”

**Nicholas Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California**

“The Wilton Park conference on NATO post-2014 provided a remarkably full and productive discussion about the future of NATO. The high level participation and variety of views, the deliberately small and private format of the convening and the overall structure of the program, allowed the experts and officials to assess the challenges and risks facing the transatlantic community, in a unique forward-looking and provocative fashion. The conference was perfectly organized and Wilton Park provides an ideal atmosphere for working groups, networking and creative thought.”

**Bacre Waly Ndiaye, Director, Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOG)**

“The relevance and quality of the attendees was far higher than I've experienced elsewhere... Wilton Park provides an environment that is very conducive to rapidly establishing new relationships... I was surprised at how open and forthcoming the comments of the participants were.”

**Geoffrey Weston, Head of Group Strategy and Development, International Airlines Group**

“Your mastery of such complex issues ,your chairing skills and your own way of being friendly to all allows us all to make useful contributions , to reach together a better understanding of issues at stake and to develop a common willingness to make progress in a positive spirit.”

**Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Senior Transatlantic Fellow, Director, German Marshall Fund of the United States in France**

“Wilton Park just keeps getting better. I've been attending meetings here since 2000, and every time I find you've notched it up a bit more in some way. Really impressive that you don't rest on your laurels.”

**Amy Smithson, Senior Fellow, James Martin Center for Non-proliferation Studies**

“Wilton Park is unique. It creates the space where open dialogue enables a better understanding of the issues. Above all it enables representatives of developing economies such as myself, the platform to engage on international agenda. The take home is powerful networks, a great sense of valued contribution and the challenge to make it happen.”

**James Mwai, Acting Executive Director, Fairtrade Africa**

“I was left really energised by the few days we all spent together. It was a very engaged and diverse group of participants from all over the humanitarian community, and this was evident in the variety and quality of debate. The conference itself facilitated an exchange among actors that wouldn't usually get the chance to interact with each other in constructive dialogue, especially those from a 'non-traditional' background. This aspect made it a very successful event, not to mention the fact that the conference was impeccably organised and everything worked to perfection.”

**Sara Pantuliano, Head, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute**

“A very great thanks to you and to every one of your colleagues at Wilton Park who made our stay so enjoyable. I have never experienced such flawless professional perfection combined with such warmth and comfort. That combination is unique. No one else compares with you, you are outstanding.”

**Tomas Ries, Senior Lecturer, Swedish National Defence College**

“The Wilton Park conferences are special; it is a privilege to be able to have informed discussions with so many outstanding colleagues.”

**Joep Lang, Executive Scientific Director, Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD)**

## WP contacts

Please contact Richard Burge ([richard.burge@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:richard.burge@wiltonpark.org.uk)), our CEO, or Robin Hart ([robin.hart@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:robin.hart@wiltonpark.org.uk)), Director of Programmes, in the first instance, if you do not have an established relationship with one of the Programme Directors below.

## Programme Directors

**Robin Hart's** programmes include disaster management and humanitarian responses, food security, agriculture and land use and global health. As Director of Programmes, Robin also develops other existing and emerging policy themes.

[robin.hart@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:robin.hart@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Dr Robert Grant's** programme includes counter-insurgency and stabilisation operations, civil-military co-ordination, defence policy and capability, governance and democracy promotion and energy security.

[robert.grant@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:robert.grant@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Kathryn Hingston** is responsible for the global prosperity portfolio, covering topics including financial markets and regulation, global trade and commodities, emerging economic powers, energy and climate change and financial transparency.

[kathryn.hingston@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:kathryn.hingston@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Isobelle Jaques'** programmes address United Nations peace and security issues, conflict prevention, peace-making, Post-conflict reconstruction and human rights, South and South East Asia and the Middle East.

[isobelle.jaques@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:isobelle.jaques@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Julia Purcell** focuses on justice and home affairs, including migration, cyber-security, organised crime and counter-terrorism. She also runs the annual WP Futures conference and regular events on public diplomacy.

[julia.purcell@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:julia.purcell@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Dr Mark Smith's** focus is nuclear non-proliferation, particularly the future of the NPT and prospects for nuclear reductions and elimination. His programme includes chemical and biological weapons non-proliferation and arms trade treaty issues.

[mark.smith@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:mark.smith@wiltonpark.org.uk)

**Canon Dr Gary Wilton** runs the WP faith-based events as a Visiting Programme Director. Based in Brussels, he is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the EU and an Anglican priest.

[gary.wilton@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:gary.wilton@wiltonpark.org.uk)

### General Contact:

Nandini Mackay, Business Development Manager, [nandini.mackay@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:nandini.mackay@wiltonpark.org.uk)

WP, Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3DZ, United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 1903 817779 | F: +44 (0) 1903 816373

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