

# Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7



**Preliminary  
version**

**April 2022**

A joint initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and partner organizations:  
Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), European Commission and INTER PARES,  
National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN  
Women, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Directorio Legislativo

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## Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

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## Acknowledgements

The IPU has convened a group of organizations with experience in supporting parliaments in all parts of the world to create these global parliamentary indicators.

The preliminary version of the indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7, has been developed through a partnership convened by the IPU with eight organizations that have significant experience in supporting parliaments in all parts of the world. They are (in alphabetical order):

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
- Directorio Legislativo
- European Commission
- INTER PARES
- National Democratic Institute (NDI)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UN Women
- Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

All partners provided considerable in-kind contributions of time and resources to help plan, draft and review the indicators.

Funding for the project was provided by the IPU through a grant from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Additional financial support was received from INTER PARES in cooperation with the European Commission. UNDP provided additional support for the drafting of certain indicators.

### Project team

The preliminary version of the indicators was developed under the guidance of a project team.

**Project team members:** Andy Richardson and Irena Mijanović (IPU); Anthony Smith and Victoria Hasson, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD); Jonathan Murphy and Andrea Wolfe, INTER PARES/ International IDEA; Gonzalo Jorro Martinez, the European Commission (EC); Frieda Arenos, the National Democratic Institute (NDI); María Baron, Directorio Legislativo (DL); Ionica Berevoescu, UN Women; Charles Chauvel and Agata Walczak, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and Matthew Salik and James Pinnell, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

**Coordination:** Andy Richardson and Irena Mijanović (IPU)

**Drafting:** David Elder, Tamar Chugoshvili, Irena Mijanović, Frieda Arenos and Alex Read, with support from Tumi Zantsi and Adriana Carretero.

**Research and mapping:** Irena Mijanović, Rachel Mundilo and Adriana Carretero

### Testing

- First stage – testing of the framework (nine parliaments)

Parliaments of Greece, Jordan, Portugal, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Rwanda and Ghana, as well as the Pan-African Parliament. Special thanks to Dr. Christos Belias and Dr. Vasilios Svolopoulos from the Parliament of Greece, José Manuel Araújo from the Parliament of Portugal, Marko Vujačić from Westminster Foundation for Democracy/ EU-JDID Office in Jordan, and to Josephine Watera from the Parliament of Uganda, for their efforts to ensure quality feedback on the project framework and their contributions to its improvement.

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- Second stage – testing of draft indicators (11 parliaments)

Feedback received from Parliaments of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iraq (Kurdish Parliament), Liberia, North Macedonia and Paraguay. Special thanks to Dr. Jochen Guckes from the German Bundestag for his very detailed feedback and many useful suggestions.

Appreciations for the support of the NDI offices in Albania, Georgia, Iraq, Liberia and North Macedonia.

Cover photo: IPU, 140 Assembly; April 2019

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## Invitation to get involved

The indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7, which are outlined below, are the result of long, detailed and careful planning, analysis and consideration of existing knowledge and parliamentary practices. They have been drafted and reviewed by experts with considerable experience in parliamentary issues, and have been tested by a number of parliaments. The specificities of parliaments in different political systems and parliamentary contexts were taken into account at all stages of development of the indicators, as one of the key objectives is to make the indicators relevant and useful to all parliaments and regardless of governance system, region, size, and parliamentary environment.

Although extensive testing with parliaments has taken place, before the final adoption of this work, the IPU and partner organizations have decided to make them publicly available in the form of a “preliminary” version. The intention is to let the indicators “live in the real world” for a period of time (up to 12 months), to see how they work in practice. This will allow their relevance and usability to be examined and confirmed by parliaments for which they are created.

We are therefore opening a public consultation process. We are inviting parliaments to use this preliminary form of indicators in the coming months to assess their capacity and performance in areas of their interest and for the purpose of improvement. The IPU and partner organizations will be happy to provide expert and technical support to parliaments in organizing and conducting their assessment exercise. We also invite parliaments and other stakeholders to provide us with feedback (comments, suggestions and any other input), which would help us to improve and adjust the indicators so that they become a common reliable tool within the parliamentary community, recognized by parliaments and parliamentary strengthening organizations.

Please contact [standards@ipu.org](mailto:standards@ipu.org) for all matters about the Preliminary version of the Indicators, including feedback, comments and questions

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# Indicators in brief

## In brief

- ❖ The indicators cover all aspects of parliamentary activity. They are aimed at assessing both parliamentary capacity and performance, including formal powers and how these powers are used in practice.
- ❖ They are designed to be reliable, comprehensive and universally relevant to all parliaments and in all parliamentary contexts.
- ❖ The primary purpose of the indicators is to support parliament's ability to further learn and improve. They are primarily intended for parliaments, their members and staff.
- ❖ The indicators are based on SDG targets 16.6 (Effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and 16.7 (Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making), adapted to apply to the institution of parliament.
- ❖ The indicators are based on existing knowledge and tools. They have been developed as a multi-partner project, led and coordinated by the IPU.

## In numbers



**Sub-targets**  
Effective, accountable and transparent parliament (SDG 16.6)  
Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament (SDG 16.7)



**Indicators**



**Dimensions**



**Criteria**



**Parliaments involved**



**Partner organizations**

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## Introduction

No two parliaments are the same. They differ in form, role and functioning. They are shaped by the history and culture of each individual country. Yet, they all are expected to pass good laws that serve people, to oversee the implementation of laws and policies by the executive, and to be representative institutions. To better address these expectations, parliaments are becoming more adept at strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. Across the world, in different contexts, parliaments undertake efforts to reform, modernize and innovate. They are more and more transparent, inclusive and open to listen to the voice of people. In other words, parliaments want to improve their capacity and performance. The indicators for democratic parliaments provide a framework for assessing capacity and performance, as well as monitoring change over time, in all segments of parliamentary work.

Over the last two decades, many organizations have developed frameworks and tools aimed at helping parliaments to assess their capacity and performance, for the purpose of parliamentary development. For example, the IPU has produced a range of self-assessment tools as part of its work on parliamentary standards (covering the institution of parliament,<sup>1</sup> gender-sensitivity in parliaments,<sup>2</sup> parliaments and the SDGs,<sup>3</sup> and parliamentary oversight), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has worked with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to revise the Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures,<sup>4</sup> and the National Democratic Institute has published International Standards for Democratic Legislatures.<sup>5</sup> These tools have proven useful for guiding reform and driving progress in many parliaments.

The international focus on good governance and parliamentary effectiveness has become even stronger with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recently due to the pandemic and conflicts. More than ever, people are looking to their parliaments to respond with actions that will lead to a better future, as envisaged by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 entitled “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which has been universally agreed by all Member States of the United Nations. The new “enabling” SDG 16, which recognizes the importance of strong institutions, including strong parliaments, has created the need to help parliaments to evaluate their progress against this goal, particularly targets 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels).

The indicators for democratic parliaments are structured around these generally agreed characteristics of strong institutions, and are adapted to the institution of parliament (effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament). SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7 are very much in line with the five criteria for democratic parliaments which are recognized and promoted by the IPU, namely representative, open and transparent, accessible, accountable and effective parliament.

They are intended to serve as a complementary tool for the SDGs targets, and have been written specifically by and for the parliamentary community. They are not designed to be “official” SDG indicators in the United Nations SDG system, but rather to assist parliaments in “translating” aspirational SDG targets into their parliamentary context, by assessing their capacity and progress, and their strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for dialogue, prioritization and reform.

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<sup>1</sup> IPU, [Evaluating parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliaments \(2008\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> IPU, [Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit \(2016\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> IPU, [Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit \(2016\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> CPA, [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures \(2018\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> NDI, Toward the Development of [International Standards for Democratic Legislatures \(2007\)](#).

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The indicators also fully take into account the core parliamentary functions of law-making, oversight and representation, as well as parliament's budgetary role. Users are able to group indicators in different ways according to their needs.

The IPU has convened a group of organizations with experience in supporting parliaments in all parts of the world in order to create this set of universal parliamentary indicators. The indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7, have been developed in a close partnership with eight organizations that bring to this project their significant knowledge and experience, namely: the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), the European Commission, INTER PARES, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Directorio Legislativo.

The objectives of this joint project, led and coordinated by the IPU, were to design a global set of parliamentary indicators which would help parliaments to measure their capacity and performance, while ensuring meaningful, comprehensive, useful and comparable results. We believe that the global challenges that we are all facing make this the right time to bring forward parliamentary indicators, considered through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Purpose of the indicators

The primary purpose of the indicators is to support parliaments' ability to learn and improve. The ultimate objective is to strengthen parliaments and enhance democracy.

The indicators are intended to assist parliaments in assessing their strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for improving their performance and for tracking progress.

They enable parliaments to assess their capacity and performance at a specific moment and to monitor progress over time. Though they can also provide a means of comparison with other parliaments for the purpose of learning and self-development, the purpose of the indicators is not to rank parliaments.

The indicators are intended to be reliable, comprehensive and universally relevant for assessing both parliamentary capacity and performance in all aspects of parliamentary activity, regardless of parliamentary context.

Assessment of progress towards the universal SDG targets is a means of reinforcing the institution of parliament as a cornerstone of democracy, while also protecting it against adverse trends. Learning and progress complement each other: by learning we are able to progress, and when making progress we can learn more.

Parliaments will engage with the indicators on a voluntary basis. The assessment process is owned and led by parliament itself. Every parliament will need to decide how best to use the indicators in their own context, in accordance with their priorities. Experts and technical support provided by the IPU and partner organizations are available for parliaments at all stages of the assessment process.

## Target audience

The indicators are a public good and are available to anyone who wishes to use them.

The indicators are primarily intended for parliaments, their members and staff. They are expected to become a major reference source for parliaments, and for organizations working with parliaments to strengthen the



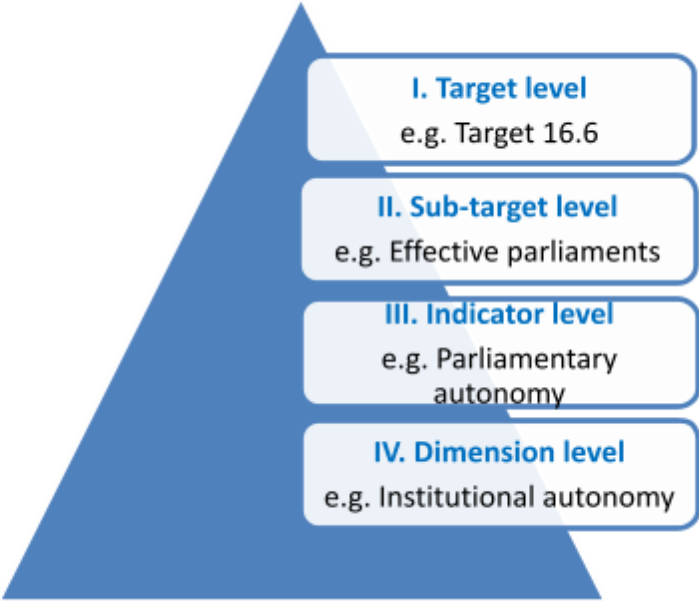
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institution. All parliaments can benefit from the assessment of indicators regardless of governance system, size, level of country's development, region and various political, cultural, historical and other contexts.

We expect the parliamentary indicators to be useful not only to parliaments, but also to governments, parliamentary strengthening organizations and other local or international organizations, donors, scholars and civil society actors interested in strengthening democratic institutions. Civil society organizations may wish, for example, to carry out a "shadow" assessment in parallel with parliament's own exercise.

## Description of the indicator framework

The indicator framework provides for both a high-level overview of particular areas of parliamentary capacity and performance, and detailed assessment of a specific area. The indicators sit within a four-level framework based on specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adapted to the institution of parliament, as follows:



### Targets

The first level consists of two targets:

1. Target 16.6 – Effective, accountable and transparent parliament
2. Target 16.7 – Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### Sub-targets

The second level consists of seven sub-targets comprising the elements of the SDG targets referred to earlier:

1. Effective parliaments
2. Accountable parliaments
3. Transparent parliaments
4. Responsive parliaments
5. Inclusive parliaments
6. Participatory parliaments
7. Representative parliaments

### Indicators

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The third level consists of indicators. Each sub-target has several indicators for specific segments of the sub-target. In total there are 25 indicators. Each indicator has several *dimensions* for a specific facet of the indicator and an introduction describing the indicator as a whole.

### **Dimensions**

The fourth level consists of dimensions. There are 111 dimensions in total. Each dimension has several *assessment criteria*. It is at the level of the dimension that the specific parliamentary capacity and performance would be assessed, using the assessment criteria. The assessment criteria contain clear, standard written descriptions to enable users to identify the most appropriate grade for their parliament.

The first three levels (targets, sub-targets and indicators) present the aggregate result (composite index) of the elements in the level below. Aggregation allows for an overview of parliamentary capacity and performance in a given area.

The aggregation of the grades for each assessment criterion provides the grade for the dimension. The aggregation of the grades for each dimension provides the grade for the indicator. All these elements are weighted equally.

### **About the dimensions**

As indicated above, it is at the *dimension* level that the assessment takes place. Each dimension includes several sections:

About the dimension – an introductory part that provides an explanation/clarification of the given issue to ensure a clear common understanding of the subject of assessment.

Aspiring goal – a description of an aspiring goal that parliament may seek to attain; the goal is based on a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development.

Assessment criteria – each dimension has several assessment criteria that reflect different elements of parliament's work covered by that dimension. Each assessment criterion provides a description of the object against which parliament can assess its capacity or performance.

### Assessment grades

There are six descriptive grades: "Non-existent", "Poor", "Basic", "Good", "Very good" and "Excellent". "Non-existent" is the lowest assessment grade, which corresponds to a "zero" grade, while "Excellent" is the highest assessment grade reserved for a criterion, which corresponds to a "5" on a scale of 0-5.

The assessment criteria contain several statements relevant for a given segment of parliamentary work. Respondents select the grade that most accurately reflects the situation in their parliament. The assessment should be supported by evidence.

Evidence – respondents should document the evidence of the rationale behind their assessment and on which their assessment was based, such as constitutional or legal provisions, provisions of parliamentary rules of procedure, legal texts, parliamentary records, and any other relevant information on which their assessment is based and which might support it.

Recommendations for change – the key objective of the indicators for democratic parliaments is to help parliaments improve their capacity and performance. Recommendations should result from the assessment exercise and discussion of participants. As a reflection on the assessment, respondents are invited to note down their ideas on how to improve a certain segment of parliamentary work.

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Sources and further reading are also offered whenever applicable, with specific sources and quotes in relation to a given dimension.

## Methodology

From the very beginning, the IPU's intention was to build the indicators on the basis of the significant amount of work developed in recent years by various organizations, and to make them relevant for every parliament and every parliamentary context. Therefore, the first steps towards the development of parliamentary indicators were to map and analyse the existing parliamentary assessment frameworks, benchmarks and indicators. All these sources have been saved in a web-based database. Parliaments' own experiences in developing various indicator frameworks have been also taken into account.

Following a comprehensive research and analysis of the existing tools in 2018 and 2019, an initial concept of the project was prepared, with a framework of the indicators, which was grounded in the generally agreed characteristics of strong, democratic parliaments and considered through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This concept has been tested through an expert consultation with the most relevant organizations dealing with parliamentary strengthening, regional parliamentary organizations, and individual experts with proven expertise in the field. This first consultative meeting opened the pathway to developing the indicators as a truly multi-partner project.

A project team was formed, which has expanded over time with the new organizations, gathering representatives of the IPU and eight partner organizations: the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the European Commission, INTER PARES, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), UNDP, UN Women, and Directorio Legislativo.

The team played a substantial role during all stages of the development of the indicators, through discussions and the provision of guidance on key tasks, timelines and milestones, drafting and reviewing of indicators, as well as overall progress, which led to the publication of the preliminary version of parliamentary indicators. The project team will continue to exist throughout the following stages – assessment of preliminary indicators by parliaments in a public consultation and further implementation of the project.

We very much appreciate the support provided by parliaments in this project. Around 20 parliaments were involved in the different stages – first in the testing of the concept and composition of indicators, and later in the testing of more than half the draft indicators. The feedback from parliaments, their comments and suggestions have been invaluable and have significantly contributed to achieving the goal of making the indicators as useful and relevant as possible to all parliaments.

As indicated above, this preliminary version of indicators will remain in the public domain for up to one year. We hope that during this time, parliaments and other stakeholders will become familiar with the indicators, start to use them and provide feedback in order to further improve them.



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## Indicators

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## List of all Indicators and dimensions

### SDG Target 16.6 – Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### Sub-target 1 - Effective parliament

##### **Indicator 1.1 – Parliamentary autonomy**

- Dimension 1.1.1 Institutional autonomy
- Dimension 1.1.2 Procedural autonomy
- Dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy
- Dimension 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy

##### **Indicator 1.2 – Members of parliament**

- Dimension 1.2.1 Status of MPs
- Dimension 1.2.2 Inviolability and immunity
- Dimension 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office
- Dimension 1.2.4 Access to resources
- Dimension 1.2.5 Professional development

##### **Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures**

- Dimension 1.3.1 Institutional framework
- Dimension 1.3.2 Rules of procedures
- Dimension 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis
- Dimension 1.3.4 Calendar/timetabling/planning
- Dimension 1.3.5 Convening sessions and agenda-setting
- Dimension 1.3.6 Quorum
- Dimension 1.3.7 Debate
- Dimension 1.3.8 Voting
- Dimension 1.3.9 Records
- Dimension 1.3.10 Dissolution

##### **Indicator 1.4 – Parliamentary organization**

- Dimension 1.4.1 Plenary
- Dimension 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer
- Dimension 1.4.3 Bureau/presidium
- Dimension 1.4.4 Committees
- Dimension 1.4.5 Parliamentary (party) groups
- Dimension 1.4.6 Cross-party groups

##### **Indicator 1.5 – Administrative capacity and independence**

- Dimension 1.5.1 Parliamentary administration and human resources management
- Dimension 1.5.2 Policy analysis, research and library services
- Dimension 1.5.3 Infrastructure
- Dimension 1.5.4 Innovation and digital technologies
- Dimension 1.5.5 Information management

##### **Indicator 1.6 – Law-making**

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- Dimension 1.6.1 Powers in law-making
  - Dimension 1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendment
  - Dimension 1.6.3 Legislative procedure
  - Dimension 1.6.4 Legislative drafting
  - Dimension 1.6.5 Enactment
  - Dimension 1.6.6 Publication
  - Dimension 1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny (PLS)

**Indicator 1.7 – Oversight**

- Dimension 1.7.1 Election, confidence, no-confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministers
- Dimension 1.7.2 Parliamentary access to information from government
- Dimension 1.7.3 Summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees
- Dimension 1.7.4 Summoning officials in chamber (interpellations)
- Dimension 1.7.5 Questions
- Dimension 1.7.6 Hearings
- Dimension 1.7.7 Committees of inquiry

**Indicator 1.8 – Budget**

- Dimension 1.8.1 Formulation, examination, amendment and approval
- Dimension 1.8.2 Ex-post control
- Dimension 1.8.3 Public accounts committee
- Dimension 1.8.4 Expert support
- Dimension 1.8.5 Supreme audit institution

**Indicator 1.9 – Representational function**

- Dimension 1.9.1 Opposition
- Dimension 1.9.2 Constituent relations

**Indicator 1.10 – Relations of parliament**

- Dimension 1.10.1 Executive
- Dimension 1.10.2 Judiciary
- Dimension 1.10.3 Sub-national parliaments and authorities, and local councils and authorities

**Indicator 1.11 – Specific state policies**

- Dimension 1.11.1 SDGs and the 2030 Agenda
- Dimension 1.11.2 Human rights
- Dimension 1.11.3 Security sector
- Dimension 1.11.4 Defence policy
- Dimension 1.11.5 Foreign affairs
- Dimension 1.11.6 Parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation

**Sub-target 2 - Accountable parliament**

**Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics**

- Dimension 2.1.1 Anti-corruption
- Dimension 2.1.2 Code of conduct
- Dimension 2.1.3 Conflict of interest

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Dimension 2.1.4 Disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure  
Dimension 2.1.5 Lobbying

**Indicator 2.2 – Institutional integrity**

Dimension 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure  
Dimension 2.2.2 Public procurement  
Dimension 2.2.3 Access to information  
Dimension 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work  
Dimension 2.2.5 Staff recruitment and advancement  
Dimension 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration

**Sub-target 3 - Transparent parliament**

**Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes**

Dimension 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work  
Dimension 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process  
Dimension 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency

**Indicator 3.2 – Parliamentary communication**

Dimension 3.2.1 Parliamentary website  
Dimension 3.2.2 Other channels for informing the public

**Indicator 3.3 – Access to parliament**

Dimension 3.3.1 Openness of parliamentary venues and events to citizens  
Dimension 3.3.2 Accessibility standards  
Dimension 3.3.3 Media access to parliament

**SDG Target 16.7 – Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament**

**Sub-target 4 - Responsive parliament**

**Indicator 4.1 – Valuing public concerns**

Dimension 4.1.1 Responding to public concerns  
Dimension 4.1.2 Responding to emerging policy issues  
Dimension 4.1.3 Responding to individual members of the public, including constituents

**Sub-target 5 - Inclusive parliament**

**Indicator 5.1 – Inclusive legislation and oversight**

Dimension 5.1.1 Human rights-based legislation and policies  
Dimension 5.1.2 Impact assessments  
Dimension 5.1.3 Gender mainstreaming  
Dimension 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting  
Dimension 5.1.5 Youth engagement

**Indicator 5.2 – Inclusive institutional practices**

Dimension 5.2.1 Workforce diversity



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Dimension 5.2.2 Gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat  
Dimension 5.2.3 Multilingual service delivery  
Dimension 5.2.4 Workplace environment

## Sub-target 6 - Participatory parliament

### **Indicator 6.1 – Parliamentary environment for public participation**

Dimension 6.1.1 Regulatory framework for public participation  
Dimension 6.1.2 Mechanisms and tools for public participation

### **Indicator 6.2 – Participation in parliamentary process**

Dimension 6.2.1 Citizens' legislative initiative  
Dimension 6.2.2 Participation in parliamentary bodies  
Dimension 6.2.3 Public consultation on draft legislation  
Dimension 6.2.4 Public participation in the budget cycle  
Dimension 6.2.5 Public participation in parliamentary oversight  
Dimension 6.2.6 Expert consultation

### **Indicator 6.3 – Other forms of public engagement**

Dimension 6.3.1 Partnerships for participation – consultation with civil society organizations  
Dimension 6.3.2 Civic education

## Sub-target 7 - Representative parliament

### **Indicator 7.1 – Electoral integrity**

Dimension 7.1.1 Voting and election rights  
Dimension 7.1.2 Candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities  
Dimension 7.1.3 Public authorities' roles in elections

### **Indicator 7.2 – Composition of legislature**

Dimension 7.2.1 Representing diversity of political opinion  
Dimension 7.2.2 Gender  
Dimension 7.2.3 Youth  
Dimension 7.2.4 Other under-represented groups

### **Indicator 7.3 – Composition of parliamentary bodies**

Dimension 7.3.1 Composition of parliamentary leadership  
Dimension 7.3.2 Composition of committees  
Dimension 7.3.3 Gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies

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## 1 – Effective parliament

Effective parliament is one that:

- Delivers satisfactorily on its core functions of representation, legislation and oversight, having the legal, administrative and financial capacity to do so and making use of this capacity in practice
- Performs adequately as a state (public) institution, having a vision and strategy, managing well its resources (budget and staff) and monitoring its own performance

The sub-target 1 on Effective parliament is the first element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6 – Effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, adapted to apply to the institution of parliament. It concerns the core functions and responsibilities of the parliament, whether they be institutional or administrative. Taken together, the indicators in this sub-target constitute the means of assessing the ability of the parliament (its effectiveness) in performing its core responsibilities. The sub-target both reflects constitutional and legal frameworks, which enable effectiveness, as well as the performance of the legislature in practice. The sub-target covers more indicators and dimensions than any other sub-target because the effectiveness of parliament encompasses so many different aspects of the role and operations of parliament. There is also a close relationship with the other sub-targets as issues such as parliamentary accountability, transparency, responsiveness, representativeness and others, all contribute to its effectiveness.

The sub-target firstly deals with the central issue for a parliament, and that is its institutional autonomy and the extent to which the separation of powers is embedded in its constitutional arrangements and practice, providing the parliament with its distinct institutional role. The first indicator, concerned with parliamentary autonomy, sets the overall framework within which the parliamentary institution operates. MPs, as the representatives of the parliamentary institution, who are central to the way in which the parliament can perform its functions effectively and so the issues which are related to the ability of MPs to operate effectively are covered by the second indicator in this sub-target.

The sub-target covers the procedural capacity of the parliament (indicator 1.3) to be able to manage its work and be effective in the conduct of its institutional processes, including the convening of sessions and agenda setting, debating and voting in the legislature and other procedural aspects. The capability of key elements of the organizational framework of the parliamentary institution including the Plenary, presiding officers, Bureau/Presidium, committees, parliamentary groupings etc. also is covered in this sub-target (indicator 1.4). An independent and capable parliamentary administration is critical to the effective operation of parliament. This administrative capacity ranges from the infrastructure and technologies available to the legislature and MPs, to the staff and the tools of trade available for parliamentary work (indicator 1.5).

The sub-target then covers the three widely recognized core functions of a legislature – law-making (indicator 1.6), oversight (indicator 1.7), approval and scrutiny of the annual budget (indicator 1.8) and representation of constituents (indicator 1.9). The indicators covering these areas deal in detail with all aspects of the roles of the legislature and its MPs in these core areas of a parliament's responsibilities and focus on those issues which will ensure the effectiveness of the legislature.

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The separation of powers is one of the key concepts for a democratic system of government. This sub-target covers parliamentary relationships with the other two branches of government – the executive and the judiciary. It also covers the relationships with other levels of government in a nation – state, provincial, regional or local governments – which may be defined in a nation’s constitutional or other legal framework (indicator 1.10).

Finally, the sub-target has an indicator with dimensions covering a number of specific state policy areas including Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, Human Rights/Ombudsman, Security, Defence, Foreign Affairs and parliamentary diplomacy or inter-parliamentary relations. These are particular areas of state policy that are important in assessing the effectiveness of parliament (indicator 1.11).

The sub-target on effective parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy
- 1.2 Members of parliament
- 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
- 1.4 Parliamentary organization
- 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence
- 1.6 Law-making
- 1.7 Oversight
- 1.8 Budget
- 1.9 Representational function
- 1.10 Relations of parliament
- 1.11 Specific state policies

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## Indicator 1.1 – Parliamentary autonomy

In democratic systems where authority is exercised on the basis of the principle of the separation of powers, parliament, as the supreme representative body, exercises legislative power, defines the main directions of policy priorities, scrutinizes the activities of the executive, all within the scope established by national constitutions and laws. Parliament has full autonomy and is fully equipped with the necessary resources to effectively implement its mandate.

The indicator related to parliamentary autonomy considers the independence of the legislature in all aspects of its operations, including debating and passing laws without any interference, scrutinizing the government and holding the executive accountable, independently establishing its own working structure and creating committees to assist it in performing its core functions. Parliament has the constitutional and legal powers to adopt and amend its own standing orders or rules of procedure, set its own structure, determine the terms of reference and membership of its committees, determine its own agenda and timetable, set and control its own budget, and make its own administrative and staffing arrangements.

For further reading, please see *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*.<sup>6</sup>

The assessment of parliamentary autonomy comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.1.1 Institutional autonomy
- 1.1.2 Procedural autonomy
- 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy
- 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy

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<sup>6</sup> David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006)

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## Dimension 1.1.1 Institutional autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions that provide the framework for the parliament to have autonomy and independence over its administrative and operational affairs. The legislature is the representative body of government that is responsible for debating and approving decisions that impact the livelihood of the population. The legislature is also responsible for holding the executive accountable for implementing policies that align with constituent priorities. Parliamentary autonomy underscores the notion of ‘separation of powers’ whereby each branch of government in a democratic system has unique and distinguished mandates that do not conflict.

The mandate of the parliament as an autonomous institution covers all the criteria necessary for the institution’s organization and function. Specifically, this includes parliament’s independence over its own: organization; timetable or calendar; ability to call regular or extraordinary sessions; authority to draft, propose, debate and approve legislation through its own regulations, which govern the conduct of the members and such processes; and oversight of the work of the executive. Only the legislature has the right to utilize and/or adjust its procedures.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of institutional autonomy would encompass the following:

There is a clear separation of powers established in a country’s constitution or legal precedent that codifies the independence of the legislature as an autonomous body whose mandate is to represent the interests of the people on a national stage.

The parliament has autonomy in determining its form of organization and its procedures, electing its own bodies, setting its committees, organizing its business, deciding on its rules, and defining its budget.

The practices of the legislature reflect the constitutional and legislative framework, which is respected by all bodies, including the executive.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provision(s) on the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- Standing orders or rules of procedure that reflect adoption by the legislature alone
- Established rules by means of which the parliament has autonomy in determining its own organization and procedures, in electing its own bodies and leadership, and in setting its committees and organizing its business, and evidence that these rules are routinely followed and respected
- Established committees/relevant bodies within the legislature, through which members alone have the authority to amend or change procedures, rules, and conduct within committees

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authority**

There is evidence of a constitutional provision(s) that defines basic separation of power, including the existence of an independent, autonomous, legislative institution.

Non-existent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislative framework**

There is a legislative framework – either standing orders or rules of procedure (or ‘law on parliament’ in some countries) – that defines the autonomy of the legislature in all areas of the organization and functioning of the parliament, including the determination of its own organization and procedures, the election of its own bodies, the setting of its committees, the calling of plenary or debate sessions, and the setting of the agenda.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice of the legislature**

There is evidence that the constitutional and legislative framework is reflected in the practice of the legislature, and that it is recognized and respected by all areas, including the executive.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.1.2 Procedural autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by means of which the parliament has autonomy and independence over its procedures. Procedures are actions exercised by members (and staff) that align with their representative mandate and functions to give effect to the processes of the legislature and define its overall culture and practice. These procedures can define members' rights, mandates and immunities, as well as give effect to the actions of members to propose, debate, amend, and pass legislation, and uphold their autonomy in agenda-setting, plenary, and committee affairs.

Having procedural autonomy allows the parliament to achieve its core objectives of legislating, scrutinizing the executive and representing constituencies. This can include: regulating the conduct and behaviour of members, including their right to resign; defining the makeup and actions of presiding officers; defining the procedures that are available to those in the majority and minority; assisting members in monitoring the effective passage, implementation, and consequences of legislation; defining the tools to hold the executive to account; and defining the rights of the opposition and their access to parliamentary resources, including infrastructure, staff, funding for political groups and research services (Note that these aspects of procedures are dealt with and assessed in other dimensions. This dimension concerns the overall institutional authority and framework). To enable the parliament to implement these detailed procedures, a robust framework for the development of its procedural provisions must be in place.

Procedural autonomy is defined by the specific provisions of the body, as established in its standing orders and rules of procedure, which should be debated and implemented solely by the legislature.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of procedural autonomy would encompass the following:

The legislature has full authority over the definition, adoption and amendment of its rules of procedure/standing orders. In contrast to the other laws, rules of procedure are not approved by the executive (they do not require signature by a head of State, for example), but are approved by the parliament (and are signed, for example, by the speaker or president of the parliament).

The rules of procedure of the legislature should reflect a framework that gives the parliament the ability to determine its own procedures. The framework includes processes for the parliament alone to develop, consider, amend and approve the procedures of the parliament.

The practice of the legislature reflects the autonomous position of the legislature in determining its own procedures, and the implementation of procedures is consistent and non-partisan.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legal provisions that establish the authority and framework granting the legislature the autonomy to determine its own procedures
- Practices of the legislature whereby standing orders or rules of procedure are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
- Information on the involvement of MPs in all aspects of the parliament’s proceedings
- Rulings by the speaker

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legislative authority**

There is evidence of a constitutional or legislative authority that gives the parliament full control over the determination of its own procedures, including the ability to establish and vary procedures that allow the parliament to exercise its legislative, scrutiny and representative mandate.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework**

There is evidence of a detailed framework, reflected in the rules of procedure of the legislature, which supports the authority granted by the constitution or legislation to the parliament in order to determine its own procedures. The framework includes processes for the parliament alone to develop, consider, amend and approve the procedures of the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice of the legislature**

The practice of the legislature reflects the autonomous nature of procedural determination and application. There is evidence that procedures are debated and approved by the legislature alone, and that they are applied in the day-to-day practice of the legislature.



Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Consistency in the implementation of procedures**

There is evidence of consistent implementation of stipulated parliamentary procedures in practice, such as in the actions taken by members during plenaries, committee hearings, and other meetings. This also includes the actions of presiding officers to maintain consistency and compliance with those procedures, as well as an equal balance of representation across parliamentary parties, factions, and other member affiliations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by means of which the legislature has autonomy over its own budget, finances, and resources, including, but not limited to: offices, supplies, assets and staff. It may also include funding for a range of other services, for example, a non-partisan office that is responsible for providing an expert budget analysis on policy implementation or funding for security services that serve the legislature and its members.

This autonomy is established under constitutional mandates that uphold the separation of powers, and is supported by relevant standing orders or rules of procedure. Budget autonomy means that only the legislature can determine and approve its own budget, and that it has independent financial expertise in order to ensure effective oversight of its funds. Budget autonomy specifically implies that a legislature's budget is not subject to approval or allowance by the executive, and that it is the responsibility of the legislature alone to execute. It is also recognized by the national government in the annual budget cycle through allocated resources for the parliament in the budget plan.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of budgetary autonomy would encompass the following:

There is a clear demarcation between the budget that exists to finance the activities and operations of the legislature, and that of the government. The legislature has the authority to debate and approve this budget and is solely responsible for its management.

An independent budget afforded to the legislature provides the body with resources to finance all necessary offices, equipment, staff, and security measures related to the institution, in addition to offices that support effective budgetary oversight of these funds.

Any scrutiny of the management of the parliamentary budget is independent from the executive branch, and takes place through internal or external inspections, independent of the executive, by, for example, an independent audit office or equivalent institution.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legal provisions providing the parliament with autonomy over its budget
- Standing orders or rules of procedure defining the parliament's autonomy to manage its budget, which are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
- National budget packages outlining the reserved budget for legislative branch operations

- A financial office independent from the legislature that oversees finances related to the legislature alone, including its offices, resources, and staff
- Credible reports on sufficiency of the resources allocated to the parliament. This might include observations of MPs or assessments of independent non-State actors

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal authority

The country's constitution or legal provisions establish an independent legislative branch that has control over its own budget. The authority includes the powers of the legislature to adopt its own budget without interference from the executive.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework

National laws on the budget, in addition to a legislature's standing orders or rules of procedure, provide a detailed framework that clearly defines the extent to which the body has control over its own financing and resources. The framework provides the legislature with the power to approve and manage its budget without interference by the executive branch.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Control of the parliamentary budget

The parliament has the expertise and resources to use its funds as it wishes and, through internal inspection and an external independent supreme audit institution, monitors the management of its budget without interference by the executive.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No.4: Resource provisions**

The legislature’s independent budget ensures the effective and adequate financial capacity of the legislature in order to carry out its representative mandate, such as compensation for members, hiring of staff, development and financing of non-partisan analysis and oversight offices, security for the legislature, technology and infrastructure, supplies and equipment, and other necessary assets and resources related to the institution’s total operations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the extent to which the legislature has independent administrative functions that allow the institution (its members, staff and parliamentary offices) to function effectively. Administrative autonomy includes independence over the organization of parliamentary services and the recruitment of parliamentary staff. The relevant parliamentary official or body shall have the power to define the organizational structure of the legislature, establish or rearrange units necessary for the effective operation of the parliament, and manage its own staff.

The administrative functions of the legislature are overseen most often by a non-partisan secretary-general (SG) or general services office which operates independently of the executive and is appointed by, and accountable to, the parliament. Technical and administrative functions of the institution supported could include, but are not limited to, management or maintenance of the houses/buildings of parliament, IT, human resources, communications and media, archiving and public records, supplies and equipment procurement, ethics and conduct regulations, and other necessary services as needed by members and staff (health care, commissary, food, etc.). Administrative autonomy means that the legislature alone shall determine its administrative functions, needs, and offices.

Administrative autonomy also includes the effective authority and control of the parliament over the precincts in which the parliament buildings are located.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of administrative autonomy would encompass the following:

The legislature has an independent administrative function(s) that allows for the effective operation of the institution in all aspects, including in order to fulfil its representative mandate through a capable, well-staffed, and well-resourced institution.

The administrative function of the legislature is housed within the legislative branch alone, and is directed under the authority of the legislative branch. It is part of parliament's administrative autonomy to independently manage its apparatus/structural units and staff. This includes having authority and control of the precincts in which the parliamentary buildings are located.

There is a clear distinction between the partisan and non-partisan staff. Administrative staff are non-partisan and objective actors, who work in accordance with the administrative procedures outlined within a body's standing orders or rules of procedure and corresponding regulations and their services are equally accessible by all political parties and MPs, including the opposition.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legal provisions on the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- Legal or standing orders or rules of procedure provisions that establish a framework for independent parliamentary administration
- Existence of non-partisan administrative offices that are independently managed, resourced, and staffed by the legislature alone

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal authority**

The country’s constitution and laws guarantee that the legislature has independent administrative authority that allow autonomy in the organization and staffing of its administration, and effective control over the precincts in which the parliamentary buildings are located.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Autonomous administrative framework**

The legal authority for administrative autonomy provided by the constitution or laws of the country are supported by the legislation, rules of procedure or processes of the legislature which provide a framework for the parliament to exercise administrative autonomy. This framework ensures the parliament has effective control over all aspects of its administrative arrangements without executive interference.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Management of parliamentary administration**

The legislature’s administrative functions are overseen by a non-partisan, objective office, for example such as a secretary-general, who is appointed or elected solely by the parliament and is accountable to the parliament. This non-partisan administration, in conjunction with other structures put in place by the parliament, exercises effective control over the administrative offices of the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4 Non-partisan administration**

There are non-partisan administrative staff serving the parliament which are distinct from the politically-assigned staff appointed to support individual members and parties. The administrative staff support the institution itself, thereby contributing to operations and responsibilities that ensure the effectiveness, transparency, and overall functioning of the institution.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.2 – Members of parliament

MPs are the cornerstone of the parliamentary institution in democratic systems. It is MPs who undertake the core parliamentary responsibilities of legislating, exercising oversight of the executive and representing their communities. The effectiveness of parliament is strongly dependent on the effective performance by MPs of their duties.

This indicator relates to a number of elements that can assist MPs in being effective. It includes the formal arrangements for MPs to take up office, relinquish office, and be able to complete their parliamentary term or mandate. The potential conflict in roles and how such conflict is resolved formally for MPs is also encompassed in this dimension. To contribute effectively to their legislatures, MPs need to be free to participate fully in the proceedings of the parliament and its committees without fear of legal consequences. Thus, legal immunity for 'freedom of speech' is essential, as is some degree of protection from unwarranted detention or arrest in particular circumstances. But with free speech comes the responsibility to protect others who may be unduly affected (natural justice protection). MPs also need remuneration, support and resources so that they can fully perform their duties. Although MPs come to their roles with life experience and political skills, they will benefit from professional development to become more effective parliamentarians and representatives of their constituencies.

As noted in the IPU study of the concept of the parliamentary mandate, conferring special rights on MPs does not mean that they are above the law, "Rather, it is a recognition of the fact that, given the importance and magnitude of the mandate entrusted to them by the sovereign people, they require some minimum guarantees to be able to discharge this mandate in an independent and unhindered fashion".<sup>7</sup>

For more sources on this subject, please see the footnote.<sup>8</sup>

The assessment of the members of parliament indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.2.1 Status of MPs
- 1.2.2 Inviolability and immunity (including natural justice)
- 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office
- 1.2.4 Access to resources
- 1.2.5 Professional development

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<sup>7</sup> Marc Van der Hulst, *The Parliamentary Mandate: A Global Comparative Study* (Geneva: IPU, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), *Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators* (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018); National Democratic Institute (NDI), *Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures* (NDI, 2007).



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## Dimension 1.2.1 Status of MPs

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions and processes under which MPs may formally enter or leave office.<sup>9</sup> These formal provisions are reflected in constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions. They should be clear and not unreasonably impede a duly elected (or appointed) MP<sup>10</sup> from taking up, and continuing in office, until the completion of their term or, in the instance of committing an offence for which resignation would be required (see below), being required to resign.

Once properly elected (or appointed if applicable), MPs should be free to take up their roles without impediment or undue delay. The process by which MPs are able to participate in the proceedings of the legislature is by taking an oath or affirmation of office (being sworn in). No restrictions exist that discriminate against MPs with regard to the taking of an oath of office (for example, being required to take a religious oath against their conscience), which would prevent them from participating in proceedings.

A recognized process or procedure should be provided for MPs to voluntarily resign from office. It is also reasonable for formal provisions to be made in the event that MPs lose office involuntarily (for example, in the event of a serious ethics violation or conflict of interest, or a serious crime). Except for in instances of infraction, such provisions must be specific and equitably implemented to ensure that MPs may freely exercise their mandate, and avoid being exposed to arbitrary political persecution. MPs should expect that, once they have taken up office, they will continue for a full term and will not be subject to political attempts to remove them from office.

The issue of ownership of an MP's mandate is relevant to this dimension. The rules and practices concerning mandate ownership differ across legislatures. In many, if not most legislatures, mandates are considered to belong to MPs personally, as they have been duly elected by their constituency. However, in some legislatures, mandates are considered to be owned by the political party to which MPs belong. This is particularly the case where an MP has been elected on a 'party ticket' or 'party list' rather than personally. In some jurisdictions, a mandate is designated as belonging to a political party where it is intended to prevent defection from a party (party hopping) by MPs, which is seen to increase instability in government and parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of status of MPs would encompass the following:

There are clearly defined provisions for the commencement and cessation of the holding of office by MPs.

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<sup>9</sup> In some of the literature, the term of office of an MP is referred to as the 'duration of the parliamentary mandate' of an MP. See Marc Van der Hulst, *The Parliamentary Mandate: A Global Comparative Study* (Geneva: IPU, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> In some legislatures, members of parliament are appointed to, rather than elected, to their roles, and so this would include members of parliament who have been duly appointed.

Duly elected (or appointed) MPs are entitled to participate fully in the proceedings of the legislature. Therefore, it should be possible for MPs to take a non-discriminatory oath or allegiance of office for MPs to enable them to participate in proceedings.

MPs can reasonably expect to serve a full term of office. However, should they wish to voluntarily resign from office, there are formal provisions for them to do so. Involuntary removal of MPs from office should be limited and specific, and not be influenced by political matters.

Mandate ownership usually belongs to MPs personally, as they have been elected by their constituency. This can vary when MPs have been elected explicitly on a party ticket or list. However, anti-defection laws aimed at preventing party defection should be avoided.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning the commencement and cessation of the term of office of MPs
- Constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the swearing-in of MPs
- Constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the process by which an MP ceases to hold office
- Any practices relating to the taking-up or cessation of office of MPs, or to assessments of independent and credible organizations

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Term of office

There is evidence of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions that clearly define when MPs, whether duly elected or appointed, take up and cease to hold office.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Swearing-in of MPs

There are constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedures provisions that provide for the swearing-in of MPs, so that they can fully participate in the proceedings of the legislature. The provisions are not discriminatory (for example, they do not require MPs to take a religious oath against their conscience).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Process for the cessation of office**

There are constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions that establish the process by which MPs cease to hold office. These provisions include a clearly defined process for MPs to voluntarily resign. Where there are provisions for involuntary cessation of office (for example, expulsion by the legislature, incompatibility of office or automatic disqualification for specific reasons), these provisions are exceptional and clearly specified and implemented in accordance with a defined and proper process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Ownership of mandate**

There are constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning ownership of MPs' mandates which establish that the mandates are owned by the MPs personally. Anti-defection laws are not in evidence.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.2.2 Inviolability and immunity

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns arrangements that provide protection to MPs when they participate in parliamentary proceedings and processes, so that they can do so freely without concern about possible legal action. As protection from possible legal action (for example, for making defamatory statements during proceedings) can have adverse consequences for individuals, provisions on natural justice also need to be considered to give those who may be accused the opportunity to respond.

The ability of MPs to raise matters freely in the core proceedings of legislatures without interference, is fundamental to the ability of parliament to perform its oversight, legislative and representational roles. This fundamental protection is often referred to as ‘the freedom of speech privilege’. Members of parliament should have the right not to testify about facts disclosed to them in their capacity as MPs. This protection should extend to former MPs in respect of their former participation in parliamentary proceedings. It should be noted that members of parliament can be held to account for their actions by their peers through processes such as codes of conduct or ethics committees (see dimension 2.1.2).

Only the legislature should be empowered to remove this protection from individual MPs. Limits are reasonably imposed on the free expression of views by MPs often to maintain order and decorum in the chamber (therefore accusations against other MPs may be prohibited), and to recognize the separation of powers (therefore adverse remarks about the head of state or the judiciary may be prohibited, unless there are special circumstances such as impeachment). Such restrictions should be limited, and restrictions on references to matters such as national security or sovereignty are less justified.

Some jurisdictions also provide varying degrees of protection from detention and arrest for MPs (known as inviolability). Constitutional or other regulations often impose restrictions on the arrest or detention of members of parliament, or on searches of their person and their personal/working space without parliamentary consent. In this regard, a careful balance is required between the protection of MPs to enable them to freely perform their duties and the recognition of the principle that all people should be treated equally before the law.

The existence of immunities for MPs, which exclude them from the operation of the ordinary law, creates the potential for unfairness to others, such as those who may be falsely accused of matters under the protection of parliamentary privilege. This can be balanced by having appropriate natural justice provisions that enable those adversely affected by the removal of their usual rights to have some means of redress. Natural justice arrangements can extend to situations where MPs or others are charged with offences against a legislature (such as contempt).

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of inviolability and immunity (including natural justice) would encompass the following:

There are clearly defined constitutional or other similar provisions to provide MPs with protection from arbitrary arrest or criminal charges, as well as with the immunity of freedom of speech (which also apply to former MPs) in the exercise, at a minimum, of their core responsibilities in the legislature.

This immunity can only be removed from an MP by the legislature. Lifting immunity shall take place strictly in compliance with constitutional regulations. Legislators are able to carry out their legislative and constitutional functions in accordance with the constitution, free from interference.

Members of parliament cannot be held liable for the views expressed inside or outside parliament while performing their duties. The conditions for the unhindered exercise of powers by a member of parliament are ensured. It is reasonable that restrictions be applied to freedom of speech, to ensure proper order and decorum in the house and to recognize matters such as the separation of powers, but such restrictions should be limited and not be used as a means of silencing MPs. Inviolability arrangements for MPs (if in place) ensure that the protection does not place MPs above the proper operation of the law.

There are provisions and processes in place to enable natural justice for those who may seek redress from the application of the protections (or immunities) that are put in place for MPs. There are also natural justice provisions for MPs or others charged with an offence against a legislature.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions concerning 'freedom of speech' protection for MPs
- Any provisions that limit the freedom of speech of MPs
- Provisions that provide for restrictions on the detention and arrest of MPs
- Natural justice processes and procedures put in place by the legislature

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Protection from arbitrary detention

There is evidence of strongly entrenched provisions restricting the arrest or detention of members of parliament, or searches of their person and their personal/working space without parliamentary consent.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: 'Freedom of speech' protection

There is evidence of strongly entrenched provisions that enable 'freedom of speech' protection for MPs (and former MPs) in respect of participation in the core processes of the parliament. Only the legislature can withdraw an MP's freedom of speech protection.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Limits on freedom of speech and inviolability protection**

Provisions that impose restrictions on the exercise of freedom of speech of MPs generally are limited to matters such as the preservation of order and recognition of the separation of powers. Inviolability arrangements for MPs (if in place) do not unduly restrict the operation of the law.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Natural justice processes and procedures**

There are natural justice provisions and suitable processes and procedures to support them and ensure that they provide for means of redress for those adversely affected by the special immunities given to MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension relates to the constitutional, legislative or other provisions that parliaments have in place to limit the additional offices or roles that an MP can occupy whilst holding office. The limitations (called incompatibilities of office) are primarily aimed at preventing MPs from breaching the principle of the separation of powers, thus guaranteeing the independence of the legislature. They also are designed to ensure that MPs are in a position to devote their time and effort principally to the performance of their responsibilities as MPs, and to reduce the opportunity for conflicts of interest.

The following are the restrictions usually imposed on MPs in many jurisdictions to prevent incompatibility of office:

- In a bicameral system, being unable to hold office in both houses
- Being unable to hold office as a member of the judiciary
- Being unable to hold office in the civil service of the executive branch and, in some jurisdictions with a very clear separation of powers, being unable to hold ministerial office

Private sector employment or roles are generally seen as compatible and are permitted. However, there are restrictions in some parliaments relating to private contracts with the government, or roles with foreign companies or international organizations, in addition to service on boards or representation of special interests. Care would need to be taken also to ensure that MPs were not unduly diverted from their core responsibilities.

It is expected that where incompatibility arises, an MP would seek to resolve such incompatibility as soon as possible (by resigning from the incompatible office). The holding of an incompatible office in some jurisdictions can lead to (automatic) disqualification as an MP or from the incompatible office. In some jurisdictions, there is some flexibility for MPs to continue to hold office in the civil service, and to be recognized as being on 'leave' when performing their duties as an MP. Such exceptions should be limited.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of incompatibility of office would encompass the following:

There are constitutional, legislative or other provisions to provide for limits on MPs holding offices that are incompatible with their roles as MPs. These generally concern possible separation of powers matters such as being a member of both houses in a bicameral parliament, holding judicial office or holding office in the civil service.

Where incompatibilities of office arise, there are provisions, and a process, for them to be resolved quickly either by resignation from the incompatible office, or by disqualification from the office or as an MP.

The occupation of private sector roles may give rise to incompatibilities of office. Both regulations and parliamentary practices effectively protect against the possibility of conflict of interest or corruption arising from incompatibility of office or any unnecessary diversion of MPs from their duties. Data on the occupation of other roles by MPs are available.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional, legislative or other provisions concerning the holding of incompatible offices
- Constitutional, legislative or other provisions, and the supporting processes, to enable MPs to resolve incompatibility of office issues quickly
- Provisions that limit the occupation of private sector roles by MPs to prevent conflicts of interest and diversion from responsibilities as an MP
- Data on MPs occupying other roles

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Incompatibility of office provisions

There are constitutional, legislative or other provisions which specify incompatibilities of office for MPs and which cover the key areas of conflict concerning separation of powers.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Resolution of incompatibilities of office

There are constitutional, legislative or other provisions, and the necessary supporting processes, to enable MPs to quickly resolve incompatibility of office issues when they arise.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Private sector roles and incompatibility of office

While the occupation of private sector roles may be compatible with the role of an MP, there are regulations and parliamentary practices that protect against the possibility of conflict of interest or corruption arising from incompatibility of office or any unnecessary diversion of MPs from their duties.



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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.2.4 Access to resources

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension is concerned with the remuneration and other resources available to MPs to enable them to perform their duties. It includes salary and any parliamentary allowances, as well as access to staff, facilities and resources to support the work of an effective MP.

The reasons for MPs to have access to an adequate level of remuneration and resources are:

- To ensure that all citizens, regardless of their means, can participate in the parliamentary system as an MP
- To protect MPs from possible corruption
- To ensure that MPs have sufficient means of livelihood to be able to focus on their parliamentary and representative responsibilities
- To ensure that MPs have adequate support to carry out quality work and undertake their responsibilities effectively

Jurisdictions have widely differing levels of and approaches to the remuneration and allowances of MPs. Such remuneration and allowances are likely to include a salary of office, additional parliamentary allowances depending on the office held, subsistence and travel allowances and pension arrangements. While the level of these provisions will differ according to the capacity of the legislature and government service regulations under national law (specifically with regard to pensions), they should be adequate for their purpose, be made available fairly to all MPs and be determined independently of both MPs and the legislature.

In almost all parliaments, MPs have access to facilities and resources in addition to their salaries and any allowances of office. These might be seen as 'tools of the trade' that enable MPs to properly perform their duties. They could include ICT and other equipment, communication allowances, official transport, support staff and parliamentary and constituency offices (see dimension 1.5.3 in relation to facilities available to MPs in the parliament). In legislatures with parliamentary research services and independent budget offices, equal access for all MPs to their services shall be ensured. The level of access to resources will vary according to the capacity and approach of the legislature. It is important that, regardless of the level of resources, access is granted fairly, with due regard for an MP's role (for example, the MP may occupy a leadership position such as committee chair), and in a non-partisan way, and is determined independently of MPs and the legislature.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of access to resources would encompass the following:

There are clear rules and procedures in place in relation to access to resources for MPs which include remuneration and other benefits.

There is an adequate level of remuneration and resources provided for MPs, in accordance with the capacity of the legislature. At a minimum, remuneration and benefits provide the basis for MPs to have a decent standard of living and enable them to focus on their responsibilities.

MPs are treated fairly and in a non-partisan way in terms of the remuneration and benefits that they receive, which could include having an independent body or process to determine them. In particular, opposition and independent MPs have access to a fair and adequate level of resources, which is proportionate to their numbers in the legislature.

MPs are provided with the necessary staff and other resources, as their tools of the trade, to enable them to perform their duties effectively.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Rules and procedures relating to access to resources for MPs
- Feedback from MPs about the adequacy of remuneration, benefits, staff and resources
- Independent reports or evidence of the adequacy of the remuneration, benefits, staff and resources provided to MPs
- Independent reports and evidence regarding the fair and non-partisan provision of remuneration, benefits, staff and resources to MPs

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Rules and procedures concerning access to resources

There are clear rules and procedures (which may be legislated) in place concerning access to resources for MPs, which includes rights to remuneration and benefits, their determination and corresponding requirements.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Adequacy of remuneration and benefits

Sufficient remuneration and other resources are provided for MPs to ensure any citizen can stand as an MP and to enable them to perform their duties effectively as MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Fair and non-partisan provision of remuneration and benefits to MPs**

There is a proper process to ensure that MPs are treated fairly and without partisan considerations in the provision of remuneration and benefits, which could include having an independent body or process to determine them. This should include ensuring that opposition and independent MPs have access to adequate levels of resources, which are proportionate to their numbers in the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Access to staff and resources**

MPs have access to the staff and other resources proportionate to a country's circumstances and to the particular role of the MP, to enable them to perform their duties effectively.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.2.5 Professional development

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns the provision of professional development to MPs to assist them in performing their core roles of law-making, oversight of the executive, and representation of their constituencies. It encompasses the programmes and resources offered at the institutional level and run by, or under the auspices of, the parliamentary administration. In some jurisdictions, this work is carried out with assistance from development partners or NGOs. It does not include programmes offered by the political parties or the development that may be provided informally by experienced MPs, although these programmes can play an important role in the professional development of MPs.<sup>11</sup>

MPs usually come to their roles with considerable and varied life experience and well-developed political skills. However, the task of being an MP requires different sorts of skills and knowledge, some of which are quite specialized, such as a knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure, or the operation of parliamentary structures such as committees. MPs also have responsibility for their constituency, which can include managing a busy constituency office. The legislature has an important responsibility, which is undertaken by, or under the auspices of, the parliamentary administration, to assist MPs in gaining an understanding of their core responsibilities, including the specialized knowledge that is needed to operate effectively.

Induction training for new MPs is particularly critical. New MPs can be quite overwhelmed in their early days in office by the range of responsibilities that they are taking on. Providing them with specific knowledge and insight at the initial stage can assist them in making the transition to becoming effective MPs. In particular, induction programmes should address the basics of how the legislature works, procedures and practices, expert resources or offices available, the responsibilities of MPs and practical information about their rights and access to resources.

Continuing the development of MPs can assist them in further developing their understanding of their core parliamentary responsibilities, thus building on the work done during induction. Ideally a professional development programme would be put together to provide regular opportunities for all MPs to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of their roles. The training courses offered to MPs should be relevant to their needs and should ideally be designed and offered after researching the particular interests and expectations of MPs. Taking into account the busy agenda of MPs, offering online training modules and self-guided courses, which could be accessed at any time from any location, could be a useful alternative to face-to-face training.

The development of guides, manuals and handbooks to assist MPs in understanding the various roles that they have to undertake can be an important part of the approach to professional development. Such guides and manuals provide the documentation to support and reinforce the induction and ongoing professional development programmes and ready references for MPs to use in their everyday work.

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<sup>11</sup> These elements of the professional development of MPs are not included, as they do not relate to the systematic work of the legislature, as undertaken by, or under the auspices of, the parliamentary administration, and would be difficult to measure since there may not be strong knowledge of what is done.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of professional development of MPs would encompass the following:

Induction programmes are provided for all new MPs by the legislature and its parliamentary administration, which cover the specific knowledge and skills to assist MPs to perform their immediate work as MPs.

A programme on ongoing professional development is offered by the legislature and its parliamentary administration, and delivered on a regular basis to all MPs, focusing on their core responsibilities as MPs. As a matter of best practice, this also includes access to online training modules and self-guided courses tailored to the needs and expectations of MPs.

Guides, manuals and handbooks covering the core areas of MP responsibilities exist to provide supporting materials and resources for the professional development of MPs and ready reference material for MPs to use in their work.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Induction programmes that are developed and delivered to all new MPs
- Ongoing professional development programmes that are developed and delivered regularly to all MPs
- Feedback from MPs about induction or ongoing development programmes
- The existence of guides, manuals and handbooks designed specifically for MPs to cover their core areas of responsibilities

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Induction programme for MPs

The existence of an induction programme tailored to and attended by all new MPs, which covers the core responsibilities of MPs and helps them to become effective in their immediate work, and which is delivered under the auspices of the parliamentary administration.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Continuing the professional development of MPs

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The existence of an ongoing professional development programme, which is developed in consultation with MPs to meet their needs and delivered regularly to all MPs, in the core areas of their responsibilities, and which is delivered under the auspices of the parliamentary administration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Guides, handbooks and manuals for MPs**

The existence of guides, manuals or handbooks specifically aimed at MPs and covering the core areas of their responsibilities as MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

The indicator on parliamentary procedures outlines the unique responsibilities assigned to members of parliament to conduct legislative business, specifically in plenary or debate settings. The indicator describes the frameworks that define member activities in the plenary, including in a chamber's rules or standing orders, in addition to the regulations outlining the ability of members to set the agenda, convene meetings, conduct debates, make decisions, ensure institutional record-keeping, and address general plenary matters. The indicator also covers methods for maintaining parliamentary activities in an emergency or crisis situation.

This indicator underscores the mandated roles of members who are solely responsible, as elected members of a national legislature, for making laws in a responsible, orderly and accountable manner.

The assessment of the indicator on parliamentary procedures covers the following dimensions:

- 1.3.1 Institutional framework
- 1.3.2 Rules of procedure
- 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis
- 1.3.4 Calendar/timetable/planning
- 1.3.5 Convening sessions and agenda-setting
- 1.3.6 Quorum
- 1.3.7 Debate
- 1.3.8 Voting
- 1.3.9 Records
- 1.3.10 Dissolution



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## Dimension 1.3.1 Institutional framework

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the overarching framework of laws, regulations or orders that define parliament's procedural role and function. The institutional framework also defines the process by which parliament's actions and mandate are exercised, and is reflected in all aspects of the work of the parliament. (Note that dimension 1.1.1 relating to the overall autonomy of the parliamentary institution, and dimension 1.1.2 relating to the autonomy of the parliamentary institution in determining its own procedures, are relevant to this dimension.)

This dimension encompasses provisions set forth in a variety of documents, including a country's constitution, legislation relating to parliamentary practice and procedure, and, most importantly, parliament's rules of procedure (see dimension 1.3.2). (Note that for legislatures with multiple chambers, an individual set of rules and procedures will generally exist for each chamber.)

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of institutional framework would encompass the following:

There is a clear institutional framework defining parliament's role as a representative institution that is independent, is the primary body responsible for adopting legislation, and has oversight of the executive. The institutional framework must also define parliament's procedural powers and authority as an effective institution, as this is related to its role in the performance of legislative, oversight and representative functions. For legislatures that have multiple chambers, unique rules of procedure typically exist for each individual body.

The framework also defines the parameters for the detailed procedural operations of the legislature, which encompass all the functions and responsibilities of the legislature.

The framework is readily available and clearly explained to all members and staff of the institution, and is transparent in order to ensure the awareness of the general public. When members and staff are elected or hired in the institution, they are encouraged to uphold and abide by these tenets.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legislative provisions relating to the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- Standing orders or rules of procedure that are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
- Documents or presentations that explain the framework

- Commitments made to abide by the framework

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Institutional framework for procedure**

In addition to the relevant constitutional and legislative provisions of a legislature, there is a robust and comprehensive framework in which the legislature can autonomously provide details of its procedural operations, including the authority to develop the rules of procedure of the legislature. In bicameral legislatures, each of the chambers has the authority and autonomy to develop its own rules of procedure.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Institutional framework are readily accessible and explained**

The institutional framework for procedure is readily accessible to MPs, staff and the public. There are documents (such as guidance or handbooks on procedure) and/or presentations that explain the framework in clear terms.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Commitment to the framework**

There are provisions in the constitution, legislation, and/or rules of procedure that require MPs and parliamentary staff to adhere to the institutional framework.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.2 Rules of procedure

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the specific powers and provisions defined in a parliament's rules of procedure (also known as 'standing orders'). Rules of procedure define the powers and privileges of the institution, in relation to debate, voting, motions and amendments, in addition to the composition of parliament and its committees and offices. In unicameral legislatures, there is only one set of rules of procedure that defines the entire institution, whereas in bicameral legislatures, there are rules of procedure that define the conduct, actions, and composition of each chamber individually, thus reflecting the institutional independence of the chambers.

The rules should cover all the legislature's activities and can define matters such as:

- The individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including the powers and privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups
- The composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups
- Plenary and debate conduct and provisions
- Agenda-setting provisions
- Ethics and conflict of interests clauses
- Political activities and funding
- Independent budgetary authorities
- The establishment and operation of committees

The rules of procedure should be consistent with the institutional framework set by the constitution and any legislation relating to parliamentary procedures (see dimension 1.3.1). They should be introduced, amended, and passed by members of the institution alone, and abided by all stakeholders of the institution when elected or hired by the institution. They should be expressed in simple and comprehensible language so that they are understood by MPs and the public. They should be transparent and accessible to all MPs and staff (and be published in hard copy as well as online). The interpretation of such rules of procedure also needs to be consistent and available to MPs, including past practices and past interpretations (such as interpretations or rulings by the presiding officer). This practice should ideally be described in documents such as guides or handbooks on procedure and practice that are available to MPs. The rules of procedure should be subject to regular or ongoing review and proposals for amendment by a group of MPs (such as a standing orders committee or committee on procedure) representing the membership of the legislature.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of rules of procedure would encompass the following:

There are clear and comprehensive rules of procedure (or standing orders) of parliament which are owned, adopted and amended by parliament alone, and which codify the rules and regulations of all aspects of parliamentary activity.

The rules should be comprehensive of all the legislature's activities and can define, among other matters, the individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including: the powers and

privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. The rules also outline parameters on staffing and parliamentary administration, including the appointment of a secretary-general or other relevant head of the administration.

The rules of procedure are:

- Expressed in simple comprehensible language
- Transparent and accessible
- Interpreted consistently, with documentation of interpretations available in guides or handbooks on parliamentary practice and procedure that are readily available to MPs
- Subject to regular review and proposals for amendment by a group of MPs (or a committee) representative of all MPs in the legislature

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Rules of procedure that are adopted or amended by the legislature alone, which exist for every relevant chamber (unicameral or bicameral) of the institution
- Any additional information that supports the assessment

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Parliamentary rules of procedure are determined by the legislature

There is evidence of a set of parliamentary rules of procedure that is maintained by parliament alone, and can only be established, amended, or passed by members of the institution. The rules of procedure should be made public and be accessible to the public, in addition to all individuals in the institution. Depending on the nature of the legislature (unicameral, bicameral), each respective chamber has its own codifying rules of procedure. These rules are read by all members and staff of the parliamentary administration elected or hired by the institution, who undertake to comply with them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliamentary rules of procedure are comprehensive

There is evidence that the set of parliamentary rules of procedure is comprehensive and consistent with the constitutional and legislative framework. The rules define, among other matters, the individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including: the powers and privileges of members of majority and

minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. Parliamentary rules of procedure also define parameters related to parliamentary staff and the administration, including the appointment of a head of parliamentary administration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Rules are interpreted and followed consistently**

The rules of procedure are subject to consistent interpretation and implementation. Such interpretation is readily available to MPs in the form of guides or handbooks on parliamentary practice and procedure, and actions outlined by the rules are carried out consistently. In some parliaments, consistent procedural implementation is directed or managed by a non-partisan individual to ensure compliance by all those subject to the chamber’s rules.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Rules are reviewed regularly by MPs**

The rules of procedure are subject to regular review and proposals for amendment by a group (or committee) of MPs representative of the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis (or emergency)

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the specific provisions under which a parliament may conduct business in times of crisis or emergency. Crisis procedures are different from normal standing orders and procedures of parliament, and are only to be used in exceptional circumstances as determined by the president or speaker of parliament, or another relevant presiding officer, or by the parliament itself by majority vote. Emergency provisions may be defined in either a country's constitution or standing orders, as well as in other legislation outlining emergency procedures.

Emergency procedures allow parliament to adjust the required composition of the membership or other operational procedures in order to adapt to the established emergency period. However, this depends largely on the type of crisis. For example, in some emergency situations the number of MPs required for a quorum may be reduced, whereas other provisions may include a virtual or hybrid operation in order to conduct business (such as some members appearing in person and others conducting business virtually). This has been a particular feature of the operation of many parliaments during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the presence of the full complement of MPs has been problematic. A combination of adapted procedures and the use of technology has enabled both the plenary and committees to continue to meet.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, emergency procedures may require business to be conducted in a truncated or exceptional format, such as debates being limited and votes being cast despite not all members being present.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of procedures in times of crisis (or emergency) would encompass the following:

There are clear provisions established in law (constitutional, legislative or procedural) that define the exceptional circumstances of emergency or crisis in which emergency procedures are to be used. They also prescribe the actions to be taken by parliament in such times. Specifically, the procedures define the composition of parliament in times of crisis, including the number of members and the use of virtual or hybrid proceedings that are required in order to debate, pass, or amend legislation.

Procedures may also define the conduct of the executive in relation to the parliament during an emergency, especially if the crisis is related to the power of the executive over a nation's armed forces. Furthermore, the procedures must also define the emergency powers of parliament. In an emergency, the executive and legislature must know their respective powers. For example, it is expected that the executive will notify the legislature of a crisis situation immediately, so that the legislature may act quickly to define rules that allow business to proceed. Such rules must also define the amount of time that the legislature has to act, especially if it must act in the absence of executive power, or to exercise an oversight function. Likewise, it is important for emergency rules to define and ensure parliament's oversight powers and procedures during an emergency.

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<sup>12</sup> See Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "World e-Parliament Report 2020" (IPU, 2021), 17-31 for a description of the procedural and technological innovations that many parliaments have implemented during the pandemic.



Emergency powers define modifications of the usual agenda-setting and debate procedures, and may allow for a truncated set of motions in order for debate to proceed quickly and effectively if it pertains to the crisis. Crisis procedures should also give members an opportunity to contribute by modifying normal procedures in the rules.

Crisis procedures may also be 'time bound' and therefore only apply for a limited period of time during, such as in the case of a trial or exceptional circumstances. Members may vote to allow for exceptional circumstances in the representation, voting and passage of directives at such times.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions, legislation or rules of procedure that define the action to be taken in the event of an emergency or crisis, including limited or modified rules, and evidence of flexibility in their use
- Virtual or hybrid meetings of the plenary and committees

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of parliamentary crisis procedures in the constitution or legislation

There are constitutional or legal provisions and precedents for parliament to adopt limited or amended rules in the enactment of legislation when it relates to emergencies and acute crises. These frameworks clarify the role of the executive and legislature in such crisis scenarios, and define the circumstances in which emergency or crisis procedures can be adopted.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of parliamentary rules (or standing orders) on emergency procedures

There is evidence of parliamentary rules of procedure (or standing order) provisions outlining debate, agenda-setting, oversight and law-making procedures, in addition to other executive, legislative and presiding officer privileges in an emergency or crisis situation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Rule flexibility in the case of emergency**

The rules on emergency procedures allow for flexibility in the representation and number of members present for a debate, and also prescribe the specific powers available to members with regard to speaking time, directives and voting. The rules will also establish whether business may be conducted in person, virtually or in a hybrid model, such as in emergencies that limit in-person operations. There is also an established procedure and criteria for emergency operations, including the clarification of the respective roles of executive and legislative bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice in the legislature**

The flexibility in the rules on emergency procedures is reflected in the practice of the legislature, and the necessary ICT support is available for virtual and hybrid proceedings of the plenary and committees to take place successfully.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.4 Calendar/timetabling/planning

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the existence of a publicly available parliamentary calendar that establishes the timetables for debate and in-session periods and sittings, in addition to recesses (or in-state/locality work periods or adjournments) and holidays. It includes the process by which the calendar is developed and maintained. The parliamentary calendar is typically maintained by a member of the chamber leadership, and may only be changed in conference with designated officers. In some legislatures, the calendar is subject to approval and amendment by the legislature. The parliamentary calendar also includes information related to committees and standing committee provisions, mandates and parameters.

Information related to the procedures for the development of the parliamentary calendar, timetabling and planning is included in the institution's rules of procedures or standing orders.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of calendar, timetabling and planning would encompass the following:

The procedure for the development of a parliamentary calendar and the timetabling and planning of sessions is included in the legislature's rules of procedure.

There is a publicly available calendar, which is maintained and updated by the parliamentary leadership, and which outlines the days on which parliament is in session throughout the year, and the days on which it is in recess (also known in some structures as in-state/locality work periods or adjournments). Session times are determined by each chamber's leadership, but typically follow a regular season of sessions and recesses as dictated by tradition. For example, many parliaments take recess for countrywide holidays, festivals, or religious events. The calendar also includes the regular 'sitting hours' of members during sessions and proceedings. Though times are subject to change under the jurisdiction of parliamentary leadership, the calendar itself will typically record the regular session hours in which debate and formalities take place. In some legislatures, the calendar is approved and can be amended by the legislature.

The calendar includes details related to all legislative activity within the chambers in the institution (depending on the unicameral or bicameral nature of the legislature). It should also include information related to hearings and business meetings of parliamentary committees.

The parliamentary calendar is maintained by the parliamentary leadership, and is kept up to date. The calendar is prepared ahead of each new session year, but is subject to change under the authority of the president or speaker or designated leadership officers of the chamber. Viewers are able to see illustrative activities on the calendar for the entirety of the calendar year.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Rules of procedure defining the existence and development process of a legislative calendar that provides an overview of session and recess times, legislative activity and committee events/activities, in addition to the powers of the leadership in maintaining the calendar
- Parliamentary calendars, including evidence of regular updates and public availability

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Procedures for determining the calendar and timetable of the legislature**

Parliament’s rules of procedure or standing orders include references to the procedure for the development and maintenance of a calendar which outlines the times throughout the year when parliament is in session and conducts legislative sittings and business. The rules stipulate the specific periods of the year during which parliament regularly sits, though the actual timetable is subject to change under the authority of the president or speaker of parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: A calendar or timetable exists for plenary and committee activities**

There is a session calendar that includes information related to the timetabling of plenary debate. The calendar also stipulates information related to all committee and standing committee affairs, including hearings, business meetings and other extraordinary gatherings. Finally, the calendar is updated regularly to include the anticipated legislative activity.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Calendar transparency**

The calendar is made available for all members of the parliament and the general public. The calendar is regularly updated and maintained to ensure that relevant updates and changes are kept current for public

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view.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.5. Convening sessions and agenda-setting

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the means by which parliament convenes sessions, including initial sessions after an election, and by which it establishes its own agenda for the purpose of legislative or other debate. The dimension also prescribes the rights of parliament and legislators to have regular, special or extraordinary sessions and to ensure that there is a specified maximum period between sessions. The dimension outlines the responsibilities of the leadership or special committees in developing and maintaining the agenda, and the powers under which legislators may vote to change the agenda, including determining legislation for debate.

The dimension pays particular attention to the rights of legislators to meet regularly in order to fulfil the legislature's representational and oversight mandates, the opportunities for MPs to contribute to agenda-setting, and the provisions by means of which the executive may call parliament into a special or extraordinary session.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of convening sessions and agenda-setting would encompass the following:

There are constitutional or legal provisions that specify a maximum period within which the parliament must meet after an election. There is also specification of the maximum period within which the parliament must regularly meet.

As prescribed by parliament's rules of procedure, the institution meets at regular intervals in order to fulfil its legislative, representational and oversight mandates. Sessions are determined by a parliamentary authority (either by the leadership or special committees), and all members have the right to vote to amend or change that agenda in accordance with the rules of procedure. Furthermore, all members of parliament have the right to participate, including through debate, votes, the submission of remarks or questions for the record, or other comments or actions.

While the executive can call special or extraordinary sessions of parliament, a legislative body's standing orders prescribes the right of the autonomous legislature to call and hold its own sessions, and to determine which legislation and other issues are to be debated at given times.

The agenda is subject to all legislators within the chamber having the equal right to initiate, propose or amend legislation and to call regular, special, or extraordinary sessions. This provision gives the elected representatives of the people the ability and mandate to represent the interests of the citizenry through policy debate and development.

The session calendar and the agenda for sessions should be made publicly available, updated and maintained, and be provided for legislators with ample notice so that they may prepare for session activities and debate.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legal provisions specifying times for the holding of sessions after an election and at other times
- Rules of procedure defining the existence of procedures governing the ability of jurisdictional authorities (parliamentary leadership or special committees) to establish parliament’s own agenda, in addition to the rights of members to amend that agenda, including any legislation that would be considered

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal provisions specifying maximum time periods within which sessions must be convened**

The constitution or other legal instruments specify a maximum period within which parliament must meet for its first session after an election (for example, within three months of an election). Similarly, the constitution or legal provisions specify the maximum period within which the parliament must regularly meet for sessions (for example, no more than six months between sessions of the legislature).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of agenda-setting provisions within the rules of procedure**

Parliament’s rules of procedure or standing orders contain provisions for the rights of the leadership or special committees to determine the agenda of parliament, and the powers under which legislators approve or amend the agenda. They also allow for all members of parliament, regardless of partisan affiliation, the right to debate, vote and engage in parliamentary action.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Consistent follow-through on agenda-setting provisions**

Parliament consistently carries out provisions on agenda-setting, as outlined under the rules of procedure. In practice, this means that agenda-setting privileges (as allowed under the rules) are respected consistently by all members of parliament, regardless of partisan affiliation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Convening authorities**

There are specific provisions under which the relevant jurisdictional authority, such as the executive, can call regular, special or extraordinary sessions. Members of the autonomous body have the right to call a special session to order under a specified proportional vote by the chamber. This authority is separate from the privileges granted to the executive to call a special session of parliament, which are in any case clearly defined.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Advance notice**

Members of the chamber are given ample advance notice of the convening of sessions and the overall agenda in order to prepare for debate and deliberation. The session agenda, as outlined on the parliament’s calendar, is also publicly available, and is regularly updated and maintained to ensure that it remains current.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**



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## Dimension 1.3.6 Quorum

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the requirements for a quorum, or the minimum number of members of a chamber who must be present<sup>13</sup> in order to legitimize legislative business. The existence of a quorum is therefore a practical measure that allows a chamber to be effective by operating without the full number of members being present. A quorum is intended to validate member actions by ensuring there is a representative sample of witnesses of statements, debates and votes taken in the chamber, and therefore provides protection against decision-making by a very small number of members. The requirement to maintain a quorum can also be used as a tactic to delay debate on legislation, since if there are not enough members present in the chamber when a scheduled debate is to take place, the presiding officer is forced to request a quorum, which further stalls the process. Often, legislators have a specific timeframe from when a 'quorum call' is announced to when a quorum must be formed to begin or continue debate. A quorum is also an important tool for members who want witnesses to their actions. In some legislatures, members can raise a 'point of order' to draw attention to a quorum not being established, which forces the presiding officer to call for a quorum to be formed to continue business.

Quorum regulations are outlined in a country's constitution, in legislation and in a chamber's rules of procedure, and define the number of members that must be present in order for legislative action to occur. Rules of procedure may also outline the stated time period that members have between when a quorum is announced and when it must be formed in the chamber to conduct business, in addition to the allowable parameters under which a member may raise a point of order to call for a quorum.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of quorum would encompass the following:

Rules concerning quorum are outlined in the constitution, legislation and/or a chamber's rules of procedure (or standing orders), which define the minimum number of members who must be present (either in person, or virtually if this is permitted) in order for legislative business to be conducted, and the amount of time that members have to present themselves in the chamber in the event that a quorum is requested.

Rules of procedure also define the powers of members to request a quorum, and these rules are consistently implemented in practice.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

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<sup>13</sup> To maintain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, some legislatures adopted rules allowing for hybrid or virtual presence in order to reach a quorum, where this was permitted by their constitutional and legal frameworks. Also, many parliaments adopted COVID-19 emergency procedures to reduce the number of members required for a quorum.

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The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Quorum regulations defined in the constitution, legislation and/or chamber's rules of procedure

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of a quorum in the rules of procedure**

There is evidence of quorum regulations being defined in the constitution, legislation and/or a body's rules of procedure, including the consequences for actions of the legislature if a quorum is not present and enforced.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Member independence to call for a quorum**

Members have the right, as defined under the legislature's standing orders, to call for a quorum in the absence of a minimum number of members present in order to legitimize legislative business.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Quorum practices are followed consistently in line with the rules**

Quorum rules are upheld consistently in parliamentary business.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.7 Debate

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines parameters for member debate. The right to debate is universally one of the most critical functions of a legislator in a democratic system. Debate provides members with the opportunity to publicly register their support for or rejection of an idea based on the priorities of their constituency and/or party. It is also the mechanism by which a chamber deliberates on matters under consideration, and enables members to be informed so that they can make a decision. Debate can occur at the committee level or in full plenary. For the purpose of this dimension, 'debate' will refer to that in which members engage during a plenary.

Member debate ensures that law-making is approached through the balanced representation of citizen and party interests. It also allows members to have oversight of executive actions, by providing them with opportunities to debate issues of importance relating to government proposals, programmes and services.

In line with the principle of legislative autonomy, a legislature should have complete control over the structure of its debates. It is especially important for legislatures to adopt processes for structuring and regulating debate which are clearly understood, and which are impartially applied to all members regardless of party affiliation. The rules should provide for debate time-limits, opportunities for members to table a motion or propose amendments, call a point of order, or hold open a debate. There should also be legislative rules to ensure that debate can take place in an orderly and respectful way with members being able to express their views freely.

Debate on bills should be made public to provide citizens with the opportunity to hold their members accountable. Members should also be allotted adequate time and opportunity for debate ahead of a scheduled vote, to ensure that all sides are equally able to contribute on a proposed matter, and for citizens to contact their representatives regarding the pending legislation.

Processes for structuring and regulating debate are outlined in a legislature's rules of procedure or standing orders and are applied impartially by the presiding officers. Additionally, the importance of a legislature's right and responsibility to debate legislation may also be recognized in a country's constitution.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of debate would encompass the following:

There are clearly defined rules for structuring debate in a legislature, which apply impartially to all members regardless of party or group.

These rules define timetables for debate, allowing ample time for all members to debate issues, legislation and other matters before a planned vote. The rules also stipulate the ability of members to determine the order of precedence of motions tabled, and grant members the ability to provide comments for the record, propose amendments, raise points of order, and hold open a debate.

Debate is open to the public through physical or virtual public access, a webcast, and official records.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on debate processes defined in a chamber's rules of procedure
- Constitutional provisions that indicate the important role of legislators in debating legislative priorities
- Practice of the legislature in debate, such as rulings of presiding officers

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Processes for structuring and regulating debate are contained in the parliamentary rules of procedure

Debate processes are established in a body's rules of procedure, which clearly define member debate powers, timetables and the tone of debate (orderly and respectful).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: All members are entitled to equal debate time

Members have the right, as defined under the chamber's standing orders, to enable and participate in debate. They also have the power to table motions, call amendments, and stall or hold open debate to allow ample time to discuss pending matters.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: All plenary debates are made public

All plenary debate and proceedings are made publicly available through physical or virtual public access, a webcast, and official records.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice and consistent implementation of rules**

Debate procedures are conducted in a consistent manner as outlined under the legislative rules of procedure, and in an impartial manner by the chamber’s presiding officer.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.8 Voting

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines parameters for member voting, including by voice or by ballot. The ability of members to cast votes for or against a policy provision is quintessential to parliamentarians' role in a representative institution. As a member of parliament, casting a vote is a critical responsibility for the development of informed policymaking that represents citizen interests. Members must be able to vote freely without improper interference or influence. Voting powers are restricted to members of parliament, and are reserved for those who are elected (or appointed) by their constituents or party to represent their priorities on a national stage. No partisan or non-partisan staff of the institution may be granted the privilege to vote in the legislature.

Votes should be recorded and made publicly available in a manner that offers an 'on-the-record' account of the member's decision (yay, nay, abstain, not present). There should be clear guidelines for public voting in a chamber's rules of procedure. Rules must also stipulate if there are any exceptions to publicly available votes or a recorded account of how a member voted. Methods for recording votes include roll-call, electronic record or paper record/tally. For legislatures that allow proxy voting, established approval mechanisms allowing proxy must be articulated in a chamber's rules. The rules of the legislature shall also allow a minority of legislators to demand that a recorded vote be held.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of voting would encompass the following:

There are clearly defined rules of procedure for allowing, calling and recording votes in the chamber. The rules establish that a member exercises the vote freely, and without improper interference and influence, and that only a member has the power to vote in the legislature.

The rules define the presumption that votes will be recorded and made public, in order to maintain an account of how a member has voted. Rules must also outline exceptions to publicly available voting, and make provisions for advance notice in the event that a vote is held in private.

The rules must also define the manner in which a minority of legislators can call for a vote, or demand that a vote be held on a specific matter.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on voting processes in a chamber's rules of procedure
- Publicly available records of votes in the legislature

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Voting is restricted to members of the legislature**

There is evidence that voting provisions are defined in a body’s rules of procedure, which outline the privilege of voting that is to be freely exercised by members without improper interference or influence, and to be restricted to members of the legislature. The rules will also outline parameters on proxy voting, if allowed, and specify how to arrange such voting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: A minority of members may call for a vote to be held**

The rules clearly specify that a minority of members may call for a vote to be held on a particular matter.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: The rules outlining voting procedures are followed and implemented consistently in practice**

The rules on voting procedures are followed consistently in practice, as verified by the presiding officer and authorities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Voting records**



The rules clearly define how votes will be recorded (for example, paper ballot, card e-voting, or other) and which voting options are available to members during a vote (depending on parliament these might be, for example, “yay, nay, abstain, not present”; or “for and against”).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Voting is made public**

The rules clearly stipulate that votes will be made public, provide details on any exceptions to public voting, and require advance notice to be given before a non-public vote

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.9 Records

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines parameters for documenting and maintaining records. Record-keeping is critical to institutional sustainability and capacity. Records should include evidence of the formal decisions and proceedings of the legislature, a direct transcript of all member deliberations and votes, daily proceedings, statements, questions for the record, and any other business conducted in plenary. It should also include documents presented to the chamber and copies of bills and motions proposed for debate in the chamber.

Records should also be maintained of all official business (submissions, hearings and business meetings) conducted in a committee, including all standing, select, and special committees in parliament. All records should be made publicly available through an easily accessible portal (either in print or online) unless in the event that a particular committee holds a classified or private meeting, which would be outlined in its specific rules of procedure or in the chamber's rules. There may be exceptions to recorded activities and transcripts from select or special committees, especially if deliberations are classified and only authorized for approved audiences.

Records must be maintained continuously from the commencement of the legislature. A legislature should have a central repository of written records that is easily accessible to all members and staff, and the public alike. Records should also be made available in all official working languages as outlined in the nation's constitution.

Records are often compiled by parliamentary staff who support the chamber. Staff could include Hansard reporters or stenographers who are responsible for recording transcripts of all daily proceedings, plenary business and committee affairs. Additionally, there may be staff in the chamber responsible for recording the formal decisions and proceedings of the chamber, including records of votes. These individuals should ensure protection of such records, and store them in the necessary record-keeping repositories following any votes cast. Parliament may also have someone responsible for maintaining the entire records repository, including someone who collects statements for the record.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of records would encompass the following:

The legislature has a central repository for easily accessible, written records that are also made available online for electronic public consumption.

Records are maintained of all decisions, votes, deliberations, daily proceedings, documents presented and considered, other plenary business, and committee business and hearings, for all years that parliament has been in existence (and recordkeeping was maintained/possible).

Records should be made available in all official working languages outlined in the constitution.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Hansard reporter, stenographer or official record keeper for all plenary and committee business
- Central recordkeeping repository within parliament
- Record-keeping provisions in all working languages, as outlined in a chamber’s rules.

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Records are established for all official parliamentary business**

There is evidence of record-keeping procedures for all parliamentary business. This involves the collection and protection of all official documents such as evidence of the formal decisions and proceedings of the legislature, a direct transcript of all member deliberations and votes, daily proceedings, statements, questions for the record, and any other business conducted in plenary. Chamber support staff compile and maintain the official records of the legislature, including those produced by Hansard reporters, stenographers and others responsible for developing transcripts.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Records are stored in a central repository in parliament and made publicly available where applicable**

Records are stored and maintained in a central location within the parliament in written form. They must be stored in a way that is easily accessible to members and staff, in addition to the public when appropriate, depending on the type of committee proceeding and committee itself. Records may also be publicly accessible through an electronic or online portal.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Records are made available in all official working languages**

Records are made available in all official working languages as outlined by a country’s constitution.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.3.10 Dissolution

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the authority to end or ‘dissolve’ a term of parliament to allow for new elections to take place. This may or may not occur before the scheduled end of a term of parliament. Of course, dissolution occurs automatically at the scheduled end of a parliamentary session or term. When dissolution takes place, there are established constitutional or institutional rules that require all non-returning members to leave their posts in a timely manner.

All powers and parameters specifying the circumstances for dissolution are outlined in a nation’s constitution, in addition to a parliament’s rules of procedure. The power to dissolve parliament is highly dependent on a nation’s structure of government and the powers vested in both the executive and parliament, and often is more nuanced in semi-presidential and semi-parliamentary systems.

There are many different ways in which parliament can be dissolved.<sup>14</sup> Depending on a country’s structure of government, dissolution can occur when there is a loss of confidence by a majority in the parliament leadership. In parliaments with a strong executive government, the government may have the ultimate power to force dissolution at will. In other systems, the prime minister or head of parliament can enact dissolution at will. In some systems, dissolution may be used as a tactic to force an election on policy initiatives, or to gain public trust in a measure proposed by a minority or majority in parliament. Some systems have fixed terms for parliament which can only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Typically in systems where the government can dissolve parliament on its own terms, parliament has less authority in driving the terms of dissolution. Alternatively, in systems that provide for more balanced executive-legislative relations, parliament’s power to force dissolution is an important factor in strengthening the institution’s overall independence, especially in instances of executive dominance or overreach. Of course, dissolution is automatic when parliament reaches its scheduled end of session or term, with all non-returning members leaving office in accordance with stated timelines, and returning members or new members engaging in activities to prepare for and assume office.

In the case of an emergency, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, dissolution can occur for different reasons, including as a result of an executive order, election circumstances and other environmental contexts.

For the purpose of this dimension, regardless of how dissolution occurs in a parliament, there should be clarity in the constitutional or other provisions for dissolution, as well clear guidance or practice about the roles of those who may be involved in the process of dissolution, and clear provisions defining the end of a parliamentary term and specifying what happens when a parliamentary term ends. Rules should also define the length of terms, which result in automatic dissolution, in addition to timelines for leaving or assuming office, as well as provisions outlining allowable resources for outgoing/incoming officials, and rules on record storage or official recordkeeping requirements. Terms for vacating or moving onto the parliamentary premises may also be outlined in a chamber’s rules, architecture/building, ethics or administration committee, or other relevant committees in parliament.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information on possible circumstances of dissolution, please refer to this document:

<https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/dissolution-of-parliament-primer.pdf>

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Parameters for dissolution should include awareness of the importance of institutional memory, including processes for collecting evidence, information, and handover records for members leaving office. Such actions ensure institutional sustainability regardless of shifts in power. Provision should be made for the preservation and public accessibility of any official records developed by the member while in office to comply with general reporting and archival requirements as outlined in a nation's laws.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of dissolution would encompass the following:

There is clear constitutional and legal authority for the dissolution of parliament. Legal provisions, practice and guidance clearly specify the roles of those who are involved in the process of dissolution, and clearly provide for the end of the parliamentary term and what happens when the parliamentary term ends. Such parameters may also be outlined in a chamber's rules of procedure.

A nation's constitution defines clear session and term calendars, in addition to term limits for members, which culminate in an automatic dissolution of parliament at the end of the scheduled session or term.

In an automatic dissolution, a chamber's rules of procedure, or regulations under relevant parliamentary committees (such as an ethics, architecture, rules or administration committee) should outline the requirements for outgoing members to vacate the premises, and for their conduct in the immediate months following their term(s) in office. Rules and regulations should also outline the requirements for keeping or archiving of official records and transcripts, and their storage for public access, upon dissolution of parliament and the consequent departure of a member.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on the existence of constitutional authorities
- Rules of procedure or other regulations
- Administrative procedures to ensure compliance by members with regard to archiving and ethics upon dissolution

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authorities**

There is constitutional and legal authority for the dissolution of parliament, including clear provisions defining the end of a parliamentary term and automatic dissolution of parliament. These provisions and any associated practice and guidance clearly specify the circumstances and roles of those who are involved in the dissolution process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Procedures in the case of dissolution**

A chamber’s rules of procedure and its practice outline details of the impact of dissolution on the work of the parliament. The rules also define a scheduled end of session, in addition to the timetables under which outgoing and incoming leaders are allowed to vacate or enter the premises upon automatic dissolution of a scheduled term and before the beginning of the subsequent term.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Requirements for outgoing members in a dissolution**

Regulations exist, most likely in the rules of a procedure or relevant committee regulations (such as a rules, architecture/building, administrative or ethics committee), which prescribe record-keeping or archival requirements, in addition to ethics parameters for member compliance upon dissolution.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- 
- Elliot Bulmer/ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [\*“Dissolution of Parliament, International IDEA Constitution-Building Primer 16”\*](#), Second edition (2017).



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## Indicator 1.4 – Parliamentary organization

Parliament is a natural place for confronting ideas and even inter-party conflicts, as well as a unique setting that has no hierarchical bodies but rather gathers together equals representing diverse opinions. Therefore, organizing the work of the parliament requires a collective decision-making system and a complex structure, which allows members of parliament to implement their duties in a meaningful way.

The parliamentary plenary is the most visible part of the legislature's work and represents the culmination of the work done in committees and in the political groups. The bureau/presidium, as a collective governing body, ensures that political issues are submitted before the parliament, while the speaker/presiding officer is responsible for managing the operation of parliament fairly and impartially, and for ensuring evidence-based debates and a constructive atmosphere.

Parliamentary committees are groups of parliamentarians who are appointed, on either a temporary or a permanent basis, to examine matters more closely in order to better organize parliamentary work. The political structure of the parliament is mainly guided by parliamentary (party) groups, which bring together MPs elected under the same political party with the aim of coordinating their activities and achieving shared political goals. Parliamentarians also cooperate across the parties, which is necessary to achieve joint outcomes despite the political differences that political parties may have.

The assessment of the indicator on parliamentary organization comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.4.1 Plenary
- 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer
- 1.4.3 Bureau/presidium
- 1.4.4 Committees (powers, composition, governing bodies, procedures)
- 1.4.5 Parliamentary (party) groups
- 1.4.6 Cross-party groups

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## Dimension 1.4.1 Plenary

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns arrangements that define a parliament's plenary sessions as the most visible aspect of the parliament's work. A plenary represents the culmination of the work done in committees and in the political groups. The parliament's most important tasks, such as enacting legislation, performing the most visible oversight actions, including question time, interpellation, impeachment and other important debates, are carried out in the plenary. It is usually where the highest-ranking state officials, such as presidents and prime ministers, are heard. A plenary session is an arena for holding timely political debates and for voting on legislation previously discussed in the committees. All major decisions made on behalf of the parliament - including those regarding parliamentary rules and procedures - should be voted and approved by the plenary.

In unicameral systems, plenaries bring together all elected members of parliament, while in bicameral systems, plenaries take place separately in different chambers.

The dates and even the duration of plenaries are often fixed in the constitution or law. However, there can also be special sessions, the grounds for which must be defined by law. Standing orders should set clear rules on organizing plenary sessions, including on setting the agenda, organizing debates, ensuring transparency of the process, defining the duties and responsibilities of the presiding officer, and allocating speaking times at the plenary session. The rules for holding a plenary should ensure proper and effective participation of political groups, as the main actors in the work of the plenary.

The law usually sets the quorum for holding plenary sessions. In many countries, the constitution itself prescribes the quorum required for deliberation. The minimum number of members required to be present varies across countries. Standing orders usually define the practical arrangements of the debate and how speaking times are to be calculated. It is an obligation for a presiding officer to verify the quorum and to secure adherence to the procedures for holding a plenary session.

A plenary should be held only in the parliament building in the respective chambers. Changes of venue of plenary sessions or changes to their procedures are normally restricted to a state of emergency (see 1.3.3) or other exigent circumstances also prescribed in law. In contrast with committee hearings, in which the public and various stakeholders can take part, participation in a plenary is strictly limited to members of parliament, although in most plenaries there are galleries for the public to attend sessions. However, transparency of plenary sessions through broadcasting/live-streaming and attendance by the media should be ensured by law.<sup>15</sup>

The agenda of a plenary session should be approved by the plenary itself on the proposal of the bureau in advance, and should be widely accessible to the public and media. In the case of special sessions, agendas are usually set in advance and cannot be changed during the session. Also, in some cases, agendas can be set by the executive branch, for example, for extraordinary sessions held outside the legally established period of ordinary sessions.

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<sup>15</sup> See also dimension 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work, dimension 3.2.1 Parliamentary website, and indicator 3.3 Access to parliament.

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Please see also indicator 1.3 on parliamentary procedures and sub-target 3 on transparent parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of plenary setting would encompass the following:

There are constitutional or legal provisions outlining the regulatory framework for holding plenary sessions. All major decisions made on behalf of the parliament, including the enactment of legislation and the implementation of the most visible oversight actions, such as question time, interpellation and impeachment, are debated, voted and approved or rejected in a plenary.

All aspects related to parliamentary procedures in the plenary, including the quorum for holding plenary sessions, dates, the duration of ordinary plenary sessions, as well as the grounds and procedures for calling special or extraordinary sessions, are outlined in the law.<sup>16</sup>

Plenaries are held only in the parliament building in the respective chambers. Changes of venue of plenary sessions or changes to their procedures restricted to a state of emergency or other exigent circumstances.

The plenary sessions of the parliament are public. Cases of secret or closed plenary sessions are exceptional and prescribed by law. Publicity of the plenary sessions through broadcasting/live-streaming is ensured by law. Mass media representatives accredited in accordance with the established rules are authorized to participate in plenary sessions, and attendance by the public is usually provided for.

Agendas of plenary sessions are approved by the plenary itself, with the possible exception of extraordinary sessions, and are widely accessible to the public and media in advance of the meeting.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, laws or parliamentary resolutions/decrees outlining the regulatory framework for the holding of plenary sessions, including the required quorum, timing, duration of ordinary plenary sessions, as well as the grounds and procedures for calling special sessions
- Specific articles of the constitution or laws establishing that plenaries are held only in the parliament building in the respective chambers
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure establishing that the plenary sessions of the parliament are public unless specified as closed

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

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<sup>16</sup> See also the indicator 1.3 Parliamentary procedures.

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions outlining the regulatory framework for the holding of plenary sessions, including the required quorum, calendar and duration of ordinary plenary sessions, as well as the grounds and procedures for calling special or extraordinary sessions. There is also evidence that all major decisions made on behalf of the parliament – including the enactment of legislation and the implementation of the most visible oversight actions, such as question time, interpellation and impeachment – are debated, voted and approved or rejected in the plenary.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Venues for holding plenaries**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions establishing that plenaries are held only in the parliament building in the respective chambers. Changes of venue or changes to the procedures of plenary sessions are restricted to a state of emergency or other exigent circumstances.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Transparency of the plenary**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions establishing that plenary sessions of the parliament are public except for secret or closed plenary sessions in exceptional cases specified by law. Publicity of the plenary sessions through broadcasting/live streaming is ensured by law. Mass media representatives accredited in accordance with the established rules are authorized to attend public sessions, as is the general public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions that define the mandate, role and duties of a speaker of a parliament or a presiding officer.

The essential role of a speaker is to facilitate orderly and meaningful discussions in an institution, which is the natural place for confronting ideas and often a venue of inter-party conflicts. A speaker has to exercise authority in a unique setting, as parliaments are not hierarchical bodies, but rather assemblies of equals. There is no justification for distinguishing between a nation's representatives.<sup>17</sup>

A speaker is usually a member of parliament elected at the beginning of each convocation by fellow MPs to preside over the parliamentary chamber or, in a unicameral system, to preside over the parliament. The speaker, being the first among equals, is equipped with the necessary mandate, powers and resources to fulfil the role delegated by peers.

A speaker's official role is to represent a parliament or chamber at official functions, including in the international arena, and to preside over debates and votes, supervise administrative matters, be responsible for the organization of the parliament's work, and rule on questions of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary privilege. It is an obligation for a speaker to impartially and neutrally manage the floor, allocate speaking times and rule fairly, and maintain an ethical, constructive and issue-based atmosphere during debates. In some political systems, the speaker might have a casting vote to resolve a deadlock.

A speaker is responsible for maintaining discipline and order within the house, therefore is granted the power to apply the rules and to call to order and discipline any MP who breaches those rules. This power usually gives the speaker the authority to sanction members for violating rules of procedure or codes of conduct.

A speaker is usually responsible for preparing and supervising the implementation of the institution's budget, and has overall responsibility for the administrative functions of the parliament, as well as for the appointment or recommendation of a secretary-general to the parliament. A speaker enjoys a privileged material status, including higher remuneration, personal equipment and sufficient members of staff, who are appointed for the term of the speaker's tenure.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of speaker/presiding officer of parliament or a chamber would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional or legal provision defining the mandate, role, functions and duties of a speaker of the parliament or a presiding officer.

There is a constitutional or legal provision setting the rule for electing a speaker/presiding officer and defining the term of office.

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<sup>17</sup> Georges Bergougous, [Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies](#), (Geneva, IPU, 1997)

A speaker/presiding officer is mandated to coordinate and manage the work of the parliamentary bodies, manage the overall functioning of the respective chamber or a parliament, preside over sessions, and exercise full administrative powers within the parliament or chamber.

A speaker implements their functions impartially and neutrally, manages the floor fairly, contributes to constructive and issue/evidence-based discussions, provides equal opportunities for all political groups and members to engage in debates, and distributes parliamentary resources fairly.

A speaker/presiding officer is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the code of ethics and rules of procedure. In case of grave violation of a code of conduct and rules of procedure, the speaker is mandated to apply sanctions.

A speaker enjoys a privileged material status, including higher remuneration, and, personal apparatus, with sufficient members of staff.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution and laws that regulate the mandate, functions and duties of a speaker of parliament or a presiding officer
- Specific articles of law or rules of procedure that regulate a speaker's mandate to coordinate and manage the work of the parliamentary bodies, manage the overall functioning of a chamber or parliament, preside over sessions and exercise full administrative powers within a parliament or chamber
- Specific articles of law or rules of procedure establishing that a speaker is obliged to implement functions impartially and neutrally
- Specific articles of law or rules of procedure establishing that a speaker is responsible for ensuring the implementation of a code of ethics and rules of procedure
- Information about resources and staff at the disposal of a speaker or presiding officer
- Copies of asset declarations submitted by a speaker or presiding officer

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is evidence of a constitutional provision defining the general mandate, functions and duties of a speaker of a parliament or a presiding officer. There is a constitutional provision that sets the rule for electing a speaker or presiding officer, and defines the terms of office.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the mandate of a speaker**

There is evidence of legal provisions mandating the speaker or presiding officer to coordinate and manage the work of parliamentary bodies, manage the overall functioning of the chamber or parliament, preside over the sessions, and exercise full administrative powers within a parliament or chamber.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Impartiality and neutrality**

There is evidence of legal provisions establishing that a speaker is obliged to implement functions impartially and neutrally, manage the floor fairly, contribute to constructive and issue-based discussions, provide equal opportunities for all political groups and members to engage in debates, and to distribute parliamentary resources fairly.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Compliance with standing orders and codes of conduct**

There is evidence of legal provisions establishing that a speaker is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the code of ethics and rules of procedure. In the case of grave violation of a code of conduct and rules of procedure, a speaker is mandated to apply sanctions, which, in some cases, have to be approved by the plenary.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources**



There is evidence of sufficient resources available to a speaker or presiding officer for implementing mandates, including through the availability of personal apparatus with sufficient members of staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Practice**

There is evidence of a speaker or presiding officer ensuring the implementation of the code of ethics and rules of procedure in practice, implementing functions impartially and neutrally, managing the floor and distributing parliamentary resources fairly.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Georges Bergougnous, [Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies](#), (Geneva, IPU, 1997)

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### Dimension 1.4.3 Bureau/presidium

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions that define the composition and mandate of a bureau/presidium or similar collective governing body of the parliament. In some parliaments, parliamentary governing bodies might include a board with political responsibilities that bring together leaders from the different parliamentary (party) groups. In bicameral systems, each chamber usually has its own governing bodies.

A bureau or similar governing body is an important part of the political structure of the parliament, which is responsible for making decisions on political issues, organizing the work of the parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary, and deciding other issues of importance relevant to the operation of the parliament.

A bureau/presidium is usually representative of the political configuration of the parliament, with the majority and minority parties represented. It meets under the chairmanship of the speaker and brings together deputy speakers, chairs of parliamentary committees and leaders of political groups. The secretary-general of the parliament, though not a formal member of the bureau, usually participates in bureau meetings. The number of participants can thus vary greatly and may not even be fixed in a particular assembly, as it depends on the number of political groups and committees.<sup>18</sup>

There are different arrangements for the frequency and timing of bureau meetings, and often they are prescribed in rules of procedure. The frequency of bureau meetings is usually an indicator of the importance of its role.

The law or parliamentary regulations usually define whether bureau/presidium meetings are public and broadcast/live-streamed, or closed to the public. Both practices are observed across the countries.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal in the domain of bureau/presidium of parliament would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional, legal or statutory provision defining the composition and mandate of a bureau/presidium as a collective governing body of parliament.

The bureau/presidium is representative of the political configuration of the parliament, is chaired by the speaker and brings together deputy speakers, chairs of parliamentary committees and leaders of political groups.

The bureau is responsible for taking decisions on political issues before the parliament, organizing the work of the parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary and deciding other issues of importance for the operation of the parliament.

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<sup>18</sup> Georges Bergougous, *Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies*, (Geneva, IPU, 1997)

The frequency and timing of bureau meetings, as well as the openness of its meetings are fixed in the rules of procedure of the parliament.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, laws or other regulations defining the functioning of the parliament, which regulate the composition and mandate of a bureau/presidium of parliament
- Specific articles of law or the rules of procedure that regulate the representative nature of a bureau/presidium
- Specific articles of law or the rules of procedure establishing that a bureau/presidium is responsible for organizing the work of the parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary and deciding other issues of importance for the operation of parliament
- Evidence of the frequency and openness of bureau meetings

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is evidence of a constitutional, legal or statutory provision defining the composition and the mandate of a bureau/presidium as a collective governing body of parliament, or chamber in bicameral systems. Some parliaments also have different governing bodies according to their functions.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Composition of bureau/presidium

There is evidence of legal or statutory provisions establishing that a bureau/presidium or similar collective body is representative of a political configuration of the parliament, is chaired by the speaker and brings together deputy speakers, chairs of parliamentary committees and leaders of all the political groups.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Powers of a bureau/presidium**

There is evidence of legal provisions establishing that a bureau is responsible for organizing the work of parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary and deciding other issues of importance to parliamentary operations. These responsibilities can be also assigned to different governing bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Frequency and openness of bureau/presidium meetings**

There are legal provisions defining the frequency and the timing of the bureau meetings. Information about bureau meetings and its conclusions is made publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**

There is evidence of the systematic and consistent implementation of legal provisions on the bureau/presidium in practice, and of full compliance with the requirements of law/standing orders.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.4.4. Committees

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions concerning the powers, composition, governing bodies and procedures of the parliamentary committees which serve as the main tool for all democratic legislatures in the conduct of their business.

A committee is a group of parliamentarians who are appointed, on either a temporary or a permanent basis, to examine matters more closely in order to better organize parliamentary work. Usually, a composition of a committee reflects that of the whole parliament, though “special consideration can be given to smaller groups to ensure their representation in committees, either as full members or as observers”.<sup>19</sup>

Committees perform a number of important functions in the parliament, including the review of draft legislation, oversight of government activities and interaction with the public.

The types of committees, their duties and powers vary from parliament to parliament. Generally, there are two categories of committees – standing (permanent) and ad hoc (temporary) committees. In some systems, standing committees review proposed legislation and at the same time oversee activities of the executive branch. In other cases, legislative and oversight functions are divided between ad hoc and permanent committees. In some bicameral systems, both standing and ad hoc committees might be composed of members of one or both chambers.

Committee governance and the distribution of committee chairmanship among the parties represented in the parliament can differ. In some systems, the party with the majority of seats has the benefit of chairing all committees, while in others, the committee chairmanship is distributed among the majority and the opposition (the selection of committee chairs and the composition of committees are fully covered under dimension 7.3.2).

The number and size of committees, as well as the frequency of committee meetings, should be clearly regulated by law or by the standing orders of the parliament. Committee decisions are made by a majority of votes when a quorum requirement set by the rules of procedure or a statute is met. Committees are sometimes permitted to establish sub-committees or working groups, with the aim of examining legislative drafts in greater detail before committee meetings. Such meetings of working groups or sub-committees may be closed to public participation.

A comprehensive system of committees provides more accountability and efficiency while ensuring better stakeholder engagement. Committee meetings are to be open and accessible to the public and relevant stakeholders, unless there is sufficient justification to close the meeting.

In order to fully exercise its powers, a parliamentary committee needs a solid administrative capacity. It should be equipped with qualified staff to support MPs in conducting their legislative and oversight duties.

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<sup>19</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) [Tools for parliamentary oversight. A comparative study of 88 national parliaments](#) (IPU, 2008)

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliament in the domain of committees would encompass the following:

The parliament has a clear constitutional or legal mandate to establish committees, define their powers, functions, composition, governance and procedures.

Parliamentary committees are mandated to review draft legislation, obtain information from the executive, summon government officials and report to parliament on their findings, and make recommendations.

Parity of committee membership and governance across the parliamentary (party) groups represented in the legislature is ensured by the law or parliamentary resolutions.

The law provides clear rules and procedures with regard to committee meetings, such as the time of a meeting, notice of a meeting, preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, record keeping, voting and reporting.

Committee meetings are open and accessible to the public and relevant stakeholders, unless there is sufficient justification to close a meeting.

Committee meetings are held on the basis of a meeting agenda that is duly approved and published.

Committees are equipped with the administrative capacities necessary for their functioning.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, laws or parliamentary regulations that regulate the establishment and organization of the parliamentary committees
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate committee meetings
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure showing that committee meetings are open and accessible to the public, unless there is sufficient justification to close the meeting
- An organizational chart of the committee staff
- Committee reports and recommendations

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### **Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on parliament's mandate to establish and organize committees**

There are constitutional, legal or statutory provisions by means of which the parliament establishes committees, defines their powers, functions, composition, governance and procedures, and ensures parity of committee membership and governance across the political parties represented in the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the conduct of committee meetings**

There is evidence of clear rules and procedures with regard to committee meetings, such as the time of a meeting, notice of a meeting, preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, record keeping, voting and reporting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Openness of committee meetings**

Committee meetings are open and accessible to the public and relevant stakeholders, unless there is sufficient justification to close the meeting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Administrative capacity**

Parliamentary committees are supported by adequate human, financial and administrative resources, including regularly trained and skilled staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 5: Consistency of implementation**

There is evidence of consistent work carried out by the committees. The committees regularly conduct meetings with an agenda that has been duly approved and published, and in which relevant stakeholders are engaged, and in which the respective conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations, are produced and reported to the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**



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## Dimension 1.4.5 Parliamentary (party) groups

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions establishing that members of parliament are entitled to form parliamentary (party) groups<sup>20</sup> within the parliament in order to coordinate their activities and achieve shared political goals. The members of a parliamentary (party) group usually belong to one and the same campaigning party. In some jurisdictions, it is also possible for MPs from different political parties to create a parliamentary (party) group or to join a parliamentary (party) group in the form of associate members, which may become the subject of parliamentary approval. In some other jurisdictions, there also exists a specific parliamentary (party) group for MPs who are not part of a parliamentary (party) group. In some cases, MPs may move from one parliamentary group to another during their term.

The detailed criteria for forming parliamentary (party) groups, and the regulations concerning their mandate and responsibilities, should be clearly defined in the rules of procedure of the parliament or in national legislation.

In many legal systems, parliaments grant official recognition to the parliamentary (party) groups and provide certain privileges and facilities that are proportional to the size of their parliamentary representation or membership. In order to exercise their functions efficiently, the parliamentary (party) groups have access to additional financial and administrative resources from the overall budget of the parliament (or the national budget) and are provided with a secretariat and research services. The secretariat/staff of the parliamentary (party) groups are not part of the parliamentary administration. The number of staff and resources allocated to the political party is usually proportional to the representation of the parliamentary (party) group in the parliament. The attribution of privileges and benefits also encompasses the allocation of equitable speaking time in a plenary/debate and the right to be represented in the management structures of the parliament (in the bureau and/or in permanent committees).

Parliamentary (party) groups are key units that have significant responsibility for law-making and oversight. They are entitled, through their MPs, to obtain information from the executive, submit written or oral questions to the government, request the conduct of a hearing, and request the summoning of officials at a group meeting, as well as at a plenary. The parliamentary (party) groups may also have the authority to request the launch of a parliamentary investigation.

In order to avoid an “excessive fragmentation of the legislative organ”,<sup>21</sup> national legislation may require a minimum number of MPs to form a parliamentary (party) group. The required threshold should not be set too high and should not run counter to legislators’ right to form a parliamentary (party) group. In some parliaments, changes within or between parliamentary groups might be restricted.

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<sup>20</sup> Parliamentary (party) groups are also known as ‘parliamentary groups’, ‘party groups’ or ‘political groups’.

<sup>21</sup> Venice Commission, CDL-AD(2007)015-e, [Preliminary Opinion on the Draft Law on the Parliamentary Opposition in Ukraine](#) (Venice, 16-17 March 2007), 3.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of parliamentary (party) groups would encompass the following:

There is a clear constitutional or legal mandate for the members of parliament to be able to form parliamentary (party) groups. The formation, rights and responsibilities of parliamentary (party) groups are clearly stated.

The members of the parliamentary (party) group are MPs who have agreed to be part of the same political party and who share political views. This does not prevent different political parties from forming a parliamentary (party) group or MPs from joining a parliamentary (party) group as associate members.

The parliamentary (party) group is officially recognized in national legislation and is granted privileges and benefits through the use of a clear and transparent formula. The parliamentary (party) groups have access to additional financial and administrative resources from the parliamentary (or national) budget, and are provided with secretariat and research services. The parliamentary (party) groups have to account for these resources.<sup>22</sup>

The rules of procedure of the parliament guarantee the equitable allocation of speaking times to the parliamentary (party) groups at a plenary/debate, and ensure their representation in the management structures of the legislative institution (the bureau and/or in permanent committees).

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedure and/or other laws and statutory provisions that define the formation of a parliamentary (party) group
- Specific legislation or articles of the rules of procedure that guarantee additional financial, administrative and human resources for parliamentary (party) groups
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that ensure representation of the parliamentary (party) groups in the management structures
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that secure equitable speaking time for the parliamentary (party) groups at a plenary/parliamentary debate
- Reports by the parliamentary (party) group that might include communication by the group with the government (written questions, requests for information), as well as information on the number of hearings or summons of government representatives requested by a parliamentary (party) group (or its MPs)

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### **Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the mandate of members of parliament to form parliamentary (party) groups**

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<sup>22</sup> See dimension 2.1.4 on disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure

There is evidence of constitutional, legal or statutory provisions that authorize members of parliament to form a parliamentary (party) group and gain formal recognition in a legislative institution. No MP belongs to more than one parliamentary (party) group. MPs who, at the time of elections, belong to the same parliamentary (party) group must remain with that political group.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the provision of privileges and facilities to parliamentary (party) groups**

There is evidence of legal or statutory provisions by means of which the parliament guarantees additional financial, administrative and human resources to parliamentary (party) groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Legal framework on the securing of speaking times and representation**

There is evidence of legal provisions by means of which parliamentary (party) groups are guaranteed equitable speaking time at a plenary/parliamentary debate. There are also legal provisions that ensure the representation of parliamentary (party) groups in the management structures of the parliament (the bureau or in the permanent committees).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Rights of parliamentary (party) groups**

Parliamentary (party) groups have a right to initiate actions such as proceedings, motions and interpellations, which is stipulated by the rules of procedures.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**

Parliamentary (party) groups exercise their powers in parliament systematically and rigorously. All rights prescribed in the law or the standing orders of parliament, including those on equitable speaking time and access to resources are duly implemented in practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.4.6. Cross-party groups

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions concerning the establishment and functioning of cross-party parliamentary groups.

The cross-party groups (all-party parliamentary groups) are informal groups that bring together members of parliament from different parties (from one or both chambers in the case of bicameral legislatures) to pursue and promote a specific cause or an issue. Such groups can vary in their objectives, size and operating rules.

Different terms are used in different parliaments to describe cross-party cooperation. In some countries cross-party groups are called a 'caucus', while in others they are called 'parliamentary friendship groups' or 'all-party parliamentary groups'.

Cross-party groups represent an important forum for bringing together legislators representing different political parties or interests in order to share information, discuss policy issues, channel common concerns and engage stakeholders. They allow external organizations and individuals that are interested or active in the field to become involved in discussions and influence decision-making processes. Cross-party groups can also participate in diplomatic and inter-parliamentary activities.

Cross-party groups can assume many functions, including raising awareness on an issue of mutual interest, acting as a watchdog, advocating and influencing the legislative and political processes. Avoiding the introduction of partisan politics into the work of the group is usually one of the common challenges faced by cross-party parliamentary groups. Having clearly defined objectives can be an effective remedy in such situations.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of cross-party groups would encompass the following:

Members of parliament are entitled to establish cross-party groups.

The transparency of the group's activities and the adherence of its members to the code of conduct for members of parliament are ensured by the parliament's rules of procedure or the cross-party group's statute.

Cross-party groups meet regularly and engage with relevant stakeholders.

Cross-party groups are provided with the administrative capacities necessary for their operation.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of laws or statutory provisions that regulate the establishment and organization of cross-party parliamentary groups
- Specific articles of the statutes of the cross-party groups that regulate transparency and the ethical conduct of members
- Evidence of the existence of cross-party group(s). Information about their composition, purpose and term
- Meeting records of cross-party groups

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the establishment of cross-party groups**

There are legal or statutory provisions by means of which members of parliament can establish cross-party groups, or evidence that there is no legal or statutory impediment to the establishment of such groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Transparency, ethical conduct and community engagement**

There is evidence of clear rules with regard to transparency of cross-party group activities, adherence of its members to the code of conduct for members of parliament and efforts by the group to engage the community in its activities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Administrative capacity**

Cross-party groups are provided with basic administrative support, qualified staff, meeting venues and other resources.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice**

There is evidence of one or more cross-party group(s) established in the parliament. Term, composition and purpose of the established cross-party groups are defined.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.5 – Administrative capacity and independence

In most parliaments, the business of the houses and their committees needs to be supported by a capable and independent administration. While this support varies across legislatures and can take various forms, it typically includes the provision of adequately trained staff, suitable facilities, well-researched information and content, the use of digital tools of trade and facilities, as well as the management of administrative policies, systems and practices. This dimension covers the general support available to the parliament from the parliamentary administration. More specific support on particular matters (for example, the budget, oversight work and institutional integrity, are covered in other dimensions).

The indicator related to administrative capacity recognizes a professional parliamentary service. It is critical that support is provided impartially for all members of parliament, including those of opposition parties, and that where a parliament consists of two houses, both are supported adequately. Sufficient human, financial and infrastructure resources facilitate the business of parliament, and support more effective law-making, oversight, and public and international relations. The extent to which parliament's administration functions independently of the executive is especially important for parliament's oversight role. The autonomous functioning of the administration reinforces the separation of powers between parliament and the executive, and strengthens the accountability of the executive branch to the parliament.

The assessment of the capacity and independence of the parliamentary administration to support the work of members of parliament, comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.5.1 Parliamentary administration and human resources management
- 1.5.2 Policy analysis, research and library services
- 1.5.3 Infrastructure
- 1.5.4 Innovation and digital technologies
- 1.5.5 Information management



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## Dimension 1.5.1 Parliamentary administration and human resources management

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension focuses on the provision by the parliamentary administration of an adequate number of capable human resources to support an effective parliament now and in the future. This support is considered to be effective to the extent that it facilitates the business of parliament and the day-to-day work of members of parliament.

It is critical that the support provided for parliamentary work is separate from and independent to that of the executive, even though there may be linkages with the executive to ensure the effective support of the parliament. It is important to maintain autonomy for effectiveness, but also to ensure there is adequate capacity to support the work of the institution and its members.

The organization of the daily work of the parliamentary administration, as well as staff recruitment and career management should also be independent of political influence by political structures and MPs within the parliament (see dimensions 2.2.5 Staff recruitment and 2.2.6 Professionalism of the parliamentary administration).

Given the significance of independent and unbiased staff support in enhancing the capacity of members to carry out their parliamentary roles, human resources in this dimension include only non-partisan staff under the management of the parliamentary administration, and not the political staff supporting individual politicians and political parties. The administration can be organized to support both houses jointly.

As with all dimensions under this indicator, the human resource dimension is important in determining the ability of the parliament not only to carry out its mandate immediately, but also to adapt to change and to address future opportunities and challenges. Thus, human resources need to focus not only on the immediate requirements, but also on the building of capacity for sustained and enhanced performance in the future. The comprehensive development and training of staff (see dimension 2.2.6 Coverage of professional development), and the implementation of succession planning are therefore important for the parliamentary administration to be able to meet the needs of the parliament in the longer term.

Regular reporting to the parliament and the public by the parliamentary administration about its work and performance is an important accountability mechanism. It also assists in informing MPs about the support provided by the administration (see 2.2.4). The monitoring and evaluation of services and performance with a view to improving the services of the parliament is also important for the achievement of effectiveness.

Please see other dimensions that are linked to human resources management<sup>23</sup> and sources for further reading.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Dimensions 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy; 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work; 2.2.5 Staff recruitment; and 2.2.6 Professionalism of the parliamentary administration.

<sup>24</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "[Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration](#)" (IPU, 2020); Charles Lusthaus and others, [Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance](#) (Inter-American Development Bank and International Development Research Centre, 2002); United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "[Organizational Capacity Assessment](#)" (2016).

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of staff (and human resources management) would encompass the following:

Human resources are available to the parliamentary institution, its committees and individual members of parliament. They are provided in a non-partisan manner, managed independently of the executive under the leadership of the parliamentary administration (for example, the secretary-general or equivalent) and overseen by a body or other governance structure which includes representation by members of parliament.

Clear policies governing the recruitment, retention, disciplinary procedures, ethical conduct, working hours and leave allocations are established and implemented, and reviewed regularly.

There are independent processes and procedures in place for the planning, allocation, and assessment of staff support to the parliament and its members.

Mechanisms are in place for obtaining feedback from members of parliament on the support provided to them by the administration, and such feedback is used to enhance human resources support.

There are policies and plans in place for succession planning with the parliamentary administration.

The parliamentary administration reports regularly to the parliament and the public about its work and performance, and also conducts monitoring and evaluation of services and performance with a view to making improvements.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Independent parliamentary service. Established body (including members) to approve and oversee human resource decisions by the parliamentary administration
- Relevant policies pertaining to human resource management within the parliamentary administration
- Performance contracts, reports on work done and performance assessments
- Climate surveys conducted in relation to staff members
- Client satisfaction surveys conducted regarding the administration (by members of parliament)
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and work
- Implementation of succession planning

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Independent governance structure

Human resources are structured and managed separately from and independently of the executive under the leadership of staff (for example, a secretary-general or equivalent) responsible directly to the parliament. There is a body or other type of governance structure, with representation from members, which oversees decision-making

on matters affecting human resource management. This body may approve the organizational structure, the delegation of powers within the administration, and may oversee policies and appointments of the most senior administrative officials, but without interference in the day-to-day management of the parliamentary administration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Human resources policies**

Clear human resources/staff policies are established, implemented and regularly reviewed to support the effective management of parliamentary staff. These policies outline the rules and procedures for all aspects of the parliamentary service, including recruitment, retention, conduct, disciplinary procedures, working hours and leave allocations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Processes to facilitate a high-performance environment**

There are established processes for planning, performance management and reporting. There is also evidence of clear job descriptions, salaries, benefits and other performance incentives. Human resources are sufficient to support all aspects of parliamentary business.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Mechanisms for feedback on performance from members of parliament**

There are mechanisms in place for soliciting feedback from members of parliament and independent parliamentary offices on the support that they receive, and this feedback is used to improve staff support.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Policies for succession planning**

Policies and plans are in place for succession planning to ensure that the parliament has the necessary resources available to it in the longer term.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Regular reporting to the parliament and public concerning the work of the parliamentary administration**

There are formal requirements for the parliamentary administration to report regularly to the parliament and to the public about the work and performance of the administration, and these reports are considered informative by MPs and the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and practice**

There is evidence of a comprehensive framework for M&E in the legislature which is mandated in the policies of the legislature, practised systematically and which is used as the basis to improve the performance and services of the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.5.2 Policy analysis, research and library services

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the library, research and policy analysis support given to members of parliament to facilitate and promote evidence-led decision-making. It considers best practices for the adequate provision of this support, in a non-partisan manner.

Access to library, research and policy analysis services has implications for the quality of law-making and oversight, as adequate support can facilitate better evidence-led decision-making. The availability of adequate subject matter specialists facilitates more effective oversight of all areas of executive implementation by the parliament. Independent sources of information to verify, clarify, or even dispute executive sources help maintain the separation of powers and improve the effectiveness of parliaments.

Relevant, reliable, objective and timely information enhances the ability of the parliament and its members to adequately carry out their responsibilities. As the volume of information available has increased over time, it has become even more important for parliaments to ensure the provision of professional, impartial and expert services to MPs. The dynamic nature of oversight work also requires that staff tasked with providing research and analytical support are able to carry out both reactive and proactive work. This gives the parliamentary institution and its MPs the knowledge necessary for them to undertake effective oversight, legislative and representational responsibilities.

The staffing of the library, research and analytical services should be provided within the context of an independent parliamentary service to ensure the impartial and professional delivery of these services. Oversight of these functions by a body or bodies representative of members is also desirable to ensure that the services are meeting the needs of members.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of policy analysis, research and library services would encompass the following:

Guidelines are in place clearly stating the nature, scope and manner in which library, research and policy analysis services are established within parliament and provided for MPs and staff, and standards of service delivery are specified and monitored.

Specialist and quality information and analysis is available as required in all areas that may be relevant to the needs of MPs. Quality control processes are in place to ensure that timely, accurate and useful information is available to MPs.

Parliament provides digital access to all publicly available research, policy analysis and library products for MPs, institutional staff, and the public.

Services in this area are delivered by staff who are part of an independent parliamentary service with oversight by a body involving MPs.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A service charter/guide outlining the information services support to be provided for members of parliament
- A documented quality control process
- Research, policy analyst and library roles filled as per the service charter, and the organizational organogram/establishment
- Client satisfaction surveys conducted for research, library and policy analysis services (by MPs)
- Universal access to information products for members of parliament
- Website usage statistics
- Staffing and oversight arrangements for library, research and analytical services

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Guidelines on the provision of library, research and analytical services

There are guidelines or a service charter defining the range and scope of research, library and policy analysis support to be provided for members of parliament. Standards such as the type, required time, and the format of the service to be provided, are outlined in the guidelines/service charter and their implementation is monitored.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Expertise and quality control of content

There is an adequate number of expert professionals available, including sector specialists as required by the chambers and their committees, or by citizens. Processes for the quality control of content are also in place.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Digital access

Digital access to research, library resources and policy analysis is available. This could include information from the public, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the executive unless subject to specific confidentiality requirements. Library resources, research and policy analysis are available externally.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Adequate provision of research**

All members of parliament, including those of the opposition, and parliamentary administration staff, have access to specific library, research and analytical services regardless of political affiliation. Within a bicameral parliament, there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of both houses and their committees. Where requested, members can embargo individual research undertaken for them, within the rules or requirements set by the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Staffing and oversight of services**

Research, library and policy analysis services are delivered by staff who are part of an independent parliamentary service with oversight by a body involving MPs, which sets and monitors guidelines and standards of delivery.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), [Guidelines for parliamentary research services](#) (IPU and IFLA, 2015);
- Keith Cuninghame, [Guidelines for legislative libraries](#) (IFLA, 2nd ed., 2009);



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- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), United Nations (UN) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), [\*Handbook: Information and Communication Technologies in Parliamentary Libraries\*](#) (IPU, UN and IFLA, 2012).

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## Dimension 1.5.3 Infrastructure

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension focuses on the infrastructure or facilities<sup>25</sup> available to members of parliament, as well as political and parliamentary staff. Infrastructure or facilities can include office space, furniture and equipment required in the house(s) (chamber(s)), committees, or in constituencies. In some cases, facilities also comprise housing, transportation, parking and household services, including catering and cleaning services. Protection services may also be provided. Infrastructure should be available to all individual members, political parties, coalitions or groups, as well as other parliamentary governance structures. It is also important for support staff, whether attached to political offices or the parliamentary service, to have access to appropriate and adequate facilities. While the adequacy of infrastructure, such as the facilities and space available for the public and media to access the parliament, are relevant to this dimension, they are covered more extensively in indicator 3.3.

The extent, quality and suitability for the purpose of facilities are important factors in this dimension. Therefore, the dimension includes the consideration of whether facilities are 'fit for purpose' in terms of the needs of the parliament. There are adequate resources to maintain the facilities in a suitable condition and there is access to resources if facilities need to be enhanced. The facilities and the resources to support them should be under the control of the parliament.

However, this dimension also concerns the equitable provision of these facilities, in line with the budgetary constraints of each parliament. All members of parliament, regardless of political affiliation, whether ordinary members or a presiding officer, and irrespective of gender or disability, should have access to the facilities that they need. Poor quality facilities can affect the ability of staff to deliver the timely and quality services for which they are responsible, including research, procedural advice, and other key services. Inadequate facilities can also have an impact on public or media accessibility to the parliament.

In order to effectively deliver on the parliamentary mandate, facilities must be adequate and access to them must be equitable. Without adequate facilities, the parliamentary mandate can be jeopardized, and where access is not granted impartially, the effectiveness of legislatures and ultimately the legitimacy of parliamentary processes, can be compromised.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of infrastructure capacity would encompass the following:

Infrastructure and facilities are 'fit for purpose' in terms of the needs of the parliament. There are adequate resources to maintain the facilities in a suitable condition, and there is access to resources if facilities need to be enhanced.

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<sup>25</sup> In some of the literature, the terms 'infrastructure' and 'facilities' are used interchangeably to describe office space, furnishings and other equipment (including ICT infrastructure).

A transparent process or formula for determining access to adequate facilities by members of parliament and staff is in place. All members have access to facilities in a manner that enables them to carry out their parliamentary mandate.

A multi-party committee/group oversees decisions on the allocation of resources, including access to facilities, for individual members of parliament or parties, and staff, within parliament.

Office and other facilities are available for all members of parliament, in particular those of opposition parties, in addition to staff.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Feedback on the adequacy of infrastructure and facilities, including any assessments of their adequacy
- Resources available to the parliamentary administration to support and develop infrastructure and facilities
- Guidelines outlining a clear formula for access to facilities
- The existence of a governance body overseeing facilities
- Reports on actual access to infrastructure and allocation of facilities

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Adequacy of infrastructure

The infrastructure available to the parliament is adequate and fit for the purposes for which the parliament needs to use it. The parliament also has access to the resources necessary to maintain existing infrastructure, enhance existing facilities or develop new facilities if required.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Clear guidelines

There are defined rules and guidelines with a clear, transparent and equitable formula for determining adequate facilities that must be available to MPs and staff. These rules and guidelines specify the type of facilities available, as well as when and how to access them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Governance body**

There is a multi-party body that oversees and advises on decisions regarding the allocation of resources, including access to facilities, for individual members of parliament or parties within parliament. The body ensures that not only the needs of members are taken into account when determining equitable access to facilities, but also the overall parliamentary mandate.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Equitable access to facilities**

Office and other facilities are available for all members of parliament, in particular those of opposition parties, without disproportionately benefitting the majority party. Furthermore, members and staff with disabilities, members with families, female members, and the media and the public are taken into account when the adequacy of facilities is considered.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.5.4 Innovation and digital technologies

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension covers the innovation and digital technologies available to members of parliament and staff to support the conduct of their business, and those that ensure enhanced and transparent public access to information. Digital technologies include hardware and software and the automation of core activities and processes of parliament. It also includes broadcasting and audio-visual infrastructure, as well as systems and applications.

As digital technologies become more intertwined with daily activities, it is increasingly important for parliaments to adapt to new ways of using technology to conduct their business and to improve transparency and accessibility for the public. Tools of the trade, the right software, access to data, and awareness of a digitally fluent citizenry, are key ingredients to a successful utilization of innovation and digital technologies to improve the work of parliament. As identified in the IPU's World e-Parliament Report 2020, we are currently witnessing a unique period of dynamic change and often enforced innovation with regard to the use of digital technology, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been a catalyst for new and transformational digital practices.<sup>26</sup>

The key to ensuring successful ICT solutions is having a sense of the strategic direction for ICT and its innovation, the policies and plans for how to achieve this direction, and the leadership to support change. The latest IPU e-Parliament Report notes that the concept of an e-parliament is as much about governance and strategy as technology and communications.<sup>27</sup> It is also important to ensure that adequate training is provided for both MPs and staff, and that investment in ICT yields a return. Additionally, investment in technology must respond to the needs of citizens for access via mobile technology, the mandate of parliament, and the needs of MPs. The underlying implication is that the goal is not necessarily for parliaments to acquire the most sophisticated technology, but rather for the technology to be adequate and 'user friendly' in order to assist MPs in conducting their business in the houses, committees, or in communicating effectively with their constituencies. In view of security threats to parliamentary systems and information, it is also essential for there to be a robust approach to protect the systems and information.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of innovation and digital technologies would encompass the following:

There are established policies or plans that provide strategic direction for and encourage innovation processes and the availability of digital technologies within parliaments. New ways of working resulting from innovation are being consolidated into day-to-day practices.

Governance structures are in place to facilitate leadership and oversight of digital transformation and decision-making in the context of a rapidly changing environment.

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<sup>26</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *World e-Parliament Report 2020* (IPU, 2021), 15.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

There are dedicated and adequate resources, both financial and human, for the deployment of various ICT tools (software and hardware).

Innovation and digital technologies are introduced in line with the needs and strategies of a particular parliament and are then further developed and consolidated.

Security measures are in place to facilitate the preservation of institutional memory, and to ensure that members and staff are able to conduct their work without unauthorized interference.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Policies or plans on digital transformation and innovation
- An established ICT governance structure, including parliamentary leadership and oversight (preferably involving MPs)
- Dedicated budget and staff for ICT and its management
- Evidence of alignment between ICT plans and the parliamentary mandate and/or strategies
- System security infrastructure and reports

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Policies and plans

There are policies that outline the strategy, scope, type, quality and timing for the provision of digital technology. These policies include details on the approach to digitization and innovation, members' and staff entitlements to ICT tools, and ways to optimally engage and communicate transparently with the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Governance structure

There is an established governance structure in place to ensure effective leadership within the parliamentary administration and oversight (preferably involving MPs) on ICT-related decision -making. This governance structure ensures that parliaments remain agile and adaptive enough to meet both the changing needs of members, committees, staff and citizens, and the demands of the ICT ecosystem.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Adequate resources**

Adequate financial and human resources for innovation and digital technology are available. There is a dedicated ICT budget, and the required hardware and software, as determined by each parliament, are accessible to all MPs and staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Innovation for performance improvement**

ICT tools are provided in line with the mandate and plans of parliament. Innovation are utilized to facilitate the improvement of performance. Once developed and adopted, such innovations are consolidated into day-to-day practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Secure access**

There is sufficient security for all digital processes and applications, particularly those related to the core business of parliament. This should be sufficiently robust to prevent unauthorized access to parliamentary systems and information.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.5.5 Information management

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension focuses on the management of information, including the extent to which information management systems support the collection, categorization, analysis, and storage of data and information and their distribution and dissemination.

Information management is crucial to the work of parliaments, as it:

- Documents the work carried out by parliaments
- Provides information resources for parliaments and parliamentarians to conduct their business
- Provides the source material for parliaments to disseminate information to the public about their work, thus facilitating engagement and participation

It is useful to think about information management in the context of records management and knowledge management. Records management concerns data and information and the systems and processes used to manage them. Knowledge management<sup>28</sup> is more about processed data and information, and the people who create and use it. Information management potentially covers elements of both records and knowledge management. Thus, knowledge creation and innovation can be enhanced through the establishment of an integrated and efficient information management system.

The information to be managed, as indicated in this dimension, is very broad ranging and includes all the information generated by the parliament, its staff and members. This includes both the formal information generated by the business of the parliament as well as the records of the parliamentary administration and those generated by members in their representative duties. In the Westminster parliamentary system, this usually does not include the records of MPs who perform executive government functions.

Records of the business of parliament, whether generated through oversight or the law-making process, are especially important, as they document the work and decisions of the parliament. Good information management also facilitates tracking and monitoring by the public and other stakeholders. Both these elements strengthen the accountability of parliament to the public in terms of both its outcomes and its processes, thus bolstering trust in the parliamentary institution. Furthermore, the storage, categorization and dissemination of information in an easy and reliable way, including research, policy analysis, procedural or legal advice, play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the parliamentary institution and members. The volume of information produced by parliaments makes a case for innovative and electronic approaches to information management.

Information management and the related matter of knowledge management also underpin the institutional memory of parliaments. As parliaments generate more data and information, they learn more about the legislation that they enact, the entities that they oversee, the citizens that they represent and their own processes and procedures for undertaking the work of the parliament.

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<sup>28</sup> “Knowledge management is a process where people capture, share, and generate knowledge in various ways, whether through the use of technology or through social processes, to the benefit of the organization and the expertise of its people” [[Implementing a records management strategy to complement Parliament’s knowledge management initiatives, IFLA Pre-Conference Paper, 2015, 4](#)].

For all these reasons, sound information management systems and processes are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of a modern parliament. Consequently, the protection of this information and its supporting systems from unauthorized access or malicious attacks is essential.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of information management would encompass the following:

Information management governance is well documented and implemented, and prescribes how, when and who can create, process, store, retrieve, delete and disseminate information.

There is a central repository (or repositories) where all information is stored and can be accessed when required. This can be through an intranet or document management system, whether internal or cloud-based.

Public access to parliamentary information through the parliamentary website, or on request to the parliament is in place.

Information is accessible but secure from unauthorized and/or malicious access.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A governance document or guide on information management
- An existing central repository (or repositories) in place
- Availability of documents on the website, or via email, post or handout (hardcopy/physical copy)
- ICT security reports

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Documented governance of information management**

The governance for information management is developed, well-documented and implemented. This can include, *inter alia*, rules, procedures and processes for creating, processing, categorizing, storing, retrieving, deleting and disseminating information.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Central repository (or repositories)**

A central repository (or repositories) has been created where information is easily accessible to members of parliament and parliamentary staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Public access**

Information produced and kept by parliament is accessible through a website, on request, or through other convenient means for the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Security and integrity**

Security protocols are in place to protect the information management system from breaches and unauthorized and/or malicious access and interference.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.6 – Law-making

Legislating is regarded in most jurisdictions as the legislature's primary responsibility, and provides the source from which many of parliament's functions and powers draw. The role of legislating as the core responsibility of parliament is usually reflected in constitutional (or equivalent) provisions. The overriding principle reflected throughout this indicator is that, even though other stakeholders play a role at various stages of the legislative process, parliament and its members remain paramount in law-making.

This indicator covers all aspects of the legislative function. It includes the processes by which legislation is prepared (legislative drafting) and the powers of the different participants in the legislature to initiate, amend and approve legislation. The routine procedure for the passage of legislation through all stages of the legislature, including passage through two houses in bicameral systems, is covered. The indicator also includes the processes for expedited consideration of legislation, and the necessary protection to ensure proper consideration even when the process is accelerated, for valid reasons. The circumstances for constitution-making and amendment are distinguished from those for the processing of ordinary laws.

Once legislation has properly passed through the house(s), there are processes for its final endorsement (assent and enactment) and publication, which are covered in this indicator.

Finally, many parliaments have recognized that their role does not end once legislation has been passed, and, consequently, they have adopted approaches to the post-legislative scrutiny of legislation that they enact, including processes to address delegated legislation.

The assessment of the indicator on law-making comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.6.1 Powers in law-making
- 1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendment
- 1.6.3 Legislative procedure
- 1.6.4 Legislative drafting
- 1.6.5 Enactment
- 1.6.6 Publication
- 1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny (PLS)

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## Dimension 1.6.1 Powers in law-making

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns the powers of various participants within the legislative process in relation to the initiation, passage and approval of legislation. It reflects the right of MPs, regardless of their status (parliamentary majority, minority or independent) to involvement at all stages of the passage of legislation. In some jurisdictions, other participants also have the right to initiate legislation.

All MPs, regardless of their status, should have the right to initiate and propose amendments to legislation as reflected in the constitution and/or rules of procedure of their legislatures. Reasonable restrictions can be placed on the authority of individual MPs or a house (in bicameral systems) to initiate or amend proposals that involve, for example, the spending of public money or the imposition of taxes. These powers may be reserved for a lower house in a bicameral system or for MPs from parliamentary majority groups or political parties that form the executive. There may also be limits on the opportunities to debate legislative initiatives or amendments (see dimension 1.6.3). If such restrictions are in place, they should not create unreasonable limits on the freedom of MPs to play a full role in the legislative process. Some jurisdictions also have wider rights regarding the initiation of legislation, which may include the executive or its agencies or groups of citizens.

All legislation, including budgetary legislation, presented for final assent to the head of state, must have been approved by the legislature, and in bicameral systems, where passage through both houses is required, it must have been approved in the same form by both houses of the legislature. In some legislatures, there can be different approval requirements for different forms of legislation. In some cases, only a simple majority of MPs' votes is required, while in others, a majority of the total number of seats is necessary. In some jurisdictions, there may also be special circumstances where full passage through both houses is not required, with a lower house being able to by-pass or override passage through the upper house, particularly where the upper house has been appointed and not elected.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of powers in law-making would encompass the following:

There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to initiate legislation. Any restrictions on this right should be strictly limited and reasonable.

There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to propose amendments to legislation as it passes through the legislature. Any restrictions on this right should be strictly limited and reasonable.

There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions for any legislation, including budgetary legislation, presented to the head of state for assent, to have been approved first by the legislature, in accordance with the rules of the legislature applying to that particular legislation (including both houses in the case of bicameral systems, unless particular restrictions on the upper house are in place).

The practice of legislatures indicates that they follow their constitutional principles and rules of procedure relating to MPs' powers throughout the legislative process, and MPs are reasonably empowered to participate in all stages of the legislative process. Particular attention is given to the opportunities for opposition and independent MPs.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning MPs' rights to initiate legislation
- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the power of MPs to propose amendments to legislation
- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the approval of legislation by MPs
- Any practice relating to the initiation of bills or proposal of amendments to legislation by individual MPs

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Right to initiate legislation

There is evidence of constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to initiate legislation in their legislatures. In some legislatures, legislation can be initiated only by a set number of MPs. Any restrictions on this right (for example restrictions concerning financial proposals) are clearly defined and limited. In some jurisdictions, constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions also permit other participants, for example, the executive and its agencies or groups of citizens, to initiate legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Amending legislation

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedures provisions that grant all MPs, regardless of their status, the authority to propose amendments to legislation as it proceeds through committees and the legislature. Any restrictions on this right (for example restrictions concerning financial proposals) are clearly defined and limited.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Approval of legislation**

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions that require all legislation, including budgetary legislation, submitted to the head of state for assent to have been approved by the legislature in accordance with the rules of the legislature applying to the particular legislation (and both houses in the case of a bicameral parliament). Special circumstances may apply in some bicameral legislatures, whereby the upper house may be bypassed or overridden in the approval process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Empowerment of MPs in practice**

The practice of the legislature, as demonstrated by the bills initiated or amendments proposed by individual MPs or other participants, demonstrates powers to take the initiative at all stages of the legislative process. Particular consideration is given to parliamentary minority and independent MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendment

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

Most countries have written constitutions that provide, at the highest level, for matters such as the separation of powers between the different branches of government, define the respective powers and responsibilities of the executive, parliament and the judiciary, and provide for other aspects of a democratic form of government. These constitutions have been adopted and are subject to amendment through processes that vary across jurisdictions. The making of a constitution, and its amendment, are special cases of law-making, and usually involves special or additional requirements, such as passage by a supermajority of the legislature or with public approval.

As the constitution protects the democratic system and can protect minority and other rights, it should not be possible to change it easily. If changes could be made easily, the protection that a constitution affords to the democratic system would be threatened. Amendment also should not be made so difficult that constitutional change is impossible to achieve. If the constitution is virtually impossible to change, sensible modifications that improve the operation of the democratic system may not be made.

The right to put forward proposals for constitutional change also is significant. In some jurisdictions, the right of initiative rests solely with the legislature (MPs or groups of MPs), while in other jurisdictions, other mechanisms, such as citizen-initiated proposals for constitutional change, are also permitted. Ideally, a range of mechanisms is available to ensure that the opportunity to initiate change is not restricted.

Where applicable, the legislature is involved in the approval of constitutional changes, in some cases by a special majority in the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

Not all legislatures permit change solely by approval of the legislature. In some jurisdictions, endorsement by the people through a referendum is required. In other cases, other approaches are adopted, such as approval by a majority of states or provinces in federal systems. In these cases, there is a demand for wider public consultation to obtain approval.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of constitution-making and amendment would encompass the following:

Constitutional and other legal provisions permit a range of mechanisms for the initiation of constitutional changes, from initiation by MPs to citizen-initiated proposals.

In some jurisdictions, constitutional and legal provisions ensure that the legislature approves constitution-making and amendment, preferably by a supermajority of the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

In jurisdictions where there are other processes for the approval of constitution-making or amendment, such as a public referendum or approval by states and provinces in a federal system, wider public consultation is required.



The legislature is able to demonstrate, through its practice, that amendments to the constitution can be made, but constitution-making or amendment does not threaten the fundamental democratic provisions of the constitution, including the protection of rights.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional and legal provisions relating to constitution-making and amendment
- Evidence of public consultation on proposals for constitution-making and amendment
- Any practice relating to constitution-making and amendment

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Initiation of proposals for constitution-making and amendment

Constitutional and other legal provisions establish a range of mechanisms for the initiation of proposals for constitution-making and amendment.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislature approval of constitution-making and amendment

There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions establishing that constitution-making and/or amendment is approved by the legislature, preferably by a supermajority of the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

In jurisdictions where there are other processes for the approval of constitution-making or amendment, such as public referenda or approval by states and provinces in a federal system, constitutional or legal provisions or practice demonstrate wide public consultation on the proposals.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 3: Ease of constitution-making or amendment

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Practice demonstrates that, while amendments to the constitution can be made, constitution-making and amendment do not threaten the fundamental democratic provisions of the constitution, including the protection of rights.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.6.3 Legislative procedure

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns all aspects of the processes for the passage of legislation through the legislature (approval processes are covered in dimension 1.6.1). Such processes are reflected in constitutional or other legal provisions, but usually the rules of procedure of the legislature provide details of the processes and expand on constitutional and legislative provisions.

The procedures of the legislature for the passage of legislation should be clear, transparent and readily understood, and allow for the proper consideration and debate of legislation as it progresses through all stages. For bicameral legislatures, there should be clear, well-understood and accepted procedures set by each house for its own consideration of legislation. Each legislature has different approaches to resolving differences in the consideration of legislation between the houses in a bicameral system. These processes should be clear, accepted and manageable, to allow for the resolution of differences between the houses.

In general, for the routine consideration of legislation (see below for procedures for urgent consideration), legislators should have sufficient time and opportunity to be able to reflect on and debate bills that are under consideration before voting on them. Many legislatures have various stages for consideration of a bill (known as 'readings' in some legislatures). There are usually at least two major stages – one for debate on the general principles of a bill and another when the detail of a bill is considered and amendments can be proposed and voted on. It is presumed that an aspect of the process will be referred to a relevant committee for detailed consideration. Such committees should have the power either to recommend amendments or to amend the legislation during committee consideration. This stage allows for direct participation by the public in the legislative process, which should be provided for in the procedures of the legislature, and be reflected in the practice of the legislature with sufficient time allowed for public consultation.

It is recognized that there are circumstances in which bills need to be passed more quickly than the routine process for consideration. These circumstances could include the response to natural disasters, pandemics or acts of terrorism, or to adverse court judgments. Legislatures might be expected to have procedures for the urgent consideration of legislation, which is sometimes called 'fast tracking'. The fast tracking of legislation essentially means that the legislation passes through all the usual stages, but with an expedited timetable. Sometimes an explanation is expected for the urgent consideration of legislation, as well as the provision of opportunities for MPs to debate and vote on the need for urgency. While the urgency may be justifiable, the procedures should still allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny to the extent possible. In some jurisdictions, emergency legislation also may provide for special approaches to the approval of matters that are usually considered by the legislature, for example, the making of delegated legislation or other laws. In cases of urgent or emergency legislation, the legislature should consider other mechanisms for scrutiny, such as post-legislative review or the use of sunset clauses.

This dimension also covers the consideration of delegated legislation. Delegated legislation is secondary legislation made by the executive under the authority of primary legislation. Delegated legislation needs to be made under the authority of and in full compliance with existing law. There parliament has the opportunity to scrutinize (see dimension 1.6.8), debate and approve (or reject) delegated legislation, and legislative or rules of procedures provisions should be in place to provide for such consideration.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of legislative procedure would encompass the following:

There are clear and transparent provisions in the constitution and/or rules of procedure for the passage of legislation through all stages in the legislature. These procedures include the conditions of passage through two houses in a bicameral system, including appropriate mechanisms for the resolution of differences between the houses.

Provisions of the legislature establishing the routine consideration of legislation ensure that the legislature is able to fully deliberate on and debate legislation, and provide the opportunity for MPs to propose and vote on amendments.

The routine process of consideration of legislation and proposals to the legislature for amendments require all legislation to be referred to committees for consideration. This process also includes expert and public consultations

Legislature legitimately has provisions for the urgent (or fast-track) consideration of legislation where required. These provisions include an explanation for such urgent consideration, the opportunity for MPs to debate and vote on urgent legislation and for reasonable scrutiny of legislation even in urgent circumstances.

Delegated legislation is made in accordance with the powers delegated by law. Provisions of the legislature establish that delegated legislation is subject to scrutiny by the legislature, including debate and approval/rejection. The use of emergency powers to make delegated or other legislation prompts the legislature to use other scrutiny mechanisms such as post-legislative review or sunset clauses.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning the passage of legislation through the legislature, including provisions in both houses in a bicameral system
- Statistics on the practice of the legislature in the passage of legislation, such as time spent considering legislation and the numbers of amendments proposed and voted on
- Any practice relating to the resolution of legislative differences between the houses in a bicameral system
- Practice of committees in the consideration of legislation, including the statistics for public participation (for example, the number of submissions or hearings) and the number of proposals for amendment
- Statistics on the use of urgent procedures by the legislature
- Practice relating to the legislature's consideration of delegated legislation

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Clarity, transparency and comprehension of legislative procedure

There is evidence of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions that clearly and transparently provide for the passage of legislation through the legislature, including in each chamber of legislatures with bicameral systems. The procedures are readily understood and accepted by MPs and the public and, in bicameral systems, enable the management and resolution of differences.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Routine consideration of legislation**

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions providing for the routine consideration of legislation. These procedures provide, at a minimum, for debate on the general principles of legislation, and for the opportunity to consider the detail of legislation and to propose and vote on amendments.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Reference to committees**

Provisions of the legislature require all legislation to be referred to committees for detailed consideration, public consultation and proposals for amendment.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Urgent consideration of legislation**

While legislatures have processes for the expedited consideration of legislation, rules of procedure provisions ensure that the circumstances are defined clearly and justified (usually by means of a statement to the legislature) and are subject to debate and amendment and vote by MPs. To the extent possible, the rules of procedure enable proper parliamentary scrutiny, even in the event of fast-tracked or urgent procedures.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Scrutiny of delegated legislation, including when made under emergency powers**

There are constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions providing for the scrutiny of delegated legislation by the legislature, which ensure that the legislature can debate and approve/reject delegated legislation. Where emergency powers are used to make delegated or other legislation, legislative provisions enable other mechanisms, such as post-legislative review or sunset clauses, to be used.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Application of legislative procedures**

The practice of the legislature shows that the majority of legislation is subject to routine processes and that there is no undue reliance on the fast-tracking of legislative procedures.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.6.4 Legislative drafting

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the principles of legislative drafting (also known as legislative technique in some jurisdictions). Legislative drafting is the art of legislating with clarity and effectiveness. The aim of the legislative drafting is, on the one hand, to ensure the unity and coherence of an act with regard to the legal system, and, on the other hand, to enhance the clarity, quality and viability of legislation.

Citizens and those who might be impacted by a law must be able to know their mandates, rights and duties stipulated by law. Good legislative drafting therefore provides legal certainty and equality before the law while making clear the spirit and intent of the legislation, and avoiding any misinterpretation, loopholes or conflicting provisions. In contrast, unclear legislative drafting undermines the applicability and certainty of legislation and, hence the trust of citizens in legislation, and weakens the sense of equality under the law. Clear legislative drafting also aids the legislature in its consideration of legislation as it progresses through the legislature.

This dimension focuses on common elements required to ensure good legislative drafting and, thus, better quality legislation.

The dimension on legislative drafting applies to legislative proposals that are considered by the parliament, as well as amendments to pieces of legislation, subordinate legislation and other legislative instruments.

It is common for the executive to have a specialist legislative drafting office or service available to meet its drafting needs. Consideration needs to be given by the legislature to the availability of legislative drafting resources to MPs, and particularly to opposition, minority party and independent MPs, to assist them in preparing draft legislation for presentation to parliament.

Please see also other dimensions linked to indicator 1.6 on law-making, especially dimension 1.6.7 on publication.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of legislative drafting would encompass the following:

There is evidence of a legislative drafting manual, guidance or similar that sets criteria for clear and effective drafting. This guidance is followed in the drafting of all legislative pieces to be tabled to the parliament. The aim of the guidelines is to assist drafters in their task, not by prescribing rigid rules, but by allowing them to apply the best option for each case according to their own knowledge and experience.

Before developing draft legislation, drafters analyse the proposal and design a solution accordingly. Elements that are considered by the drafter include the necessity of the proposal, its practical implications, the best solution to be found, the existing legislation that affects the subject, scope and content of the proposed draft legislation. This analysis is available in the form of explanatory notes accompanying the legislation and regulatory impact assessment (RIA).

A standard structure for draft legislation is in place, which ensures a high level of consistency within the same jurisdiction. The content of the draft legislation is homogeneous and arranged following a logical order, so that later provisions build upon earlier ones.

Clear, precise and plain language, with no unnecessary jargon or archaic expressions, is used to ensure equality before the law and legal certainty. The drafter considers the addressees of the draft legislation, with the aim of making it more comprehensible to the public.

Legislative drafts use gender-neutral language<sup>29</sup> instead of gender-specific language.

Legislation is amended in a logical order and a coherent manner. Amendments are made in the form of text inserted into the amended legislation. Amending acts follow the structure and terminology of the legislation that is amended.

There are specialist legislative drafting resources available to all MPs, or parliamentary (party) groups, including opposition, minority parties and independent MPs.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Drafting manuals, guidelines and other documents that assist drafters in their task
- A preliminary rationale, reports and impact assessments of proposed legislation
- Evidence of the accessibility of legislative drafting resources, including specialists
- Existing legislation, legislative proposals, amending acts, subordinate legislation and other legislative instruments

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of legislative drafting guidelines

There is evidence of a legislative drafting manual, guidance or similar that sets criteria for clear and effective drafting and assists drafters in their task.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

<sup>29</sup> Also known as 'non-sexist', 'non-gender-specific' and 'inclusive' language.



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### Assessment criterion No. 2: Planning for drafting

There is evidence of a plan for drafting which considers the need for a legislative proposal, its potential adverse implications, its effectiveness and the balance of cost and benefits, including respect for fundamental rights and public liberties. The plan is transparent and accessible, and is in the form of, for example, explanatory notes accompanying the legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Structure and composition of the act

The act follows a standard structure that makes it easy to follow and consistent with other acts.<sup>30</sup> The content of the act is homogeneous<sup>31</sup> and organized in a logical order. Definitions of terms are set out before these terms are used.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 4: Clarity, consistency and unambiguity in drafting

Acts are drafted clearly and in plain language. Ambiguity, vagueness, contradictions and over-generality within the text and with regard to other acts are avoided. All those whose rights and duties are stipulated by an act are able to identify them and understand without ambiguity. The drafting style specifies what type of act it is and whether it is binding.<sup>32</sup> Gender-neutral language is used throughout the act.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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<sup>30</sup> An act usually comprises the following sections: title/heading; contents page; preamble/overview; enacting terms (articles/sections); final provisions; and annexes. Other ways to present the structure include the following: preliminary provisions; principal provisions; general and supplementary provisions; final provisions; and annexes.

<sup>31</sup> Unrelated matters are not addressed under the same act.

<sup>32</sup> This is reflected in the choice of verb and tense.

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**Assessment criterion No. 5: Amending legislation**

To the extent possible, amending acts amend a single act, and specify the act being amended and the purpose of the amendment. Amendments are made in a logical order and are inserted into the act to be amended, not as separate provisions. Amending acts maintain the structure and terminology of the act that is amended and do not contain substantive provisions autonomous to it.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Assessment criterion No. 6: Availability of legislative drafting resources**

Individual MPs or parliamentary (party) groups have resources available for specialist legislative drafting and to assist with the drafting of legislation for presentation to the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Recommendations for change**

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**Sources and further reading**

- European Union (EU), [\*Joint Practical Guide of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for persons involved in the drafting of European Union legislation\*](#) (Luxembourg: EU, 2nd ed., 2015).
- Piedad García-Escudero Márquez, *Manual de técnica legislativa* (Cizur Menor: Thomson Reuters-Civitas, 2011).
- New Zealand Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO), '[\*Principles of clear drafting\*](#)', Drafting Manual.
- United Kingdom Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), '[\*Drafting Guidance\*](#)' (OPC, 2020).
- Helen Xanthaki, *Thornton's Legislative Drafting* (Bloomsbury Professional, 5th ed., 2013).

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## Dimension 1.6.5 Enactment

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which a piece of legislation that has been passed by the legislature and has been supported by the parliament at all stages, in compliance with the legislative process, but which has not yet been enacted, is signed and promulgated and finally becomes law. The proposed laws adopted by the parliament in most jurisdictions require the consent of or signature by the head of state in order to enter into force. Constitutions or equivalent rules provide heads of state with the constitutional power to refuse to give assent to, or to veto, a draft law. Where a head of state can veto legislation, parliament usually has the ability to override the veto. Different jurisdictions provide different grounds for applying veto powers as well as different levels of complexity for overriding them. The nature of the power to refuse to give assent to, or to veto, also varies. In some cases, assent by a head of state is just a formality, in others a head of state has the authority to prevent legislation from being enacted, and even to propose specific amendments to the bill.

Overriding a veto normally requires a super-majority decision in the legislature and the relevant procedure is prescribed in the constitution. In systems where the head of state has the authority to propose specific amendments to the law, as a rule, the legislature is allowed to pass the bill by an ordinary majority if proposed amendments are fully adopted.<sup>33</sup>

Constitutions usually provide for a special procedure and timeline for the signing and promulgation of laws, which can include the number of days for submitting the adopted draft law to the head of state, the number of days for signing the draft or imposing a veto, and for proposing amendments to the parliament. The detailed procedures for overriding a veto are also outlined in legislation or the constitution itself.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of enactment of legislation would encompass the following:

There is a clear constitutional distinction between legislation being passed by the parliament and the enactment of law. Enacting a law is typically marked by the formal signing of a bill by the head of state. Constitutional provisions clearly define procedures for the signature and promulgation of a law, which gives the law final legitimacy.

Where constitutional provisions give the head of state the authority to refuse or withhold assent, or to propose amendments to a proposed law, parliament is also constitutionally authorized to override the veto by, for example, a supermajority, or through the acceptance or rejection of amendments proposed by the head of state.

After parliament overrides a veto, the head of state is obliged to sign and promulgate the law. This provides a mechanism to avoid dead-locks in the adoption of laws.

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<sup>33</sup> Elliot Bulmer, [Presidential Veto Powers](#) (Strömsborg: International IDEA Constitution-Building Primer 14, 2nd ed., International IDEA, 2017).

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the enactment of laws, including signature and promulgation
- Specific articles of the rules of procedures that regulate the procedures and timelines for the submission of passed draft laws to a head of state for signature
- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committees' acts that regulate the overriding of a veto by a head of state

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Clear constitutional framework

The constitutional framework provides a clear procedure for enacting laws. The rules on the signature and promulgation of legislation that has been passed by the parliament as the final stage for giving assent to the law are defined in the constitution or legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Procedures for failure to assent

Where a head of state is equipped with the power to veto (or not assent to) legislation passed by the parliament, there are clear grounds on which the veto power might be exercised, a clear definition of the scope of the veto power and a timeline for submitting suggested amendments where applicable.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Procedures to override a veto or agree to amendments

The constitutional framework provides a clear mandate for parliament to accept amendments proposed by a head of state or to override a head of state's veto with a pre-determined majority. It is within the powers of parliament to

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have the final say in the enactment of legislation, even if a larger-than-usual majority is required for passing the law.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.6.6 Publication

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which laws shall be duly and officially published and made accessible to any interested party. Open and effective access to laws is vital to understanding and applying the rule of law. Laws may only be properly implemented if they are accessible, predictable and clear. Citizens are more likely to comply with laws that they know and understand. If people have efficient, effective and free access to laws and regulations, they are better positioned to exercise their legal rights, plan their actions, and efficiently resolve any problems and disputes that may arise.<sup>34</sup>

A key standard for any democracy should be the provision of free and easy access to current laws, including the publication of laws in journals and official gazettes. In light of modern technological developments, this standard has evolved over past decades to include online access to updated, accessible and searchable information. Legislation shall be published proactively by the relevant state institution, and shall be accessible in a consolidated version including any amendments passed by the legislature. In the case of amending bills passing through the legislature, a consolidated version should be available, including amendments introduced to the legislation, to enable citizens to track the progress of the bill. Although clarity of the text is one of the requirements for any piece of good legislation, it is also reasonable to expect the publication of explanatory notes, the legislators' rationale for the amendment or adoption of certain pieces of legislation accompanying the bill, in order to fully grasp the intention and meaning of the legislation in question and to understand the need for its implementation.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of the publication of legislation would encompass the following:

The law sets out the rules on the publication of legislation passed by the parliament, including the procedure and timeline between the passage and publication of the legislation.

The constitution and/or the law provides for full and effective access to an official collection of laws in a single place and requires legal databases to be kept up to date. Maintaining a comprehensive, accessible and free-of-charge unified website containing all applicable legislation is an obligation for any democratic state.

The legislation is searchable online, organized by category, such as laws and other legislative acts, and by type, date, geographic region, agency, legislative area and sector.

All regulatory and legal repositories are kept up to date. Amendments introduced to legislation are published in a consolidated version, allowing users to access full and up-to-date versions of laws. Best practice may suggest the publication of explanatory notes or rationale for the adoption of legislation

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<sup>34</sup> Renzo Falla Lopez and Valentina Saltane, '[Regulatory Governance in the Open Government Partnership](#)' (Open Government Partnership and World Bank, 2020).

together with the legal act. This practice may be particularly useful for ensuring the proper interpretation of laws by the judiciary and/or other entities applying relevant legal provisions in practice.

Ideally, laws are accessible to the public through publication in an official publishing space before they enter into force.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the publication of laws
- Specific articles of the rules of procedures or other laws that regulate the publication of laws
- Journals and gazettes and/or a unified website or registry where law is published
- Consolidated versions of the laws are accessible on an official website or in an official journal

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for publishing legislation

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitution, laws, rules of procedures/standing orders of parliament) that defines basic rules for the publication of legislation, including the procedure and timeline between the passage and publication of the legislation. Ideally, laws become effective only after being duly and officially published.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Established practice of publishing legislation

Legislation is available in a single place, such as a website or registry, which is regularly updated and which can be accessed by the public free of charge.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 3: Publishing of consolidated versions of laws

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In addition to the publication of the initial versions of laws, all amendments passed to existing laws are published in the same space, are integrated into the original text and are provided in a consolidated and user-friendly format, so that users can easily access the latest complete versions of laws, and track amendments made to the legislation at different stages.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**



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## Dimension 1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny (PLS)

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the parliament has the authority to carry out post-legislative scrutiny (PLS). PLS is an important tool for ensuring that laws are implemented effectively, carrying out rigorous scrutiny on the implementation of laws, and assessing the impact of legislation. It also helps to review the interpretation and application of a given piece of legislation by courts, and to understand how legal practitioners and citizens apply its provisions. PLS therefore contributes to the identification of legislative gaps and shortcomings in the application of legislation, and to the promotion of targeted and evidence-based law-making. Moreover, PLS enables legislators to review the secondary and delegated legislation associated with the primary laws from which they derive, thus ensuring more comprehensive scrutiny of the implementation of laws. Post-legislative scrutiny can be considered as both a legislative and oversight tool, and its assessment is also recommended as a part of indicator 1.7 on oversight.

PLS can be an inclusive process that ensures the engagement of all relevant actors, such as political parties, civil society, academia, experts and citizens. Stakeholder engagement enables parliaments to access additional sources of information, increases the credibility of parliamentary work and promotes public trust in legislative institutions.

To ensure effective PLS, it is important to establish procedures for the systematic monitoring of the implementation and consequences of legislation in the rules of procedures. Such procedures contribute to the clarity and predictability of the process. They guarantee transparency, define the relevant parliamentary bodies responsible for carrying out PLS, establish the optimal moment for conducting PLS, and enable parliament to allocate the necessary human, financial and administrative resources for PLS. However, even when there are no clear procedures for conducting PLS, parliament is still capable, within its general oversight mandate, of overseeing the implementation of legislation through the provision of timely access to governmental information, the conduct of hearings, the collection of information from relevant stakeholders and the issue of findings and recommendations. Such scrutiny is still of value.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework for PLS in the country's legal system (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament). The legal framework specifies the parliamentary bodies (standing committee/s or other dedicated bodies) responsible for conducting PLS, and defines the mandate of the committee/dedicated bodies, transparent mechanisms for the selection of the legislation to be reviewed, and clear processes for conducting reviews and issuing recommendations.

Post-legislative scrutiny is an established oversight mechanism within the legislature and is part of parliamentary scrutiny, which is conducted regularly.

The committee/dedicated bodies are supported by relevant human, financial and administrative resources in order to conduct PLS. This entails regularly-trained and skilled staff authorized to cooperate with all

relevant institutions and stakeholders, in order to collect information and draft preliminary and final PLS reports.

PLS is an inclusive process, in which all relevant stakeholders, such as political parties, civil society groups, academia, experts and citizens are able to participate. It includes an inclusive and non-partisan process for the identification and determination of the pieces of legislation to be reviewed in a PLS process.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- The legal framework defining the rules for PLS activities (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament)
- The availability of trained committee personnel, and administrative and financial resources to carry out PLS
- PLS reports and recommendations issued by committee/dedicated body/bodies
- Monitoring reports on the implementation of PLS recommendations

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for conducting PLS

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament) that defines basic rules for conducting post-legislative scrutiny.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Established practice for conducting PLS

There is a designated parliamentary body (or bodies) or committee which acts in accordance with the existing legal framework (or without it, if no formal framework exists), applies PLS as part of the general parliamentary oversight mandate and conducts PLS on a regular basis, and issues findings and recommendations.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3 Availability of a supportive system to conduct PLS**

Parliament is equipped with adequate human, financial and administrative resources to carry out PLS, including regularly-trained and skilled personnel.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Stakeholder engagement**

Post-legislative scrutiny is an open, transparent and inclusive process. Established practice in parliaments ensures the participation of all relevant actors, such as political parties, civil society actors, academia, experts and citizens.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Defining terms of reference for PLS**

Each PLS inquiry has clearly defined terms of reference, outlining the scope of the PLS inquiry, the legislation being analysed and the main questions relevant to assessing the implementation and impact of the legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Monitoring of implementation**

Based on the findings and recommendations of the committees/bodies responsible for conducting PLS and/or the plenary, the relevant committees/bodies monitor the status of implementation of the PLS recommendations and regularly interact with representatives of the government department(s) and other stakeholders on their follow-up to the PLS findings and recommendations.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading:**

- Franklin De Vrieze, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), '[Principles of Post-Legislative Scrutiny by Parliaments](#)' (2018).
- Franklin De Vrieze, WFD, '[Post-Legislative Scrutiny in Europe](#)' (2020).

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## Indicator 1.7 – Oversight

Parliamentary oversight is one of the three core functions of parliament and an essential element of the exercise of democracy. Directly-elected houses of a legislature are mandated to hold governments accountable on behalf of the people, and to ensure that there are checks and balances on the executive. The fundamental objectives of parliamentary oversight are to promote the freedoms of the people, as well as to contribute to improving the quality of governance, law-making and representation.

Parliamentary oversight becomes increasingly relevant when public trust in representative democracy decreases. The people call for effective action by their elected representatives to ensure that governments perform at the best of their abilities. Societies wish to see their parliaments hold governments to account, identify legislative measures to remedy their concerns, make well-justified budget allocations and find effective policy solutions. The oversight process includes conducting enquiries, obtaining information from the executive, summoning officials, organizing hearings, holding debates and conducting inquiries.

Parliamentary oversight<sup>35</sup> should be rigorous, systematic, constructive, and evidence-based. Legislatures are authorized to scrutinize policies of the executive, including military, security and intelligence services. Parliaments are mandated to monitor secondary, delegated or subordinate legislation, as well as scrutinize appointments to executive posts. Oversight is a transparent and open process that involves the participation of relevant stakeholders and the general public.

The assessment of the oversight indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.7.1 Election, confidence, no-confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministries
- 1.7.2 Parliamentary access to information from government
- 1.7.3 Summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees
- 1.7.4 Summoning officials in chamber (interpellations)
- 1.7.5 Questions
- 1.7.6 Hearings
- 1.7.7 Committees of inquiry

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<sup>35</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Global Parliamentary Report 2017 – Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account](#) (IPU and UNDP, 2017); Hironori Yamamoto, [Tools for parliamentary oversight A comparative study of 88 national parliaments](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2007); Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Evaluating parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliaments](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2008).

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## Dimension 1.7.1 Election, confidence, no-confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministers

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which parliament has the power to elect a head of state/government, to vote for confidence or no confidence in the executive, to censure or impeach a head of state or government and/or ministers. As the system of checks and balances in democratic societies ensures that no one enjoys absolute power, parliaments have a constitutional mandate to hold governments to account and, in some systems, also to confirm executive appointments. While various constitutional systems provide for different mandates enabling parliaments to elect head of states/governments, and to vote on confidence motions, all democratic legislatures have the power to remove heads of state or government through a constitutionally-established process of impeachment for the breach of constitutional duty or in the event of serious misconduct.

The parliamentary authority to hold a vote of confidence or no confidence in the executive is outlined in constitutional law. The vote of confidence represents the right of directly-elected parliamentarians to express their support for a person or a group. The notion of a vote of confidence in the executive varies across systems. For the purposes of this dimension, a 'vote of confidence' refers to parliament's power to establish a cabinet, typically immediately after parliamentary elections. Parliament is authorized to withdraw confidence if it considers that the government or some of its members are failing to carry out their duties. A successful vote of no confidence has the potential to replace all or part of the government. In parliamentary systems, government tenure usually depends on the continued support of the legislature and, therefore, parliament has the power to dissolve the government by a vote of no confidence where necessary.

In presidential systems, where heads of state or government are directly elected, they are still accountable to citizens between presidential elections. Even in systems where a legislature has no power to exercise a vote of confidence in the executive, it still has mechanisms to impeach heads of state or government officials/ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or in cases of unlawful action. The removal of the highest executive officials from office is a drastic measure and, in some cases, may lead to the dissolution of parliament, triggering early elections.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of election, confidence, no confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministers would encompass the following:

There is a clear separation of powers established in a country's constitution or legal precedent that codifies the mandate of the parliament for the election of, vote of confidence or no confidence in, or censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers. The procedure for applying these powers is clearly established in legislation and in practice.

Heads of state and government/ministers are accountable to the people through the parliament. Parliament has mechanisms to censure and/or impeach the head of state or leader of government or government officials/ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or in cases of unlawful action.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the processes of the election of, confidence or no confidence in, and censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate the procedures for the election of, confidence or no confidence in, and censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers
- Examples of a decision of the parliament or its committees on confidence or no confidence in, censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and or minister

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Election of a head of state

The constitution and law set clear criteria and rules for the election of a head of state. In systems where heads of state are elected by the parliament, the law clearly defines the methods for nominating and electing a candidate (secret or open ballot), as well as the minimal quorum for electing a head of state.

In systems where heads of state are elected through popular elections, there is evidence of the constitutional provisions and law regarding the election, mandate and roles of the head of state.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Vote of confidence/approval of ministers

In systems where the government is established by a parliamentary vote of confidence, the constitution and the law provide for clear rules and criteria for such a vote. The constitution sets out rules on the nomination of the candidate for a head of government and members of cabinet, proceedings for the debate of a proposed governmental programme, deadlines and the minimum quorum necessary for gaining parliamentary confidence in the new cabinet.

In systems where the establishment of a government does not require a vote of confidence, parliament approves ministers and cabinet members individually. There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions that set out clear rules for the submission of candidates for approval, hearing procedures and a minimal quorum for final decision.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Dissolving government (vote of no confidence and censure)**

There are constitutional or legal provisions by which only a popularly elected house has the power to bring down a government. The law enables parliament to hold a vote of no confidence or to file a motion of censure as a procedure to remove the government from office (except in presidential and semi-presidential types of government). In order to succeed, such a procedure requires at least a majority of legislators. A vote of no confidence or a motion of censure is debated transparently and the public has an opportunity to observe the entire process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Legal framework on impeachment**

There is evidence of clear constitutional or legal provisions by which the legislature has mechanisms to address serious misconduct by a head of state and government/ministers, and to impeach a head of state or government or ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or for unlawful conduct. The constitution and law clearly establish the grounds and a clear procedure for an inquiry/investigation into the misconduct. The law sets the minimum votes needed for the initiation of the impeachment motion, as well as the number of votes necessary for the final decision on impeachment.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Implementation in practice**

The application of the procedure for casting a vote of confidence/no confidence in, or impeaching or censuring a head of state or government or government officials in practice is clear and consistent. In cases where such mechanisms have been applied by parliament, their implementation was in strict compliance with the relevant constitutional or legal provisions.



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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.7.2 Parliamentary access to information from government

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which parliament has the authority to exercise its oversight mandate by obtaining documents and information from the executive. This mandate is usually exercised by individual MPs, political groups and committees, depending on the oversight tool that parliament chooses to apply.

Many legislatures are legally empowered to access any information, including classified information, held by the executive. MPs have the right to submit questions to the government, prime minister and ministers, as well as the right to have their questions answered in a complete and timely manner either orally in plenaries or in writing. Parliamentary committees also have the right to visit government institutions and other sites to examine details of the implementation of various programmes.

In many systems, parliamentary committees are key units that have significant responsibility for oversight. In parallel to the rights of individual MPs, committees are granted additional powers to obtain any information from the executive either for the purpose of accountability or for law-making.

The rules of procedure of parliament establish clear and effective procedures for obtaining information from the executive and submitting questions or letters to the government, including specific timelines for responding to such questions/letters. The law may also prescribe rules that limit access to classified information, such as state secrets (requests for information from military, security and intelligence services). In these cases, requests for classified information may be limited to a special committee or to individual members of parliament having the necessary security clearances or authority to oversee these areas. Any limitation on access to classified information, such as state secrets (requesting information from military, security and intelligence services) should be precisely defined by law.

The process of obtaining information from the executive shall be rigorous and systematic. Parliament shall have effective procedures for the reception of timely responses from the executive and a designated parliamentary body (mostly a committee on rules and procedures) may be authorized to monitor compliance of the executive with relevant provisions of the law. Such a body or similar unit should keep records of the number of submissions, the number or timeliness of responses, the number of delayed responses, justifications for delays, and the percentage of questions answered within the statutory deadline. The collection of such data is useful for monitoring the overall accountability of the executive and individual ministries. In certain legal systems, the failure of a minister to provide requested information to the parliament might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of a minister or a government official or the determination of a breach of privilege.

In many countries, the authority and powers of the parliament to obtain access to information from the government is supported by provisions for citizens to make freedom of information (FOI) requests to the government. Such FOI arrangements should cover the information held by the government, any exceptions (for example, for national security) should be narrowly defined, and failure to provide information should be subject to appeal to an independent body.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of parliamentary access to information from government would encompass the following:

There is a clear constitutional or legal mandate of the parliament, parliamentary committees and of individual MPs to obtain information (including classified information, in line with the law) from the executive, and ministers/ministries are legally obliged to provide information in a full and timely manner.

The law or rules of procedure provide for a specific timeline and procedures obliging the executive to provide the parliament with information. These procedures could include question time in the plenary, and the provision of information to parliamentary committees or of written responses to individual MPs.

FOI provisions support access to information by the parliament.

A relevant parliamentary body is mandated to monitor governmental responses to parliamentary requests for information, and keeps track of matters such as delays, failures to submit information and justifications for delays.

Systematic failure of a minister or other government representative to submit requested information to the parliament might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of the minister or government representative, or the taking of other parliamentary action.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate parliamentary access to information from government
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate procedures for the submission of information requests to the executive, as well as timelines and procedures by which government agencies should respond to such requests
- Specific articles of law that regulate the legal or political responsibility of a minister or an official for systematically failing to provide information to parliament
- Parliamentary or committee reports on parliamentary access to information from government, which might include the number of requests submitted, the number of timely and full responses, the number of delayed responses and justifications for delays.

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### **Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the authority of the parliament to obtain information from the executive**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which parliament, its committees and individual MPs are authorized to obtain information from the executive through the submission of written requests. These include provisions on freedom of information that ensure open access to citizens (including MPs) to government information.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the authority of the parliament to visit government institutions**

There are constitutional or legal provisions by which parliament, its committees and individual MPs are authorized to visit government institutions and other sites to examine in detail the implementation of various programmes or for other oversight purposes.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Obligation of the executive to provide information to parliament**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which the executive is obliged to provide requested information to parliament or to individual MPs in a full and timely manner, in writing or during the oral question time in the plenary.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Responsibility for limiting parliament's access to information**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which a minister or other government representative might be held responsible for systematically failing to provide information to the parliament or to MPs. Such a failure might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of a minister or other government representative, or for taking other parliamentary action established in legal provisions, in line with the type of political system in place.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Consistency of implementation**

There is evidence of a rigorous and systematic process for the collection of information from the executive by parliament, committees or individual MPs. Parliament keeps record of the percentage of timely and full responses, monitors justification for delays and follows up on failures to provide information.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 1.7.3 Summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the authority of parliament to summon government representatives, including members of cabinet in committees (the summoning of ministers and other government representatives in chamber or plenary, or 'interpellation', is covered in dimension 1.7.4.). Scrutinizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the executive, as well as verifying the compliance of its actions with relevant policies and laws is a core responsibility of the legislature. To assist the parliament in fulfilling this responsibility, it needs certain powers to obtain information from the executive. In addition to the authority to obtain information from the executive and to conduct inquiries and investigations, parliaments have the power to summon ministers and other representatives of the executive, including members of the cabinet and senior officials of the military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

Summoning powers rest with the legislature and are usually delegated by law to parliamentary committees. According to the National Democratic Institute, "committees shall have the power to summon persons, papers and records, and this power shall extend to witnesses and evidence from the executive branch, including officials"<sup>36</sup>. If this power is not enjoyed by permanent committees, it shall be enjoyed by temporary committees at a minimum.<sup>37</sup>

The necessary procedures for summoning ministers or other government representatives should be defined in the rules of procedure. These rules should include detailed regulations ensuring transparency, stakeholder participation and the rights of the parliamentary minority. Committees should have available staff with the expertise necessary to provide quality support in the process of summoning government representatives.

It should be recognized that effective parliamentary oversight is the result of the joint efforts of MPs, civil society and other oversight institutions, with the support of the general public.<sup>38</sup> The collection of a wide range of relevant evidence contributes to the effectiveness of oversight and the questioning of ministers or other government representatives when summoned. Therefore, the engagement of the audit/oversight institutions, civil society and other external actors constitutes added value for the overall process. The law may envisage different procedures for the summoning of military, law enforcement and intelligence officials or requests for classified information.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework permitting parliament and its committees to summon government representatives, including cabinet members and those in charge of military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

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<sup>36</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), *Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures* (CPA, 2017).

<sup>37</sup> National Democratic Institute (NDI), *Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures* (NDI, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Global Parliamentary Report 2017 – Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account* (IPU and UNDP, 2017).

Parliamentary rules provide detailed regulations for summoning ministers or other government representatives, and for ensuring transparency, stakeholder engagement and the rights of the opposition.

Established practice entails the collection of a wide range of evidence and information from relevant sources/stakeholders prior to the summoning of ministers or other government representatives to ensure the high quality and effectiveness of oversight and questioning.

Committees are equipped with qualified staff to support the process of effectively summoning and questioning government representatives.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the mandate of parliament to summon government officials, including cabinet members
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate all aspects of the summoning of government officials
- Committee records/reports on the summoning of government officials
- Committee records on preparation materials for summoning government officials (information/evidence)
- The percentage of committee meetings that address the summoning of officials per year

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework

The law provides for a clearly defined framework mandating parliament and its committees to summon government representatives, including cabinet members and those in charge of military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Summoning process

Parliamentary rules of procedure provide detailed regulations to ensure transparency, stakeholder participation and the rights of the opposition when exercising the process of summoning ministers or other government representatives. Access to a wide range of evidence and information from relevant stakeholders prior to summoning is guaranteed by the law.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Established practice for summoning government representatives**

Parliament has an established and consistent practice for summoning ministers and other government representatives. Ministers and other officials appear before the parliamentary committees when invited. They are obliged to appear personally and cannot be substituted by staff members.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Established practice of collecting information/evidences**

There is evidence of an established practice of collecting a wide range of evidence and information from relevant stakeholders prior to the summoning of government officials to ensure high quality of oversight and questioning.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources and qualified staff**

The parliamentary committees are equipped with the resources and qualified staff necessary to support the effective process of summoning and questioning government representatives.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					



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**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.7.4 Summoning officials in chamber (interpellations)

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the legislature has the power to summon government officials, including the prime minister, ministers and other officials in the chamber. Different mechanisms are used in different systems for defining the mandate of parliament to summon officials in plenary.

Summoning officials in chamber (interpellation) is a valuable instrument to enable parliament and MPs to publicly express their opinions and conduct effective oversight. Interpellations are written requests for information from the executive by a group of MPs or a political group, with the intention of launching a debate. After submitting a motion on interpellation, government officials, including the prime minister and ministers, are required to respond to the request or question in person in the plenary. In contrast to ordinary questions, interpellations address matters of national rather than local importance. Interpellation is distinguished from 'question time' (see dimension 1.7.5) and a 'no-confidence vote' (see dimension 1.7.1), as it involves separate procedures. The number of MPs required to launch an interpellation procedure varies from one country to another. Some parliaments also have established regular periods for interpellation, for example, once a week or once a month, while others use other instruments, such as a 'topical hour' that can be placed on the agenda by any parliamentary (party) group.

As a result of interpellation or debate, parliament can issue a censure motion, or a resolution expressing parliament's opinion on the subject of the debate. Such debates may even result in a no-confidence motion seeking a political sanction. Motions rarely result in the collapse of a government, nevertheless they are still an important tool for attracting public attention to issues of concern. Some legislatures do not have an interpellation procedure. It may be covered in other ways such as requests for written or oral questions of the government or motions of censure or no confidence of the government or individual ministers.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of summoning officials in chamber (interpellations) would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional framework authorizing parliament to summon government representatives in chamber/the plenary. MPs, political groups or parliamentary committees are mandated to initiate debates on matters of concern and to question executive officials.

Parliament can launch debates on issues of its own choice by using interpellation (or alternatives) or questions for a debate. Parliamentary rules define the procedure for holding such debates and the law obliges executive officials to respond to interpellation in person in the plenary.

The law defines clear procedures for interpellation, including initiation, timeframe, guaranteed speaking time for the opposition and the possibility to resume a debate on a motion or a resolution. Debates can be held on issues or questions that the government failed to answer or to which it did not respond fully within the established deadline.

The summoning of government officials in the plenary is a significant part of parliamentary work and takes place on a regular basis.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the summoning of officials in chamber (interpellations)
- The ratio of the time devoted in the parliamentary plenary to carrying out oversight through debate to that devoted to law-making
- Example of motions on the initiation of interpellation
- The number of appearances of cabinet members in parliamentary chamber for interpellation or summons during the year

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is a constitutional framework authorizing MPs, political groups and parliamentary committees to summon government representatives in chamber (interpellations) on matters of concern. Parliament can launch debates on issues of its own choice by using interpellation (or other instruments) or questions for a debate. Parliamentary rules define procedures for holding such debates and the law obliges executive officials to respond to interpellation in person in the plenary.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislative framework

There is a legal framework secured in the parliamentary rules providing clear procedures for summoning officials in chamber, including initiation, timeframe, guaranteed speaking time for the opposition and the possibility to resume debate on a motion or a resolution. MPs can participate in debates as members of a political group or as independent MPs. Debates can be held on issues or questions that the government has failed to answer or to which it has failed to provide a full response within the established deadline.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Established practice**

Parliament summons government officials in chamber regularly and consistently. The procedure for interpellation (or similar instruments) is rigorously used and members of the cabinet or the other government representative appear before the chamber upon the request of MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [\*Global Parliamentary Report 2017 – Parliamentary oversight: Parliament’s power to hold government to account\*](#) (IPU and UNDP, 2017).
- Hironori Yamamoto, [\*Tools for parliamentary oversight: A comparative study of 88 national parliaments\*](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2007).

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## Dimension 1.7.5 Questions

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines provisions by which members of parliament are authorized to submit oral and written questions to officials of the executive, and to receive answers. Questions are fundamental tools for exercising oversight. The practice of submitting both oral and written questions is in place across parliaments.

Oral questions allow MPs to address the prime minister, ministers or officials publicly with regard to politically acute topics, while written questions are a useful tool to directly approach an official or minister and collect more detailed information, which is not otherwise available.

Oral questions, including ‘question time’ or ‘prime minister’s hour’ or ‘ministers’ hour’ regularly take place in many parliaments. Often the parliamentary agenda sets a specific period of time for ministers to respond to questions from members. The frequency and format of the question period varies across countries. Members are allowed to ask ‘supplementary’ questions, where the response does not provide full information. The presiding officer has a substantial role during oral questions, and oral question time is often a dynamic period. Maintaining the balance among political parties, managing the floor and setting a constructive tone of debate are the responsibility of the speaker, who should be given the necessary authority by the rules of procedure to exercise this responsibility (see dimension 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer).

Written questions are the most used oversight tool across parliaments. They enable MPs to collect more detailed information on matters of interest from any government representative and agency, ranging from national or policy issues to matters concerning a member’s constituency. Rules of procedure establish the guidance for submitting written questions, deadlines for providing answers and possible sanctions for breaching this obligation.

The meaning of the term ‘written question’ varies across countries. It usually refers to a category of questions posed in writing that require written answers, though some parliaments allow the authors of written questions to request either written or oral answers. Parliamentarians can request the government to provide oral answers to written questions that remain unanswered. In some cases, unanswered questions become the subject of interpellations.<sup>39</sup>

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of questions would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional or equivalent provision authorizing members of parliament to submit both oral and written questions to the government and officials of the executive. The executive is obliged to respond to these questions in a timely manner.

Rules of procedure provide clear regulations for question time, prime minister’s hour or other forms of oral question opportunities, which allow members to put questions to government and ministers on matters of

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<sup>39</sup> Hironori Yamamoto, [Tools for parliamentary oversight: A comparative study of 88 national parliaments](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2007).

political urgency. MPs can ask supplementary questions following the initial question, to seek clarification on points that the government may wish to keep vague or not address at all.

The rules of procedure provide the speaker or president of the chamber with the authority and obligation to fairly manage floor time in the plenary, allocate an adequate amount of speaking time to the opposition and maintain a constructive atmosphere during the procedure.

The constitution and rules of procedure authorize members to submit written questions to the executive. The addressee is obliged to respond fully and in a timely manner, in compliance with the requirements of the law. Breaching this requirement of the law might result in interpellation or a debate with the intention of sanctioning the executive authority.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the authority of members of parliament to pose oral and written questions to government, and the obligation for the executive to respond to those questions
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate the details of the holding of ‘question time’, ‘prime minister’s hour’, the timeline for responding to written questions, and sanctions for breaching these responsibilities
- The percentage of time that parliament dedicates to oral questions in comparison with other oversight activities
- Reports on the percentage of full and timely responses by executive officials to MPs’ questions
- Evidence from the parliamentary records demonstrating that the speaker fairly manages floor time in the plenary, by allocating an adequate amount of speaking time to the opposition and maintaining a constructive atmosphere during the procedure

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal framework for the right to ask questions

A constitutional or legal framework provides for a clear right of members of parliament to pose oral or written questions to the government and ministers, who are then obliged to respond in a timely and full manner. Failure to provide answers to written questions sent by MPs can result in sanctions for ministers/executive representatives.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Detailed procedures for questions

A legal framework establishes detailed procedures for both oral and written questions to be posed to the government. The procedures include the frequency of holding 'question time' or 'prime minister's hour' or 'ministerial hour', permission for members to ask questions on any policy issue and 'supplementary questions', and the authority to and obligation for the speaker to manage the floor fairly during question time.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice regarding procedures for questions**

Posing questions, both oral and written, to executive officials/ministers is a permanent part of parliamentary life. Practice demonstrates that the procedures for asking questions are applied consistently and the speaker manages the plenary floor fairly, by allocating a fair portion of time to the opposition and maintaining a constructive atmosphere during these periods. Members of the executive respond in a timely way to both written and oral questions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.7.6 Hearings

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions in parliamentary rules and practice for parliamentary hearings to be held as an important and powerful tool for a parliamentary committee to exchange information among parliamentarians, obtain data and opinions, seek evidence from a wide range of individuals, and thus oversee the policies and actions of the executive branch. Apart from the reception of written submissions, hearings are the most important way in which committees can inform themselves on a topic and exercise both legislative and oversight roles. The active participation of the parliamentary opposition in the hearings is vital for ensuring rigorous oversight. Hearings help parliament to make informed analyses/decisions and to supplement government-supplied reports with information obtained from other sources.<sup>40</sup>

Hearings allow for broad public engagement which is fundamental for participatory parliamentary processes and which ensures the development of evidence-based, sound and relevant recommendations. Committee hearings are held on parliamentary premises, as well as outside the parliament, where appropriate and justified. There is the presumption that committee hearings are open to the public, and any exceptions (such as a valid need to hear confidential evidence) shall be clearly defined and provided for in the rules of procedure.

In order to fully exercise their oversight powers, parliamentary committees need strong administrative capacities in addition to their legal mandate.

When planning a hearing, a committee needs to ensure that the purpose of the hearing is clearly defined, committee members are well-informed, transparency is provided, the format of the hearing is in line with its objectives, all stakeholders are invited, and that an adequate agenda is published in advance.

It is also important that the results of the committee hearing are properly documented (ideally, they are published as a transcript of the hearing) and committee conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations that result from the hearings, are made public.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of hearings would encompass the following:

The parliament and its committees have a distinct legal mandate to conduct hearings, invite a wide range of individuals and experts and collect evidence in addition to that provided by the executive, and thus effectively oversee the policies and actions of the government.

The law or rules of procedure provide clear rules and procedures with regard to committee hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.

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<sup>40</sup> Hironori Yamamoto, [Tools for parliamentary oversight A comparative study of 88 national parliaments](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2007).



The law or rules of procedure provide for the openness of committee meetings to the public. Provisions allowing committees to close meetings when necessary, for example, to protect individual privacy or national security, are clearly defined.

Parliament regularly carries out hearings, and ensures that the meeting agenda is duly approved and published, the relevant stakeholders are engaged, and that the respective proceedings or conclusions are produced and published.

There are provisions for hearings to be held outside the parliamentary precinct, where appropriate and justified.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate committee hearings
- Specific articles of rules of procedure that regulate the details of hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.
- Committee reports of conducted hearings

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which a parliamentary committee carries out hearings. Parliaments thus have procedures for holding hearings and receiving submissions from the public, which are recorded as part of parliamentary proceedings.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules on organizing hearings

The law or rules of procedure provide clear rules and procedures with regard to committee hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Rules on the selection of a venue for a hearing**

The law or rules of procedure provide for hearings to be held on parliamentary premises, as well as outside the parliament, where appropriate and justified.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Consistency of implementation**

There is evidence of a rigorous and regular process of conducting committee hearings with the participation of stakeholders, which ensures that hearings cover diverse perspectives. Committee hearings are open to the public, unless there is a legitimate reason to close the meeting. Committee conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations, are produced and published.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.7.7 Committees of inquiry

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines provisions by which parliament has investigative powers enabling it to inquire into an issue independently and investigate possible maladministration or/and alleged misconduct by government officials through the establishment of a parliamentary committee of inquiry (PCI). Although parliamentary investigative powers often borrow tools from legal proceedings, they are political rather than legal processes. Parliamentary inquiries are fact-finding proceedings and seek to place an issue high on the political agenda.<sup>41</sup> This dimension is related to dimension 1.4.4 which covers the role of committees more generally. A PCI is a specific committee process to address areas of particular government maladministration or failure.

The rules for conducting parliamentary committee inquiries vary considerably. Parliament can hold inquiries via permanent committees or establish ad hoc committees, specifically mandated to conduct a particular investigation within a pre-defined scope. Parliament shall be mandated to conduct in-depth investigations of possible misconduct by a government through PCIs. The PCIs can therefore summon officials/private individuals, obtain written and oral evidence, and assess all relevant information and documentation provided by governmental, judicial, administrative and private institutions.

A PCI is usually set up by the chamber, with the mandate to investigate a particular matter, and ceases to function upon submission of a final report. Committees of inquiry may conduct fairly intense investigations over a relatively short period of time. PCIs have the potential to reveal facts that may be uncomfortable for the government.<sup>42</sup> The inquiry may result in findings regarding the responsibility of senior government officials, cabinet members, or even in impeachment. The law shall not contain excessive barriers to the launch of an inquiry, or unduly limit the mandate of parliament to investigate possible misconduct or a policy failure. Political participation in such inquiries should be proportional to political representation in the legislature, and the role of the opposition in the PCI shall be guaranteed by law.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of committees of inquiry would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework to set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry (constitution, rules of procedure, laws). Parliament is thereby empowered to investigate possible misconduct and policy failures. A committee of inquiry is set up by the parliament with the mandate to investigate a particular matter, and ceases to function upon submission of a final report. PCIs ensure an inclusive process and proportional representation of political groups.

PCIs have the power to summon officials and witnesses, obtain necessary information/documentation from government and private institutions, conduct hearings and issue findings and recommendations.

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<sup>41</sup> Eva-Maria Poptcheva, [Parliament's committees of inquiry and special committees](#) (European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Evaluating Parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliaments](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2008).

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Parliamentary inquiry is a transparent process, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances (such as matters of national security, disclosure of confidential documents or private information).

Findings of the inquiry may result in findings regarding the responsibility of senior government officials, cabinet members, and even in impeachment.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedures of the parliament or laws that regulate the setting up of a committee of inquiry
- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedures of the parliament or laws that guarantee proportional participation of political groups
- Specific articles of laws that define responsibilities and sanctions for the unlawful refusal to appear before a PCI and provide information
- PCI reports and recommendations
- The availability of trained personnel, administrative and financial resources to carry out a parliamentary inquiry

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, laws) that defines basic rules for setting up a committee of inquiry. Parliament has powers to investigate possible misconduct and policy failures. The proportional participation of political groups in the inquiry is secured by law or rules of procedure.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers of PCIs

PCIs have the power to summon ministers and other government representatives and witnesses, obtain necessary information/documentation from government and private institutions, conduct hearings and issue findings and recommendations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Transparency of inquiry**

Parliamentary inquiry is a transparent process, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances (such as matters of national security, disclosure of confidential documents or private information). The general public can observe the process in person and/or through media or other means.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Outcome of an inquiry**

An inquiry can result in findings of political responsibility for governance failings by ministers and cabinet members, or in impeachment.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources for conducting inquiries**

Parliamentary committees of inquiry are equipped with the trained personnel, administrative and financial resources necessary to support a parliamentary inquiry process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.8 – Budget

Annual budget legislation and any associated legislation concerned with government revenue raising and expenditure are among the most important pieces of legislation considered by the legislature. It is a central theme in democratic systems of government for control over the raising and spending of public funds to be overseen and approved by the legislature<sup>43</sup> on behalf of the citizens. Whereas the raising of revenue is usually seen as part of the normal legislative process, the spending of funds constitutes a special function. A number of parliaments therefore have separate finance (raising) and budget (spending) committees.

This indicator concerns the role of the legislature in its engagement with the budget process at all stages of the budget cycle before, during and after the passage of the annual budget through the legislature. It is recognized that there are two broad phases to parliamentary consideration of the budget: consideration and approval of the government's budget (ex-ante review) and monitoring of expenditure (ex-post).

This indicator therefore includes the full parliamentary process for consideration of the budget – its receipt, examination and scrutiny, possible amendment and final approval. The involvement of the legislature does not end once the budget has been approved. The legislature remains informed about, and plays a role in the scrutiny of and control over the budget after it has been passed. The bodies that assist the parliament in this role are the public accounts committee and the supreme audit institution (or however these are referred to in different jurisdictions). These bodies have very detailed roles with regard to budget scrutiny, which are covered in this indicator.

It is also recognized that budgetary knowledge and scrutiny are specialized areas. Parliament needs support in the form of expert assistance to undertake budget scrutiny. This indicator refers to how such expert support can be available to the legislature, and recognizes that this role can also assist civil society with understanding budgetary issues and the impact of such issues on them.

The assessment of the budget indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.8.1 Formulation, examination, amendment and approval
- 1.8.2 Ex-post control
- 1.8.3 Public accounts committee
- 1.8.4 Expert support
- 1.8.5 Supreme audit institution

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<sup>43</sup> See also Dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy, which refers to the role of the legislature in approving its own budget, which may or may not be part of the national budget process.

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## Dimension 1.8.1 Formulation, examination and approval

Indicator: 1.8 Budget

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns all aspects of the process for legislative consideration and approval of budgetary legislation, and particularly of the annual budget. It reflects the principle that one of the most important oversight functions of parliament is to exercise control over the expenditure of the executive. The draft budget represents the executive's statement of priorities and commitments, and can include both revenue and expenditure proposals (although this is not the case in all parliaments). However, only parliament can authorize its approval.

The process of legislative consideration of the budget commences with the formulation of the budget and its presentation to parliament. The budget is then examined and deliberated by the legislature, may be amended as a result of the examination, and is finally approved by the legislature. It should be noted that the parliamentary budget, subject to approval by the legislature, may or may not be part of the national budget process.

In some jurisdictions, the formulation of a budget is largely the responsibility of the executive, and the parliament is, in general, not extensively involved in this part of the process. However, in other jurisdictions, the parliament, as well as civil society actors, have a more substantial role in the process of formulating the budget. This is more desirable, as it enables parliament to influence the shape of the budget, including its impact on different social groups.<sup>44</sup> It also can assist with the ultimate passage of the budget through the legislature. Sufficient time must be allocated for such consultations in the rules and respected in practice.

The primary responsibility for parliament in many jurisdictions commences when the budget is presented to the parliament by the executive. To assist parliament with its consideration of the budget, the budget should be accompanied by detailed information about its measures and its effect on the community (particularly disadvantaged and minority groups), and any long-term trends in the budgetary position of the country. The provision of such information is the responsibility of the executive and its agencies.<sup>45</sup> Parliament is often assisted in its consideration of the budget through the work of its public accounts committee or another specialist committee (see dimension 1.8.3), expert support (dimension 1.8.4) and its supreme audit institution (dimension 1.8.5). The roles of these bodies are described in the aforementioned dimensions and they often constitute an important resource in the consideration of a budget.

A number of approaches are adopted by legislatures in the examination of the budget. These approaches include:

- Debates in the legislature on the budget proposals, both about the general principles and proposals and on the detail of the budget, including expenditure by individual ministries. This can include MPs expressing views about the budget in general, as well as detailed questioning about specific proposals for expenditure.
- Consideration of the budget proposals by committees (or a specialist committee). In some jurisdictions, this is referred to as the 'estimates process' where the estimated expenditure for each ministry or portfolio is subject to detailed scrutiny and the questioning of ministers and officials by parliamentary committees.

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<sup>44</sup> For more details see Dimension 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting.

<sup>45</sup> See also Dimension 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency.



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In many legislatures, elements of both approaches are adopted.

These approaches provide MPs with the opportunity to contribute and to be fully engaged in the process of budget examination. They are able to question the details of expenditure, and to ask ministries and officials about budgetary measures. These processes ensure that MPs are able to scrutinize and are fully informed about the budget before considering amendments or voting to approve it (it should be noted that in parliaments that operate in political or caucus groups, consideration and approval take place within and among the groups).

At the stage where detailed consideration is given to the budget, MPs should have the opportunity to propose, debate and vote on amendments. Within constraints that may exist in the laws or rules of procedure of the legislature to limit the rights of individual MPs to propose changes to expenditure (for example, in some jurisdictions, MPs other than those representing the executive cannot propose amendments that would increase taxation or expenditure), any MP should be able to propose amendments to be debated and voted on (it is important to note the different practices in parliaments that operate in political or caucus groups where amendments are proposed and considered at the group level).

Finally, parliament must approve the budget legislation. In bicameral systems, budget legislation is approved by both chambers. It is recognized that there may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role that an upper house may play in the amendment and approval of a budget.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of formulation, examination, amendment and approval of the budget would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework (constitution, legislation, rules of procedure) for all aspects of the legislature's consideration and approval of budgetary legislation including the annual budget. The legal framework should provide sufficient time and opportunity for scrutiny, particularly by the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs.

Parliaments and MPs, as well as community and civil society actors are substantively involved in the process of formulating the budget. Thus, parliament is able to influence the budget, including its effect on different social groups. When finalized, the executive presents the draft budget to the parliament along with detailed supporting information from the executive and its agencies to assist MPs with understanding the proposals of the budget.

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, with the opportunity to be engaged in and be informed about the budget, so that they can make decisions and scrutinize and debate the budget.

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide that an MP, whether individually or as part of a political group, can propose amendments to the budget to be debated and voted on. There may be reasonable limits in the rules on the form of the amendments that may be proposed by MPs.

Constitutional and legislative provisions establish that only the legislature can give final approval to budgetary legislation. In the case of bicameral systems, both chambers must approve it, although there

may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role of an upper house in such approval. Communication about final budget outcomes should be clear and accessible.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament relating to the legislature's consideration and approval of budgetary legislation
- Information about the involvement of civil society actors, MPs and others in budget formulation
- Statistics on the time spent on budgetary consideration, and the involvement of different groups of MPs, such as opposition, minority-party and independent MPs
- Proposed amendments to budgetary legislation
- Approval of the budget

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for budget consideration by the legislature

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, legislation, rules of procedure) for all aspects of the legislature's consideration and approval of the annual budget and other budgetary legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Formulation and presentation of budget

There are processes in place that enable the involvement of parliament in the process of budget formulation, regardless of the legally established roles and practices concerning budget formulation (which may vary in different jurisdictions), even if the executive is primarily responsible for the formulation of the budget. When finalized, the budget is presented to the parliament along with detailed supporting information from the executive and its agencies to assist MPs with understanding the budget proposals.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Examination of the budget**

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, with the opportunity to scrutinize and debate the budget. While approaches to such scrutiny may vary, the rules ensure that all MPs are engaged with and informed about the budget so that they can make a decision about its approval.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Amendments to the budget**

Constitutional and legislative provisions or the rules of procedure of the legislature provide that MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, can propose budget amendments to be debated and voted on. The rules may reasonably provide limits on the scope of amendments by MPs. Amendments should be expressed clearly and it should be explicit as to who has proposed them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Approval of the budget**

In line with constitutional and legislative provisions, only the legislature can give final approval to budgetary legislation. In the case of bicameral systems, both chambers must approve the budget, although there may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role of an upper house in its approval.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 6: Budget consideration practices**

The practice of the legislature is to allow sufficient time for the proper development of, consultation with experts and civil society actors on, and the consideration, debate, amendment and approval of the budget, taking into account the volume of material and complexity of issues to consider. A deadline for the government to submit the draft budget to parliament is defined by the law, or other legal provisions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 1.8.2 Ex-post control

Indicator: 1.8 Budget

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

The legislature's role does not end once the budget has been considered and approved by parliament. After the approval of the budget, it is important for parliament to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness with which the expenditure approved in the budget is implemented, including whether the funds have been spent on the purposes for which they were approved, and whether expenditure has been in line with the allocation of funds. This process of ex-post control is covered in this dimension. The process is important in itself for parliament to be able to monitor and assess budgetary outcomes, and also feeds into parliament's consideration of the next budget. Dimensions 1.8.3 to 1.8.5 fully cover several important parts of the ex-post control framework exercised by parliament.

This dimension outlines the provisions and processes by which parliament can undertake its role of ex-post control over the budget. The ways in parliament can exercise ex-post control (other than by the means referred to in dimensions 1.8.3 – 1.8.5) include:

- Ensuring transparency from the agencies funded by the budget, by requiring them to report to parliament on the details and outcomes of their budget expenditure in a way that is accessible to the legislature. This reporting closes the loop on parliament's scrutiny of the budget by ensuring that parliament is fully informed about the outcomes of the expenditure that it has approved. This reporting supports the other forms of scrutiny by parliament referred to below, and supplements the other resources available to parliament through its public accounts committee, expert advice and its supreme audit institution.
- Using the parliament's committee system to examine the spending of the agencies that fall within each committee's ambit. One of the specific tasks of committees (or a specialized committee) should be the ex-post scrutiny of agencies within their area of responsibilities. The general scrutiny and review work of committees also may include scrutiny of budgetary outcomes.
- Ensuring that there are rules of procedure provisions that allow for budgetary outcomes to be subject to discussion and debate in the legislature. Particular recognition is given to opportunities for opposition, minority-party and independent MPs.

Ex-post scrutiny becomes a mechanism for parliamentary control of the budget through the legislature's scrutiny of the outcomes from the previous budget and the use of this information by the legislature in its consideration of the current budget.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal in the domain of ex-post control would encompass the following:

There are legislative provisions (supported by the rules of procedure of the legislature) requiring transparency of budget-funded agencies to account fully to parliament for their budgetary expenditure and outcomes. This is achieved by regular and comprehensive reporting to parliament.

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature for committees (or a specialized committee) to inquire systematically into the budgetary expenditure and outcomes of executive agencies for which they have responsibility. Such committees are provided with adequate and expert resources to undertake their work.

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature to enable discussion and debate of budgetary expenditure and outcomes. These provisions give particular recognition to the role of the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs in this process of ex-post review. Civil society is involved, which ensures that information about the budget is readily accessible to the public.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament requiring transparency and disclosure by publicly-funded agencies about budgetary outcomes through regular reporting to parliament
- Provisions of rules of procedure of the parliament relating to committee scrutiny of the budgetary outcomes of executive agencies
- Reports of committees on budgetary scrutiny of agencies
- Provisions of rules of procedure of the parliament providing for opportunities to debate budgetary outcomes
- Statistics on legislature debates on budgetary outcomes

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Transparency of budget outcomes

There is evidence of legislative provisions (supported by the rules of procedure of the legislature) requiring transparency of budget-funded agencies to account to parliament for their budgetary expenditure and outcomes by reporting fully on both the details of funds expended and the outcomes of the expenditure. This is achieved by regular, comprehensive and accessible reporting to parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Scrutiny by parliamentary committees

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature for committees (or a specialized committee) to inquire systematically into the budgetary expenditure and outcomes of executive agencies for which they have responsibility. Any committee, parliamentary group or individual MP has a right to receive information that is needed for effective ex-post scrutiny if it is not publicly available. Such committees are provided with adequate and skilled human resources to carry out their scrutiny work.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Debate of budget outcomes**

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature to enable discussion and debate of budgetary expenditure and outcomes. These provisions give particular recognition to the role of the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs, as well as the views of civil society.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Ex-post scrutiny in practice**

The practices of the legislature reflect the involvement of committees in budget scrutiny and the debate of budgetary outcomes by the legislature, with wide participation by MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).

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- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).



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### Dimension 1.8.3 Public accounts committee<sup>46</sup>

Indicator: 1.8 Budget

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

Although other committees of the parliament may have roles in oversight and scrutiny of the budget (both before and after the passage of the budget through the legislature), there should be a specialized parliamentary committee with responsibility for budgetary oversight in the legislature. Thus, in a legislature's oversight of budgetary matters, there is a particular role to be played by a public accounts committee (PAC) or, in some jurisdictions, a committee with an equivalent or similar role. A well-functioning PAC can act as an important check on the possibility of fraud and corruption in government. Every legislature is expected to have a PAC or a similar specialized committee. This can be a committee made up of MPs from one chamber or, in some jurisdictions with bicameral legislatures, can be a committee made up of MPs from both chambers. The role of such a committee even more important in times of emergency (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), as expenditure can be fast-tracked without the full scrutiny of the legislature.

The roles<sup>47</sup> of a PAC include:

- Providing information to assist with formulating and debating the budget
- Post-hoc monitoring of government expenditure
- Examining the financial affairs or performance of any government entity
- Receipt of reports from the supreme audit institution for examination (see dimension 1.8.5)
- Promoting the efficient, effective and corruption-free expenditure of public funds

In undertaking its role, the PAC needs to have authority and powers derived from the constitution, specific legislation and/or the rules of procedure of the legislature, in order to perform its role in the scrutiny of the budget and public expenditure. Such authority and powers include the mandate of the PAC, its power to obtain records and information from government entities in relation to budgetary matters and its membership. The mandate of the PAC should be broad and enable it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight. The PAC should have the authority to require publicly-funded entities to provide it with records and information, so that it can effectively examine their performance. The membership of the PAC should reflect the important role played by the opposition in budget scrutiny. In some jurisdictions, it is stipulated that the chair of the PAC should be a member of the opposition.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public accounts committees would encompass the following:

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament) to establish a PAC (or similar committee) as the primary oversight body of the legislature in relation to budgetary matters and the financial management of publicly-funded entities.

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<sup>46</sup> Note that some parliaments may not have a public accounts committee (PAC), but may have a committee that plays an equivalent or similar role to a PAC. In these cases, the reference to a PAC may be interpreted as a committee performing similar roles to a PAC.

<sup>47</sup> Note that the PAC may not perform all these roles in some jurisdictions.

By means of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions, a PAC has a broad mandate which enables it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight and the assessment of the performance of budget-funded entities.

Rules of procedure or other provisions require proportional representation of opposition (or minority-party) membership in the PAC and preferably the PAC to be chaired by a member from the opposition or minority parties.

Constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions empower the PAC to require publicly-funded entities to provide records and information about their budgets and performance. Such information should be readily accessible to the legislature.

The PAC is funded and resourced adequately for it to undertake its mandate on behalf of the parliament.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament or laws that establish a PAC (or similar committee) and grant it authority and powers
- Provisions relating to the mandate and membership of the PAC
- Examples of PAC reports
- Availability of financial and human resources for the PAC to carry out its mandate

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for the PAC

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament) to establish a PAC (or a similar committee) as the primary oversight body of the legislature in relation to budgetary matters and financial management oversight.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Mandate of the PAC

By means of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions, the PAC has a broad mandate which enables it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight and the assessment of the performance of budget-funded entities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Membership of the PAC**

Rules of procedure or other provisions require proportional representation of opposition (or minority-party) membership in the PAC and preferably that the PAC is chaired by a member from the opposition or minority parties.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Powers of the PAC to obtain information**

Constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions empower the PAC to require publicly-funded entities to provide records and information about their budgets and performance. Such information should be readily accessible to the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources of PAC**

The PAC has sufficient funds and resources to undertake its mandate on behalf of the parliament (for example, the necessary human resources and technical expertise).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Practices of PAC**

The practice of the PAC is to perform an active role in the legislature with regard to the scrutiny of the budget, and to support the scrutiny activities of the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 1.8.4 Expert support

Indicator: 1.8 Budget

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliaments

### About the dimension

The scrutiny of the budget and of the financial management and performance of the government is a specialist area in which MPs need expert assistance to enable them to perform their role of scrutiny effectively. If the parliament is to be able to hold the executive to account for the use of public resources, it will need information and expertise to enable it to do so.

There are a variety of ways in which such expert assistance can be provided to the parliament. Dimension 1.8.1 refers to the importance of detailed and transparent information provided by the executive to the parliament about the budget. However, parliament needs its own source of expertise, including for the evaluation of official information about the budget.

A number of parliaments have a well-resourced, independent parliamentary budget office with the expertise to provide parliament with independent commentary and information on the budget. This expertise should include the analysis of current budgets and long-term budgetary trends, and the evaluation of budgetary outcomes. An alternative to an independent budget office, is to have staff with expertise in budgetary analysis and scrutiny within the research support or research service available to the parliament, who will provide information about budgetary matters to MPs. Parliaments may have access to other sources of expertise. However, the important issue is that sufficient autonomous expertise is available to the parliament.

Parliament should also have access to expertise available in the community. Many individuals and community groups have significant expertise and interest in budgetary matters, including those impacted by budgetary decisions. Such expertise can include academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations. Parliament should consider the ways in which it can engage with such individuals and organizations as part of its consideration of the budget. This engagement could be through the work of parliamentary committees, including the PAC, with the political parties or with individual MPs who wish to pursue particular areas of interest. It can provide perspectives on how the budget impacts groups such as women, youth, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged and other marginalized groups.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of expert support would encompass the following:

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure) that establishes a parliamentary budget office or some other form of specialized expertise to provide expert support to the parliament in its role of scrutiny of the budget.

The parliamentary budget office (or the equivalent form of expert support) has sufficient funding and expertise to advise the parliament on budgetary matters.

Parliament establishes avenues to access external sources of expertise on budgetary matters, such as academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations, particularly in order to gain a perspective of the impact of the budget on marginalized groups.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament establishing a parliamentary budget office or specialized support service
- Resources of a parliamentary budget office or the parliamentary research service in relation to research on budgetary matters
- Reports of the parliamentary budget office or specialized research service
- Contact with external individuals and organizations about budgetary matters

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Independent parliamentary budget office or equivalent specialized expertise

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament, laws) that establishes a parliamentary budget office or some other form of specialized expertise to provide expert support to the parliament for scrutiny of the budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Resources and expertise

The parliamentary budget office (or its equivalent form of expert support) has sufficient funding and expertise to advise the parliament on budgetary matters.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Access to external sources of expertise**

Parliament establishes avenues to access external sources of expertise on budgetary matters, such as academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:  
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**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice regarding expert support**

In practice, the legislature demonstrates that expert assistance and advice is available to parliament to support its scrutiny of the budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:  
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**Recommendations for change**

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**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 1.8.5 Supreme audit institution

Indicator: 1.8 Budget

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

A supreme audit institution (SAI)<sup>48</sup> is the body responsible for the auditing of public financial administration and the management of public funds. Thus, the SAI plays a central role in the efficient, effective, transparent and accountable use of the public resources approved by parliament through the annual budget process. The SAI is an important independent source of information about budget outcomes and performance for parliament.

Through its reporting to parliament and the public, the SAI provides information to the community about the use of public funds (that they are being used and managed well) and, consequently, act as a significant check on possible misuse of or corruption in relation to public funds. The SAI has a sufficiently broad mandate, and conducts audits both of the legality and regularity of the accounts of the entities audited, as well as performance audits which examine the efficiency and effectiveness of public entities and programmes. The SAI is therefore an essential body in a democratic system which provides reassurance on accountability, integrity and transparency in the budgetary process.

There are a number of key principles<sup>49</sup> that are central to the operations of an SAI, namely:

- The independence of an SAI. It should be independent of the executive and the entities that it audits, and should have an independent source of funding (budgetary autonomy) and staffing so that it can perform its functions. Its independence should be recognized in the constitution or legislation.
- The independence, integrity and qualifications of the members (and heads) of an SAI, which is linked to the overall independence of the SAI. It is necessary to establish provisions that address such matters with respect to the appointment of members (and heads) of an SAI, as well as restrictions on their removal from office. Such provisions should be laid down in the constitution or legislation.
- The relationship of an SAI to parliament. While the SAI is independent from parliament, it should have a close relationship with parliament, which includes reporting to parliament and working closely with the parliamentary public accounts committee (or a similar committee), and having responsibility for the auditing of the parliament's expenditures. This relationship should be provided for in the constitution, legislation and/or the rules of procedure of the legislature.
- The powers of an SAI provides it with access to the entities that it audits, and to any records and documents, in an accessible format, to enable it to perform its audit function. It should also have the power to require a response to its findings.
- An SAI is required to report regularly and independently to parliament and the public. It is the public nature of the findings of an SAI that provides the basis for its effectiveness in accountability.

Constitutional or legislative provisions should provide the basis for the existence, functions and powers of an SAI, enabling it to adhere the key principles referred to above.

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<sup>48</sup> Note that different terms are used for 'SAI' in other jurisdictions, for example, 'national audit office', 'court of auditors', 'audit bureau' and 'auditor-general'.

<sup>49</sup> These principles are drawn from International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), 'INTOSAI-P 10 Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence' (Endorsed at the XIX INCOSAI in Mexico City, rev. ed. 2019).



On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of supreme audit institution would encompass the following:

The constitution or legislation provides the legal framework to establish, in the country, an SAI that is independent of the executive and the entities that it audits. Members of the SAI enjoy independence in terms of their appointment to and cessation of office, and are persons of integrity and competence.

There is a legal basis for the SAI to determine the scope of its mandate, and to have access to the funding and expert staff to perform its audit functions.

The SAI has a special relationship with the parliament and this is defined in law or the rules of procedure of the legislature. The SAI reports to the parliament and has a close relationship with the parliament and particularly the parliament's public accounts committee (or a similar committee).

Legislation grants the SAI the authority to obtain access to the entities that it audits and their records and documents, available in an accessible format, to enable it to undertake its auditing responsibilities. The SAI also has the power to require a response to its findings.

There is a legal requirement for the SAI to report regularly and independently to the parliament and the public.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or legislation which establish an independent SAI, its membership, powers, mandate, resources and reporting requirements
- Information relating to the mandate, resources and powers of the SAI
- Examples of reports of the SAI and its findings

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional and legal framework for the independence of the SAI

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution and legislation) which establishes, in the country, an SAI that is independent of the executive, and which also defines the entities that it audits.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Independence of the members of the SAI**

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (legislation or rules of procedure) which establishes that SAI members are independent from the executive, including with regard to removal from office, and that they are persons of integrity and competence.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Independence of the resources and mandate of the SAI**

There is a legal basis for the SAI to determine the scope of its mandate, and to have access to the funding and expert staff to perform its audit functions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Relationship to parliament**

Law and the rules of procedure of the legislature define the relationship of the SAI to parliament. They establish that the SAI reports to the parliament and has a close relationship with the parliament and particularly the parliament's public accounts committee (or a similar committee).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Powers of the SAI**

Legislation grants the SAI the authority to obtain access to the entities that it audits and their records and documents, in an accessible format, to enable it to undertake its auditing responsibilities. It also grants the SAI the power to require responses to its findings.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Reporting of the SAI**

There is a legal requirement for the SAI to report regularly and independently to parliament and the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Practices of the SAI**

The practices of the SAI demonstrate its independence and that of its members, and the thoroughness of its auditing work and reporting to parliament and the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), [INTOSAI-P 1 The Lima Declaration](#) (Endorsed in 1977 at the IX INCOSAI in Lima, rev. ed. 2019).
- International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), [INTOSAI-P 10 Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence](#) (Endorsed in 2007 at the XIX INCOSAI in Mexico City, rev. ed. 2019).

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- International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), [\*INTOSAI-P 12 The Value and Benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions – making a difference to the lives of citizens\*](#) (Endorsed in 2013, rev. ed. 2019).

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## Indicator 1.9 – Representational function

The representational function is one of the three key responsibilities of a legislature, in addition to legislating and oversight, and is of crucial significance for an effective parliament. This function involves the establishment of a close connection between MPs and their electorate or constituencies, in order to represent their concerns and interests in all the work undertaken by MPs in the legislature. Parliament should reflect the views of the electorate as represented by its MPs and the political parties to which they belong.

This indicator also takes into account the territorial aspects of representation in bicameral and, particularly, federal parliaments, where MPs in upper chambers also represent their subnational territories. MPs elected by the territorial principle (usually called senators) also ensure that the federal state does not adversely affect the interests of the subnational states.

The role of the opposition (minority party or parties in the parliament) is particularly important in the representativeness of the legislature, as the opposition and minority and independent MPs represent the views of a constituency that differ from that of the parliamentary majority party/parties. It is the responsibility of the opposition, in particular, to exercise oversight of the executive and to offer an alternative to government policies.

This indicator concerns the rights and resources of the opposition (minority party or parties in the parliament) and individual MPs, to enable them to be effective in their representational roles.

The assessment of the indicator on the representational function comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.9.1 Opposition
- 1.9.2 Constituent relations

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## Dimension 1.9.1 Opposition

Indicator: 1.9 Representational function

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

In democratic legislatures, the opposition (or parliamentary minority party/parties)<sup>50</sup> plays a very important role. In parliamentary systems, the opposition represents the ‘government-in-waiting’ and hence plays a particularly important role in the accountability and scrutiny of the government and also in the proposal of an alternative policy agenda.

In presidential systems, the division between the ruling party in power and the opposition that is waiting its turn to be in power is sometimes less clear. Alliances, mostly circumstantial, and negotiations are much more volatile and allow both sides to promote an agenda if the numbers are sufficiently even. Parliamentary opposition parties in presidential systems, when there are no clear majorities, also have a key role and authority with regard to the promotion and passing of laws and the scrutiny of policies.

There are a number of considerations in this dimension to ensure that the opposition (minority party/parties) is able to effectively perform the functions required of it in a democratic legislature. Firstly, the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties) needs to have opportunities in the legislature (proportional to those of the government or majority party/parties) to raise or debate matters of concern. This includes the opportunity to initiate legislation or motions for debate, having reasonable debating opportunities, ask questions of the government (majority party/parties), propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to have equitable representation on committees and in other parliamentary bodies. Secondly, the opposition (minority party/parties), and particularly the opposition leader (minority party leader), need access to adequate resources so that the oversight function can be performed effectively and an alternative policy agenda can be developed. In systems where the opposition is represented by several parties, the allocation of resources should be proportional to their representation.

In addition to the opposition (minority party/parties), the dimension also covers independent MPs<sup>51</sup> who may not be part of the official opposition or minority party/parties. These MPs also play an important role in the scrutiny of the executive and the majority party/parties in the parliament, and ensure that there is scrutiny of the agenda and policies of the opposition. They therefore need to be provided with opportunities in the legislature and with resources to support them.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of opposition would encompass the following:

There are clear legal provisions (constitution, rules of procedure, laws) that recognize the special role in the legislature of the opposition (minority party/parties) and, in particular, the leader(s) of the opposition (minority-party leader or, particularly in presidential systems, the leader(s) of parliamentary (party) groups).

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<sup>50</sup> In many parliaments, the opposition can consist of multiple parties rather than a single minority party. Also, in some parliaments, there is no notion of minority party, as minority parties make up the opposition.

<sup>51</sup> Note that independent MPs include both those elected as independent MPs and those who leave their parties to sit as independent MPs.

This legal recognition is supported in the rules of procedure of the legislature, which provide the opposition (minority party/parties) with specific rights in the legislature, such as the ability to safely question the executive, initiate legislation or motions for debate, participate equally in debate and votes, propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to be equitably represented on committees and in other parliamentary bodies.

This legal recognition is supported by provisions and practice that ensure that the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties), and in particular the leader(s), have adequate facilities and resources to be able to perform their role effectively. In systems where multiple parties make up the opposition, resources are shared proportionately to representation.

There also is recognition in the law or the rules and practices of the legislature of the provision of independent MPs with opportunities to contribute in the legislature and with adequate resources to perform their roles.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedure of the parliament or laws which recognize the special role of the opposition (minority party/parties), or which guarantee equal treatment among all members of the legislative body, including the opposition and independent MPs
- Rules of procedure of the parliament that provide the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs (if applicable) with equitable opportunities
- Provisions relating to the resources of the opposition (minority party/parties) and other minority parties and independent MPs
- Information relating to the resources of the opposition (minority party/parties) and independent MPs
- Parliamentary records of debates in the plenary and committees
- Media reports and reports of civil society actors

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

Constitutional, legislative or other rules of the legislature recognize the special role of the opposition (or minority party/parties) in the legislative system. Particular recognition is given to the leader(s) of the opposition or leader(s) of parliamentary minority groups. (Please note that preferential treatment of opposition parliamentary parties and their leaders is not as relevant in some presidential systems as in parliamentary systems.)

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Opportunities in the legislature**

The parliament’s rules of procedure provide the opposition (minority party/parties) with specific rights in the legislature, such as the ability to openly question the executive, initiate legislation or motions for debate, participate equally in debate and votes, propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to be represented equitably on committees and in other parliamentary bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Resources**

There is a legislative or other provision, and supporting practice, that ensure that the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties groups) and, in particular its leader(s), have adequate facilities and resources to be able to perform their roles effectively. In systems where the opposition consists of multiple parties, resources are allocated proportionately to representation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Independent MPs**

The law or the rules and practices of the legislature establish that all members of the legislative body, including independent MPs receive completely equal treatment, or that independent MPs are provided with opportunities to contribute in the legislature, as well as with adequate resources to perform their roles.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**



There is evidence of the consistent and non-discriminatory implementation of provisions (indicated in the above criteria) in practice. There is a parliamentary environment that enables the full contribution of all MPs in parliamentary work, regardless of their political membership and aspirations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), '[Guidelines on the rights and duties of the opposition in parliament](#)', Unanimously adopted by the participants at the Parliamentary Seminar on Relations Between Majority and Minority Parties in African Parliaments (Libreville, Gabon, 17–19 May 1999).

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## Dimension 1.9.2 Constituent relations

Indicator: 1.9 Representational function

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension<sup>52</sup>

The legislature, as a representative institution, is dependent on MPs being able to reflect the perspectives of their constituencies in all matters that are pursued in the legislature. In order to properly represent the interests and views of their constituents in the legislature, MPs need to be able to interact and engage effectively with them. This is equally relevant and applicable to relations of MPs with their electorate in countries where there are no individual constituencies (due to size of the country or for any other reasons, such as multi-member constituencies), and to the engagement of MPs in upper chambers with their districts and subnational territories in bicameral and federal systems.

For MPs to be able to engage effectively with their constituents, electorate and districts, they need sufficient resources to travel and meet with their constituents. Such resources could include office accommodation in the constituency, communication resources, travel and accommodation expenses, and sufficient staff to organize meetings and to follow up on concerns.

Laws and rules of the legislature should recognize this responsibility of MPs and make clear provision for MPs to be given the resources necessary to support their engagement with their constituencies, electorate or districts, with a base level of resources available to all MPs. While legislatures will have differing capacities to meet the resource needs of MPs, it is important for the available resources to be distributed equitably and in a non-partisan manner among all members of parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of constituent relations would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework of the legislature (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, laws) which recognizes that MPs have the responsibility and right to engage with and represent the interests of their constituencies, electorate or districts and subnational territories, where applicable.

There are legal provisions that provide for a base level of support for all MPs, regardless of their status, to engage with their constituencies. Such support may include access to a constituency office, travel and accommodation expenses and support staff for constituency work.

Law and rules of the legislature provide that the distribution of resources to MPs, regardless of their status, is carried out in an equitable, non-partisan way, and that practice reflects this distribution. Any differences in the distribution of resources are based on legally-defined reasons.

### Assessment

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<sup>52</sup> Note the relationship between this dimension and the size of constituencies, as the number of constituents that an MP represents is relevant to their ability to represent them effectively.

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedure of the parliament or other legal or statutory provisions that recognize the constituency rights and responsibilities of MPs
- Legal provisions that define the entitlements of MPs in relation to their constituency work
- Information relating to the resources of MPs for their constituency work
- Reports on meetings and other activities of MPs in constituencies or districts
- Administrative records of MPs’ visits to constituencies or districts

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for the recognition of MPs’ constituent responsibilities**

The legal framework of the legislature (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, or other legal or statutory provisions) recognizes that MPs have the right to engage with and represent the interests of their constituencies. Practice in the legislature demonstrates MPs’ engagement with and advocacy on behalf of constituents.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2 Base level of resources**

There are legal provisions and supporting practice that provide for a base level of support for all MPs, regardless of their status, to engage with their constituencies, electorate or districts and subnational territories, where applicable. Such support may include access to a constituency office, travel and accommodation expenses and support staff for constituency work.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Proportional and non-partisan distribution of resources**

Law and rules of the legislature provide that the distribution of resources to MPs, regardless of their status, is carried out in a proportional and non-partisan manner, and that practice reflects this distribution.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).
- NDI, [Building public trust through a responsive parliament - A quick guide to constituency outreach](#)

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## Indicator 1.10 – Relations of parliament

The indicator on relations of parliament outlines the constitutional separation of powers that exists between the legislature and other branches of government, including the executive, judiciary, and subnational governments. The indicator also outlines mechanisms for communication or coordination between the legislature and other branches with regard to parliamentary jurisdictional powers, such as legislative oversight of the executive, judicial appointments, and national-subnational shared resource implementation.

This indicator also reinforces the unique powers of parliament as a central branch of government that is responsible for oversight of the executive delivery of programmes and services, the appointment and confirmation of justices, and the ultimate authority of representing the interests of citizens at the national level.

The assessment of the indicator on relations of parliament covers the following dimensions:

- 1.10.1 Executive
- 1.10.2 Judiciary
- 1.10.3 Subnational parliaments and authorities and local councils and authorities

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## Dimension 1.10.1 Executive

Indicator: 1.10 Relations of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the nature of the relationship between parliament and the executive, and specifically, the mechanisms for that established relationship. In a democratic system, the executive and legislature have distinct and autonomous roles. As a result of these distinct and autonomous roles, there is considerable scope for tension in the relationship. However, parliament and the executive must maintain a satisfactory working relationship, if the country is to operate effectively. This relationship is built on a mutual understanding of and respect for the respective roles that each play.

One of the key roles of an effective legislature is its capacity to hold the executive to account.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore critical that channels exist to allow parliament to access information, data and officials in order to report on public accounts, services and performance, and ensure the accountability of government expenditure and programmes.

The relationship between the legislative and executive branches requires established scrutiny mechanisms that allow parliament to maintain oversight and accountability of public accounts, services and performance. Such mechanisms may include oversight committees, audit offices, ombudspersons, auditors-general, anti-corruption commissions, and information commissioners.<sup>54</sup> These offices should be non-partisan in nature, and may exist physically within parliament or externally. In some governments, executive offices may include dedicated legislative liaisons who are responsible for providing legislative actors with direct access to executive data and information on programmes and accounts. This helps to ensure fluid communication between the two branches at all times, and provides actors in the legislature (either members directly or their caseworkers) with the ability to directly enquire about public programmes and services on behalf of citizens in need (for example, veteran benefits). This is also important to help to maintain the executive-legislative relationship in law-making, such as when the executive proposes new legislation or makes changes to existing laws that the legislature must review. In these cases, it is normal for the executive to have a dedicated legislative liaison who maintains regular communication with members' offices.

Depending on a nation's laws, requirements may exist for periodic information-sharing between the executive and legislative branches through these mechanisms. For example, laws may require semi-annual or annual audits to be conducted on all public accounts to ensure the receipt of follow-on funding in the national budget. Other laws may require regular reporting to parliament on the performance of executive agencies, periodic public asset review, tracking and collection, especially during executive transitions. Some countries require semi-annual or bi-annual review of expenditure on national security, defence or international aid and defence assistance, especially if such expenditure constitutes the majority of a nation's overall budget. It is critical that any laws that exist in this regard require the reports, reviews and audits conducted to be made available to the parliament and the public.

<p>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of executive relations of parliament would encompass the following:</p>
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<sup>53</sup> For more details, see Indicator 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy, and Indicator 1.7 Oversight.

<sup>54</sup> The Commonwealth, "[Commonwealth Principles of the Accountability of and the Relationship Between the Three Branches of Government](#)" (the Commonwealth Secretariat and others, 2004).

In order to support a clear constitutional basis for the executive-parliament relationship, there are established mechanisms that allow parliamentary checks, oversight, and periodic or fluid communication with (and access to) the executive in order to maintain awareness and the accountability of public expenditure, programmes and services.

National laws establish formal requirements for these mechanisms to report on executive activities, including regular reporting on performance and services, periodic audits, inspector-general reports, ombudsperson reports, and other relevant commission reports.

Although there is tension in the relationship between the executive and parliament, the framework and mechanisms put in place are effective in enabling both the parliament and the executive to perform their respective roles, and for there to be effective sharing of information between the executive and the legislative branches to facilitate their work.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions on the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- National laws outlining mechanisms for executive-legislative relations and timetables for reporting, audits and other reviews as applicable
- Established mechanisms under which the legislative-executive relationship exists as outlined under law, and which provide both branches with fluid and consistent access to information and communication with liaisons who can supply direct information on public expenditure, services, and programmes.

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authority

There is evidence of a constitutional provision that, by defining basic separations of power, including the existence of an independent legislative institution, establishes the framework for the relationship between the executive and the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework

Within the context of the constitutional relationship between the executive and parliament, there is a legal framework established by national laws that defines a comprehensive approach to the parliament's oversight and

scrutiny role in relation to the executive. The framework includes systematic reporting to parliament about the executive's activities and a systematic approach to the review and scrutiny of the activities of the executive.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Established legislative-executive relationship mechanisms**

There are established mechanisms that exist under parliament’s authority and framework that allow for periodic information-sharing, access and oversight of executive expenditure, programmes, services and performance. These mechanisms may include the following: an ombudsperson; auditors-general; inspectors-general; oversight and accountability committees, commissions and agencies; audit offices; anti-corruption commissions and information commissions; and legislative liaison offices. These offices are non-partisan in nature and exist to enable fluid communication and access to information between the branches, and provide methods for effective parliamentary oversight of executive expenditure, programmes, services and performance. The reports from these offices are publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practices in the executive/parliament relationship**

There is evidence, through the framework and mechanisms put in place, of a satisfactory working relationship between the executive and parliament, which is based on mutual understanding of and respect for their respective roles, and which is reflected in the capacity of the executive and parliament to perform their roles effectively. There is an effective exchange of information between the executive and legislative branches that facilitates their work.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.10.2 Judiciary

Indicator: 1.10 Relations of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the primary forms of relations between parliament and the judiciary. Due to the political nature of the legislature and the political impartiality of the judicial system, relations between the legislative and judicial branches of government are strictly separated by the constitution or equivalent rules. These relations entail parliament's responsibility for law-making on one hand and the judiciary's responsibility for the interpretation and application of law on the other hand. The judiciary and parliaments fulfil their respective but critical roles in a complementary and constructive manner.<sup>55</sup>

It is the responsibility of the parliament to establish clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, set unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges, and allocate adequate budget resources to the judicial system.

In many jurisdictions, the system of checks and balances requires the legislature's consent in confirmation of senior judges (such as supreme court justices, constitutional court justices and federal court judges) and parliament has the power to impeach high-ranking judges for serious crimes or misbehaviour. The relationship between parliament and the judiciary also implies that the interpretation and application of the law is the responsibility of the judiciary and not the legislature.<sup>56</sup> In most legal systems, the judiciary has the mandate to rule on the constitutionality of the laws adopted by the parliament and, in some cases, even abolish them.

Where parliaments have responsibility for confirming and/or impeaching senior justices, they establish clear procedures for confirmation and impeachment, which usually include detailed criteria for selecting candidates, obtaining relevant information (background checks), and rules on holding hearings and making decisions. Procedures for conducting impeachment are prescribed by law.

In addition to these formal relationships between the parliament and the judiciary, the separation of powers also requires mutual respect and restraint with regard to their separate roles. In the case of the parliament, this can be reflected in rules of procedure to restrict adverse comments about judges or reflections in debate on matters before the courts. In the case of the judiciary, it involves a restriction on interference in matters that are solely within the jurisdiction of the parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of relations with the judicial branch would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined constitutional framework on the separation of powers between legislative and judicial branches of government. Any relations and interaction between the judiciary and parliament take place strictly in compliance with the constitution and law, and in recognition of mutual respect for their independence.

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<sup>55</sup> The Commonwealth, "[Commonwealth Principles of the Accountability of and the Relationship Between the Three Branches of Government](#)" (the Commonwealth Secretariat and others, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> National Democratic Institute (NDI), "[Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#)" (NDI, 2007).

There is a legal framework established by parliament to set clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges, and set unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges. Judges may only be suspended or removed for reasons of incapacity or misbehaviour that renders them unfit to carry out their duties.

Parliament allocates sufficient budgetary resources for the judicial system to operate effectively without any constraints.

Where applicable, a detailed procedure for confirming and impeaching senior justices (including supreme and constitutional court judges) is defined by the constitution or the law. Detailed criteria for selecting candidates and obtaining relevant information (background checks), rules on holding hearings and making decisions, and procedures for conducting impeachment, are prescribed by law. Decisions on appointments or impeachments are made by a majority or supermajority vote of the legislature.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions or equivalent rules on the separation of powers between the legislature and the judiciary, and procedures and practices reflecting mutual regard for their independence
- Constitutional or legal provisions on the setting of clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, and independence safeguards
- Budgetary allocations providing sufficient resources to the judiciary in order for it to operate effectively
- A legal framework defining explicit and detailed procedures for the appointment and impeachment of highest court justices
- Reports on judicial confirmations and impeachments issued by parliament

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is a constitutional framework that clearly outlines a separation of powers between the legislature and the judiciary. The nature of the relationship between these two branches of government is defined by constitutional law. Mutual respect and restraint are reflected in the procedures and practices of the parliament and the judiciary.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment Criterion No. 2: Legal framework

There is a legal framework established by parliament to set clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments and to establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges. The framework also sets unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, which might be applied only for reasons of incapacity or misbehaviour that renders them unfit to discharge their duties.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment Criterion No. 3: Securing resources**

There is evidence of sufficient budgetary resources being allocated by the parliament for the judicial system to ensure the effective operation of courts without any constraints.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment Criterion No. 4: Confirmation and impeachment of senior judges**

This assessment criteria are only relevant to countries where the legislature confirms and/or impeaches senior justices. Parliament’s actions to confirm or impeach senior judges are consistent with its legal framework, and are conducted using clear and transparent procedures. Decisions on the confirmation or impeachment of a judge are made by a majority or supermajority vote of the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 1.10.3 Subnational (state, provincial, regional) parliaments and authorities and local councils and authorities

Indicator: 1.10 Relations of parliament

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns the relationship between the national parliament and relevant subnational bodies of government (state, local, municipal). It is important to note that, depending on a nation's constitutional and legal framework, the nature of the relationship between a national parliament and subnational entities may differ significantly. The relationship may be affected by the representational status of the chamber, for example, a chamber made up of members representing individual constituencies will have a different focus to one representing whole states or provinces. As a result of these differences, the relationship in different legislatures can vary considerably and be very nuanced in its variations. This dimension seeks to distil the key relationship issues with subnational authorities that are generally applicable to national parliaments.

First, there should be clear constitutional and legal provisions of the country that delineate the respective responsibilities and authority of the national and subnational entities. Both the national parliament and subnational authorities should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, so that they can better determine the nature of their interactions. This delineation of responsibility includes the recognition that the members of a national parliament, as the representatives of their electors, will comment or discuss matters of subnational concern, in order to underscore or elevate key issues to a national level. This does not subvert the proper authority and role of subnational entities in relation to these matters.

Second, as a country relies on successful cooperation among its respective authorities, parliaments should also ensure there are protocols and mechanisms in place for connectivity and information-sharing among authorities. Depending on the variation in the relationship between national parliaments and subnational authorities referred to earlier, there may be a wide variety of ways in which parliaments and MPs can maintain connectivity and information-sharing with subnational governments and authorities. These ways may include:

- Individual MP's offices may have individual information-sharing channels, such as scheduled check-ins with subnational officials to remain informed of ongoing policy implementation, in addition to opportunities and challenges.
- Parliament may have a communications or policy office that assists it in tracking or sharing information on subnational affairs.
- At the subnational level, officials may use centralized hubs for sharing information with parliament, including through organized associations (such as a governors association or a municipality association).
- There may be a national ministry dedicated to subnational governance affairs to maintain overall connectivity between affairs at the state and local level and the national government. In this instance, the legislature can use this body to maintain communication and connectivity with subnational entities to improve communication on core policy implementation and resource-sharing. This is especially critical in the event of a disaster or crisis in a national MP's locality (or jurisdiction), where assistance needs to be delivered, or in instances where government programmes and services are needed locally or for the individual constituents of MPs (for example, health care or veterans benefits).

Regardless of the mechanisms that are in place, effective communication, cooperation and connectivity are important.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of subnational authorities would encompass the following:

There is a clear delineation in constitutional or legal provisions of the respective roles and responsibilities of the national parliament and subnational authorities. The national parliament has the responsibility to represent all citizens by sharing examples from subnational jurisdictions to amplify the needs and priorities of citizens on a national stage without subverting the proper authority and role of the subnational bodies.

The legislature has established mechanisms and practices to maintain connectivity, communication, cooperation and awareness of subnational affairs. These mechanisms will vary depending on the nature of a national parliament's relationship with subnational authorities.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on the existence of constitutional authorities
- Legal regulations requiring shared responsibility between national and subnational levels of government
- Information on a centralized parliamentary mechanism for tracking subnational affairs, individual office mechanisms for connectivity, or coordination efforts of the national ministry responsible for subnational affairs (if applicable)

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Clear delineation of authority and responsibilities

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions that provide a clear definition of the respective roles and responsibilities of the national parliament and subnational authorities. The national parliament is recognized as having the role of representing all citizens, and sharing examples from subnational jurisdictions to amplify the needs and priorities of citizens on a national stage.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliamentary mechanisms for communication and coordination

Parliament itself or individual MPs have established mechanisms and practices for communication between the national and subnational levels of government. Mechanisms and practices will vary according to the defined

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relationship between the national parliament and subnational entities, but should enable effective communication and cooperation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 1.11 – Specific state policies

Parliamentary effectiveness can be assessed by the way in which functions are aligned to make an impact across key state policies. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs provide a framework for assessing how parliament supports efforts to end poverty, build peaceful societies, promote prosperity and well-being, and protect the environment for current and future generations. SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This is both an outcome and an enabler of sustainable development. As the central institution of representative democracy, parliaments worldwide must examine their internal practices to ensure that they are responsive and inclusive and oversee action taken by government on the SDGs and across state policy areas, while guaranteeing transparency and accountability for public decision-making.

The 2030 Agenda represents a rights-based approach to development and this indicator assesses how parliament can play a central role within a national human rights framework.

It is also essential for security sector and defence policy issues to be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and control, reflecting that human rights, peace and security are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In assessing foreign affairs and parliament's role in diplomacy and international cooperation, this indicator examines how parliaments play a key role in democratizing decisions made above the level of the nation state.

The assessment of the indicator on specific state policies comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.11.1 SDGs and the 2030 Agenda
- 1.11.2 Human rights
- 1.11.3 Security sector
- 1.11.4 Defence policy
- 1.11.5 Foreign affairs
- 1.11.6 Parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation



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## Dimension 1.11.1 SDGs and the 2030 Agenda

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the central role of parliament in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs represent a globally-agreed plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. An effective parliament is one that integrates this wide-ranging and transformative agenda across its core functions, including the debate and scrutiny of national plans for sustainable development, the incorporation of the SDGs into the legal framework, and the bridging of the gap between the international and national levels through the localization of the goals.

Parliament is key to helping to formulate and oversee the implementation of national SDG plans and policies. Sustainable human development requires specific strategies to combat discrimination, reduce inequality and uphold the rights of marginalized groups, ensuring that no one is left behind. Parliament's duties include passing gender-sensitive and human rights-based legislation and ensuring that SDG priorities are sufficiently resourced and that funding reaches the most vulnerable and excluded in society.<sup>57</sup> It is therefore necessary to ensure the means to assess diverse needs across geographic, social, sexual, ethnic, cultural or economic categories, and for MPs to continually engage with the public on the SDGs through their representational duties.

The SDGs are interconnected with all sectors that play a role in their delivery. A well-functioning and coordinated committee system, with opportunity for committee reports to be debated and responded to in the plenary, allows for holistic oversight of national progress towards sustainable development. Some parliaments have established dedicated structures such as sustainable development committees, caucuses and units to support SDG mainstreaming across parliamentary work. Such bodies can act as a focal point for the type of partnership building across society that is necessary to implement the SDGs, including with civil society, the media, the private sector, independent oversight bodies and academia.

At international level, all countries are required to monitor SDG implementation and encouraged to report progress and challenges through voluntary national reviews (VNRs). Parliaments should have space to contribute to, debate and make recommendations on national SDG plans and report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and international bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Financing for the SDGs is a key consideration and parliament has a role in scrutinizing the availability and use of international resource flows from development cooperation, international taxation, trade and other means.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of SDGs and the 2030 Agenda would encompass the following:

The SDGs are integrated into parliament's core functions. Parliament debates and scrutinizes national development plans, strategies, sectoral plans, statements and government reports to ensure alignment with and the localization of the SDGs.

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<sup>57</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit](#) (IPU, 2016).

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Parliament has reviewed the legal framework to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of national SDG priorities and the wider 2030 Agenda. There are established practices for parliament to assess how legislation impacts SDG attainment. Parliament's role at all stages of the budget cycle (formulation, consideration and approval, implementation and audit) allows for systematic oversight of SDG delivery.

Parliament's commitment to mainstreaming the SDGs is indicated in a strategic plan, policies and/or SDG action plans. SDGs are included in the terms of reference of all portfolio committees. Reports are debated in the plenary to help scrutinize progress across all goals. Mechanisms, such as a sustainable development committee, exist to oversee SDG progress and support SDG mainstreaming in parliament.

Parliament supports a whole-of-society approach to SDG delivery. Parliament is represented in national SDG coordination mechanisms, such as inter-ministerial committees. Rules of procedure allow for systematic engagement with stakeholders from civil society, the media, the private sector, and scientific and academic communities in monitoring SDG progress. There are well-established relationships with government and independent oversight bodies such as the state audit office, anti-corruption commissions or national human rights institutions that help provide technical inputs and reporting on the SDGs.

Parliament has transparent and clear mechanisms to inform the public on the SDGs and to gather evidence on national SDG implementation. MPs use the plenary and other parliamentary mechanisms to reflect the diverse needs of their constituents in relation to SDG priorities.

There is space for MPs to contribute to reporting to international bodies and processes on national SDG implementation. Parliament is informed of international SDG financing instruments and can scrutinize development financing.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Resolutions or motions in Hansard or other records of parliament indicating parliamentary commitment to the delivery of the SDGs
- Media reporting of parliament includes statements by parliamentary leadership and MPs of commitment to SDG delivery
- Committee terms of reference reflecting the roles across portfolio committees with regard to SDG delivery
- Articles in parliament's strategic plan related to the SDGs or the existence of an SDG parliamentary action plan
- Explanatory memoranda/introductory speeches to bills and enacted legislation outline how they address the SDGs
- Committee reports incorporating evidence from a range of stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups, on SDG delivery
- Availability of training or capacity development materials for MPs on the SDGs. Briefings and analysis from the parliamentary library.
- Communication materials and communication strategies indicating the role of parliament in SDG delivery

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Expression of parliament’s commitment to SDG delivery**

Parliament has formally endorsed the SDGs or indicated its commitment to SDG delivery through motions, resolutions and debates of national plans, strategies or other SDG frameworks.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Practices in place to review legislation through an SDG lens**

Parliamentary review of legislation indicates contribution to SDG achievement. Bills are accompanied by an assessment of impact on SDGs, such as through ministerial statements, explanatory memoranda or regulatory impact assessments.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: National budget reflects national SDG priorities**

Parliament’s scrutiny of the budget indicates how funding is allocated to implement national SDG priorities and responds to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Plans and policies to mainstream SDGs across parliament**

Parliament’s strategic plan, policies and/or SDG action plans identify how the SDGs will be mainstreamed across parliament’s functions. Dedicated mechanisms may exist to support SDG mainstreaming, such as a sustainable development committee or sub-committee and/or a dedicated unit of the parliamentary secretariat.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: SDGs incorporated in the work of all parliamentary committees**

The terms of reference of parliamentary committees reflect their role in SDG implementation. Committees have developed tools such as checklists to assess policy and legislation against SDG objectives.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Well-established relations with government regarding SDGs**

There is evidence of parliament making recommendations on government planning, policy and programmes related to SDG attainment, and of parliamentary engagement in international reporting on national SDG achievement.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit](#), (IPU, 2016)
- Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Islamic Development Bank (IDB), [Parliament’s role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals](#), (GOPAC, UNDP, IDB, 2017)

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- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), [\*Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development\*](#), (UN DESA, 2018)

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## Dimension 1.11.2 Human rights

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension looks at the critical role of parliament in protecting and promoting human rights. The realization of human rights worldwide is essential to peace, democracy and sustainable development.

Parliament is required to contribute to the application of international human rights obligations and ensure that government action is in compliance with international law. Parliament should be actively engaged with international and regional human rights mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Council, its universal periodic review (UPR) mechanism and human rights treaty bodies. In a number of countries, MPs are also included as members of national delegations at sessions of treaty bodies.

Parliaments are central to a national human rights framework. As representative bodies, they ensure the right to participation in the conduct of public affairs. In scrutinizing legislation and budgets, upholding the rule of law and overseeing state action across sectors, parliament is essential to realizing the entire spectrum of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>58</sup> Parliament's role includes ensuring that the judiciary is independent, effective and accessible, that a free, independent and pluralistic media exists to protect the civic space and investigate human rights violations, and that national human rights institutions (NHRIs) operate effectively.

Parliamentary committees constitute an important means of human rights oversight. The establishment of a committee with an exclusive mandate on human rights, and on specific human rights issues such as gender equality or minority rights, can send a strong political message and help mainstream human rights across other committees.<sup>59</sup> Other mechanisms that parliaments have used include caucuses or informal groups of MPs active in the area of human rights. As a guardian of human rights, parliament is responsible for ensuring that the needs and voices of minority, marginalized and vulnerable groups are incorporated throughout its work. Parliament plays a role in assessing the needs of groups such as asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons who may be left outside official statistics, and overseeing government policy and programmes to ensure responsiveness to those who may be left behind.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of human rights would encompass the following:

Parliament has ratified international treaties on human rights. Parliament has powers to receive answers from governments where treaties are not ratified or where there are specific reservations. Parliament has clear responsibilities in relation to reporting to human rights treaty bodies.

The national legal framework reflects human rights norms and obligations. The NHRI is established in law and has clearly defined relations with parliament. Parliament uses tools such as legislative impact

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<sup>58</sup> Enshrined in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR).

<sup>59</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, [Contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review](#) (Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2018).

assessments, human rights audits of the budget and human rights indicators to assess the impact of policy, legislation and public spending.

Parliament has institutional mechanisms to address human rights, such as dedicated human rights committees with powers of inquiry and investigation and sufficient resources. Human rights are also included in the mandate of parliament's portfolio committees, which have transparent and routine procedures to engage with the NHRI, civil society and other stakeholders.

Services from the parliamentary secretariat assist MPs in remaining well-informed about international human rights treaties, the work of treaty bodies and national human rights issues. MPs have access to the necessary data to assess the human rights needs of different groups in society. Parliament's communications highlight the role of parliament in promoting and protecting human rights, and inform the public of mechanisms to report human rights violations.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles of the constitution mandating parliament to ratify human rights treaties and incorporate them into national law
- Articles in national law referencing international human rights obligations
- Terms of reference for a body responsible for human rights in parliament, such as human rights, gender equality or minority rights committees
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating their roles in human rights protection and promotion
- Parliamentary committee reports indicating the evidence from and routine engagement with national human rights bodies and civil society
- Memoranda of understanding between the NHRI and parliament
- Parliamentary website contains information on parliament's role in promoting and protecting human rights and how the public can report human rights violations

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal powers to promote and protect human rights

The constitution or laws mandate parliament to debate and ratify international human rights treaties and ensure that the national legal framework is consistent with international human rights obligations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Engagement with international human rights bodies and processes**

Parliament has a clear role in national consultation processes preceding the preparation of reports to treaty bodies, and in debating reports, overseeing recommendations, questioning government and establishing follow-up measures where needed. MPs participate as members of national delegations at sessions of treaty bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Clearly defined engagement between parliament and the NHRI**

Parliament ensures that the NHRI exists, functions independently and has sufficient resources. The composition of the NHRI is approved by parliament. There are strong working relationships, including the duty of the NHRI to report to parliament and that of parliament to monitor the implementation of NHRI recommendations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Existence of human rights infrastructure in parliament**

A body such as a parliamentary committee with an exclusive human rights mandate exists, with powers to assess legislation, government policy and action, to ensure compatibility with human rights obligations. Its duties include supporting the mainstreaming of human rights across committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Human rights mainstreamed across parliamentary committees**

Human rights are a cross-cutting issue for all portfolio committees which have established practices to assess policy, legislation and budgets through a human rights lens.



Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Routine public engagement on human rights**

Parliamentary proceedings, including debates and committee hearings, on human rights issues are communicated to the public and are open to public engagement. Proceedings include input from civil society, grass-roots organizations and individuals such as human rights defenders.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 26](#), (IPU, 2016).
- United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, [Contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review](#) (Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights).

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### Dimension 1.11.3 Security sector

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension examines the role of parliament in security sector policy and governance. The security sector comprises all bodies with the legitimate authority to use force, including defence services, law enforcement, police, armed forces, border guards, paramilitary units, intelligence services and private security organizations.<sup>60</sup> The principle that security services should be subordinate and accountable to democratically elected political leadership has long been seen as a basic condition for the effective functioning and well-being of democratic societies.<sup>61</sup>

Parliament plays an essential role in ensuring that the security sector operates in a manner that is rooted in respect for the rule of law and human rights. Parliament is required to determine the legal framework for security policy and to oversee and debate policy and practice in the plenary and committees. As security sector organizations often use a large proportion of the national budget, it is essential that parliament monitors the use of these resources. In its oversight role, parliament ensures that the actions of the security sector are mediated through participatory and transparent processes which take into account the needs of all members of society. This includes recognizing that women, sexual minorities and persons with a non-binary gender identity face specific security challenges, and that measures are required to ensure that their voices are brought to bear in security sector oversight.

Usually, the government is seen as dominant in security policy and the nature of the security sector can present challenges with regard to effective parliamentary oversight. Governments may frame security issues as matters of national importance and state survival and, therefore, outside the bounds of parliamentary involvement. The need to often act quickly and maintain secrecy may be seen as incompatible with transparent and deliberative democratic participation.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, parliaments need to ensure that there is effective legislation on data secrecy, which defines strict limits on data that are not available to parliament. This legislation should strictly stipulate data confidentiality, including degrees of secrecy, the procedure of data classification and declassification, data access and protection. The size and complex organization of security personnel and the nature of evolving security threats<sup>63</sup> add complexity to the challenge of democratic controls and oversight if MPs lack full access to expertise and information. Globalization and cross-border threats have also increased the need for international cooperation and decision-making, in which parliament should have a role. Parliament should have permanent mechanisms for oversight of the security sector, which should be included in the mandates of different committees, particularly specialized committees addressing defence, law enforcement and intelligence, as well as in the mandates of other committees where oversight would be required.

Effective oversight relies on MPs having the ability to obtain information from the government on security sector issues using all oversight mechanisms. In some countries, parliaments may also have powers to approve or veto appointments to senior posts within the security institutions.

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<sup>60</sup> DCAF and NATO PA, [Oversight and Guidance: Parliaments and Security Sector Governance](#), (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

<sup>61</sup> DCAF and NATO PA, [Oversight and Guidance: Parliaments and Security Sector Governance](#), (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> Wolfgang Wagner, [Parliaments and Foreign Policy](#), (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Including cyber-warfare, vulnerability of energy supplies, climate change, pandemics, and mass migration, surveillance and disinformation, and technological advances in artificial intelligence and autonomous weaponry.

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As security is essential to public well-being, parliament as the representative body must ensure transparency and public input into security policy. Parliament may also establish an ombudsman or commission to investigate public complaints which reports to a security sector committee.

To work effectively in a highly technical area, MPs require sufficient resources and expertise. Parliament can also provide opportunities for inter-parliamentary cooperation to exchange best practices and lessons learned from parliamentary assemblies addressing security issues.<sup>64</sup> This can encourage dialogue, build confidence, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning, thus contributing to the improvement of parliamentary oversight.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of security sector policy would encompass the following:

There is a comprehensive legal framework for oversight of the security sector. The constitution establishes civilian control and powers to hold the government accountable for security policy. MPs have powers to scrutinize, amend or reject legislation related to the security sector, and ensure that it is in conformity with human rights standards and international obligations.

The legal framework includes freedom of information laws which provide for powers to obtain information from the executive.<sup>65</sup> There exists in law an ombudsman or similar public body which addresses public concerns or complaints about security issues, and which reports to parliament.

Parliament has well-established practices for security sector oversight, including that of policies, practices, budgets and appointments. MPs have the opportunity to debate security sector policy and practice in the plenary and committees. There is comprehensive oversight of the security sector including specialized committees and a mandate to scrutinize across relevant parliamentary committees, which have broad-ranging powers to investigate security sector issues and gather evidence, including summoning ministers, government and security sector representatives, calling on experts, holding hearings and carrying out inquiries.

Parliament is transparent regarding security sector oversight, subject to legal limitations. There are established mechanisms for parliament to engage with stakeholders including civil society regarding security and security-related issues.

There is expertise on security sector issues available within parliament. Training is available for staff and members of committees, including on security sector issues, human rights and issues related to women, peace and security. MPs receive support for participation in international meetings related to the security sector.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

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<sup>64</sup> Including NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

<sup>65</sup> See dimension 1.7.2.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles in the constitution and legal framework identifying parliament’s role in security sector governance
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees identifying responsibility for issues related to the security sector
- Publications such as committee reports on parliamentary inquiries into security issues, which identify evidence taken from stakeholders including ministers and government officials, the public and civil society
- Annual parliamentary reports or reviews on the functioning of all security services
- Press releases or pages on the parliamentary website providing public information on parliament’s role in security sector policy

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional provisions and legal framework ensure parliament’s role in security sector policy**

The constitution ensures civilian control and oversight of the security sector. Parliament is responsible for adopting or amending the legal framework for the security sector.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Addressing public concerns or complaints about the security sector**

There is an ombudsperson or similar body responsible for addressing public concerns or complaints about the security sector, which is legally accountable and reports to parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No.3: Systematic oversight practice**

There is evidence of a parliamentary committee (or committees) with responsibility for oversight of the security sector, law enforcement and intelligence. Security sector oversight is also included in the responsibilities of the different portfolio committees. Committees have the power to conduct investigations and inquiries, summon government and security sector representatives to give evidence, and examine security sector budgets. Parliamentary committees engage with stakeholders including civil society and the media on security-related issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Public engagement on security sector policy**

Parliament issues information on its website or through press releases regarding debates, decisions, motions or laws related to the security sector. With the exception of closed hearings, and subject to legal limitations, the minutes of committee meetings and debates on security issues are made public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources and expertise are available**

The parliamentary secretariat provides support to MPs, including committee staff, specialized research capacity, access to data and supporting documentation on security sector issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices](#), (Geneva, 2003)

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- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), [\*Oversight and Guidance: Parliaments and Security Sector Governance\*](#), (Geneva: DCAF, 2015)
  - Wolfgang Wagner, [\*Parliaments and Foreign Policy\*](#), (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [\*Parliaments as partners supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda\*](#) (Norway: Oslo Governance Centre, 2019)

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## Dimension 1.11.4 Defence policy

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension examines parliament's powers on issues of defence policy, covering declarations of war, states of emergency, deployment of armed forces, sales and exports of arms, and protection of civilians during conflict. Civilian control of defence policy is essential in a well-functioning democratic society. Parliament is mandated to represent the interests of all members of society and to uphold human rights, acting as a safeguard against the unjustified and disproportionate use of force and ensuring that decisions on defence policy are aligned with public needs.<sup>66</sup>

The constitution and national legal provisions outline the extent of parliamentary involvement in the declaration of war and deployment of troops and during states of emergency. Some parliaments have considerable war powers, and MPs are allowed to debate and question the decision to deploy armed forces.<sup>67</sup> In others, the government must only notify parliament and keep MPs informed of operations, and in some cases, there is minimal consultation with parliament. Parliaments may also be able to refuse to provide funds or be required to give their consent to additional funds for war, troop deployments and for arms procurement. Parliamentary systems usually have a more limited influence than in presidential democracies. However, in practice, there may be widespread understanding that a government would not deploy troops without having majority support in parliament. This requires political will to keep parliament engaged and informed, and relations of trust between branches of power.<sup>68</sup>

As a guardian of human rights, parliament must ensure that defence policy remains subject to international law and under democratic control. This includes ensuring that, where arms are sold, their use is not in violation of international humanitarian law. It is also incumbent on parliament to ensure that defence policy reflects public needs, has public support and protects the rights of all, including minority groups. This includes understanding the gendered impact of conflict and taking measures to protect civilians, including women, girls and persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.<sup>69</sup> Transparent deliberation in parliament opens up defence decisions to public scrutiny, helping the public to understand the rationale for and risks of military engagement and emergency powers and how they comply with societal norms and human rights.

To play a full role in defence policy, parliament also needs to have a strong role in security sector oversight and broad influence across foreign policy, which are covered in dimensions 1.11.3 and 1.11.5 respectively.

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<sup>66</sup> Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy*, (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017).

<sup>67</sup> Some parliaments may also exempt certain issues, such as foreign troops on national territory, minor deployments, and arrangements with international organizations, and exception is also usually made for situations of urgency such as when a state is under attack. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices*, (Geneva, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy* (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: 2017).

<sup>69</sup> As reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and related resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2272 and 2647; and SDGs 5 and 16.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of defence policy would encompass the following:

The constitution and legal framework give parliament powers to approve the use of military force, including the declaration of war and deployment of troops. Parliament is consulted prior to troop deployments and can investigate and debate the use of military force, including powers to summon the government to testify before parliament. Parliament can effectively block the use of military force if there is a majority in favour.

Parliament also has the power to authorize the joining of international defence organizations.

Parliament has the legal authority to scrutinize, amend and approve the defence budget, including the authorization of funding for each deployment of troops, and for arms sales and weapons procurement. Parliamentary committees have broad mandates over defence issues, including the overseeing of arms sales to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. There exists a committee with the mandate to oversee gender mainstreaming in defence policy, including the composition of the armed forces and other defence bodies, the gendered impact of military and peacekeeping operations, and protection measures for women, girls and persons of different sexual orientation, gender identity and expression during conflict.<sup>70</sup>

Parliament has well-established communication practices and ensures that the public remains informed throughout situations of conflict and states of emergency. Parliament has access to support staff with independent expertise in defence policy.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles in the constitution or legal framework providing parliament with the power to authorize war and the deployment of troops, and to amend the defence budget
- Articles in the constitution or legal framework mandating parliament to play a role in the declaration, promulgation, prolongation and lifting of a state of emergency
- Hansard/parliamentary records on debates related to the declaration of war, deployment of troops or states of emergency
- Items on the parliamentary website or media articles related to parliament's role in defence policy
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating their role in overseeing different aspects of defence policy
- Memoranda of understanding between defence sector complaint bodies and parliament

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal powers over the declaration of war and deployment of troops

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<sup>70</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Parliaments as partners supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda](#) (Norway: Oslo Governance Centre, 2019).



The constitution and legal framework ensure that parliament is consulted prior to use of military force and has the power to authorize or block a declaration of war and the deployment of troops.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers over the defence sector budget**

Parliament's role in scrutinizing and approving the national budget includes defence expenditures, arms procurement and revenue from sales of arms and equipment.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Inclusion of defence policy in the mandate of parliamentary committees**

Parliamentary committees have a mandate to oversee and investigate different aspects of defence policy, including arms procurement, arms sales, issues concerning women, peace and security, and the gendered impact of conflict and crises.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Existence of defence sector complaint bodies reporting to parliament**

Complaint bodies related to the defence sector, including human rights commissions and ombudsperson, exist and report to parliament. Such bodies routinely engage with the public, civil society, media and other stakeholders, and there are clear mechanisms to submit evidence on instances of human rights violations including gender-based violence.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Expert resources and public engagement**

Adequate resources and the necessary expertise are available to parliament to support its work in the scrutiny of defence legislation and policy. There is evidence that parliament engages with the community in relation to defence issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices](#) (Geneva, 2003)
- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), [Parliament's role in defence procurement](#) (Geneva, 2006)
- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), [Parliamentary War Powers: A Survey of 25 European Parliaments](#) (Geneva, 2010)
- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Emergency Powers](#) (Science and technique of democracy No.12, Strasbourg, 1995)
- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Respect for Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law during States of Emergency – Reflections](#) (Strasbourg, 2020)
- Tom Ruys, [Parliamentary war powers and the role of international law in foreign troop deployment decisions: The US-led coalition against "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria](#) (Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Seppe Tiitinen, [Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations](#), (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Parliaments as partners supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda](#) (Norway: Oslo Governance Centre, 2019)
- Wolfgang Wagner, [Parliaments and Foreign Policy](#) (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)

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## Dimension 1.11.5 Foreign affairs

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension examines parliament's role in foreign affairs and international cooperation. The 17 SDGs represent a transformative global roadmap requiring action at national and international levels. Foreign policy is critical to SDG implementation in fragile contexts, and the meeting of foreign policy objectives of security, stability and prosperity depends on global progress in achieving the SDGs. Parliament's mandate to define foreign policy priorities is enshrined in constitutions worldwide, giving parliament a role in overseeing SDG integration across foreign policy areas.

International agreements (including treaties, instruments, conventions and bilateral agreements) on issues such as environmental policy, international trade and security have a direct impact on the public and affect the rights and obligations of all. In an increasingly globalized world, parliaments need to find new opportunities to influence foreign affairs to prevent a democratic deficit in decisions made above the state level. As such, it is important that international agreements are subject to transparent decision-making processes at the national level and the involvement of elected representatives to ensure that decisions have legitimacy and public acceptance.<sup>71</sup>

Agreements that include significant national obligations usually require parliamentary approval or ratification, and powers differ according to whether parliament can accelerate the ratification process, change the text, express reservations, or refuse to ratify and return the matter for new negotiations.<sup>72</sup> Parliament can also put pressure on the government for the passage of agreements that are not yet signed, using oversight mechanisms to receive answers and updates on progress. There is also increasing recognition of the importance of including elected representatives in the formulation of international agreements. In some countries the government is required to consult with foreign affairs committees before important decisions are taken on foreign policy issues.

Parliament and its portfolio committees are essential in overseeing the achievement of foreign policy priorities. Applying an SDG lens across sectors allows parliament to assess progress in key areas, including: supporting mutually-beneficial trade and investment policy, which can create trust between nations and help reduce inequality; overseeing accountability for and the impact of international financial agreements, including loans and development assistance;<sup>73</sup> and ensuring that development support is gender- and conflict-sensitive.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of foreign affairs would encompass the following:

The constitution mandates the parliament to have a role in determining foreign policy priorities. Parliament is legally responsible for the ratification of international agreements, loan agreements and in-country programmes by international organizations.

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<sup>71</sup> Seppä Tiitinen, *Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations* (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> Seppä Tiitinen, *Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations* (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996).

<sup>73</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation* (IPU, 2020)

Parliament can help formulate and amend international agreements. There is consultation between parliament and government before negotiations take place, MPs are kept informed of negotiating positions and parliamentary committees are engaged with negotiators. MPs can use oversight tools to question the government and have powers to submit private member bills and motions regarding the content of international agreements.

There is a legal basis for the government to report to parliament on the implementation of international agreements and activities of international organizations. Where a state is required to report to an international body, the report is debated in parliament first.

Committees across parliament play an active role in scrutinizing international financial agreements, including ensuring that development assistance has a lasting impact and is conflict- and gender-sensitive. Parliament has the power to amend loan agreements, in addition to accepting and rejecting them.

Parliament's committee system reflects inter-linkages between foreign policy objectives and the SDGs. Committees addressing issues including health, education, gender equality and human rights have the remit to oversee how foreign policy in these areas supports sustainable human development.

The parliamentary secretariat provides MPs with support in terms of technical capacity and independent information about foreign affairs. Parliament communicates and engages with the public on foreign affairs issues, helping to ensure transparency and accountability of action taken at international level.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles in the constitution mandating parliament's role in defining foreign policy priorities, and in ratifying international agreements
- Articles of international treaties, conventions or agreements mandating regular reporting by government to parliament
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating a role in oversight of international agreements
- Committee reports on foreign affairs issues
- Research briefings and informational material on foreign affairs produced by parliamentary research services or other bodies of the parliamentary secretariat

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal mandate for parliament's role in foreign affairs

The constitution provides parliament with the mandate to define foreign policy priorities and monitor government compliance with parliamentary resolutions on foreign affairs issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers relating to international agreements**

Parliament is responsible for ratifying international agreements. Parliament can propose amendments to international agreements, including financial agreements, in addition to accepting and rejecting such agreements.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Routine oversight of foreign affairs**

Committees across parliament are engaged in monitoring international agreements and ensuring that foreign policy contributes to achieving the SDGs in the areas of their mandate. Parliament can establish committees to monitor specific international issues and the work of international organizations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Transparency of information**

The executive provides parliament with information on foreign affairs, implementation of international agreements and the work of international organizations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Expert resources and public engagement**

The parliament is provided with adequate resources and the necessary expertise to support its work in the scrutiny of foreign affairs legislation and policy. There is evidence that parliament engages with the community in relation to foreign affairs issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation](#) (IPU, 2020)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and World Bank (WB), [Parliamentary Oversight of International Agreements and Related Processes](#) (IPU, 2013)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliamentary Involvement in International Affairs](#) (Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, New York, 2005)
- Adelphi, [A Foreign Policy Perspective on the SDGs](#) (Berlin, 2018),
- Seppe Tiitinen, [Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations](#) (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996)
- Wolfgang Wagner, [Parliaments and Foreign Policy](#) (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)

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## Dimension 1.11.6 Parliamentary diplomacy

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension examines the role of parliament in diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy is an important part of international cooperation, which provides a parliamentary perspective on global governance. By supporting political dialogue and mediation, parliamentary diplomacy plays a constructive and effective role in conflict prevention and crisis management, and contributes to reducing tensions and finding solutions to political and other international, regional and national challenges. It helps to strengthen dialogue between countries and increase mutual understanding. Parliamentary diplomacy can be conducted through bilateral relations between parliaments or through multilateral, international and regional, organizations and channels.

Relations between states are usually conducted by government, but there are strong reasons why democratically-elected MPs can have an impact on international relations. Engaging MPs across countries promotes common interests and values, opens new channels for dialogue and for sharing experience and expertise. As they do not represent the government's position, MPs can operate with increased flexibility in reflecting their own positions and the views of their constituents, thus helping to raise complex issues between countries, such as democracy and human rights. Their mandate can help to democratize international affairs and represent the pluralism of society in the international arena.

Bilateral parliamentary diplomacy can take the form of incoming and outgoing parliamentary visits, organized by parliament or with development support. MPs are also often included in official delegations with the government, or there is space for meetings with MPs on bilateral state visits. Parliamentary friendship groups are organized more formally and involve regular meetings between MPs from different countries. They can promote the exchange of views between MPs in areas of shared interest, and discuss and offer solutions to complex international issues. In this way, bilateral parliamentary engagement can be useful to build understanding and foster agreement in areas where the government may not have had success.<sup>74</sup> Various international bodies exist to support multilateral parliamentary diplomacy, including parliamentary assemblies at international and regional levels, organizations and networks.

Information gained through parliamentary diplomacy strengthens the work of MPs at the national level. It helps to connect decisions made at the international level with local realities and translate the concerns of the public into policy. Information gained through parliamentary diplomacy provides MPs with the means to play an active role in scrutinizing foreign policy and supporting the implementation of international agreements (reflected in dimension 1.11.5).

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of parliamentary diplomacy would encompass the following:

Parliamentary diplomacy activities have clear aims and objectives, determined through transparent, participatory and inclusive processes.

There are well-established channels of communication with and support from the government (the foreign affairs ministry or related ministries) for parliamentary diplomacy activities.

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<sup>74</sup> Geert Hamilton, *Parliamentary Diplomacy: Diplomacy with a Democratic Mandate* (IPU, 2012).

Delegations for bilateral visits and to multilateral parliamentary bodies are inclusive and reflect the composition of parliament and diversity of society. Political, gender and age quotas for delegations are mandated in parliament's rules. If international bodies require such quotas for parliamentary delegations, parliament respects them. Continuity of delegates and support staff helps to ensure understanding of how multilateral bodies operate and how to make an impact. Delegations are required to submit reports and share the resolutions, reports and recommendations adopted, which are distributed across parliament.

A specialized body or unit exists to coordinate the preparation, communication and reporting on parliamentary diplomacy activities. Such bodies produce regular summaries of the work of international organizations and the results of meetings and events, including follow-up action and how parliament has addressed resolutions and decisions made in multilateral bodies, and help to set future priorities for international engagements.

Parliament's budget includes funding for international engagements. The parliamentary secretariat offers expert and administrative support to MPs undertaking international engagements, including briefings on agenda items and on preparing and amending resolutions in multilateral bodies. The public is informed about activities and outcomes of international engagements through parliament's communication channels.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Agendas of official bilateral engagements indicating parliamentary involvement
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating responsibility for international engagements
- Name lists for parliamentary delegations indicating a political, age and gender balance
- Service statements/organogram indicating that a department exists to support MPs with international engagements
- Reports from parliamentary committees/delegations/party groups on international engagements indicating the outcomes achieved
- Items in the parliament's budget for parliamentary diplomacy activities

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Procedures for determining parliamentary diplomacy activities

Clear and transparent procedures are in place for deciding on parliamentary diplomacy activities and forming friendship groups. Procedures are participatory and inclusive in setting aims, objectives and agendas of activities and deciding on delegation members.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:



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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of specialized bodies of parliament**

Dedicated bodies support parliamentary diplomacy, such as committees on international relations and on the work of regional and international parliamentary organizations. These bodies have the mandate to prepare, communicate and coordinate reporting on parliamentary diplomacy activities and ensure follow-up to decisions taken during activities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Parliamentary diplomacy reflects the pluralism of parliament**

There are opportunities for all MPs to participate in parliamentary diplomacy activities and join parliamentary friendship groups. Parliament respects the rules of parliamentary delegation composition stipulated by international and regional organizations, and has in place quotas or other measures to ensure a political, age and gender balance in delegations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Assessment criterion No. 4: Reporting on outcomes of international and bilateral engagements**

Reports following international engagements are produced and made available to all MPs. Parliament regularly reports on follow-up action taken as a result of parliamentary diplomacy, including how resolutions of multilateral bodies have been addressed. Parliament communicates all reports publicly.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Assessment criterion No. 5: Well-established engagement with government**

Parliament receives support and information from the government prior to international engagements.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Specialized services from the parliamentary secretariat**

An international relations or other department exists to provide support to MPs to conduct international engagements.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Daniel Fiott, [On the Value of Parliamentary Diplomacy](#), (Madariaga Paper – Vol. 4, No. 7), (Madariaga, College of Europe Foundation, 2011)
- Geert Hamilton, [Parliamentary diplomacy: diplomacy with a democratic mandate](#), (IPU, 2012)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Parliamentary Diplomacy: Seminar for Members of the Parliament of East Timor*, (IPU, 2003)
- Davor Jančić and Stelios Stavridis, [Introduction: The Rise of Parliamentary Diplomacy in International Politics](#) (The Hague Journal of Democracy 11(2), 2016)

## 2 – Accountable parliament

Accountable parliament is one that:

- Is ethical, with all MPS upholding standards related to anti-corruption, conflict of interest, lobbying and disclosure of information
- Serves the public interest and promotes accountability across public institutions and society as a whole through its legislative and oversight functions
- Is a model of institutional integrity, including with regard to finances, procurement, reporting, and recruitment and management of staff

This sub-target on accountable parliament is the second element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6 on effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. In this case, it is adapted to apply to the institution of parliament. Parliament is often the premier institution in many democratic countries. Given this status, it is looked to for leadership and for setting high standards of institutional integrity and accountability. This sub-target covers both individual integrity and accountability (of MPs) and the institutional integrity of the parliament and its administration.

The sub-target includes the ethical framework and behaviour of MPs (and senior parliamentary staff). MPs are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards and conduct, as adverse perceptions of MPs can have a significant impact on the regard that the public has for the parliamentary institution in general. The indicator concerning parliamentary ethics covers both the regulatory framework for parliamentary ethics as well as the practices of MPs.

The indicator on institutional integrity covers a number of different aspects of the integrity and accountability of the parliamentary institution more broadly. This includes both the parliament and its administration, and relates to matters such as accounting for expenditure, procurement for the parliament, the provision of information to the public, and transparency and integrity in the recruitment, advancement, development and management of staff. Collectively, these aspects ensure that the parliament and its administration remain fully accountable to the public.

The sub-target on accountable parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 2.1 Parliamentary ethics
- 2.2 Institutional integrity

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## Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

In order to increase and maintain public trust in parliament, it is essential that parliamentarians behave ethically, and that any apparent breach of ethical standards is investigated and, if necessary, sanctioned.

While principles of parliamentary ethics have been applied to MPs in the past, they were mostly limited to the arena of the parliamentary chamber and were not applied to the conduct of MPs more generally. Recurrent political scandals in many countries in recent decades have had an impact on citizens' perception of parliamentary legitimacy and have pressured parliaments to renew and reform the regulation of parliamentary conduct.

The indicator on parliamentary ethics considers individual professional and ethical standards for MPs. Depending on the specific legal and political system, it might also include other elected parliamentary officials, such as secretaries-general and deputy secretaries-general.

The assessment of the parliamentary ethics of members of parliament, through a regulatory framework and implementation in practice, comprises the following dimensions:

- 2.1.1 Anti-corruption
- 2.1.2 Code of conduct
- 2.1.3 Conflict of interest
- 2.1.4 Disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure
- 2.1.5 Lobbying

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## Dimension 2.1.1 Anti-corruption

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the duties and responsibilities of the legislature to prevent and combat corruption in public institutions, including parliament, and across society as a whole.

Corruption has many definitions but can be described as actions that lead to or are intended to “abuse public power for private benefits”.<sup>75</sup> It is a growing global phenomenon that negatively affects the credibility of democratic institutions and their ability to deliver services and resources to citizens, thereby corroding human rights, threatening democratic discourse, and hampering economic development. Corruption can have detrimental long-term consequences for all segments of a society. In cases where corruption is used to illegally divert state funds, “corruption undercuts services, such as health, education, public transportation or local policing, that those with few resources are typically dependent upon. Petty corruption provides additional costs for citizens: not only is service provision inadequate, but “payment” is required for the delivery of even the most basic government activity, such as the issuing of official documentation.”<sup>76</sup> Corruption also denotes a variety of connected offences, which characterize the complexity of economic and political relationships, including trading in influence, money laundering or state capture.

Parliament has an essential role in curbing corruption and creating environments that minimize opportunities and space for corrupt acts. A legislator is responsible for ensuring effective and conducive legislative frameworks for anti-corruption in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption,<sup>77</sup> which is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument signed by the vast majority of UN Member States.

There are also critical anti-corruption mechanisms that legislators and their institutions can use outside of legal frameworks. These mechanisms include offices to preserve institutional archives and records, portals that are public-facing and provide access to official data and records, administrative procedures that hold members and staff accountable for their compliance with ethical rules (see dimensions 2.1.2 on code of conduct, 2.1.3 on conflicts of interest and 2.1.4 on disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure) and procedures for the scrutiny of government policies and programmes through periodic audits and programme or policy reviews. In this respect, curbing corruption requires collective efforts between and among offices of parliament and government. Parliament should collaborate with independent supreme audit institutions, the ombudsperson, inspectors-general, ethics commissions, and other relevant bodies that report to parliament to enforce its oversight efforts and ensure the necessary funding and independence for anti-corruption agencies to conduct their activities.

Promoting transparency, accountability and raising the awareness of the public about the forms and effects of corruption also require strong involvement of civil society actors and the media. Parliament should seek to engage civil society actors and consult independent reports, increase the data of watchdog organizations to raise

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<sup>75</sup> Defined by the World Bank (1997, 17) and Transparency International.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations, *Legislative guide for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Second revised edition* (2012).

<sup>77</sup> [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (2003).

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awareness about acts of corruption, and assist with the scrutiny of such acts. Furthermore, parliament can amplify the voices of whistle-blowers by raising awareness about actions of corruption and illegal acts.

Through its oversight role, parliament is in a position to systematically and effectively scrutinize the work of the executive, control spending of public resources, and monitor the performance of ministerial portfolios and the overall implementation of national anti-corruption commitments. (Note that the parliament's oversight role in relation to the executive and the budget is covered more generally in indicators 1.7 and 1.8.)

Effective prevention and combating of corruption must start in parliament itself. Institutions of parliament, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff should serve as role models by setting standards for integrity.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of anti-corruption would encompass the following:

Parliament has passed a comprehensive anti-corruption legislative framework which is in full compliance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and which includes both the mandatory and recommended legislative measures set by the Convention.

Parliament has made the necessary budgetary allocations for anti-corruption and oversight bodies and activities to effectively and independently carry out anti-corruption functions.

The implementation of the national anti-corruption commitments, laws and policies is a subject of a regular in-depth oversight by a specialized committee, public account committee and sectoral committees, in cooperation with independent anti-corruption agencies.

Parliament has developed internal legal and procedural mechanisms to prevent, detect, and hold accountable MPs and staff engaged in corrupt practices.

Parliament has the legal and procedural mechanisms to address executive corruption through constitutional tools such as inquiries, interpellations or subpoena, where this is part of the legal-constitutional set up. Participation of the public and specialized civil society actors in raising awareness, preventing and curbing corruption at all levels is proactively promoted and encouraged by parliament.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Laws and policies aimed at preventing and curbing corruption
- Parliamentary and committees' reports on scrutiny of the implementation of anti-corruption legislative framework and corruption cases
- Reports of anti-corruption agencies and other independent bodies
- Parliamentary rules addressing potential corruptive practices in parliament
- International and regional reports, such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index
- Reports by local NGOs and media

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework**

Parliament has adopted and amended legislation that includes both mandatory and recommended measures by the United Nations Convention against Corruption and additional UN commitments, including preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Oversight role**

There is effective, rigorous and regular scrutiny of the executive, including monitoring of the expenditure of public resources and performance of ministerial portfolios, with particular attention given to regulating the implementation of national anti-corruption commitments. Such oversight is exercised by a specialized committee, public account committees or sectoral committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Inter-institutional collaboration**

Parliament closely cooperates with anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions, the ombudsperson and other relevant bodies to monitor and track public resources, and conducts consistent reviews of audit reports to parliament. In order to encourage the effectiveness of these bodies in fulfilling their anti-corruption roles, parliament also maintains regular legislative action (such as updating freedom of information requirements, extending audit mandates on specialized programmes and incorporating post-legislative scrutiny measures into funding bills).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Prevention and sanctioning of corrupt practices in parliament**

Parliament has developed legal mechanisms to prevent, detect, sanction and bring to justice parliamentarians and staff engaged in corrupt practices. It ensures regular monitoring of official activities, and promotes the transparency of public resources.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Public engagement**

National and parliamentary anti-corruption policies and practices promote the active participation of civil society actors in preventing and combating corruption, including through public information-sharing portals that foster public contribution to decision-making, and raise public awareness about the existence of corruption and its severe implications.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (2003).
- UN, [Legislative guide for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption](#), Second revised edition (2012).
- [Political Declaration after UNGASS 2021](#).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#), (CPA, 2018).
- National Democratic Institute, [Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#), (NDI, 2007).



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- Phil Mason, [Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption](#) (WFD, 2021).
  - Transparency International's reports on the state of corruption in different areas of the world, available at [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org).

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## Dimension 2.1.2 Code of conduct

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

Various regulatory models exist in parliamentary systems concerning the conduct of parliamentarians and introducing behavioural standards for them. In many parliaments, the behaviour of MPs is partly regulated by the rules of procedures, which usually address the maintaining of order in the plenary. However, there is an evident trend towards the explicit codification of acceptable standards of parliamentary behaviour and conduct in general, in the form of a code of conduct.

A code of conduct sets out guidelines for the behaviour of members of parliament, which is an important segment of parliamentary accountability. “Codes affecting the conduct of individual members of parliament encourage ethical conduct, reduce risks to the integrity of the Parliament as the paramount political institution, and enable it to perform its functions more effectively, enhance propriety and strengthening the community’s trust in Parliament”.<sup>78</sup>

The code should establish clear, effective and fair rules of conduct, with mechanisms to ensure their enforcement in practice. Procedures for monitoring breaches of the rules, investigating whether misconduct has occurred and sanctions for offenders, must be also clear, consistent and transparent.

Adoption of a parliamentary code of conduct in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner can contribute to more effective implementation in practice.

A code of conduct for members of parliament applies to all office holders who are members of the parliament and, if applicable, to other appointed officials, such as secretaries-general and deputy secretaries-general.

A parliamentary code of conduct may also apply to parliamentary staff, or there may a separate code of conduct for staff at the level of parliament or the entire public administration. Depending on parliamentary context, parliament can choose one of these options for codification of parliamentary staff behaviour,<sup>79</sup> which thereby plays a very important role in enhancing the legitimacy of parliament in the public eye.

This dimension uses the term ‘code of conduct’, but other terms can be used by different parliaments or, in some cases, the code of conduct and code of ethics can be combined into one document.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of code of conduct would encompass the following:

Parliament has a code of conduct that establishes clear, effective and fair rules of conduct, as well as rules and procedures to ensure their enforcement in practice. Types of conduct which are considered as offences or misconduct, and which may lead to a disciplinary process and sanctions, are precisely defined.

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<sup>78</sup> CPA, [Recommended Benchmarks for Codes of Conduct applying to Members of Parliament](#), 2016

<sup>79</sup> See Dimension 2.2.6 – Professionalism of parliamentary administration

The code of conduct has been developed and adopted in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner, both by parliamentary majority and opposition.

There is a special committee or similar body responsible for enforcing professional standards in parliament, implementing the code of conduct and carrying out regular reviews and updates. Complaints about potential breaches of the code of conduct can be filed by anyone and are deliberated by the responsible body in a timely manner. Decisions of this body are publicly available.

Every member of parliament is obliged to formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of the parliamentary mandate. Guidance and training are provided to MPs and staff to promote standards defined by the code, including induction training for new members.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A code of conduct
- A decision on the establishment of a conduct committee or similar body
- Information and records about the work of the ethics committee

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of a code of conduct

There is a code of conduct in parliament or a similar act that establishes rules for the behaviour of members of parliament, both in parliament and in their public duties. The rules of conduct are clearly defined, effective and fair. Every member of parliament is obliged to formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of parliamentary mandate.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Adoption of the code of conduct

The code has been developed and adopted in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner, based on international recommendations and best practices. The members of the parliamentary minority have been involved in developing the code and have voted for the code.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Scope and content of the code of conduct**

The code of conduct clearly defines the type of behaviour which constitutes an offence or misconduct and which may lead to a disciplinary process and sanctions. It also prohibits any type of harassment (verbal, written or virtual) based on gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristics, among other offences or misconduct. Sanctions for breaching the rules are clear and proportionate to the severity of the misconduct.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Enforcement of the code of conduct**

There is a special committee or similar body responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and its regular review and update. Depending on the given parliamentary context, investigations may be entrusted to an external regulatory entity, such as an anti-corruption agency.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Complaints**

Complaints about offences, misconduct or any other potential breach of the code of conduct can be filed by anyone, including members of parliament, staff members and individual citizens. The body responsible for the consideration of complaints under the code of conduct deliberates on complaints in a timely manner and undertakes action in line with the code. Decisions of this body are publicly available, while taking into account reasonable boundaries related to the personal lives of MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 6: Promotion of the code of conduct**

There are programmes and activities available to MPs and staff to promote standards of conduct through guidance and training, including induction training for new members.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change****Sources and further reading**

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Codes of Conduct applying to Members of Parliament](#), 2016.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), [Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians](#), 2012.

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## Dimension 2.1.3 Conflict of interest

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

A conflict of interest is an issue, matter or action involving a member of parliament or staff whose private interests prevail over those of the public, and therefore come into direct conflict with that person's work and mandate as a public official. Examples of conflicts of interest include situations where a member of parliament (or staff): has a professional obligation to another company or organization (see dimension 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office); advises a foreign government; holds another public office; or engages in actions to benefit family members or friends. Conflicts of interest and ways to address them should be codified in a parliament's rules of procedure or national regulations, in order to uphold the integrity of public institutions. If not managed appropriately, conflicts of interest can result in corruption.

This dimension focuses primarily on conflicts of interest that relate to the registration of private interests in parliamentary debates (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets, the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments.

Practices to address conflict of interest vary significantly among countries. Some countries have separate laws aimed at preventing and managing conflicts of interest, while others have general anti-corruption legislation to address the issue. Some countries have adopted different requirements for separate categories of holders of public office and staff, including for MPs and parliamentary staff, which take into account their different positions, powers and tasks. For example, codes of conduct are mechanisms often used to address conflicts of interest.

Whatever the approach adopted, it is important for the general characteristics of conflict-of-interest situations to be clearly defined and for the procedures for identifying, managing and resolving such situations to be established and include control and monitoring mechanisms. Conflict of interest regulations should be supported by strategies and practices to promote an organizational culture that does not tolerate conflict of interest. For example, non-partisan parliamentary ethics bodies, commissions, and councils offer distinct mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest among members and staff. Transparency in the process of identifying, resolving and managing conflict of interest situations, especially in partnerships with public stakeholders and watchdog organizations, can also be effective in addressing conflicts of interest and increasing public trust.

As conflict of interest is a complex issue and may differ along ethical, socio-cultural, political, economic lines, depending on the nation and its parliament, regulatory approaches should be adapted to meet specific country contexts. A country's regulatory framework should also include global best practices for regulating conflicts of interest, which uphold common elements, such as prohibitions on holding multiple elected offices, counselling foreign governments, or accepting bribes, and ensuring that one's private interests in parliamentary debate are registered.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of conflict of interest would encompass the following:

Parliament has a comprehensive legislative framework, whether under its rules of procedure, ethics laws, or other national regulations, that codifies conflicts of interest, in addition to ways to prevent and manage conflicts of interest.

Parliament has internal legal and procedural mechanisms to prevent, detect, and hold accountable MPs and staff in cases of conflict of interest.

There are rules and established procedures for the registration of private interests in debates on specific topics (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. There is a body in parliament tasked with controlling and monitoring compliance with these rules and procedures by MPs (a body can be established instead at the level of public administration to monitor compliance with conflict-of-interest rules by holders of public office).

The process of identifying, resolving and managing conflict-of-interest situations in parliament is transparent. Participation of external stakeholders, such as civil society watchdogs, in raising awareness, preventing and managing conflicts of interest is acknowledged by parliament.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional, legislative or other provisions concerning conflict of interest, particularly in a parliamentary context
- Provisions addressing the registration of interest in debates on specific topics (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality
- Reports of the parliamentary body tasked with controlling and monitoring the implementation of conflict-of-interest rules
- Data on required declarations submitted by MPs
- Reports on compliance with conflict-of-interest rules

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: National regulations

Conflicts of interest, and their prevention and management, are legally codified for holders of public office, either under a separate law or as part of other anti-corruption legal frameworks.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliament-specific rules

There are provisions in rules of procedures or other statutory provisions and procedural mechanisms that allow for the identification, prevention and management of conflict of interest situations in parliamentary context, applicable to MPs and other holders of public office in parliament. This includes procedural mechanisms to hold MPs and staff accountable in the case of conflict of interest.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Interest disclosure**

Members of parliament are required to register their private interests in debates on specific topics, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: The holding of one public office at a time**

Regulations exist that prevent MPs from being elected to multiple public offices at a time. These regulations may also include timed restrictions following an MP's departure from office to prevent the MP from taking up elected office in a different government branch or level of government in the period immediately after an unsuccessful election or departure from office.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Foreign government guidance**

There are regulations that prevent an MP from directly encouraging the affairs of foreign governments, such as by directing MPs or government officials of another country to make specific decisions that benefit the private interests of outside individuals or groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					



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**Assessment criterion No. 6: Declaration of assets**

Members of parliament are required to declare their assets, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament, which might include assets of close family members, as well as liabilities. Submission of asset declarations is required when MPs join and leave parliament, as well as regular updates

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Acceptance of gifts**

Parliament has well-defined rules on the acceptance of gifts by MPs and other holders of public office. Receiving gifts may be completely banned, or the acceptance of gifts that do not exceed a certain value may be allowed. Requirements for the registration of gifts may also exist.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 8: Hospitality**

Members of parliament are required to declare sponsored travel and accommodation, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 9: Control and monitoring**

There is a body in the parliament (or at the level of public administration) tasked with controlling the compliance of MPs with conflict-of-interest rules, and initiating procedures in the event of non-compliance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 10: Practice**

Conflict of interest rules are fully respected in the parliament. There is a high percentage of MPs who regularly submit required declarations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Recommendations for change**

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**Sources and further reading**

- [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (2003).
- United Nations, [Legislative guide for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption](#), Second revised edition (2012).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service: OECD Guidelines and Overview](#) (2003).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Legislative Ethics: A Comparative Analysis](#), Legislative Research Series Paper #4 (NDI Legislative Ethics), (Washington DC, 1999), 11.
- European Parliament – Internal Policies (IPOL) | Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, [The Effectiveness of Conflict of Interest Policies in the EU- Member States](#), PE 651.697 - October 2020.
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislature](#) (CPA, 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).
- Phil Mason, [Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption](#) (Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD, 2021).
- OSCE/ODIHR, [Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians](#) (2012).
- G. Carney, [Conflict of interest: Legislators, ministers and public officials](#) (1999).
- Transparency International's reports on the state of corruption in different areas of the world, available at [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org).

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## Dimension 2.1.4 Disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the responsibilities of parliamentary (party) groups, individual members of parliament, and certain staff for disclosing and reporting their income and spending of public funds (specifically, funds allocated under the parliamentary budget) in their work (for more details about the accountability of parliament as an institution in the spending of its budget, see Dimension 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure). It is important to note that MP income disclosure for private income and sources is covered in dimension 2.1.3 Conflict of interest.

Public interest in parliamentary ethics often focuses on how MPs use (or misuse) parliamentary resources or public funds. Parliament should make available sufficient information to allow citizens to make informed judgments regarding the integrity and probity of individual members of parliament and parliamentary groups. This includes information on MPs' income and allowances received under the parliamentary budget, and all other benefits and compensation in addition to expenditure.

Transparency of spending budgetary funds should also apply to parliamentary parties and groups. Political parties usually have a legal obligation to provide information on the funding of political campaigns, and parliamentary groups are required to regularly report on their expenditure, both to the parliament and to the public. Depending on the structure and system of parliament, some bodies regulate public income and expenditure through a commission, committee, or other relevant office within parliament. In some structures, these provisions are regulated by stakeholders at the national or subnational level, or by external agencies.

In accordance with the legislative framework of each country, MPs might be required to disclose their non-parliamentary income (including additional income from other activities or donations), their assets and the assets of their spouses and dependent children, as well as liabilities (see Dimension 2.1.4 Conflict of interest).

Recruitment of MPs' personal staff, such as secretaries, assistants and researchers, is also often an issue that attracts public attention. Information on personal staff and their remunerations should therefore be available to the public. The employment of family members for these positions is not forbidden in many parliaments, but it does raise public concerns about the accountable use of public money. Some countries have started to regulate the employment of family members, so as to prevent nepotism and to respond to public concerns. Such allocations and expenditures are often regulated by parliamentary administration.

Accountability for the use of public funds also covers the use of parliamentary resources, including staff. It is important for parliament to make a clear separation between the provision of legitimate support to MPs by parliamentary staff and the use of such staff for party political purposes. Some parliaments have introduced provisions in their code of ethics that prohibit MPs from placing parliamentary staff in a position that could jeopardize their political impartiality or call into question the proper use of public funds.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure would encompass the following:

**Parliament makes available information on MPs' salaries and all other benefits and compensation that they receive from the parliamentary budget, as well as their expenditure.**

Parliamentary (party) groups are legally required to regularly report on their financing and expenditure, both to the parliament and to the public. There is a parliamentary body that is responsible for monitoring the compliance of parliamentary groups with those requirements, and for holding them accountable in the event of non-compliance.

The recruitment of political staff who are not part of parliamentary administration, such as personal assistants, secretaries and researchers of MPs or parliamentary groups, is clearly regulated in parliamentary rules. Provisions on their funding, as well as their remuneration and expenditure, are made publicly available.

Parliament takes care to prevent the use of parliamentary resources, including staff, for party political purposes.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions in rules of procedures or other regulations concerning the publication of information on income and other benefits and compensation of MPs and their expenditure
- Provisions that address the obligation of parliamentary groups to report on their funding and spending
- Reports of the parliamentary body tasked with controlling and monitoring compliance of parliamentary groups with reporting requirements
- Provisions that regulate the employment of political staff of MPs or parliamentary groups
- Information on political staff and their remuneration
- Data on the required declarations submitted by MPs

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Income and expenditure of MPs

Information on MPs' salaries and all other benefits and compensation that they receive from the parliamentary budget, as well as their expenditure, are publicly available.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Funding and expenditure of parliamentary (party) groups

There are provisions in rules of procedures or other statutory provisions that require parliamentary (party) groups to regularly report on their financing and expenditure. These reports are publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Monitoring mechanisms**

There is a parliamentary body that is responsible for monitoring the compliance of parliamentary groups with these requirements. There is evidence of procedural mechanisms that can be introduced in the event of non-compliance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Recruitment and expenditures of political staff**

The recruitment of political staff who are not part of parliamentary administration, such as personal assistants, secretaries, and researchers of MPs or parliamentary groups, is clearly regulated in parliamentary rules. Information on political staff and expenditure for their remuneration is made publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**

There is evidence of respect for the rules and requirements regarding the reporting and public availability of information on expenditure from the parliamentary budget for MPs, parliamentary parties and political staff. The use of parliamentary resources, including staff, for political purposes is forbidden, which is respected in parliamentary practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- [The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness](#) (2012).
- OECD, [Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service: OECD Guidelines and Overview](#) (2003).
- Venice Commission, [Guidelines and Report on the Financing of Political Parties](#), CDL-INF(2001)008-e (2001).



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## Dimension 2.1.5 Lobbying

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension addresses the legislative regulation of lobbying in the parliamentary context and its implementation in practice, as a significant factor of parliamentary accountability. It also takes into account the transparency of lobbying activities.

For the purpose of this dimension, lobbying activities can be regarded as acts by individuals or groups, each with varying and specific interests, which attempt to influence decisions taken at the political level. It therefore does not apply to so-called 'lobbying for votes', which is a political activity that sometimes occurs between members of parliament with the purpose of obtaining support for their proposals.

Although lobbying can have a positive impact, it can also be a mechanism for groups with specific interests to influence laws and policies at the expense of the public interest. Sound and enforceable legislative frameworks and corresponding mechanisms on lobbying, including parliamentary rules of conduct, are important to prevent undue influence on parliamentarians and other public decision-makers. The law should provide a precise definition of what lobbying is, what constitutes lobbying activities and who must register as potential lobbyists. All lobbying activities, including so-called professional lobbying and lobbying by interest groups, should be recorded in a publicly available register with accurate and timely updated information, including on lobbyists, their clients and finances.

This dimension uses the term 'lobbyists' to mean the same as other terms that are often used in practice in various countries, such as 'private individuals or groups', 'interest groups' and 'extra-institutional actors'.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of lobbying would encompass the following:

There is an effective regulatory framework on lobbying in place that applies to parliamentarians and other public officials. The regulatory framework clearly defines lobbying and stipulates the requirements for and the manner of conducting lobbying activities, the rules on lobbying and other issues of importance concerning lobbying.

The framework comprises a wide range of clearly defined categories of lobbyists who are required to register. It also includes clear and enforceable rules on transparency (including financial disclosure), confidentiality and conflict of interest for both lobbyists and lobbied officials, including parliamentarians.

There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists (or part of a register at the national or public administration level), with complete information about lobbyists' clients and finances. Information in the register is updated in a timely manner, with the regular tracking of all changes related to the status of lobbyists, authorizations for conducting lobbying and removal from the register, etc.

Parliamentarians and other public decision-makers are legally obliged to notify the parliament (or other relevant body) and to submit data on any person conducting illegal lobbying, when it occurs.



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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the law that regulate lobbying
- Other regulations, such as bylaws, rules and procedures that stipulate lobbying activities
- Register of lobbyists (for example, a statute or weblink)

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Regulatory framework

There is an effective legislative framework on lobbying, including a law that applies to parliamentarians and other public officials and staff. The framework clearly defines lobbying and stipulates the requirements and manner of conducting lobbying activities, the rules on lobbying and other issues of importance for lobbying. Legal regulations on lobbying also contain sanctions for non-compliance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules on transparency, confidentiality and conflict of interest for lobbyists and lobbied officials

The framework in place includes clear and enforceable rules on transparency (such as disclosure of information on what interests are being pursued, by whom and with what budgets), as well as on confidentiality and conflict of interest for both lobbyists and lobbied officials, including parliamentarians.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Defined categories of lobbyists

The regulatory framework comprises a wide range of clearly defined categories of lobbyists required to register, including: professional consultancies and law-firms, self-employed consultants; in-house lobbyists and trade/professional associations; non-governmental organizations; think tanks, research and academic institutions; organizations representing churches and religious communities; organizations representing local, regional and

municipal authorities, and other public or mixed entities. Exemptions to legal regulations on lobbying are clearly defined and justified.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Register of lobbyists**

There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists (or part of a register at the national or public administration level), with complete information about lobbyists’ clients and finances. A register of lobbyists is maintained by a public authority or other designated body. This body is responsible for the timely update of all information in the register, regular tracking of all changes related to the status of lobbyists, authorizations for conducting lobbying and removal from the register, etc.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Notification of illegal lobbying attempts**

Parliamentarians and other public decision-makers are legally obliged to notify the parliament (or other relevant body) and to submit data on any person conducting illegal lobbying, when it occurs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Accountability**

Members of a non-partisan ethics committee or similar body are responsible for reviewing lobbying disclosures and requirements periodically. In the event of an infraction by a member, public official or staff member, the committee takes steps to hold the official accountable, and ensure that necessary actions are taken to address the situation at hand.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), "[Report on the legal framework for the regulation of lobbying in the Council of Europe member states](#)", CDL-DEM(2011)002 (Strasbourg: Venice Commission, 2011).
- OECD, [Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying](#), OECD/LEGAL/0379 (adopted by the OECD Council on 18 February 2010).
- European Commission, [Transparency Register](#).

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## Indicator 2.2 – Institutional integrity

In democratic systems of government, parliament is often seen as the nation's highest institution. As such, it is essential for parliament to act as a role model for the nation with regard to institutional integrity, and uphold the highest standards and values in its operations. This indicator concerns a number of different aspects of the institutional integrity that parliaments should aspire to achieve.

Parliament is responsible for approving the national budget, both for publicly funded agencies and for itself. Parliament needs to ensure complete accountability for the expenditure of funds which it has approved for itself. Like other publicly funded organizations, parliament has to procure goods and services to assist it in providing its services and performing its functions. It therefore needs to have well-developed procedures that ensure transparency and a proper process. The indicator also concerns the provision by parliament of full access to information about its administration and work, including full and regular reporting on its activities and performance, and its expenditure. Finally, the indicator includes the recruitment, career development and professionalism of parliamentary staff. The staff of the parliament are unique in that they operate in a highly political environment but must do so in a non-partisan way. This means the parliamentary administration needs to pay close attention to the recruitment of suitable staff and to their development and career advancement, without political interference. As parliamentary staff ensure the institutional continuity of a parliament, they play a pivotal role in institutional integrity.

The assessment of the Institutional integrity indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure
- 2.2.2 Public procurement
- 2.2.3 Access to information
- 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work
- 2.2.5 Staff recruitment
- 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration

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## Dimension 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

As was noted in dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy, parliament has independence over the setting of its own budget, and is not subject to approval by the executive. The legislature also has autonomy for the execution of its budgetary expenditure. With the autonomy of the parliament in relation to its budget comes the need for parliament to be transparent and accountable for how the funds are spent. Just as parliament requires accountability from publicly funded agencies for which it approves expenditure, a similar level of accountability is expected from the parliament and its administration. This dimension concerns how parliament ensures this accountability responsibility.

First, there should be clear and transparent requirements to be met by the legislature, which stipulate how its funds are spent. This is required for all expenditure. However, clear rules and procedures should be established in particular for the remuneration and allowances of individual MPs and their staff, parliamentary officeholders and parliamentary (political) parties and groups, as they are the subject of considerable sensitivity and scrutiny. It is important that the remuneration and allowances of MPs, both individually and collectively, are actually, and are seen to be, disbursed in line with clearly understood and transparent rules and processes, and within budget.

Secondly, an important way for parliament to fulfil its accountability responsibility is for it to, through its parliamentary administration, report openly to the parliament and the public on its spending of funds in all areas of the budget, including the total expenditure on the allowances and remuneration of MPs and their staff. (Note that individual reporting on MPs' and staff remuneration and allowances is covered in dimension 2.1.4.) This includes reporting on activities, services, performance of the parliamentary administration, and the total remuneration and allowances of MPs and their staff.

Thirdly, the expenditure of funds by the parliament should be subject to various levels of oversight. The approaches to oversight would include regular, independent auditing of parliamentary expenditure, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of the funds on MPs' and staff remuneration and allowances. These audits would be made public. Oversight also is often undertaken by a committee (or committees) of the parliament. Such a committee(s) assesses the reports of the parliamentary administration and the audits of expenditure and provides scrutiny and accountability for the expenditure under the parliamentary budget. The reports and findings of this committee(s) also should be made public.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of parliamentary expenditure would encompass the following:

Parliament has, either by means of legislation or its own requirements, clear and transparent rules and procedures for the expenditure of parliamentary funds, including clear rules for the payment of remuneration and the various allowances of individual MPs and their staff, parliamentary officeholders and parliamentary (political) parties and groups.

There is a requirement for regular reporting by the parliamentary administration, on behalf of the parliament, on parliament's expenditure of funds in all areas of the budget, including the total expenditure

on MPs' and staff allowances and remuneration. This includes reporting on the activities, services, performance of the parliamentary administration and on the total remuneration and allowances of MPs and staff.

The rules of procedure and practices of the legislature require the expenditure of funds by the parliament to be subject to regular, independent auditing, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of funds on MPs' and staff remuneration and allowances. There is also oversight undertaken by a committee (committees) of the parliament. The reports from any audits and of the oversight committee(s) are made public.

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that the expenditure from the parliamentary budget is made in accordance with the law, rules and procedures set by the parliament, and that the accountability, responsibility and transparency requirements are fully met.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation, rules of procedures of the parliament or other requirements which relate to accountability for the expenditure of parliamentary funds
- Specific rules or procedures for the payment of remuneration and allowances to MPs and staff
- Parliamentary reports and information on expenditure available on the parliamentary website
- Audit reports on parliamentary expenditure or on MPs' and staff remuneration and allowances
- Reports of oversight committee(s) on expenditure by parliament

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Clear and transparent rules and procedures

Parliament has, either through legislation or its own requirements, clear and transparent rules and procedures for the expenditure of parliamentary funds, including clear rules for the payment of remuneration and the various allowances to individual MPs, parliamentary officeholders and political parties and groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Public reporting on budgetary expenditure

There is regular reporting by the parliamentary administration, on behalf of the parliament, on parliament's expenditure of funds in all areas of the budget. These include the total budget allocated to parliament and its

chambers, administrative expenses in detail, total remuneration and allowances for MPs and staff (including parliamentary party groups) and all other expenditures that occur in the work of parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Independent audit**

There are legislative or similar requirements and supporting practices of the legislature for the expenditure of funds by the parliament to be subject to regular, independent auditing, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of the funds on the remuneration and allowances of MPs and their staff. Such audits are made publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Oversight**

There are rules of procedure and practices of the legislature that require oversight of all parliamentary expenditure to be undertaken by a committee (or committees) of the parliament. The reports of the committee(s) are made public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Expenditure in accordance with rules and procedures**

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that expenditure from the parliamentary budget is in accordance with the law, rules and procedures set by the parliament. Reports and information on parliamentary expenditures are publicly available and presented in a way that is understandable for the general public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed. 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).



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## Dimension 2.2.2 Public procurement

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

Parliament is not able to provide all its own goods and services and therefore needs to procure these items from the private sector at times, to enable MPs and the administration to carry out their function and responsibilities. In undertaking the task of public procurement, the parliament has to ensure that it follows a proper process that is transparent and open to competitive bids.

There should be a legislative provision for the procurement process. This framework could be one that covers all publicly funded agencies, in which case parliament must ensure that legal provisions meet parliamentary needs. Some parliaments have enacted a separate legal framework for parliament, which meets the specific needs of the legislature compared with those of executive bodies. These provisions should also require clear and comprehensive guidelines for procurement.<sup>80</sup> The guidelines should encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken.

The key principles to be reflected in the guidelines should include:

- Value for money, that is, to maximize the use of public money
- Fairness
- Transparency, openness and clarity
- Ethical behaviour
- Competition and efficiency

The process of procurement itself, which would also be reflected in the guidelines, generally would include the following steps:

- Identify and then scope the procurement requirement
- Explore the options for sourcing the requirement
- Seek public tenders
- Evaluate tender submissions and make a decision. The decision-making process may require approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size
- Manage the contract once agreed

Procurement is a specialized task requiring particular knowledge and skills. The parliament should have staff with an understanding of the procurement process to undertake procurement on its behalf. In addition to specialist staff to undertake procurement, staff with skills in contract management also are needed by the parliament to manage contracts once agreed, so that the parliament obtains the best value from the contracts.

The most critical requirement is for there to be complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process, from the provision of advice on a requirement and the seeking of tenders, to the provision of information about the tender and the announcement of the final decision. Transparency and openness encourage the

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<sup>80</sup> For two examples of such guidelines see Australian Government, Department of Finance, [Commonwealth Procurement Rules](#), 14 December 2020 – *Achieving Value for Money (Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Finance, Commercial & Government Services, 2020)*, and Government of Belize, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, [Public Procurement Procedures Handbook](#), Volume 1, *Standardised Procurement Procedures*, First edition (June 2013).

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achievement of the other objectives of procurement, namely value for money, fairness, competition and ethical behaviour.

Parliament's public procurement process and decisions should be subject to an external audit or other review to provide assurance regarding compliance with the law and other regulations. In some countries, an independent body has been established for controlling public procurement implementation at the level of public administration.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public procurement would encompass the following:

There are legal provisions for the procurement process of the parliament. The framework could either be a national public procurement framework in which the parliament is included, or one specifically for the parliament.

There are guidelines or regulations that provide clear and comprehensive guidance for public procurement by the parliament. These guidelines encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken. The process may involve a requirement for approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size.

The parliament has expertise in all aspects of the public procurement process. In addition to expertise in procurement, the parliament also has expertise in managing contracts once they have been agreed, to obtain the best value for money in their management.

The practices of the legislature support complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process. Transparency and openness encourage the achievement of the objectives of public procurement. Reviews or audits of the procurement process, both internally and externally, are used to provide assurance regarding compliance with procurement laws and guidelines.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation that relate to public procurement by the parliament
- Guidelines and other regulations for the public procurement process in the parliament
- Public information on the all stages of the procurement process
- Audits or other reports of reviews of particular procurements or the procurement process, internal and external
- Data regarding possible non-compliance of the public procurement with the law

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework

There is evidence of legislative provisions for the procurement process of the parliament. The framework could either be a national public procurement framework, which properly fits the needs of parliament, or a framework

enacted specifically for the parliament. Provisions include accountability and possible sanctions for both the parliament and the successful bidder in the event of non-compliance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Guidelines covering the principles and process for procurement**

There is evidence of guidelines or regulations that provide clear and comprehensive guidance for public procurement by the parliament. These guidelines encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken. The process may involve a requirement for approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: External audit of public procurement by parliament**

Parliament’s public procurement process is subject to external audits or other reviews by an independent body established at the level of public administration or in another manner.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Staff expertise and training**

The parliament has expertise in all aspects of the public procurement process. In addition to expertise in procurement, the parliament also has expertise in managing contracts once they have been agreed, to obtain the best value for money in their management. Training for all staff, as well as MPs involved in the public procurement process, is provided regularly and attendance is mandatory.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Transparency and openness**

The practices of the legislature support complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process. Transparency and openness encourage the achievement of the objectives of public procurement.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 2.2.3 Access to information

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

Parliament usually enacts legislation that ensures access to information, and thereby freedom of information (FOI) for the disclosure of information on public sector agencies. FOI for public sector agencies recognizes that, as these agencies receive public funds, citizens and other organizations should expect to be able to request access to specific information on those agencies regarding their activities and operations. Just as public sector agencies should be subject to FOI, similarly the parliament and its administration should be open to providing information to enable FOI. This can be achieved either by making the parliament part of a general scheme for FOI for all publicly funded agencies, or by establishing specific provisions for parliament on FOI requirements which recognize that parliament is different and separate from executive government agencies.

The information that should be available to citizens from the parliament includes information on the parliamentary administration and the services that it provides. It also includes information relating to the procedures and processes of the legislature and its associated bodies, such as committees. Any FOI requirements concerning parliament should take account of the immunity of parliamentary privilege enjoyed by individual MPs, particularly in their relationship with constituents, which may limit access to information in very specific cases that are stipulated by law or other regulations.

The general principles that should be reflected in an FOI provision, including that for the parliament, include:

- Proactive publishing of predetermined categories of information
- Maximum disclosure
- Exceptions to disclosure are clearly and narrowly defined and are subject to a strict 'public interest' test. However, the limitations on providing information as a result of the existence of parliamentary privilege need to be recognized.
- Access to information should be facilitated and not made overly expensive.
- Refusals to disclose information should be subject to appeal to an independent body whose decisions are binding.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of access to information would encompass the following:

There are legislative provisions for a parliamentary freedom of information regime. It can either be a general public sector regime that applies to the parliament and its administration or a specific scheme for the parliament. The scheme requires the disclosure of information on both the parliamentary administration and the parliament's procedures and processes.

The FOI provisions covering the parliament require maximum disclosure of information with any exceptions being clearly and narrowly defined in the regime with a strong 'public interest' test for disclosure. The existence of parliamentary privilege may limit access to information in very specific circumstances.

The FOI provisions set standards for the proactive publishing of certain categories of information, including the budget, parliamentary action plans, implementation reports and audit reports.

The FOI provisions of the parliament ensure that access to information is facilitated, provided in a timely manner, and not overly expensive.

Refusals to disclose are subject to independent external review with any decision being binding.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation that relate to freedom of information to parliamentary information
- Guidelines covering FOI provisions of the parliament
- Categories of proactively published information
- Statistics about FOI requests, including number of requests received, approved, timeliness, cost and any appeals and their outcomes

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework

There is evidence of legislative provisions for a parliamentary freedom of information (FOI) system. They can either be a national public sector regulation that applies to the parliament and its administration, or a specific provision for the parliament. The provision requires the disclosure of information on both the parliamentary administration and the parliament's procedures and processes.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Maximum disclosure

The FOI provisions covering the parliament require maximum disclosure of information with any exceptions being clearly and narrowly defined in the regime with a strong 'public interest' test for disclosure. Parliamentary privilege may limit access to some information in very specific circumstances that are legally defined. Any citizen or organization can request information without justifying reasons for access.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Proactive publishing**

The FOI provisions set standards for the proactive publishing of certain categories of information, including budget, parliamentary action plans, implementation reports and audit reports.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Guidelines for access**

The FOI regulations of the parliament have detailed guidelines that ensure that access to information is facilitated and is not overly expensive. The guidelines include:

- Clear provisions on who can request access and how they can do so
- Deadlines for providing information
- The possibility to choose the format of information (hard copy, digital etc.) depending on cost
- Access free of charge as a default
- The right to complain if information is not provided, only partially provided or not provided in a timely manner (see next criterion)
- The storing of data on the requests received and responses provided

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Independent appeal process**

Refusals to disclose information or failure to disclose information within a set deadline are subject to independent external review by an enforcement authority, the decisions of which are binding.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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## Recommendations for change

## Sources and further reading

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).



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## Dimension 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

The legislature is responsible for systematically reporting on all aspects of the work of the parliament. This will include reporting on the administrative work and services provided by the parliamentary administration, as well as the work of the parliament and its committees.

Reporting is an important accountability mechanism and, just as parliament seeks to hold the executive accountable to it, the parliament itself must be accountable to the community for its activities. Consistent, systematic and thorough public reporting is a central part of fulfilling this accountability responsibility.

In relation to the administration of the parliament, reporting will include reporting on budgetary expenditure (see dimension 2.2.1) and reporting on services, performance and activities of the parliament and its administration. This often may be implemented by means of a requirement for annual reporting. Reporting will serve the purpose of advising MPs on the administration of the parliament, as well as informing the public. Reporting to MPs may facilitate the work of bodies or committees of MPs who oversee the work of the parliament. Such reporting arrangements will either be a legislative requirement of the parliament or be made in its rules of procedure.

In relation to the work of the parliament, its committees and other bodies, any records and the reports of such work should be available to the public (see dimension 1.3.9). There should be clear rules of the legislature requiring that the work of the parliament in all its aspects is made available to the public unless there is a specific and sound reason why it should not.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of reporting on parliamentary work would encompass the following:

There are laws and rules of procedure of the legislature that require the parliament to report publicly on the work and activities of the legislature, its committees and other bodies.

There are laws and rules of procedure of the legislature that require regular public reporting by the parliamentary administration on its budgetary expenditure, services, activities, and performance.

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that there is regular and systematic reporting to the public on the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament that relate to public reporting on the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration

- Reports of the parliament and parliamentary administration on their work and activities  
If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Reporting on the work of the parliament**

The laws and rules of procedure of the legislature require the parliament to report publicly on the work and activities of the legislature, its committees and other bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Reporting on parliamentary administration**

The laws, rules of procedure or other regulation of the legislature require regular public reporting by the parliamentary administration on its budgetary expenditure, services, activities and performance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice of the legislature in public reporting**

The practice of the legislature support that there is regular and systematic reporting to the public about the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Sources and further reading

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 2.2.5 Staff recruitment and advancement

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

Dimensions 1.1.4 and 1.5.1 recognize the autonomy of the parliament in its administrative responsibility and the significance of having adequate independent and unbiased staff to support the legislature. This dimension (and 2.2.6), like dimension 1.5.1, covers only non-partisan staff supporting the parliament and concerns the recruitment and advancement (promotion) of this staff.

In order to be effective, parliament is heavily dependent on the availability of capable, committed, independent and non-partisan staff to support its work. Parliamentary staff are like the staff of any organization in that they need to be well led and managed, but they also are unique in that they work in a highly political environment, where they are expected to work in an impartial way to support all MPs regardless of political persuasion. These factors mean that parliamentary staff have particular characteristics that need to be reflected in their recruitment, advancement, management and professional development (dimension 2.2.6 concerns the management and professional ethos and development of parliamentary staff).

Parliamentary staff can be drawn from the civil service, as many of the skills required for parliamentary work are shared with the work in the civil service. However, parliamentary staff have a different role and orientation from that of the staff in the civil service, and this should be reflected in their recruitment and advancement. As a result, parliament should be in control of its own recruitment and promotion, without input by the executive. The following principles<sup>81</sup> can be applied to the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff:

- Staff should be recruited and promoted through fair, transparent and open competition, on merit.
- Appointment or advancement should not be based on personal or partisan political factors.
- As part of recruitment, candidates should be tested for their ability to behave with integrity and political impartiality.
- MPs or political staff are not involved in the recruitment or advancement of parliamentary staff, other than that of the most senior staff, such as the secretary-general or deputy secretary-general.
- Parliamentary staff should represent citizens more broadly (see dimension 5.2.1 on workforce diversity, which covers this principle).

In relation to the most senior positions (such as secretary-general or deputy secretary-general),<sup>82</sup> some of these general principles do not apply (for example, the involvement of MPs in the appointment process). However, recognition is usually given to the principle of the administrative autonomy of the legislature and the secretary-general (and other senior posts) appointed by or on the recommendation of the speaker, a parliamentary service commission, board or plenary. Even in legislatures where the secretary-general may be appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the executive, the parliament (speaker or parliamentary commission) is

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<sup>81</sup> These principles are taken from the following document: Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) [Principles for recruitment and career management of staff of the parliamentary administration](#) (Adopted by the Association on 9 October 2013, Geneva: ASGP, 2014).

<sup>82</sup> A useful discussion on the different approaches adopted by legislatures to the appointment of the secretary-general is contained in: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2020), 4 and 7.

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usually involved in the process. In most parliaments, the secretary-general does not have a party affiliation, although this is not universally the case. Although secretaries-general may have a party affiliation, they are expected to serve the parliament with impartiality and integrity.

Recruitment and promotion are specialized tasks requiring particular skills. As this responsibility is exercised independently by the parliament, it requires sufficient, capable staff to carry out the function.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of staff recruitment and advancement would encompass the following:

There are constitutional, legislative or equivalent provisions that provide for the autonomy of parliament in the recruitment and advancement of its staff, without input by the executive.

There are rules determined by the parliament for the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff. The rules reflect the following principles:

- Recruitment and advancement are conducted through transparent, open and competitive processes based on skills, experience, and merit.
- Appointment or advancement are not based on political affiliations or partisan politics.
- MPs are not included in the recruitment or advancement process.

Interchange between the civil service and the parliamentary service is permitted, but the unique nature of parliamentary service employment is recognized.

The parliament demonstrates, in the rules, that a careful balance between openness and accessibility is ensured, with only reasonably imposed restrictions.

The autonomy of the parliament institution is reflected in the appointment of secretary-general and senior parliamentary administration managers, whether or not they have a political affiliation.

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to independently perform the function of recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of the constitution, legislation or equivalent relating to independent recruitment and advancement by the parliament
- Rules, procedures and guidelines relating to the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff
- Statistics relating to the recruitment and advancement of staff
- Any reviews or reports relating to recruitment and advancement processes

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Parliamentary autonomy in recruitment and advancement

There is evidence of constitutional, legislative or equivalent provisions that provide for the autonomy of parliament in the recruitment and advancement of its staff, without input by the executive. National laws may establish that parliamentary staff are whole-of-government employees for the purpose of retirement and other related benefits.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules for recruitment and advancement**

There is evidence of rules determined by the parliament for the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff. The rules reflect the following principles:

- Recruitment and advancement are conducted through transparent, open and competitive processes based on skills, experience, and merit.
- Appointment and advancement are not based on political affiliations or partisan politics.
- MPs are not included in the recruitment or advancement process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Relationship to the civil service**

Interchange between the civil service and the parliamentary service is permitted, but the unique nature of parliamentary service employment is recognized.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practices of the legislature in recruitment and advancement**

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that non-partisan parliamentary staff are appointed independently of the executive, on merit, and without influence by MPs or political considerations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Recruitment of staff to senior roles such as secretary-general**

Although the practices of legislatures in recruiting and appointing for senior roles of the parliamentary administration (such as secretary-general) vary, the autonomy of the parliament institution is reflected in the appointment process for these roles. Secretary-general and senior managers, whether or not they have a political affiliation, are required to serve the parliament with impartiality and integrity.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Capacity of staff**

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to independently perform the function of recruitment and advancement.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) [Principles for recruitment and career management of staff of the parliamentary administration](#) (Adopted by the Association on 9 October 2013 – Geneva: ASGP 2014).
- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).

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- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
  - Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), '[Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration](#)' (IPU, 2020).
  - National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).



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## Dimension 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity

Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

The unique nature of parliamentary staff was described in dimension 2.2.5, and that description is relevant also to this dimension. Although parliamentary staff are unique, as is the case in any organization, they require capable leadership and management to ensure the proper management of their careers. This dimension addresses a number of different aspects of the career management of parliamentary staff, including the establishment of appropriate professional and ethical standards for staff, the provision of suitable professional development regarding the particular skills required in a parliamentary environment, and the development of a corporate culture and ethos that is adapted to the parliamentary environment.

The place of parliament in the national perception means that both MPs and parliamentary staff must act with the utmost professionalism and integrity to reflect parliament's eminent status. In effect, members, and by extension, their staff, represent the institution itself. For staff, this means having an appropriate professional approach to their work, which is underpinned by clear statements of values, expectations and conduct. Staff would be expected to have a statement of values or standards with which they were required to comply, and to be subject to an associated code of conduct that would address any alleged breach of standards or instances of inappropriate conduct. A statement of values or standards might cover matters such as:

- Professionalism
- Ethical behaviour
- Respect for the parliament and the people it serves
- Integrity and accountability
- Impartiality

The code of conduct would be expected to include:

- Behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity
- Treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment. This particularly includes respectful behaviour towards women and minority groups.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain
- Upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country
- Having a process for the filing of complaints and the independent investigation of alleged breaches of the code or the standards, with sanctions to be applied in the case of proven breaches.

The statement or code of ethics, standards and conduct can be applied generally to the civil service and extended (with some modifications) to parliamentary staff or be developed specifically for parliamentary staff. There may be a single code or statement covering both ethics and conduct, or more than one statement or code, covering ethics (standards) and conduct separately.

As has been noted, parliamentary staff perform a unique role that differs from the role of the civil service in supporting the executive. The parliamentary administration therefore has an important responsibility for the training and professional development of its staff. While some of the skills required by parliamentary staff are general (such as leadership, people management and project management), many of the skills (for example, the application of procedural knowledge) are particular to the parliamentary service. The parliamentary administration should have a framework of human resources policies and practices for the professional development of its staff

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to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support the parliament into the future. In addition to professional development, the framework of human resources policies and practices should encourage the retention of staff (to assist with institutional continuity and for succession planning) so that parliament will have staff for senior roles into the future.

In addition to the professional development of its staff, it is incumbent on the parliamentary service (particularly its senior leadership) to develop an ethos of parliamentary service. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment, and that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. Human resources policies and practices should be developed to foster such an ethos.

The development and implementation of the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of staff is a specialized task. The parliament will need staff with the necessary skills and capacities to undertake this responsibility.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of professionalism of parliamentary administration would encompass the following:

There is legislation or rules of the legislature that require the development of codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff. The requirement can be general, for example, for all civil service staff (and adapted for parliamentary staff), or specifically for parliamentary staff.

There are code(s) or statements of ethics and standards and of conduct covering all parliamentary staff. The code or statement of ethics and standards include matters such as professionalism, ethical behaviour, respect for the parliament, its staff and the people they serve, integrity and accountability and impartiality. The code of conduct covers matters such as: behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity; treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment, particularly women and minority groups; avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain; and upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country.

There is a clearly defined and robust process for complaints to be filed concerning alleged breaches of the code(s), for an independent investigation of alleged breaches to be carried out, as well as for sanctions to be applied in the case of a breach.

The parliamentary administration has a developed framework for the professional development of parliamentary staff that recognizes the unique skills and capabilities required by such staff. Human resources policies and practices are developed and implemented to support the framework.

The parliamentary service, through its human resources policies and practices, develops an ethos of parliamentary service among the parliamentary staff. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment, and the fact that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. The senior leadership of the parliamentary service play an important role in this.

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to develop and implement the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of parliamentary staff.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation or an equivalent relating to codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for the parliamentary staff
- Codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff
- Statistics relating to complaints filed about breaches of the code(s) and any outcomes
- A human resources framework and policies relating to professional staff development and parliamentary ethos

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework**

There are legislation or rules of the legislature that require the development of codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff. The requirement can be general, for example for all civil service staff (and adapted for parliamentary staff), or specifically for parliamentary staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Codes or statements of ethics and conduct for staff**

There is evidence of code(s) or statements of ethics and standards and of conduct covering all parliamentary staff. The code or statement of ethics and standards cover matters such as, professionalism, ethical behaviour, respect for the parliament, its staff and the people they serve, integrity and accountability and impartiality. The code of conduct addresses matters such as: behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity; treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment, particularly women and minority groups; avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain; and upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Breaches of the code(s)**

There is a clearly defined and robust process for complaints to be filed regarding alleged breaches of the code(s), for an independent investigation of alleged breaches to be carried out, and for sanctions to be applied in the case of a breach.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Framework for professional development**

The parliamentary administration has a developed framework for the professional development of parliamentary staff, including training in specific areas, which recognizes the unique skills and capabilities required by such staff. Human resources policies and practices are developed and implemented to support the framework.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Ethos of parliamentary service**

The parliamentary service, through its human resources policies and practices, develops an ethos of parliamentary service among the parliamentary staff. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment and that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. The senior leadership of the parliamentary service plays an important role in this.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Capacity of staff**

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to develop and implement the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of parliamentary staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) [Principles for recruitment and career management of staff of the parliamentary administration](#) (Adopted by the Association on 9 October 2013 – Geneva: ASGP, 2014).
- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration](#) (IPU, 2020).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#) (IPU, 2019).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## 3 – Transparent parliament

Transparent parliament is one that:

- ensures its work, decisions, procedures and spending are made available to the public, in a timely, understandable and user-friendly manner

This sub-target on transparent parliament is the third element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6 on effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. In this case, it has been adapted to apply to the institution of parliament. The sub-target concerns the openness, transparency and ready accessibility of the parliament in terms of access to the parliamentary building and its venues, as well as the transparency and openness of parliamentary information and communication. Such openness and transparency allow members of the public to engage with parliament in a way that they choose, whether it is to attend the parliament, engage with MPs, or engage with and participate in parliamentary processes and activities. Accessibility must be ensured for all citizens, regardless of disability or special needs.

The first indicator covers the transparency of the full range of the work of the parliament, from the plenary to the work of committees and MPs. It concerns transparency in all aspects of parliamentary work, particularly key aspects such as legislation, budgetary consideration and review. It is about ensuring that there is accessibility for all groups in society, regardless of difference.

The second indicator recognizes that parliament, through media such as its website, and other channels such as print media, television and radio, must communicate information and messages effectively, if it is to be open and transparent. Parliamentary processes are often not well understood by the community, or are misinterpreted, and clear explanations and information that are accessible to all are needed.

Finally, there is an indicator that mainly concerns physical access to the parliamentary building, its venues and MPs, including access for persons with disabilities or special needs, or from disadvantaged groups. Accessibility for persons with disabilities and special needs includes ready and easy-to-use access to the information produced by the parliament. The media has a special role and relationship with the parliament, and its unimpeded access to the parliament is particularly important and is covered in this final indicator.

The sub-target on transparent parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes
- 3.2 Parliamentary communication
- 3.3 Access to parliament

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## Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

This indicator recognizes that the processes of the parliament need to be open and transparent to the public so that the public is able to understand and engage with the parliament in a way that it chooses, whether it is to be informed about, observe, follow or participate in parliamentary processes. In addition to being transparent, information about the work, decisions and procedures of the legislature needs to be provided in a timely manner, and in forms that can be accessed and understood by the public.

The indicator covers the full range of the work of the parliament, including the plenary, the work of committees, parliament's international engagement and the work of MPs. It addresses in particular the major areas of the work of the parliament. It therefore examines the transparency of all aspects of the legislative process, which is the primary function of any legislature. It also covers the transparency of the budget process from the initiation of the process to the consideration and approval of the budget by the legislature, as well as ex-post reporting and review.

The assessment of the transparency of parliamentary processes indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work
- 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process
- 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency

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## Dimension 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension concerns the transparency of all the work of the parliament. It therefore broadly covers the key principles, policies and practices of the legislature concerning transparency. (Note that dimensions 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 concern more specifically the transparency of crucial aspects of parliamentary roles, namely the legislative process and the process of budgetary consideration. Other dimensions also touch on the transparency of the work and administration of the legislature (2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5).

The work of the parliament is central to the lives of its citizens. For citizens to be fully informed about the work, decisions and activities of all aspects of the legislature, from the plenary and committees to international parliamentary relationships and the work of MPs, it is essential for the parliament to have clearly defined policies and practices for the transparency of all aspects of its work. In addition to transparency, information needs to be available in accessible and usable forms to all groups in the community, including minority or disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities.

As the parliament and its processes and practices are not always readily understood within the community, parliament also needs to provide explanations of parliamentary processes so that citizens can gain an understanding of how parliament works and, consequently, better understand how to use and put into context the detailed information that is made available.

It can be a resource-intensive task to make available detailed information about the work of the parliament. Parliament needs to ensure that it has sufficient and capable staff and other resources to assume its transparency responsibilities.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of transparency of parliamentary work would encompass the following:

There are rules of the legislature that provide a clear framework requiring transparency of all aspects of the work of the legislature, such as the plenary, committees, international parliamentary cooperation, and the benefits and allowances of MPs. The framework includes statements concerning the principles and policies of the legislature to ensure transparency, and a clear indication of how the policies will be translated into practice.

Information on all aspects of the work of the parliament is made available in a timely manner and can be widely accessed. Such information covers the work of the legislature and is packaged in a way that combines related areas of information to make it more easily available to the community.

Information about the work of the parliament is readily accessible and usable by the general community. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.



Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain in detail the role of parliament, and various processes, procedures and activities of the legislature, its committees and its MPs, to enable the public to gain an understanding of parliamentary processes so that they can make full use of the detailed information provided by the parliament.

The parliament has adequate and capable human resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of the rules of the legislature that relate to the transparency of all aspects of parliamentary work
- Information available or accessible from the parliamentary website concerning all aspects of parliamentary work
- Statistics on the number of visits to the parliamentary website to access information on the work of the parliament
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of the information concerning the work of the parliament that is available on the website.

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Framework for transparency

There are rules of the legislature that provide a clear framework requiring the transparency of all aspects of the work of the legislature, such as the plenary, committees, international parliamentary cooperation, and the benefits and allowances of MPs. The framework includes statements concerning the principles and policies of the legislature to ensure transparency, and a clear indication of how the policies are translated into practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Availability of information

Information on all aspects of the work of the parliament is made available in a timely manner and can be widely accessed. Such information covers the work of the legislature and is packaged in a way that combines related areas of information to make it more easily available to the community.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessibility and usability of information**

Information about the work of the parliament is readily accessible and usable by the general community. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority groups, groups without access to the internet, disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Explanation of parliamentary processes**

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain in detail the role, various processes, procedures and activities of the legislature, its committees and its MPs, to enable the public to gain an understanding of parliamentary processes so that they can make full use of the detailed information provided by the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources**

The parliament has adequate and capable resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities, including the periodic evaluation of parliamentary transparency and the introduction of new mechanisms and practices to further improve transparency.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**



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## Dimension 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension addresses the issue of the transparency of the entire cycle of the legislative process, from the introduction of a piece of legislation to the adoption of a law by parliament. It also considers the scope, channels, forms and timing of the dissemination of legislative information to the public.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of the transparency of the legislative process would encompass the following:

Parliament makes available to the public all relevant information and documents considered and generated throughout the legislative process. This includes the full text and status of a proposal for a new law,<sup>83</sup> or a proposal to change an existing law that is presented for debate before parliament, as well as the texts of all amendments, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, and all other background information created for or by parliament that forms part of the record on a given piece of legislation.

Information is made available on the parliamentary website in a timely manner (in real time or as quickly as it is available internally), and in a format that can easily be searched for, downloaded and reused.

All documents related to a specific piece of legislation (amendments to the law, records and minutes of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and other reports and background information) are structured and presented in a way that ensure that citizens can easily follow and understand the entire legislative process.

Links are also provided to the text and final status of proposed and enacted legislation from previous years which relate to proposed pieces of legislation.

Parliament constantly monitors the new trends and experiences of other parliaments and periodically introduces innovations and improves its practices.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the rules of procedures that regulate transparency of legislative process

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<sup>83</sup> The term 'proposal for a new law', in this case, refers to a bill, a draft law, 'law proposition' or 'law project' (depending on the parliamentary system) that is introduced, tabled or submitted by any stakeholder with a legal right to legislative initiative (such as the executive, an MP, group of MPs, or any other legitimate stakeholder in the given parliament).

- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committee acts that regulate specific parliamentary obligations regarding legislative information
- Links to website pages with available information on the legislative process
- Parliamentary records with data such as the number of visits to legislation-related pages and the number of downloads

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Public availability of information on bills and laws**

Every bill (proposals for a law) and enacted law are made publicly available. This includes the full text and status of a proposal for a new law, or a proposal to change an existing law that is presented for debate before parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Public availability of information generated throughout the legislative procedure**

All information generated throughout the legislative procedure is made publicly available, including the texts of all amendments, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, records of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and all other reports and background information created for or by parliament that form a part of the record on a given piece of legislation, including public and expert opinions submitted to or prepared for parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Usability of information provided on the parliamentary website**

Information related to the legislative process is made available on the parliamentary website in a timely manner (in real time or as quickly as it is available internally), and in a format that can easily be searched for, downloaded and reused.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 4: User friendliness of legislation tracking**

All documents related to a specific piece of legislation (amendments to the law, records and minutes of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and other reports and background information) are structured and presented in a way that citizens can easily follow and understand the entire legislative procedure. Links are also provided to the text and final status of proposed and enacted legislation from previous years which relate to a proposed piece of legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension concerns the transparency of the complete process of budgetary development, adoption and expenditure. This includes transparency and clarity regarding the role of parliament in the budget process (see indicator 1.8 Budget for a full description of the process of budgetary consideration by parliament, and dimension 6.2.4 on public participation in the budget cycle) and also transparency with respect to the parliament's own budget (see dimensions 1.1.3 and 2.2.1).

The national annual budget has a significant impact on the lives of the nation's citizens. For parliament, budget consideration is one of the most significant tasks that it undertakes. For these reasons, the transparency of all aspects of the budgetary process is vital for the community's and parliament's knowledge and scrutiny of the nation's budget.

As the executive is usually responsible for developing and delivering the budget, it is also responsible, to a large extent, for ensuring transparency. Parliament can ensure that there is transparency by requiring, in legislation or other similar provisions, the executive to be transparent, and by monitoring its implementation of transparency, particularly as it facilitates parliament's own consideration and ex-post review of the budget. Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that its own process of consideration and ex-post review of the budget, both in the plenary and committees, is transparent.

Transparency of the national budget encompasses transparency of the parliament's own budget, which should be subject to the same level of transparency and scrutiny as the national budget (see also dimensions 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditures and 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work).

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of budgetary transparency would encompass the following:

There is a legal framework (constitutional, legislative or other provisions) for the transparency of the entire process of the development, consideration, approval and expenditure of the annual national budget.

Information is made available, in a timely manner, on all stages of the budget as it undergoes development, consideration and approval by the legislature, and on the reporting of expenditure outcomes and ex-post evaluation.

The information about the budget is readily accessible and usable by the general community and the parliament. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain the parliamentary process for budgetary consideration, approval and ex-post review, and how the parliamentary processes relate to the detailed information provided about the budget.

Information about all aspects of the parliament's budget is required by legislation or rules of the legislature, and comprehensive information on all aspects of the parliament's budget is readily available and accessible from the parliament's website.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of the legislature that relate to the transparency of all aspects of the annual national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Information available or accessible concerning all aspects of the national budget, the parliamentary budget and the process for parliamentary consideration of the budget
- Statistics on the number of visits to websites with information on the national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of the information that is available on these websites

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for budgetary transparency

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitutional, legislative or other provisions) for the transparency of the entire process of the development, consideration, approval and expenditure of the annual national budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Availability of information

Information is made available, in a timely manner, on all stages of the budget as it undergoes development, consideration and approval by the legislature, and on the reporting of expenditure outcomes and ex-post evaluation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:



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### Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessibility and usability of information

The information on the budget is readily accessible and usable by the general community and the parliament. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 4: Explanation of parliamentary processes

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain the parliamentary process for budgetary consideration, approval and ex-post review, and how the parliamentary processes relate to the detailed information provided about the budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 5: Parliamentary budget

Information about all aspects of the parliament's budget is required by legislation or rules of the legislature, and comprehensive information on all aspects of the parliament's budget is readily available and accessible from the parliament's website.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

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## Indicator 3.2 – Parliamentary communication

This indicator outlines the importance of communication between the parliament as an institution and the public, and the use of different channels to reach all public groups.

Only with an informed citizenry can there be effective involvement by citizens in parliamentary work. It is therefore the duty of parliament to ensure that people understand parliamentary roles and processes, and to provide information about its work.

Almost all parliaments across the world use the official parliamentary website as a key way of informing people about parliamentary activities. The parliamentary website should provide timely, accurate and comprehensive information about the legislature and its work, especially law-making and oversight. The information provided should be organized and presented in a way that is easy for all individuals, regardless of language, disability or special needs, to find, understand and use. The website should provide interactive content to enable two-way communication with the public.

Parliament must also use various other channels to inform and communicate with people, and make sure that information is accessible to rural areas, groups without access to the internet and vulnerable groups.

The assessment of parliamentary communication comprises the following dimensions:

- 3.2.1 Parliamentary website
- 3.2.2 Other channels for informing the public

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## Dimension 3.2.1 Parliamentary website

Indicator: 3.2 Parliamentary communication

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension covers the parliamentary websites and their main elements as a valuable means of communication with citizens, public outreach and engagement. It encompasses the key information that a parliament's official site should include, as well as the format in which information is available and is easy to use.

Please see also indicators 1.3 Parliamentary procedures, 1.4 Parliamentary organization, 1.5 Administrative capacity, 1.6 Law-making, 1.7 Oversight, 1.8 Budget, 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes, 3.3 Access to parliament and 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of parliamentary websites would encompass the following:

The parliamentary website provides comprehensive, timely and accurate information about the parliament, its role, legal responsibilities, composition and organization, as well as information on its daily business executing its constitutional functions.

This includes the documentation and media produced by the plenary and non-plenary bodies,<sup>84</sup> as well as information on all parliamentary activities, including law-making, oversight and budget.

The parliamentary website meets the needs of the intended audiences, is easy to use and understand, and is accessible to all and inclusive of different sectors of society.<sup>85</sup> The content is available in various languages, especially in countries with two or more official languages or languages that are widely used by their citizens.

Parliamentary information and data are available in open and machine-readable formats that can be used/reused.

The parliamentary website offers live streams of all public hearings, including plenary sessions and committee hearings.

The parliament fosters dialogue with the public through interactive content on its website, and tools and mechanisms for contacting MPs, committees and parliament officials.

The parliament provides active leadership with regard to the website, as well as adequate resources and a strong commitment to the accuracy and quality of information.<sup>86</sup> There is evidence of good management of the documentation, information and media available on the website.

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<sup>84</sup> Committees and commissions.

<sup>85</sup> See dimension 3.3.2 Accessibility standards, and dimension 5.2.3 Multilingual service delivery.

<sup>86</sup> See dimension 1.5.4 Innovation and digital technologies.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Links to various sections of the parliamentary website
- Dedicated budget and staff for the website
- Systems security infrastructure and reports
- Strategic vision and planning
- ICT reports on the parliamentary website
- Evidence of periodic evaluation of the website

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Website content

The parliamentary website provides comprehensive information about parliament's role, functions and organization, including (but not limited to): the agenda, calendars and records of plenary/committee meetings; the profiles of MPs and their activities and votes; internal rules, administrative procedures and workflows; information on international parliamentary activities; and all other relevant documentation generated in parliamentary processes. The parliamentary website offers live streams of all public proceedings, including plenary sessions and committee hearings.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Usability and inclusivity

Information on the parliamentary website is published in a timely way and is accurate, well-organized and easy to find. The parliamentary website is understandable and easy to operate by both beginner and expert users. Information on the website is written using plain language, making it easy to read and understand. Accessibility standards are implemented to ensure that the website can be used by persons with disabilities. In countries with two or more official languages or languages used by large percentages of citizens, the website is either fully available in these languages, or at least the most relevant information is available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Format of information available on the website**

Parliamentary information and data are available in open and machine-readable formats that can be used/reused or, at least, in a format that can be easily searched for, copied and downloaded.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Communication between parliament and the public**

The website offers interactive content that promotes and enables two-way communication with the public. It has tools and mechanisms that facilitate public participation in parliamentary processes, including submitting comments and questions. The website also provides options for and recommended ways of contacting MPs, committees and parliament officials, as well as contact details. Opportunities for guided visits, virtual visits and other events are presented on the website, with guidance on how to access the parliamentary building.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Website management**

The website has the approval and support of the highest parliamentary and administrative authorities, adequate long-term funding, trained staff and secure technical infrastructure. The needs and goals of the website are defined in writing and a periodic evaluation of the website is conducted.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Sources and further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "[Centre for Innovation in Parliament](#)"
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2009)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [World e-Parliament Report 2018](#) (France: IPU, 2018)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [World e-Parliament Report 2020](#) (IPU, 2021)
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Technological Options for Capturing and Reporting Parliamentary Proceedings](#) (UN and IPU, 2014)

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## Dimension 3.2.2 Other channels for informing the public

Indicator: 3.2 Parliamentary communication

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions establishing that parliament uses various channels and forms for informing different groups of the public, including print media, radio and television broadcasters, internet and social media providers, mobile device technology platforms, and that it has direct contact with individual citizens.

It is an inherent interest and obligation of parliament, as a representative political institution, to make its activities public and to inform all groups in society about its activities using all available channels. Nevertheless, various surveys show that, in the majority of countries, citizens have a very limited understanding of parliamentary work, which may result in low trust in the institution.

Despite the growing use of digital technologies, in the majority of countries, traditional mass media (particularly broadcast media) is still the primary channel of communication. Therefore, many parliaments use television and radio channels to publicize their work. However, due to the increased complexity and diversification of information sources, many parliaments are employing new technologies, including the internet and social media, in their communication schemes.

Many parliaments around the world broadcast or permit the broadcasting of their proceedings by means of public or private media. Some countries allow only public (state) broadcasters to record and broadcast their sessions, while others are open to private media as well. Many countries have a dedicated television channel for broadcasting and recording their proceedings. While these dedicated channels may only interest a minority of the population, they fit into a more general picture of increasing fragmentation of media audiences. What is important, however, is that such channels should be accessible to the widest population.<sup>87</sup>

Along with radio and television broadcasting, parliamentary information is also conveyed by bulletins, newspapers, journals and other publications that are designed to provide detailed coverage of parliamentary proceedings. In order to facilitate public understanding of complex parliamentary information, many parliaments produce bulletins with more concise official information.

Whatever channels are used, parliaments need to make sure that all groups of the public, including disadvantaged groups, groups without access to the internet, children and young people, are reached. This process requires adequate resources, tools and techniques. Some parliaments have established specialized media or information units to facilitate the provision of information to the public.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of other channels for informing the public would encompass the following:

There are no legal barriers preventing the media from reporting on parliamentary proceedings. Any exceptions are limited and clearly defined, and are provided for in the rules of procedure of the parliament.

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<sup>87</sup> David Beetham, *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice* (Switzerland: IPU, 2006)

Parliament has adopted strategies for informing different groups of the public about its work. These strategies embrace diverse channels and means of communication (such as television and radio broadcasting, print media, the internet, written publications and leaflets) and provide all groups of society with access to parliamentary proceedings.

Parliament produces various information materials (bulletins, leaflets) facilitating public access to and understanding of parliamentary work and its products.

Parliament is equipped with adequate material and human resources to ensure effective communication and access of all groups of the public to parliamentary information.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of laws that regulate the access of the media to parliamentary proceedings
- Specific articles of the rules of procedures that regulate procedures for the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings
- Strategies, procedures, reports or other documents describing parliamentary communication
- Staff structure, and financial and other documents describing parliamentary resources dedicated to communication

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on media accessibility to parliamentary proceedings

There is evidence of legal provisions that regulate media accessibility to parliamentary proceedings. These provisions enable the media to record and/or broadcast parliamentary proceedings, with possible exceptions that are limited and clearly defined.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Strategies and practices for informing different groups of the public about parliament's work

There is evidence of a systematic process of informing different groups of society about parliamentary work, which embraces the needs of different audiences and uses diverse channels and means of communication.



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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Resources**

There is evidence that parliament is equipped with adequate material and human resources to ensure effective communication and access to parliamentary information for all groups of the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 3.3 – Access to parliament

This indicator covers issues concerning physical access to parliamentary venues and events for the public and the media. It does not address the transparency of information about parliament (which is covered in other indicators (3.1 and 3.2) or public participation in the proceedings and processes of parliament (which is covered in indicators 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3). However, it does include accessibility issues for persons with disabilities or specific requirements other than physical issues, which may limit their access to the parliament building and parliamentary information.

If parliament is to be regarded as being ‘open’ to the public and the media, the issue of physical accessibility is important. In times such as these, where there are concerns about security and, more recently, public health issues such as pandemics, all parliaments need to carefully balance accessibility and openness with other legitimate concerns, such as security and public health and safety.

This indicator covers the openness to the public of parliamentary venues (the building, chamber(s) and committee meeting rooms), as well as of events organized inside or outside the parliament. It also concerns accessibility issues for members of the community with specific requirements, including persons with disabilities. The media has a special place in democratic societies insofar as it provides a focus on the reporting of the activities of the legislature, thus ensuring the transparency and accountability of the legislature. Parliament needs to guarantee free and unfettered access to the media.

The assessment of the access to parliament indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 3.3.1 Openness of parliamentary venues and events to citizens
- 3.3.2 Accessibility standards
- 3.3.3 Media access to parliament

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## Dimension 3.3.1 Openness of parliamentary venues and events to citizens

Indicator: 3.3 Access to parliament

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

While the transparency and openness of parliamentary processes and information is of great significance, the physical accessibility of a parliament and parliamentary events to its citizenry is of both symbolic and practical importance in shaping how citizens view the 'openness' of parliament. The accessibility of the parliament building and its venues for parliamentary activities plays a vital role in attracting the public and media to the parliament, which is not the case for other means of transparency, such as the availability of information about the legislature.

There are a number of aspects concerning the openness of the parliament and its venues to the public. Firstly, there is the question of the general accessibility of the parliament building to the public. Access for visitors can be facilitated by the provision of services such as a visitor centre and/or visitor services staff to assist, encourage and inform visitors. Special events such as open days or other special occasions, organized inside or outside parliament, to which the public are invited, can be used to attract citizens to the parliament building and give them a sense of ownership of and connection with 'their' building.

Many parliaments also provide virtual access to parliamentary buildings and events, through virtual tours or other means and tools, which can attract more people and foster a better understanding of the parliament.

Particular arrangements need to be made for accessibility to sessions of the plenary, public meetings of committees and other public activities in which the parliament is involved. It is reasonable for parliaments, when developing arrangements for accessibility, to be conscious of the security or public health and safety concerns that arise when ensuring ready accessibility to the parliament and parliamentarians. There is often a delicate balance between accessibility and public safety to be made by parliaments. In achieving this balance, parliaments have to ensure that their citizens have a clear understanding that parliament is an open institution with restrictions imposed only as needed to guarantee security and public safety. Parliaments may also require citizens to make a request to attend the parliament, and parliaments should make clearly available the instructions and contacts for the submission of such requests.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of openness of parliamentary venues and events to citizens would encompass the following:

The laws and rules of procedure of the legislature provide for and encourage the country's citizens to have open access to the parliament building, parliamentary venues and events where the parliament's proceedings and processes are undertaken. Particular emphasis is placed on the rules allowing free access to the parliamentary chamber(s) for sessions of the plenary, to the public hearings of committees and other public activities of the legislature.

Restrictions on accessibility to the parliamentary building and its meeting and other venues, which are imposed by laws or the rules of procedure of the legislature, are limited to reasonable issues of security and public health and safety. The parliament ensures a careful balance, in its rules, between openness and accessibility, and only imposes reasonable restrictions.

The practices of the legislature support access for citizens to the parliament building and the parliamentary venues. Access to the parliament building is encouraged by approaches such as the operation of a visitor centre and a visitor service, and the organization of open days and special event days.

Arrangements for access to meeting venues for sessions of the plenary and public meetings of committees ensure ready accessibility for the public.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament which relate to arrangements for the public to have access to the parliament building and its public meeting venues
- Statistics about visitor numbers to the building, the chamber(s) and public meetings of committees
- Statistics about visitor numbers for open days and other special events
- Reports of visitor services units in the legislature
- Existence of virtual representations and tours of the parliament buildings

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for the openness of the parliament building and its venues

The laws and rules of procedure of the legislature provide for and encourage open access for the country's citizens to the parliament building and the parliamentary venues where the parliament's proceedings and processes, such as the sessions of the plenary and public meetings of committees and other public parliamentary activities, are undertaken.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2 Restrictions on accessibility

Restrictions on access to the parliamentary building and its meeting and other venues that are imposed by laws or the rules of procedure of the legislature are limited only to stipulated reasonable issues of security and public health and safety. Citizens are clearly informed of these restrictions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practices of the legislature regarding physical accessibility**

The practices of the legislature support access for citizens to the parliament building and the parliamentary venues. Access to the parliament building is encouraged by approaches such as the operation of a visitor centre and a visitor service, the organization of open days and special event days, and the provision of virtual representations and tours of the parliament buildings.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Information on access to parliament**

Arrangements for access to meeting venues for sessions of the plenary and public meetings of committees ensure ready accessibility for the public. There is proactive communication with the public about access to parliament, and contacts and instructions for the public to access the building, its venues and events are readily available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).

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## Dimension 3.3.2 Accessibility standards

Indicator: 3.3 Access to parliament

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

It is vital that parliament provides equal access to all members of the community. Parliament needs to be accessible to persons with disabilities, from disadvantaged groups or with other special needs that create barriers to access for the general public. Parliament needs to consider accessibility to the parliament building, parliamentary processes and proceedings and parliamentary information. Parliament has to make a special effort to ensure that persons with particular needs have the same level of access as that of the general community. This requires setting standards for accessibility and applying them across the board.

The physical structure of a building can create barriers for persons with disabilities (for example, not having wheelchair access, or access for persons with a visual impairment). These barriers may include difficulties in accessing the parliamentary chamber(s) and committee meeting rooms. Particular challenges exist for parliaments with older or heritage buildings, as they may need to be retrofitted to meet accessibility standards.

In addition to physical access to the building, persons with disabilities may experience other impediments to access. There may be impediments to access to parliamentary information in the form in which it is made available to the majority of the community. Therefore, when providing access to its information, parliament needs to ensure that the information is readily accessible to persons with disabilities such as vision or hearing impairment. If the parliament has a visitor centre, or holds open days or other special events, these also should be equally accessible to people with disabilities.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of accessibility standards would encompass the following:

There is evidence of the existence of a legislative framework with provisions that require parliament to ensure equal access to the parliament building, its processes and proceedings and to its information for all citizens regardless of disability or other special needs.

In practice, the application of the legislative framework ensures that all citizens have equal access to the legislature and its processes, procedures and information, regardless of disability or special needs.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of legislation and the rules of procedures of the parliament relating to disabled access to the parliament building, its proceedings, processes and information
- Statistics about disabled access to the parliamentary building and venues and information

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for accessibility standards**

There is evidence of the existence of a legislative framework with provisions that require parliament to ensure equal physical and online access to the parliament building, its processes and proceedings and its information for all citizens regardless of disability or other special needs. The legislative framework is supported by the rules of procedure of the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Practices of the legislature regarding access to the building**

In practice, the legislature applies its accessibility standards to ensure equal physical access to the building and the parliament’s processes and procedures for all citizens, regardless of disability or special needs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practices of the legislature regarding access to information**

In practice, the legislature applies its accessibility standards to ensure equal physical and online access to its information for all citizens, regardless of disability or special needs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Sources and further reading

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006)
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018)
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007)



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### Dimension 3.3.3 Media access to parliament

Indicator: 3.3 Access to parliament

Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

#### About the dimension

There is a complex relationship between the media and parliament and its MPs. On the one hand, MPs recognize the valuable role played by the media in informing citizens about the work of the parliament and, consequently, they wish to cultivate their relationships with the media. On the other hand, MPs often consider that the media focuses largely on the negative aspects of parliament (conflict between personalities and parties and the self-interest of MPs), which results in MPs seeking to avoid the media. There should be an understanding that MPs are public figures and, as such, are subject to greater scrutiny (and criticism) than others. Furthermore, the media can see parliament as unnecessarily restricting its access and freedom to fully report on the events of the legislature.

Nevertheless, despite the mutual distrust that can characterize this relationship, both the media and parliament can gain a great deal by working together cooperatively. The media plays an essential role in democratic societies by bringing the parliament and its work to the attention of the public, and in ensuring the accountability of the executive and parliament. To be able to carry out its work effectively, the media needs to have ready access to the parliament and the freedom to be able to report on events without fear of recrimination. For parliament, this means that a number of measures need to be taken to ensure free and open access and reporting for the media.

Parliament, through its legislative capacity, needs to provide the right regulatory framework in which the media can work, that is, to ensure there is diversity of media ownership and viewpoints, and there are no undue restrictions on the freedom of expression for the media (for example, unduly strong defamation laws or laws for contempt of parliament).

The rules of the legislature should provide the media with ready access to the parliament building and to the venues in which the public proceedings of the legislature are conducted. Such access should permit the media to freely report on the activities of the legislature. In this regard, it is noted that the work of parliamentary committees often portrays a more balanced and less adversarial perspective on the work of parliament. For these reasons, media access to and reporting on the work of committees should be encouraged. Many legislatures issue credentials to the media with access to the parliament. Credentialing should only be for the purpose of knowing who has access, or for exercising some overall control over the number of media outlets with access. It should not be used to limit the diversity of the media that is able to report on parliament nor to exercise political control over the media that has access to the parliament. The media also needs to have reasonable space (to work and conduct interviews) and infrastructure support (for example, Wi-Fi) to carry out its work.

The connection of parliament with the media can be facilitated by parliament having a media relations unit or staff to liaise with the media about the work of parliament and inform it of parliamentary activities, particularly the work of committees, which may be less visible. Such units and staff should work in a non-partisan way to support the legislature.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of media access to parliament would encompass the following:

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation) for the regulation of the media in the country. The regulatory framework ensures wide ownership and multiple sources of news and reporting, and freedom of expression, including protection for media sources and strict limits on the use of defamation laws and contempt of parliament provisions to curb free expression.

The rules of procedure of the legislature guarantee openness and accessibility of the parliament building and the venues where the parliament conducts its public proceedings.

Rules of the legislature for the credentialing of the media to have access to and report on the legislature do not limit the diversity of the media covering parliament, and are not exercised for political control.

Restrictions imposed by the rules of the legislature on media access to parliament are only to prevent serious interference with or disruption of parliamentary proceedings or the work of MPs. There are no unwarranted obstacles preventing the media from observing the plenary in session or the public meetings of committees.

The practice of the legislature is for diverse media to have ready access to the parliament building and its public meeting venues, and to be able to report on parliament freely. The parliament also should ensure that the media is given space and infrastructure support to enable it to do its work.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament relating to the legislature's relationship with the media
- Statistics on accreditation and access of media representatives

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Regulatory framework for the media

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation) for the regulation of the media in the country. The regulatory framework ensures wide ownership and multiple sources of news and reporting, and freedom of expression, including protection for media sources and strict limits on the use of defamation laws and contempt of parliament provisions to curb free expression.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Framework of the legislature

The rules of procedure of the legislature guarantee the openness and accessibility for the media of the parliament building and the venues where the parliament conducts its public proceedings, including sessions of the plenary and public meetings of committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Credentialing of the media**

Rules of the legislature for the credentialing of media to have access to and report on the legislature do not limit the diversity of the media covering parliament, and are not exercised for political control.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Restrictions on access**

Restrictions imposed by the rules of the legislature on media access to parliament are only to prevent serious interference with or disruption of parliamentary proceedings or the work of MPs. There are no unwarranted obstacles preventing the media from observing the plenary in session or the public meetings of committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice of the legislature**

The practice of the legislature is for diverse media to have ready access to the parliament building and its public meeting venues and to be able to report on parliament freely and equally, and for no particular media outlet to be favoured. The media also is given work space and infrastructure support by the parliament to enable it to carry out its work.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## 4 – Responsive parliament

Responsive parliament is one that is:

- Open and responsive to the public
- Open and responsive to policy developments

This sub-target on responsive parliament is the fourth element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.7 on responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliaments. Parliament, as the main representative political institution, should be open to and value public concerns, take proper steps to ensure that channels are open to receive them, be able to respond to emerging policy issues and emergencies in a timely and efficient manner, and communicate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure inclusive and informed policy decisions and responses.

A responsive parliament should be able to value and address public concerns, whether expressed collectively or individually, including contemporary or emerging issues that arise unexpectedly. Parliament should demonstrate that it has the necessary channels, interest, engagement and willingness to receive and then resolve issues of public concern, even when these issues do not appear to be a primary responsibility of the legislator. For this purpose, the parliament needs to have suitable channels to receive concerns and give them recognition so that they can be addressed. At the same time, it is important for individual MPs to establish timely, direct and meaningful communication with the electorate, and to respond to their needs and requests.

The sub-target on responsive parliament comprises the following indicator:

- 4.1 Valuing public concerns

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## Indicator 4.1 – Valuing public concerns

Having a framework to channel and recognize public concerns for parliament is key to enabling parliament to respond to serious issues and emergencies arising in the community, and to the appeals of individual members of the public. This will define whether parliament is perceived by the public as its representative. Parliament's openness and responsiveness to public concerns is key to building trust towards the parliament and individual MPs.

Millions of people reach out to their representatives every year with regard to their individual concerns and issues of common concern to the public or to groups of society. Parliaments have to demonstrate their openness to receiving these concerns so that they are then in a position to address such issues in a timely and effective manner. Even when public attention is directed towards other institutions or stakeholders, parliament, as a representative body, has to demonstrate its interest, engagement and efforts in resolving the issue of public concern. In order to adjust to changing public needs, parliaments need to have a suitable and flexible framework for matters of concern to be raised with the parliamentary institution or individual MPs.

This indicator also covers parliamentary responses to issues that emerge outside of medium- or long-term planning.

By providing a timely and high-quality response to individual citizens (their letters, emails or other forms of communication), parliament also demonstrates its attention to the needs of the public.

The assessment of the indicator on valuing public concerns comprises the following dimensions:

- 4.1.1 Responding to public concerns
- 4.1.2 Responding to emerging policy issues
- 4.1.3 Responding to individual members of the public, including constituents

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## Dimension 4.1.1 Responding to public concerns

Indicator 4.1: Valuing public concerns

Sub-target: 4 Responsive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the duty of parliament to be responsive to the needs of people, to recognize them and address them with due attention.

A rapidly changing world demands responsive parliaments that listen to the voices of their communities and act to address the issues that matter to the public. Parliaments are expected to adapt and revitalize their practices and processes, if they are to keep up with public expectations in a world that is connected, creative and collaborative. Parliamentarians, committees, political groups and parliament as an institution are required to keep a finger on the public pulse, to be flexible and to react in a timely way. Parliamentary processes must ensure that public needs and concerns are brought to the attention of the parliament. Responsive policy-making should reflect and give expression to the will of the people.

The challenging task for parliaments and MPs is to operationalize concepts such as people's or public will, needs, wishes, interests and concerns. People are not a homogeneous block. They have multiple and often conflicting interests and diverse perspectives. Parliaments need to apply nuanced approaches and develop comprehensive policies based on a wider perspective, with an eye to the future. It is vital for parliaments to understand and take into account diverse audiences, including groups that raise their voices and those that often remain silent.

Collecting information from different sources and through different channels can help to identify and understand real people's needs. Interest groups and civil society actors are often seen as channels through which citizens can express their opinions to policymakers. They are an important link between citizens and parliament and a valuable source of information. However, they represent the interests of specific groups of people which do not necessarily correspond to the interests of both the majority and different minority groups. A balanced approach and additional research, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, media and social media, can help parliament to be attentive to the needs of different groups that might be affected, and to matters that would otherwise not appear on the parliamentary agenda and would risk being overlooked.

Recognizing and responding to public concerns may require parliaments to adapt parliamentary procedures and processes that allow public concerns to be conveyed to the parliament, and be addressed and responded to, and to make cultural and organizational shifts, by reassessing parliamentary tasks and attitudes. Parliamentary staff should find new ways to manage significantly increased amounts of information, particularly on sensitive or controversial topics, to analyse this information and clearly and concisely present it to MPs and, finally, to translate public needs into tangible legislative or policy outcomes.

While not every demand can or should be met, it is important not to ignore or overlook the efforts of the public to influence what parliament and government do. Closing a feedback loop is equally important as it cultivates a feeling of genuine engagement and influence over the decisions taken, and creates a culture of responsiveness and learning that makes interventions more adaptive and effective.

<p>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of responding to public concerns would encompass the following:</p>
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The rules of procedure and practices of the legislature provide for a framework for public concerns to be brought to the attention of the parliament. The framework includes specific procedures for setting the agenda of the plenary and committees that enable public needs to be identified, recognized and addressed.

There are well-established mechanisms and practices for cooperation with a broad range of civil society actors and diverse interest groups, which facilitates the raising of public concerns in parliament and a better understanding of such concerns.

Parliamentary administration has the capacity to collect and analyse information from different sources concerning specific public demands, as a basis for parliamentary debate and decision-making.

Parliament has introduced an obligation and an established practice concerning the provision of feedback to public groups that have voiced their needs and concerns. Processes and decisions made on such initiatives are effectively communicated to the public.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Rules of procedure, practices, processes and mechanisms that support responsive decision-making
- Evidence of public concerns being raised and responded to by parliament
- Evidence of legislative or policy outcomes as a response to public needs and concerns
- Evidence of information collected and analysed by the administration

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Framework for public concerns to be raised and recognized

The parliamentary rules of procedure or statutory provisions, including those on the setting of the agenda of the plenary and committees, enable public needs and demands to be raised, recognized and addressed in the parliament, even if they are not specifically directed to parliament.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Cooperation with stakeholders



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There is evidence of established mechanisms and practices for cooperation with diverse civil society actors and interest groups, as well as governmental and independent agencies, which are aimed at identifying, raising and addressing public concerns.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Administrative support for responsive decision-making**

Parliamentary administration has the capacity to collect and analyse information from different sources concerning specific public demands, which can inform parliamentary debate and decision-making.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 4.1.2 Responding to emerging policy issues

Indicator: 4.1. Valuing public concerns

Sub-target: 4. Responsive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines actions of parliament that demonstrate its response to issues emerging outside of medium- or long-term planning. All societies may face unforeseen issues or developments that sometimes attract massive public attention and could become matters of common concern. Parliament's ability to respond to such circumstances in a prompt and convincing way is an important element in establishing public trust towards the legislature.

Emerging issues can be any critical event or situation, such as natural disasters, threats to democracy or outbreaks of a quarantinable disease (Note that dimension 1.3.3 addresses the procedures adopted by parliament in the case of an emergency.) This also entails any emerging issue that can have an adverse impact on people or political, social and economic development, or the environment or climate. Sometimes, a pressing local situation that causes public concern and can have a significant impact should be brought to the attention of the national arena.

Even if parliament is not a primary target of such concerns and public attention is directed towards other institutions or stakeholders, parliament has to demonstrate its ability and efforts to resolve the issue of public concern. Parliament is expected to use its unique position as a representative institution to recognize and respond to emerging issues, debate and consider their implications, and help to provide consensual and practical solutions.<sup>88</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the global need for parliaments to adjust their work to new circumstances during emergencies, and to play an active role in overcoming the crisis.

The parliament's work process and agenda are usually pre-defined and planned well in advance and, consequently, might lack flexibility. The work process of the parliament and its committees and political groups, should provide sufficient flexibility for adjusting to emerging issues. Parliament and its relevant bodies should be able to organize meetings, virtually and at short notice, if necessary, with the representatives of the public concerned, and collect information for taking subsequent action. Effective and regular cooperation and information-sharing with a range of relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders can be crucial for parliament to effectively address emerging issues.

Organizing a political debate and applying its oversight mandate are often the most effective ways for parliament to engage. Parliament should have flexibility in its procedures to call urgent debates or to summon relevant officials, request information, determine how the government as a whole, or individual ministries or public bodies are dealing with the current issue of public concern, and conclude whether adjustments are needed. The parliament should be able to set an agenda on such issues.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of responding to emerging policy issues would encompass the following:

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<sup>88</sup> Alex Brazier, Global Partners Governance (GPG), *Parliamentary Response to Crisis: Committees and Coronavirus*, (London, 2020).

Parliamentary rules of procedure/standing orders allow sufficient flexibility for the plenary, parliamentary committees, political groups and other parliamentary bodies to call political debates, ask questions, summon officials or apply other oversight actions in response to any emerging issues that might arise and cause public concern.

Parliament reacts to such issues promptly, even if the public concerns are not directly addressed to the parliament. Parliamentary committees, political groups and MPs meet with the representatives of the public voicing the concerns and establish effective communication with them.

In addressing emerging issues, parliament regularly collaborates and shares information with a range of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Parliament holds debates, summons officials, organizes hearings and effectively communicates with the public in response to emerging public concerns.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the rules of procedure setting flexible rules for the organization of debates and use of oversight tools
- Examples of parliamentary engagement in resolving emerging issues
- Examples of parliamentary cooperation on emerging issues and public concerns, including meetings conducted by the parliamentary committees, political groups and other parliamentary bodies with relevant stakeholders

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework providing for thorough and timely responses to emerging issues

There is evidence that the provisions of parliamentary rules of procedure/standing orders give the plenary, parliamentary committees, political groups and other parliamentary bodies the flexibility to call political debates, ask questions, summon officials or apply other oversight actions in response to emerging issues and public concerns.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Addressing emerging issues

There is evidence of parliament reacting to emerging issues and public concerns promptly, even when the concerns are not directed towards the parliament per se.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Cooperation and communication with stakeholders**

In addressing emerging issues, parliament establishes regular cooperation and information-sharing with governmental and independent agencies, as well as with civil society and other non-governmental stakeholders. Parliamentary committees, political groups and MPs also meet with the representatives of the public voicing the issues of concern and establish effective communication with them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 4.1.3: Responding to individual members of the public, including constituents

Indicator: 4.1 Valuing public concerns

Sub-target: 4. Responsive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

#### About the dimension

This dimension outlines ways and practices that MPs and the parliament as an institution generally use to provide timely and relevant responses to communications from individual members of the public. Direct communication with the public is key for elected officials to effectively represent and respond to their constituents' needs in the legislature.<sup>89</sup> Citizens expect to be able to easily access their parliament and MPs, and to receive meaningful responses and support from them.

Parliamentary rules of procedure/standing orders or statements of standards of service usually oblige committees and other units of parliament to consider letters and any other communication submitted, and to respond within a certain deadline. Very often, individual citizens directly address an MP or parliamentary group, using different means of communication. The MP or parliamentary group is expected to be responsive to the issues raised by each citizen. Proper responses to individual members of the public may also require the opportunity to meet with the elected representative.

Providing timely responses to members of the public is crucial though insufficient. Responsiveness to members of the public requires not only timely, but also high-quality responses to individual letters and emails or other forms of communication used by citizens. The key elements of a meaningful response to members of the public include: (a) information on the relevant authority that will address the issue; (b) information or an opinion on a policy issue; and (c) commitment to a specific action to resolve the issue.

Responding to different issues of personal interest for which individual members of the public seek a response from parliament requires well-organized work processes to receive, respond to and track progress on the resolution of citizens' problems. MPs and relevant parliamentary bodies should work with the public administration to help solve individual problems (cases) of citizens. In some situations, it may be necessary to refer a case that goes beyond the mandate of the MP or the parliament to a relevant institution. It is equally important to keep citizens informed about the steps taken to resolve an issue, and to update them on the progress made.

Timely and meaningful communication between the parliament and the members of the public requires support from qualified and trained staff through solid communication skills and experience in politics and/or administration. Support staff should keep record of visits, letters and emails and must ensure timely follow-up to the cases of citizens.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of responding to individual members of the public, including constituents would encompass the following:

Parliamentary rules of procedure/standing orders or statements of standards of service establish an obligation and clear deadlines for committees and other units of parliament to consider submitted letters and other correspondence from members of the public, and to respond to them accordingly. If issues raised

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<sup>89</sup> See dimension 1.9.2 which covers constituency relations.

by the members of the public in their appeals go beyond the mandate of the MP or parliament, they are forwarded to the relevant state institution.

MPs and their constituency outreach offices respond to and track progress on the resolution of citizens' appeals. MPs and relevant parliamentary bodies work together with the public administration to help to resolve individual problems (cases) of citizens.

Support staff make sure that all submissions from citizens to the parliament have been responded to in a timely way, keep records of their visits, letters and emails, and ensure timely and meaningful follow-up to their cases.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the rules of procedure or statements of standards of service setting deadlines for responding to applications from individual members of the public
- Specific articles of the national legislation or statements of standards of service establishing clear and transparent procedures for forwarding communication from parliament to relevant institutions
- Number of constituency outreach offices, information about meeting days, hours and venues, if available to the parliament
- Number of constituency letters, emails and visits per year, if available to the parliament
- Number of responses to letters, emails and other appeals by the constituents, if available to the parliament
- Parliamentary reports on parliamentary responses to individual members of the public
- Information about the support staff
- Records of timely and meaningful communication with members of the public

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for timely responses to members of the public

The provisions of parliamentary rules of procedure/standing orders or statements of standards of service set clear deadlines for committees and other units of parliament to consider and respond to the letters or applications submitted by members of the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Forwarding citizen applications to relevant institutions

There are legal provisions or statements of standards of service that establish that letters, appeals or issues falling outside the mandate of MPs or the parliament should be forwarded or redirected to the relevant state institutions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Follow-up to cases raised by citizens**

There is evidence that parliament or MPs respond to citizens' submissions in a regular and timely way, and that they follow-up on visits, letters, emails or other forms of communication with members of the public. Parliament keeps records of this communication and ensures follow-up to the cases raised by citizens.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## 5 – Inclusive parliament

Inclusive parliament is one that:

- Leaves no one behind
- Makes laws and holds government to account, taking into consideration the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination
- Reflects the diversity of the communities that it represents in its institutional practices

This sub-target on inclusive parliament refers to the second element highlighted in SDG target 16.7 – Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decisions-making, which is adapted to the institution of parliament. As the main institution representing citizens, parliament should reflect the diversity of the communities that it represents in its work and institutional makeup.

It is a core responsibility of a democratic parliament to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable. The decisions and actions taken by the parliament through its legislative and scrutiny functions can have varying effects on different social groups. Addressing a diverse range of interests, including those of the most vulnerable, in an inclusive manner, is a way to ensure that the parliament's legislative and scrutiny decision-making processes align with such differing needs.

There are two indicators under this sub-target. The first indicator addresses how well the parliament ensures that its processes are inclusive when exercising the legislative and oversight mandate of the parliament. It is concerned with the manner in which parliaments carry out impact assessments, ensure gender mainstreaming, develop gender-responsive budgets, interact with young people, and promote human rights through their legislative work. This indicator assesses parliament's ability to ensure that its legislative and oversight processes are inclusive of the views of all citizens, and to make decisions accordingly. It also pays special attention to the presence of political will to integrate these differing views into a decision-making process that benefits all.

The second indicator addresses parliament's inclusiveness in terms of its institutional practices. It concerns the diversity of the workforce supporting parliament's operations, and specifically addresses: promoting gender balance in the make-up of the workforce, including the secretariat personnel; creating a suitable workplace environment, including ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those who work in, and visit, parliament; and establishing family-friendly institutional practices.

The sub-target on inclusive parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight
- 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices



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## Indicator 5.1 – Inclusive legislation and oversight

One of the criteria for a democratic parliament is that it should reflect the diversity of the social groups and communities that it represents. More inclusive parliaments strengthen democracy, promote integration and prevent conflicts. The work of the parliament on both legislation and oversight should reflect the interests of the people it serves, thus leaving no one behind and representing the diversity of society.

The decisions and actions of the parliaments affect the interests of various social groups differently. In order to secure inclusive legislative and oversight processes, it is necessary to take into consideration the various impacts that parliamentary work has on different groups, and make decisions accordingly.

More and more parliaments across the world are using different tools to ensure inclusiveness in their working processes. Such tools include impact assessment mechanisms, gender mainstreaming, the development of gender-responsive budgets, education of youth, promotion of human rights legislation and policies. Applying these mechanisms in practice is not easy, as they require highly qualified staff, lengthy processes to engage stakeholders, complex analytical approaches and political will to incorporate the findings of such activities into final decisions. It is important for parliaments to have the capacity to deliver such services, and to support MPs and decision-makers in ensuring that their legislative and oversight processes support inclusiveness.

The assessment of the indicator on inclusive legislation and oversight comprises the following dimensions:

- 5.1.1 Human rights-based legislation and policies
- 5.1.2 Impact assessments
- 5.1.3 Gender mainstreaming
- 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting
- 5.1.5 Youth engagement

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## Dimension 5.1.1: Human rights-based legislation and policies

Indicator: 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight

Sub-target: 5. Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the role of parliament in developing legislation and policies that provide for equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. All aspects of parliamentary work, namely legislation, oversight, representation and budgeting, are ultimately aimed at promoting human rights, establishing protective mechanisms, preventing abuse, and ensuring that the law provides practical means through which remedies may be sought for alleged violations.<sup>90</sup> This work cannot be done without the extensive participation of the national human rights mechanism (ombudsperson), human rights organizations, activists and representatives of different groups, especially vulnerable and under-represented members of society.

Human rights-based legislation passed by the parliament should be a result of a participatory and inclusive process that takes into account the differing needs of various groups. Specialized parliamentary human rights bodies, such as human rights committees have an obligation to be in constant communication with human rights groups and activists, to listen to their concerns and to set mechanisms for the joint development of human rights legislation and policies. Parliaments also carry out post-legislative scrutiny of human rights-based legislation and assess the implementation of laws in active cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.

Many countries have adopted a national action plan that outlines policy priorities to address human rights issues and ensures the enjoyment of human rights by all groups of society. Such action plans, as well as other policy documents, are to be developed in an inclusive manner and should represent a joint effort by parliament, the ombudsperson and human rights groups. Specialized parliamentary human rights bodies should provide a safe and welcoming space for representatives of the vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, national, ethnic or sexual minorities and indigenous peoples.

Parliament as an institution and MPs individually have key roles in raising public awareness of human rights, including issues regarding discrimination against various groups, gender equality, minority rights or other social issues. The relationship between parliament and civil society contributes to parliament's oversight duties and can help forge national consensus on human rights.<sup>91</sup>

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of human rights-based legislation and policies would encompass the following:

Parliament has well-established and inclusive processes to mobilize and gather information on human rights issues, including close working relations with civil society organizations. Any legislation related to human rights is developed in close cooperation with the ombudsperson, human rights organizations, watchdogs and activists.

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<sup>90</sup> Karen McKenzie, Justin Pettit, The Commonwealth, [Parliaments and parliamentarians – a significant role in the promotion and protection of human rights](#) (London: 2017).

<sup>91</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCR), [Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 26](#) (IPU, 2016).

Parliament carries out post-legislative scrutiny of human rights-based legislation and assesses the implementation of the laws in cooperation with relevant civil society groups.

MPs have roles in the preparation and oversight of a national human rights action plan, and ensure that the plan is developed through inclusive, transparent and participatory processes.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- The existence of a human rights committee and other specific parliamentary bodies
- Hearings of the reports of national human rights institutions
- Reports on the post-legislative scrutiny of human rights legislation
- A list of civil society organizations involved in the development of human rights policies

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Cooperation with human rights institutions, organizations and activists

An inclusive process for the development of human rights-based legislation and policies is in place. A national human rights mechanism (ombudsperson), civil society, NGOs, watchdog organizations, and relevant groups of members of the of public are continually involved in the work of the committee with regard to human rights and that of other parliamentary human rights bodies. Any legislation related to human rights is developed in close partnership and cooperation with such groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Monitoring of the implementation of human rights-based laws

A specialized parliamentary body carries out post-legislative scrutiny of human rights legislation and assesses the implementation of human rights laws in cooperation with the ombudsperson and relevant civil society groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Inclusiveness in the development of national human rights action plans**

Parliament participates in the development of a national human rights action plan, as well as in the monitoring of its implementation and the guarantee of overall inclusiveness of the process.

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 26](#), (Geneva: 2016).
- OHCHR, [Draft Principles on Parliaments and human rights](#) (A/HRC/38/25).

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## Dimension 5.1.2: Impact assessments

Indicator: 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight

Sub-target: 5. Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

Impact assessment is an important element of evidence-based legislating and policy making, as it provides for a systemic and critical analysis of the positive and negative effects of proposed legislation or policies, as well as of the non-regulatory alternatives. Laws and policies have different impacts on different groups, including vulnerable groups. While developing new legislation or policies, it is important to take into account these differences and the impact that a particular policy will have on different parts of society.

The International Association for Impact Assessment defines impact assessment as a “process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action”.<sup>92</sup> Parliaments need to systematically appraise the impact of proposed primary and/or secondary legislation on certain categories of stakeholders.

Impact assessments can be broad and determine the regulatory consequences from an economic, social, environmental or other perspective. Impact assessments can also focus on specific groups such as women, young people and persons with disabilities. Among other forms of impact assessment, legislatures often use equality impact assessments to test whether a proposed law or policy promotes equality, accommodates diversity and does not discriminate against individuals and groups (including by making reasonable provision for persons with disabilities). The main outcome of equality impact assessment is either a confirmation that the draft legislation or policy adequately takes into account such needs, or an amendment of the draft legislation or policy to take into consideration those needs.<sup>93</sup>

Impact assessments of regulations and policies are formal evidence-based procedures requiring skills that are generally not part of legal training. They are carried out by administrative staff, parliamentary advisory bodies or external experts. In any case, impact assessment should be an inclusive and transparent process.

As impact assessments provide information about the potential consequences of proposed laws, they improve the quality of legislation. Impact assessment can be effectively integrated into and applied in combination with the post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) process. The institutionalization of the impact assessment system helps to ensure the stability of legislation and the adherence to the principle of predictability, by minimizing sudden changes. Given the aims and benefits of impact assessment practices, parliaments have increasingly invested in the development and application of impact assessment methods and tools in recent years (see also dimension 5.1.2 Gender-responsive budgeting).

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of impact assessments would encompass the following:

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<sup>92</sup> <https://www.iaia.org/>

<sup>93</sup> The Equality Authority and Irish Vocational Education Association, [Guidelines for conducting equality impact assessments on IVEA and VEC plans, policies and programmes](#) (2007).

There is an impact assessment manual, guidance or similar tools establishing procedures and criteria for the assessment of the different impacts that the proposed legislation, programme or policy might have on different groups. These guidelines are followed by the parliament during the legislative process.

The process of impact assessment involves the following core steps:

- Identification and collection of relevant information and data
- Analysis of the data gathered in order to determine the potential impact of a piece of legislation, programme or policy on different groups
- Consultation with representatives of relevant groups to obtain their views on any required changes to the legislation or policy, along with the findings of the impact assessment
- Selection of the best options to address the problem

Parliament has qualified staff, capable of conducting or commissioning different forms of impact assessment. At the request of a decision-maker, the parliamentary administration, an advisory board or external expert can carry out impact assessment work and draft reports. These reports are available to the MPs and those involved in policy-making, as well as other interested groups and the wider public.

Parliament uses the findings of the impact assessment reports in its work and adjusts draft laws and policies according to the findings on the potential impacts on different groups of society.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Parliamentary guidelines on conducting impact assessments
- Impact assessment reports
- Number of impact assessment exercises conducted by the parliament during the year
- Examples of policies modified as a result of an impact assessment report
- Existence of a special unit or staff responsible for conducting impact assessments
- Publication of impact assessment reports on the parliament's website

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Impact assessment guidelines or similar tools

Parliament has developed an impact assessment manual, guidance or similar tool that establishes procedures and criteria for assessing the different impacts that a piece of draft legislation, programme or policy might have on different groups.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Core steps of impact assessment**

Regulatory impact assessment involves core steps, including the collection of information, analysis, consultation with relevant groups, and the identification of areas for improvement if needed. The findings of the impact assessments are adequately reflected in the draft law/policy.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Availability of support unit, staff or other qualified administrative resources**

A responsible unit in the parliamentary administration, qualified staff or other administrative resources are available for the conduct of impact assessments. Relevant staff are trained and equipped with the necessary knowledge to draft impact assessment reports.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Systematic impact assessment**

The assessment of the impact of different draft laws and policies is systematic and takes place regularly. Impact assessment guidelines are followed to assess the different impacts that a piece of draft legislation, programme or policy might have on different categories of stakeholders.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Transparency of impact assessment reports**

The findings of the impact assessment activities are transparent and easily accessible not only to MPs and parliamentary committees, but also to other interested stakeholders and the wider public.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Prof. Dr. Patricia Popelier, [\*A legal perspective on Regulatory Impact Assessments.\*](#)
- The Equality Authority and Irish Vocational Education Association, [\*Guidelines for conducting equality impact assessments on IVEA and VEC plans, policies and programmes\*](#) (2007).



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### Dimension 5.1.3 Gender mainstreaming

Indicator: 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight

Sub-target: 5 Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

#### About the dimension

Parliaments can integrate gender mainstreaming across their processes, practices and outputs, with the aim of preventing and transforming gender discriminatory laws and policies, social institutions and practices in society, and ultimately enabling the achievement of gender equality.

An inclusive and gender-sensitive parliament protects the rights of all in society and leaves no one behind. It produces legislation that benefits women, men and persons of different sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) and incorporates their needs and input across policy areas. MPs as lawmakers must use their powers to ensure that national legal frameworks are consistent with international agreements on gender equality and promote equality without discrimination of any kind. They can pass legislation mandating specialized national institutions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, and ensure that they have sufficient resources. MPs must also hold the government accountable for gender mainstreaming progress across all sectors of policy development and implementation. Gender-related matters should therefore be routinely included on the parliament's agenda, both in plenary sessions and in committee work, and MPs are required to have the understanding, skills and information necessary to use parliamentary mechanisms effectively to address gender equality issues.

In order to ensure effective gender mainstreaming, parliaments require a strategic approach and strong institutional capacity. Parliaments worldwide have incorporated gender mainstreaming into strategic plans and developed gender policies to promote an internal culture that respects the rights of women, men and all SOGIE. Parliaments need to build systematic, institutional connections with a broad range of groups, including national women's machinery, gender and LGBTIQ+ rights advocates, civil society and private sector actors and academia to incorporate expertise into parliamentary processes and support MPs in mainstreaming gender as part of their law-making, representation and oversight roles.

Many parliaments have established dedicated gender equality bodies or mechanisms, such as gender equality committees, tasked with helping to ensure that parliament's procedures and outputs include a gender perspective. Others have guaranteed that gender mainstreaming responsibilities are shared across all committees or are addressed in 'multi-portfolio' committees such as social policy or human rights committees, as well as in cross-party groups (see dimension 1.4.6 Cross-party groups). Other mechanisms include networks of parliamentary leaders, internal gender audits, research centres, a gender desk, and focal points and units. As participation is a critical part of gender mainstreaming, it is important that such mechanisms systematically make use of evidence, including gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, and engage with a diverse group of stakeholders, civil society and gender experts.

Some parliaments have introduced gender-based legislation assessment toolkits or checklists, and have formalized their use in parliament's rules of procedure. Parliaments should also conduct post-legislative scrutiny to assess the impact of enacted legislation on equality among men, women and all SOGIE, and to determine whether revisions are needed.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of gender mainstreaming would encompass the following:

Parliament's commitment to gender-mainstreaming is incorporated into a strategic plan and/or institutional gender equality policies. Performance indicators are developed and progress of gender mainstreaming is monitored across parliament.

The national legal framework reflects international commitments to ensure gender equality. It mandates parliament to ratify international human rights treaties, including on gender equality, and the government to report to parliament on the implementation of international agreements.

Dedicated gender mainstreaming bodies or mechanisms exist within parliament. Such bodies have the authority and capacity to assess parliamentary outputs from a gender perspective, scrutinize the gender-related aspects of all government reporting, and help to monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming across parliament. Where gender equality committees exist, they have powers commensurate with those of other parliamentary committees.

Parliament has well-developed practices to review legislation on gender equality, including through an integrated review across the committee system and the use of toolkits and checklists for gender-sensitive legislative scrutiny.

Parliament has routine, transparent and well-defined mechanisms to engage closely and consult with national women's machinery, gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights advocates, civil society actors and other stakeholders during review of legislation.

Training on gender issues is provided for all MPs. Parliamentary research and committee staff have the capacity to provide expert analysis and briefings on gender issues.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A parliamentary strategic plan, gender equality plan, gender audit or other plans or policy documents
- Articles of rules of procedure that grant powers to dedicated gender equality bodies of parliament
- Terms of reference, statutes or other documents establishing a parliamentary gender equality committee, women's caucus or other body dedicated to gender mainstreaming
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees that provide for the incorporation of gender equality issues into their duties
- Committee reports that contain evidence taken from national women's machinery, including participation in hearings and submission of written evidence
- Pages on the parliamentary website that provide information on how individuals and groups can engage with parliament and offer information and evidence
  - Lists of the names of MPs attending parliamentary outreach events or activities
- Training material for MPs on gender equality

- Communication materials on the parliamentary website or in other media on gender equality and the role of parliament
- Parliamentary research papers or briefings on gender-related issues
- Laws relating to gender equality passed by the parliament in the past five years at least
- Reports to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other bodies indicating parliamentary scrutiny and inputs
- Parliamentary toolkits and/or checklists for gender-sensitive analysis of legislation

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: The legal framework reflects political commitments to gender equality**

Parliament has scrutinized and passed the legislation necessary to implement international agreements on gender equality, including women’s human rights. State reports to bodies including the UN CEDAW Committee are presented to parliament and are subject to parliamentary review and debate on recommendations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Gender mainstreaming in institutional strategies, plans or policies**

Parliament’s strategic plan incorporates provisions for gender mainstreaming, and/or specific gender equality plans or policies exist for gender mainstreaming in parliament. Plans include objectives, targets, implementation details and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Existence of gender mainstreaming bodies with sufficient powers**

Parliament has established dedicated gender mainstreaming bodies or mechanisms, such as a committee, caucus, networks, focal points and/or units. Rules of procedure provide these bodies with clear and permanent mandates and the power to conduct oversight and scrutiny functions. They can support and monitor how all portfolio committees mainstream gender within their mandates.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Routine inclusion of national women’s machinery and stakeholders representing gender issues**

Parliament’s rules of procedure promote well-defined mechanisms to engage and consult with national women’s machinery, gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights advocates, civil society actors and other stakeholders in the work of parliament and its committees. Reports from across portfolio committees indicate evidence taken from different stakeholders representing gender issues.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practices for gender-sensitive analysis of legislation**

Parliament has developed and introduced legislative scrutiny toolkits or checklists to assess the potential gendered impact of proposed legislation. Post-legislative scrutiny practices are well-established in parliament and include assessment of the gendered impact of legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Support from the parliamentary administration**

Resources are allocated across the parliamentary administration to support the gender-mainstreaming scrutiny activities of the parliament. The administration provides training, sex-disaggregated data, information and analysis for MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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### Sources and further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [\*Evaluating the gender-sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit\*](#) (IPU, 2016).
- Dr. Sonia Palmieri, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [\*Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice\*](#), (IPU, 2011).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [\*Making Laws Work for Women and Men: A Practical Guide to Gender-Sensitive Legislation\*](#) (OSCE, 2017).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Parliament of Fiji, [\*Scrutinising Legislation from a Gender Perspective: A Practical Toolkit\*](#)

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## Dimension 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting

Indicator: 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight

Sub-target: 5. Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines how parliament ensures a gender-responsive approach in the adoption and scrutiny of the national budget. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is an exercise involving the integration of a clear gender perspective within the overall context of the budgetary process through special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting gender-responsive policies.<sup>94</sup>

Many parliaments across the world have taken on practices of GRB in their work. GRB analysis allows for an understanding of how and to what extent a policy affects men, women and persons of all SOGIE as service consumers, infrastructure users and taxpayers.<sup>95</sup> A good practice in many countries is for the executive to include this type of analysis in the form of a gender budget statement (GBS) in the proposed budget. An active and gender-aware legislature can question budget priorities and call for allocations for the promotion of equality. In this way, parliament can scrutinize the extent to which government is developing and implementing policies that ensure equity, and can influence policy-making from the outset in the planning phase.<sup>96</sup>

The extent to which parliaments can adopt gender-responsive budgeting practices depends on different contextual factors, including the existence of a legal framework, the parliament's mandate with respect to the budget process, and the available time, capacity and resources.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of gender-responsive budgeting would encompass the following:

The legal framework provides a conducive environment for gender-responsive budgeting.

Parliament has the powers to assess and revise financial legislation, including finance laws, decrees on budget preparation and budget classification, and gender-related laws, in order to accommodate gender-responsive budgeting. Tools exist to track budget allocations and expenditure related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Parliament and the responsible committee(s) establish standard practices or standard operating procedures (SOP) for gender-responsive budget analysis, covering all phases of the budgetary cycle (formulation, approval, implementation, audit).

MPs and parliamentary committees have sufficient powers, time and resources to conduct gender-responsive budgeting, with portfolio committees mandated to examine sector budgets in terms of their gender impact.

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<sup>94</sup> OECD (Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate), *Gender Budgeting in OECD countries* (OECD, 2016).

<sup>95</sup> UN Women, *Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Analysis of Budget Programmes from Gender Perspective* (UN Women, 2016).

<sup>96</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank Institute (WBI) and United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), *Parliament, the Budget and Gender*, (Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 6, 2004).

The executive is required to include specific information on gender equality measures in the budget, such as gender budget statements.

Relations with civil society and other stakeholders during the budget process are well-established and routine and there are institutionalized spaces for engagement by means of public hearings.

There is capacity in the parliamentary secretariat to provide MPs with tools to independently analyse the gender impact of the budget. Parliament's research services or dedicated budget office can provide independent information on and an analysis of the budget, and there is sex-disaggregated data available for MPs. Training on budget literacy, economic policy, gender issues and gender-responsive budgeting is available for MPs from within the parliamentary secretariat or from external sources.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles in rules of procedure that establish mechanisms to support gender-responsive budgeting, such as gender equality committees or subcommittees
- Articles in rules of procedure that indicate opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement in the budget process
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees or subcommittees that indicate the responsibilities for gender-responsive budgeting
- Availability of sex-disaggregated data from the parliamentary secretariat and/or from national statistics agencies
- Availability of training for MPs on gender-responsive budgeting, evidenced by training materials or reports from the parliamentary secretariat or external technical support
- Formal records of standard practices and/or SOP in parliament's internal procedures for GRB

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Parliament has established a standard approach to gender-responsive budgeting

Parliament has in place rules, guidelines and practical tools that support gender-responsive budgeting, including the use of gender impact assessments where applicable. Standard practices or SOP exist for a gender-responsive analysis of the budget, and implementation is overseen by dedicated parliamentary bodies and the parliamentary secretariat.

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Assessment criterion No. 2: Provision of a gender budget statement**

A gender budget statement is part of the policy basis of the budget laid out in publicly available government documentation accompanying the budget proposal. Parliament has the authority to obtain this information from the government where it is lacking.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Infrastructure for gender-responsive budgeting**

Parliament grants a body the responsibility for supporting and monitoring gender-responsive budgeting across parliament, such as a parliamentary committee or sub-committee, caucus or network.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Parliamentary committees practise gender-responsive budgeting**

Parliamentary portfolio committees conduct a detailed sectoral review of the budget from a gender perspective, which includes routine public and stakeholder engagement.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Gender-responsive budgeting support from the parliamentary secretariat**

The legislature has sufficient budget research and analysis capacity, or well-established connections to external sources of expertise. The parliamentary secretariat ensures that MPs have access to training on gender-responsive budgeting.



Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

### Sources for further reading

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), [Manual for Training on Gender Responsive Budgeting](#) (Eschborn: 2006).
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), [Europe: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts](#) (Working Paper, WP/16/155, IMF, 2016).
- IPU, UNDP, WBI and UNIFEM, [Parliament, the Budget and Gender](#) (Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 6, 2004).
- UN Women, [Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Analysis of Budget Programmes from Gender Perspective](#) (UN Women, 2016).
- Elisabete Azevedo-Harman and Ricardo Godinho Gomes, [Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Law Against Gender Based Violence: The Successful Story of the Cabo Verde Parliament](#), Paper prepared for the Academic Seminar on Post-Legislative Scrutiny (London, 10 July 2018).

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## Dimension 5.1.5 Youth engagement

Indicator: 5.1 Inclusive legislation and oversight

Sub-target: 5. Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by means of which parliament ensures the inclusion of young people and youth issues in the legislature's work. Youth involvement in formal and informal political processes is crucial for democracy. Effective and meaningful youth engagement requires an enabling environment, including a legal framework free from restrictive barriers to young people.

Parliaments can play an important role in the development of youth-sensitive policies, the promotion of youth participation through the provision of support for and partnerships with youth organizations, the creation of youth education and empowerment programmes, and the engagement of young people in parliamentary work.

In order to address the issue of youth under-representation in non-formal and formal political processes, parliamentary approaches should respond to the core human rights principle, which can be applied to youth engagement: "Nothing about us without us!"

Ensuring the meaningful and effective engagement of youth in decision-making requires a number of factors, such as the involvement of young people in all aspects of parliamentary processes including: oversight and the work of committees; the guarantee of accessibility to such processes; the provision of all relevant information for young people; the closure of the feedback loop; the provision of purpose for engagement; and the building of youth capacity. Youth engagement and education activities can include: the establishment of civic education in schools and universities; the invitation of young people to visit parliament; the provision of specially designed programmes for children and young people; the creation of internship schemes for students in parliaments; the encouragement of MPs to engage with young people through different channels (including digital); the provision of support for youth parliaments; and the organization of youth fora.

Youth engagement in parliamentary activities, particularly on topics that specifically affect this age group, should be promoted through the use of tools and channels that are more adapted to young people. Furthermore, the content of proceedings, debates and decisions on issues affecting young people need to be communicated in a way that ensures outreach to young men and women.

Please see also other dimensions linked to youth engagement.<sup>97</sup>

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of youth engagement would encompass the following:

Parliament provides young people with opportunities to meaningfully engage in its work through the establishment of partnerships with youth organizations, the creation of groups to consult young people, the invitation of young people or youth groups to policy discussions, and/or the creation of digital tools for engagement.

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<sup>97</sup> Indicator on composition of legislature, dimension 7.2.3. Youth and 7.3.3 Gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies

Parliament has developed diverse programmes for youth engagement and education, which are inclusive, youth-friendly and meaningful.

Youth civic education programmes target different age, gender and social-economic groups of young people, take into account youth needs, and make use of various instruments, including digital tools.

Mechanisms are established for the collection and analysis of participants in educational programmes for young people, in order to improve such programmes and to design new ones.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Parliament's strategies, action plans, programmes or other documents that involve or address youth education and engagement
- Meeting records and reports that describe youth engagement
- Feedback provided to participants in youth programmes
- Digital and other tools tailored to young people
- Monitoring and evaluation documents on youth education and engagement

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Inclusive youth engagement

Parliament has developed inclusive, youth-friendly and meaningful mechanisms and tools to ensure that the voices of young people are heard with regard to laws and policies that particularly affect them. There is regular cooperation with youth organizations, and various activities, such as roundtables, consultations and fora, are organized to enable young people to raise their concerns and discuss issues of interest to them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of youth education programmes

Parliament has developed strategies and education programmes for different youth age groups, while taking care that these programmes are equally accessible to all young people, regardless of their social, educational, geographic or other circumstances.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Internships and other forms of engagement**

Parliament provides internships and offers other established forms of engagement to young male and female professionals, enabling them to learn and practise on parliamentary premises, and work with MPs and staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Administrative capacity**

Parliament is equipped with adequate human, financial and administrative resources including regularly trained and skilled personnel to carry out youth education and engagement activities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Consistency of implementation**

There is evidence of consistency with regard to the parliament’s youth education and engagement activities. The implementation of such activities is monitored and evaluated, youth needs are analysed and new actions are planned and developed accordingly.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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### Sources for further reading

- IPU, [\*2010 Resolution on youth participation in the democratic process\*](#), Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 122nd IPU Assembly (Bangkok, 1 April 2010).
- IPU, [\*Youth participation in national parliaments\*](#) (2021).
- IPU, Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, “[\*Conference Report - Stepping up youth participation in politics and parliaments: From words to action\*](#)” (2021).
- IPU, [\*Handbook on Child Participation in Parliament\*](#) (2011).

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## Indicator 5.2 – Inclusive institutional practices

This indicator concerns the inclusiveness of parliament in terms of its institutional practices. It recognizes that, if parliament is to be fully effective in representing the community and holding the executive to account on behalf of the citizens that it represents, the legislature itself needs to demonstrate inclusiveness in its institutional practices.

The indicator covers the diversity of the workforce that supports the parliamentary institution, including both the parliamentary secretariat staff and staff that support MPs. It specifically addresses issues of gender balance in the make-up of the supporting workforce, including key secretariat personnel. The ability of parliament to make its work inclusive for a diverse community, particularly where there are multiple official languages spoken, is important for the inclusiveness of the parliament.

Finally, the indicator recognizes the importance of a positive workplace environment. Parliament must ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of both MPs and staff, as well as visitors, and prevent harassment of any kind. To create a fully inclusive workplace, parliament should provide a family-friendly environment, by catering to the needs of MPs and staff who have family and childcare responsibilities.

The assessment of the inclusive institutional practices indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 5.2.1 Workforce diversity
- 5.2.2 Gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat
- 5.2.3 Multilingual service delivery
- 5.2.4 Workplace environment

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## Dimension 5.2.1 Workforce diversity

Indicator: 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices

Sub-target: 5 Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

If the parliament is truly to be an inclusive institution and perform its representative and accountability roles effectively on behalf of the community, it needs to ensure that the workforce that supports it reflects the diversity of the community, including women, men and LGBTIQ+ groups, persons with disabilities, or persons belonging to religious, ethnic or other minority groups. This workforce includes both the parliamentary secretariat and administrative staff, as well as the staff who directly support MPs.

To ensure there is diversity in its workforce, the parliament needs to ensure that a framework is reflected in the provisions of legislation or the rules of procedure of the parliament, which requires non-discrimination in recruitment, employment and advancement for all groups in society, and which establishes that the parliament is an equal employment opportunity employer. This is based on the principle that every person, regardless of attributes such as race, sex, age, religion, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, has equal employment opportunities. For staff, this includes physical access, organization of the workplace, equipment and procedures for staff with disabilities. Legislation offers institutional mechanisms for protecting individuals against discrimination in the workplace. In cases where there are breaches of non-discrimination requirements laid down by law, non-judicial redress mechanisms for the victims of discrimination are available.

Often the establishment of non-discriminatory laws is not enough. It is also necessary for the legislature to adopt approaches that encourage and provide real opportunities for under-represented groups to be included in the parliamentary workforce. These approaches can include targeted recruitment, specialized training for staff from minority groups who have already been recruited, or measures to retain and advance staff from minority groups. For example, for committees that address a particular subject matter concerning minority groups, the legislature may wish to specifically engage staff from those groups.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of workforce diversity would encompass the following:

Laws and rules of procedure of the legislature provide for non-discrimination in the employment of staff that support the work of the parliament, including both parliamentary secretariat staff and staff who support MPs directly.

The parliament adopts positive approaches that ensure equal opportunities for all groups in the general community.

The parliamentary workforce, including both the parliamentary secretariat and the staff that support MPs directly, reflects the diversity of the general community of the country.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament that relate to non-discrimination in the employment of staff to the parliament
- Statistics about staff employment diversity in comparison with the diversity of the community
- Reports on staff employment diversity

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for non-discrimination**

Laws and rules of procedure of the legislature provide for non-discrimination in the employment of staff who support the work of the parliament, including both parliamentary secretariat staff and staff who support MPs directly.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2 Measures to encourage diversity**

Parliament has adopted proactive approaches or programmes to ensure equal opportunities for all groups in the general community, including women, men, LGBTIQ+ groups, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to religious, ethnic and minority groups, or any other contextually relevant group.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Diversity of the parliamentary workforce**

The parliamentary workforce, including both the parliamentary secretariat and the staff that support MPs directly, reflects the diversity of the general community of the country.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments (ASPG) [Principles for recruitment and career management of staff of the parliamentary administration](#) (ASGP, 2014).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#) (CPA, 2018).

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## Dimension 5.2.2 Gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat

Indicator: 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices

Sub-target: 5 Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This indicator examines the gender balance of the parliamentary secretariat, its bodies and internal structures, and across all parliamentary staff categories, particularly at senior levels. A gender-sensitive parliament is one where women and men have equal opportunities to become parliamentary employees, and to progress to occupy senior positions in the parliamentary administration.

A gender balance in the parliamentary secretariat helps to incorporate varied perspectives across the work of the parliament, and is an important part of parliament's workplace diversity and gender mainstreaming approach (see dimensions 5.2.1 and 5.1.3). Institutional strategic plans or gender equality policies should provide for gender balance in the workforce, including an equitable distribution of work across the departments of the parliamentary secretariat and seniority levels, without different duties being assigned based on gender stereotypes.

Gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory human resources (HR) policies should be in place and be applied to the recruitment of staff and career development, and should ensure that there is no gender pay gap (see also dimensions 2.2.5 Staff recruitment and advancement, 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration and 5.2.1 Workforce diversity).

Effective mechanisms must be established for protection from sexual harassment and discrimination. Attention should also be paid to work-life balance for women and men employees.<sup>98</sup>

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of gender balance in the composition of the parliamentary secretariat would encompass the following:

There is gender balance in the leadership of the parliamentary secretariat and across staff positions in the parliamentary secretariat.

A gender equality policy and/or plan outlines parliament's commitment to a gender balance across the parliamentary secretariat, with a clear and detailed set of objectives, interventions and processes for achieving gender equality. A committee or body in charge of monitoring gender balance regularly oversees implementation of gender plans and/or policies, and reviews policies and practices to ensure that they are effective.

Where there is a gender imbalance in the secretariat, the parliament takes proactive measures to ensure that women are represented at all levels of administration, particularly in senior positions. HR policies outline transparent and objective recruitment procedures that do not discriminate on the basis of gender, and competencies and criteria for promotion and career progression are gender-sensitive. Policies and mechanisms are established to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination (see dimension 5.2.4) and to ensure gender-sensitive language in parliament.

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<sup>98</sup> This is addressed further in dimension 5.2.4 Workplace environment.

The workplace culture of parliament reflects parliament's commitment to gender equality. Codes of conduct are in place and the parliamentary secretariat provides gender-awareness training for all parliamentary staff.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- List of positions in parliamentary leadership: secretary-general/director-general/clerk, their deputies and assistants, and department managers, deputies and assistants (currently and in the recent past)
- Parliamentary secretariat staff structure/organogram that indicates positions by gender
- The parliament's strategic plan and/or gender policy or plans indicating a commitment to gender equality in the secretariat
- The parliament's HR policy
- Job descriptions and advertisements on the parliamentary website and other recruitment sites
- The parliament's workplace policies

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Plans and policies are in place to achieve gender balance in the secretariat**

Institutional strategic plans and/or gender equality policies reflect a commitment to gender equality and detailed strategies, objectives and interventions are in place to ensure that this is achieved.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Human resources management policies**

HR policies concerning recruitment, professional development and career advancement are gender-sensitive. Policies include measures to help ensure that women hold management positions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Monitoring gender balance**

Gender balance in the parliamentary secretariat is regularly monitored, and policies and practices are reviewed to ensure that they are effective in meeting the expectations of gender balance, particularly at senior levels.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Implementation of gender equality policies**

The implementation of gender equality policies is overseen by a committee, body or unit, such as one responsible for monitoring and promoting gender balance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- IPU, [Evaluating the gender-sensitivity of parliaments](#) (IPU, 2016).
- IPU, [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#), (IPU, 2011).
- European Parliament, [Gender equality: What do the parliaments of the European Union do?](#) (EP High-level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, 2012).
- IPU, [Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#) (IPU, 2019).

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## Dimension 5.2.3 Multilingual service delivery

Indicator: 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices

Sub-target: 5 Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

In its interactions with the community, the parliament must ensure that it is able to communicate effectively and inclusively with all groups of society. Language can be a barrier to effective communication with citizens. For this reason, in countries with more than one official language, the parliament should ensure that parliamentary information is available in all official languages. In addition to parliamentary information, any services, for example, visitor services or support for the work of committees provided by the parliament, should also be provided in all the official languages of the country.

In countries with only one official language, but with multiple languages spoken in the community, the parliament should consider the ways in which it communicates with and provides information to all its citizens. This could mean that at least some of the key information and services provided by the parliament are made available in languages other than the official language. The inclusive nature of the parliamentary institution will be reflected in its efforts to provide information and services that are accessible to all its citizens.

Parliaments should make efforts to provide simultaneous interpretation of national or ethnic minority MPs when speaking in committees or in the plenary, as well as sign-language interpretation.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of multilingual service delivery would encompass the following:

There are provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the legislature requiring the parliament to make available parliamentary services and information in all the official languages of the country.

In practice, the parliament makes accessible all its parliamentary services and information in the official languages of the country. In those parliaments with only one official language, key parliamentary services and information are available to persons who speak languages other than the official language.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of the constitution, legislation and rules of procedures of the parliament which relate to multilingual service delivery
- Statistics on the provision of multilingual services and information

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

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**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on multilingual access to information and services**

There is evidence of provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the legislature which require the parliament to make available parliamentary services and information in all the official languages of the country.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2 Practice**

In practice, the parliament makes accessible all its parliamentary services and information in the official languages of the country. In those parliaments with only one official language, key parliamentary services and information are available to persons who speak languages other than the official language.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#) (CPA, 2018).

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## Dimension 5.2.4 Workplace environment

Indicator: 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices

Sub-target: 5 Inclusive parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

For parliament to be properly representative and inclusive of its community, it is important to remove any barriers to the full participation of MPs and staff who support them in the parliamentary environment. A positive and inclusive workplace environmental culture can significantly contribute to a more effective performance of the parliamentary staff and the parliament as a whole.

Parliaments have an obligation to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of MPs and staff, as well as that of visitors. Improving the workplace for all can include preventing and addressing environmental hazards, unsafe working conditions or processes, drug and alcohol abuse, and workplace harassment and violence.

In addition to the full implementation of laws and standards tackling these issues, parliaments should pay particular attention to preventing and combating sexism, harassment and violence against women and LGBTIQ+ MPs and staff. Parliaments are expected to formulate specific policies, regulations and protocols which effectively address harassment and violence at work, and which can be incorporated through provisions in the rules of procedure, code of conduct or code of ethics. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of such rules and initiatives are also required.

Many MPs and supporting staff have significant family-related responsibilities that they need to balance with their active work commitments. It should be noted that such family responsibilities may not only involve caring for infants and children, but can include caring for elderly relatives or other care-related responsibilities. This can be particularly challenging for MPs because of the significant roles that they have to play in the performance of their parliamentary duties, including the representation of their constituencies, which may be located far away from the parliament. Therefore, it is essential for the parliament to provide a family-friendly environment, and for its institutional procedures and practices to be help MPs and supporting staff to achieve a reasonable work-life balance.

There are two elements that parliaments should address.

The first is to ensure that the parliamentary environment is family-friendly and provides both MPs and supporting staff with an environment in which they can achieve a reasonable balance between their work and their family and other life commitments. The approaches that parliaments can adopt to address these issues can include:

- Providing physical facilities such as spaces for family members (including children) and breast-feeding facilities
- Providing support services, such as childcare, counselling support and support groups
- Ensuring that employment conditions and human resources policies and practices allow for a work-life balance to be achieved, and include parental leave, flexible work hours and possibility of remote work.

It is also important for the institutional procedures and practices of the legislature to reflect changing community expectations. This includes ensuring family-friendly sitting hours and session periods which allow both MPs and staff to spend time with their families. It is key to make sure that sitting and session times and dates are predictable. It is also important to adapt the rules of procedure and practices of the legislature, for example in relation to attendance in the chamber or voting in the chamber, so that those members with infants can fully

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participate in proceedings. Some approaches adopted by legislatures include providing MPs with leave from the house for parental or caring purposes, scheduling votes at particular times, allowing MPs to take infants into the chamber during votes, pairing members in votes or allowing them to cast a proxy vote. Legislatures need to adapt their procedures in ways that best suit the culture and operations of their institutions.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of workplace environment would encompass the following:

Parliament has formulated policies and regulations to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of MPs and staff, as well as that of visitors, with special attention paid to preventing and combating sexism, harassment and violence against women and LGBTIQ+ persons at work. There is evidence of continuous monitoring and regular evaluation of the implementation of those rules and initiatives in practice.

The rules of procedure of the legislature and its practices provide for sitting and session times and dates for the legislature which are predictable and which allow both MPs and staff supporting MPs to balance their work and family commitments.

The rules of procedure and practices of the legislature have been adapted to allow MPs with family responsibilities, particularly breast-feeding or caring for young infants, to be able to fulfil their parliamentary duties, such as voting.

The legislature provides facilities and services to support a family-friendly workplace. These facilities and services can include the provision of breast-feeding spaces, spaces for family members and childcare facilities.

There are employment or labour laws and human resources policies and practices to support a family-friendly workplace. These can include parental leave for MPs, flexible work hours, virtual representative participation and remote work possibilities for staff.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Policies, regulations and protocols that address safety at work
- Policies, regulations and protocols, or provisions in rules of procedures or a code of conduct aimed at preventing and combating sexism, harassment and violence against women and LGBTIQ+ persons at work
- Reports or other information that provide evidence of regular monitoring and implementation of policies and regulations in practice
- Provisions of the rules of procedures of the parliament that have been adapted to provide for family-friendly arrangements for MPs
- Information about family-friendly facilities available in the legislature
- Provisions of laws and human resources policies relating to safety at work and family-friendly arrangements



If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Safety, health and wellbeing**

Policies, regulations or other measures aimed at ensuring safety at work for and the health and wellbeing of MPs and staff are in place and their implementation is regularly monitored and evaluated.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Preventing and combating sexism, harassment and violence at work**

Policies, regulations, or rules of procedures or a code of conduct include provisions aimed at preventing, reporting and responding to sexism, harassment and violence at work, particularly against women and LGBTIQ+ persons. Mechanisms are established for regular monitoring of implementation of these rules in practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Family-friendly sitting and session times**

Rules of procedure of the legislature and its practices provide for predictable sitting and session times and dates for the legislature, which allow both MPs and staff supporting MPs to balance their work and family commitments.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Adapted rules of procedure and practices**

Rules of procedure and practices of the legislature have been adapted to allow MPs with family responsibilities, particularly breast-feeding or caring for young infants, to be able to fulfil their parliamentary duties, such as voting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Facilities and services to support a family-friendly workplace**

The legislature provides facilities and services to support a family-friendly workplace. These facilities and services can include providing breast-feeding spaces, spaces for family members and childcare facilities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Employment and human resources laws, policies and practices**

There are employment or labour laws and human resources policies and practices to support a family-friendly workplace, such as parental leave for MPs, flexible work hours, virtual representative participation and remote work possibilities for staff.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- IPU, [Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#) (2019).
- UK Parliament, [Using the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme \(ICGS\): guide for complaints.](#)
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) “[Governance for Gender Equality Toolkit](#)” (2018).

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- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (CPA, 2018).

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## 6 – Participatory parliament

Participatory parliament is one that:

- provides for mechanisms that enable citizens, civil society actors, academia, experts and the general public to be systematically involved in matters that directly affect them, and to have an opportunity to influence policy

This sub-target on participatory parliament is the third element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.7 – Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament. The participatory nature of the parliament is key for building trust in democratic institutions. The decisions and actions of the legislature have a tremendous impact on people’s lives. This is especially true for complex issues which are linked to values, and which have the potential to result in political polarization. Engaging citizens, civil society actors, academia and experts in a decision-making process ensures better policy outcomes and increased public trust in and receptiveness towards the policies at stake. Parliament, as the main representative institution of any democratic society, is responsible for ensuring a participatory process at all levels of its operation, by giving civil society and citizens a more direct role in setting policy agendas and shaping policy decisions.

The first indicator concerns the establishment by the parliament of constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions that provide a legislative and regulatory framework for public participation. It also concerns the appropriate levels of personal data protection and the development of practical mechanisms and tools enabling public participation.

The second indicator concerns the participation of citizens in general, as well as that of professional and expert groups, in the work of the legislature. Such participation must be meaningful and influence the outcome of the process, such as policies, oversight actions, the budget and legislative work. The indicator recognizes that participation should go beyond the formal rules of attendance and seek to establish genuine exchange and cooperation.

The third indicator concerns partnerships for participation and civic education. Citizens often do not have the opportunity and means to directly engage in the decision-making process. Civil society organizations enable different groups of the public to organize themselves around specific issues of interest and to engage with the parliament through such means. Civic education contributes to increasing public understanding of the parliament’s role, as well as of the notions of separation of powers and the democratic system in general. The enhanced participation of citizens in the decision-making process calls for improved public awareness of the basics of the parliamentary process. This indicator concerns the role of parliament in promoting civic education.

The sub-target on participatory parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation
- 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process
- 6.3 Other forms of public engagement

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## Indicator 6.1 – Parliamentary environment for public participation

In democratic systems of government, parliament has a responsibility to ensure that it has an environment that encourages and enables public participation in all aspects of its work, including the decision-making process. Public participation in the activities and processes of parliament strengthens the work of the parliament, and ensures that the public has the chance to influence parliamentary decision-making and outcomes. It promotes increased trust in the legislature, broadens opportunities for citizens to communicate their legitimate interests, and strengthens collective intelligence to provide a better analysis of potential impacts and to achieve better quality results.

This indicator refers to whether the parliament has constitutional, legislative or regulatory provisions to ensure a framework for public participation with detailed procedures and rules. As part of the framework, there should be appropriate protection for personal information that citizens may provide when engaging with the legislature. It also concerns the development of practical mechanisms and tools that allow for and guarantee active participation. When considering participation, it is important to take into account the engagement, or lack thereof, of the different groups that make up the community, with a special emphasis on those who have historically been marginalized from decision-making, such as people with disabilities, women, youth and minorities. The tools need to be adapted in order to ensure engagement with remote or minority groups in a way that is different from engagement with the general public.

The assessment of the parliamentary environment for public participation indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 6.1.1 Regulatory framework for public participation
- 6.1.2 Mechanisms and tools for public participation

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## Dimension 6.1.1 Regulatory framework for public participation

Indicator: 6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

A sound regulatory framework is a crucial for enabling and encouraging public participation in the work of parliament. A country's constitution and its legislative provisions, as well as parliament's own rules of procedure and practices should provide a framework within which citizens, civil society actors, academia, experts and the general public can be involved systematically in parliamentary matters that affect them directly, and have the chance to influence parliamentary decision-making and outcomes. This involves the legislature playing a key role in shaping the overall civic space necessary for effective participation in all areas, not only parliamentary work. This includes the establishment of a legal framework to access information and the engagement of civil society actors.

The framework is the basis for the detailed rules and procedures that specify how participation will occur. These rules and procedures should include how citizens participate in different aspects of parliamentary processes, and should facilitate rather than restrict engagement. There should also be a strategy or plan for the implementation and development of an approach to participation, and active monitoring of levels of participation.

It is crucial to have an effective framework for public participation in all aspects of the work and processes of parliament. The regulatory framework must also include appropriate protections for personal information that citizens may provide in engaging with the legislature. Citizens need to have a clear idea of how any personal information that they provide when engaging with the parliament will be used or re-used. The rules and procedures developed to protect privacy should also not permit the tracking of personal information without the clear consent of individual citizens. At the same time, any requirement for citizens to engage by providing information, such as completing a registration form, should not be an impediment to engagement with the parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of regulatory framework for public participation would encompass the following:

There is a clear regulatory framework that provides for the right of citizens to participate in parliamentary business. This may be contained in the country's constitution, laws, parliament's rules of procedure and other rules. The rules and procedures for public participation cover all aspects in which citizens and other actors of civil society might participate in parliamentary processes and activities. They are clear and designed in a way that encourages (rather than hinders) participation.

Parliament has an agreed strategy or planning document for implementing and further developing public participation, as well as developed policies and practices. The strategy or plan is regularly evaluated, including through the use of data from the monitoring of levels of public participation to draw lessons and further improve public participation, including through public consultations. Citizens receive feedback about their participation.

The regulatory framework for public participation provides for the protection of the privacy of citizens who engage with the parliament.

The parliament has clear rules and procedures to ensure the right to privacy of citizens. The rules and procedures are both effective in ensuring privacy while not impeding public engagement.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedures that regulate public participation and protection of citizens' privacy
- Laws that shape the civic space
- National, regional or international reports that rate the level of civic space openness
- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committee acts that relate to public participation and the protection of privacy
- Strategies or plans for the implementation or development of public participation
- Data on levels of public participation and any breaches of privacy

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework enabling an open civic space

There is evidence of an existing legal framework in the country, including laws, decrees or regulations, that enables and guarantees an overall civic space necessary for the functioning of civil society, including civil society actors, NGOs and other civic organizations, as a precondition for effective participation in all areas, not only parliamentary work. This legal framework includes laws and regulations on freedom of information, the registration and funding of civil society organizations, freedom of speech and expression.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework for public participation

There is evidence of constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions which establish the right of citizens to participate in parliamentary matters, and which also define the basic principles for such participation. The rules and procedures for public participation cover all aspects of citizen participation in parliamentary processes and activities, both online and on site. They are clear and are designed in a way that encourages (rather than hinders) participation, set out the instances and mechanisms through which citizens could contribute, and identify those responsible for administering the engagement processes.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Strategy or plan**

Parliament has an agreed strategy or planning document for the implementation and further development of public participation, as well as developed policies and practices, with time-bound implementation and measurable objectives.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Monitoring, evaluation and feedback**

The strategy or plan is regularly evaluated, with the involvement of civil society actors, and includes the use of data from the monitoring of levels of public participation to draw lessons and further improve public participation and consultation. Monitoring and evaluation include data on how citizen participation is reflected in the enacted laws or policies, such as the number of passed laws which received citizen contributions or which were the result of proposals made by citizens. Citizens receive feedback about their participation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Protection for citizens' privacy**

The regulatory framework for public participation provides for the protection of the privacy of citizens who engage with the parliament, and includes clear rules and procedures to ensure citizens' right to privacy.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					



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### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- David Beetham, [\*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice\*](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [\*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators\*](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [\*Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures\*](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Dimension 6.1.2 Mechanisms and tools for public participation

Indicator: 6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

In addition to establishing a sound regulatory framework for public participation and detailed associated rules and procedures, it is necessary for parliament to develop the practical mechanisms and tools to allow public participation to take place. These mechanisms and tools are the means by which the public can be helped to engage with the parliament.

The mechanisms need to provide ways to organize, coordinate and channel public inputs so that they can be taken into account in all aspects of parliamentary processes. The parliament, through the monitoring of public participation, and of the impact that public feedback has on the outputs of parliamentary work, can assess the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the mechanisms that it has put in place. If required, the parliament should be in a position to adjust the mechanisms to make them more effective.

In addition to comprehensive mechanisms for public participation, the parliament also needs practical tools to help the public to engage. These tools need to be user-friendly and be adapted to the needs of different groups within the community. They therefore should enable engagement with groups that may be less able to use the usual means to engage with parliament, such as disadvantaged groups, women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups. They need to cater to groups which may be geographically distant from the parliament or which lack good digital access. These tools can include easy-to-use templates, pro forma or guides on engagement in activities. They can also include tailored outreach approaches for engagement with remote or minority groups in a manner that differs from engagement with the general public. Parliament should monitor the use of its tools to assist the public with participation, and adapt and change them in response to the evaluation of their effectiveness.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of mechanisms and tools for public participation would encompass the following:

The rules, practices and policies of the legislature include a comprehensive set of mechanisms that organize, coordinate and channel public participation in all aspects of the parliament's processes and activities.

The legislature has easy-to-use tools to help the public to engage with the parliament. The tools take account of different groups within the community, including disadvantaged groups, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access. The tools include templates, pro forma and guides that relate to different aspects of the parliament's work.

The parliament has a systematic approach to monitoring the use of its mechanisms and tools for public participation and ensures that such information is available to the public.

The legislature uses the feedback received from the regular monitoring of public participation to evaluate and refine the mechanisms and tools to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

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## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions of the rules, practices and policies of the legislature that describe the mechanisms used to ensure public participation
- Specific tools that help the public to participate
- Statistics and other information from the monitoring of public participation
- Changes to the mechanisms and tools over time

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Mechanisms for public participation

There is evidence that the rules, practices and policies of the legislature contain a comprehensive set of mechanisms that organize, coordinate and channel public participation, both online and on site, in all aspects of the parliament's processes and activities. This includes ensuring that there is an organizational unit within the legislature, such as a citizen participation office, or staff members assigned tasks related to public participation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2 Tools for public participation

The legislature has easy-to-use tools to help the public to engage with the parliament, both online and on site. The tools take account of different groups within the community, including disadvantaged groups, women, youth, persons with disabilities, and groups from remote areas or with limited digital access.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Monitoring of public participation

The parliament has a systematic approach to monitoring the use of its mechanisms and tools for public participation, and ensures that such information is available on the parliamentary website.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Evaluation of mechanisms and tools**

The legislature uses the feedback received from the regular monitoring of public participation to evaluate and refine the mechanisms and tools to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (Switzerland: IPU, 2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#) (United Kingdom: CPA, rev. ed., 2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007).

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## Indicator 6.2 – Participation in parliamentary process

It is fundamental to the success of the democratic process for the legislature to be transparent, accessible and for it to engage the public represented by legislators. This entails the participation of the public in key aspects of the work of the parliament, and as has been stated by the Organization of American States: “It is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development. This is also a necessary condition for the full and effective exercise of democracy”.<sup>99</sup>

This indicator concerns the participation of citizens generally, and other specialist persons and groups (such as civil society actors, academia and experts), in the work of the legislature. The purpose of such participation is to influence the outcome of legislation, influence policy matters to be addressed by the legislature, have an impact on the legislature’s consideration of the budget, or contribute to parliamentary activities of oversight, such as the work of parliamentary bodies or committees.

New information and communication technologies have enabled the use of new tools for and means of public participation, which have proven effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliaments should assess if and how working online has favoured access to information and has increased the participation of different actors in the decision-making processes during the period, and take into account this information in their future work and engagement with the public.

The indicator recognizes that participation is an active process that provides a genuine opportunity to influence, and not only be consulted or informed about, parliamentary work. Such participation should be reflected in constitutional, legislative and rules of procedure provisions of the legislature, as well as in its accepted practices.

The assessment of the indicator on participation in parliamentary process comprises the following dimensions:

- 6.2.1 Citizens’ legislative initiative
- 6.2.2 Participation in parliamentary bodies
- 6.2.3 Public consultation on draft legislation
- 6.2.4 Public participation in the budget cycle
- 6.2.5 Public participation in parliamentary oversight
- 6.2.6 Expert consultation

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<sup>99</sup> National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (NDI, 2007), 68.

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## Dimension 6.2.1 Citizens' legislative initiative

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension focuses on the ability of citizens to directly participate in the legislative process of a parliament. Truly participatory legislatures should find ways in which their citizens can voice their legislative preferences in meaningful ways.

Citizen legislative initiatives can be defined as public participation methods that allow citizens to submit legislative proposals on a constitutional and/or legislative matter. Rules and regulations are usually in place which stipulate the requirements for an initiative to be considered valid (for example, a certain number of signatures or other process). In addition to initiating amendments to constitutions and changes in legislation, some initiatives may not necessarily lead to a change in law, but can be a mechanism for placing certain issues on the parliamentary agenda, for example for the initiation of a debate.

The representation of and participation by citizens go hand in hand, as members of parliament represent the people, and legislate in response to their needs, and in a dynamic and changing environment, space is provided for citizens to voice their concerns. Given the potential and often far-reaching impact of legislation, citizens' initiatives give the public the opportunity to set the agenda for parliaments. This means that citizens not only can contribute to the programme of parliament as determined by MPs, but are able to influence matters placed on the agenda which may not have been identified by members. The openness of the legislative process to citizen participation can build trust and strengthen legitimacy in the democratic system.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of citizens' legislative initiative would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional or other legal provision that allows for citizens' legislative initiatives, and a clear enabling legislative framework detailing the types of initiatives permitted, their scope and requirements. Thresholds for legitimizing initiatives are also stipulated in the rules and procedures. Legislative and administrative processes are established to provide a clear guide for citizens who wish to raise initiatives.

Where restrictions are placed on issues that can be identified for citizens' legislative initiatives, the restrictions are articulated in guidance detailing justifiable reasons for the restrictions on certain subjects, thus preventing the arbitrary exclusion of the public from matters of importance.

Mechanisms are in place to monitor and track the administrative and legislative process for citizens' legislative initiatives, including online tools for their submission. Citizens have direct access to information on the status of and decision-making about specific initiatives.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or other provision establishing the use of citizens’ legislative initiatives
- Rules and procedures detailing the process for citizens’ legislative initiatives
- Provisions stipulating the reasons for the exclusion/protection of specific subjects from citizens’ legislative initiatives, for example, a restriction on initiatives that impair the state’s ability to raise taxes can be supported by justifiable reasons
- Updated website information informing citizens of all citizens’ current and past legislative initiatives, and other reports and documents detailing the content and status of and decisions on citizens’ legislative initiatives

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or other provision**

There is a constitutional or other provision for a citizens’ legislative initiative that grant the authority to conduct citizens’ legislative initiatives.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislative framework**

There is a legislative framework, including rules of procedure that clearly outlines the legislative and administrative requirements, scope and processes for citizens’ legislative initiatives. The framework provides a clear guide for citizens to follow, and specifies the threshold for legitimizing initiatives, if one exists. The framework enables different means for the submission of initiatives, including online submission.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Clear criteria concerning justifiable reasons for subject restrictions**

Where there are restrictions to the areas/issues that can be subject to a citizens’ legislative initiative, these restrictions must be accompanied by clear criteria on justifiable reasons, and be communicated to the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No.4: Monitoring, evaluation and feedback**

There are open mechanisms in place for citizens to monitor the processing of citizens' legislative initiatives both in parliamentary programming as well as the administration. Parliament evaluates and keeps a record of the concrete impact and outcomes of the initiatives with regard to changes in laws and policies, and makes this record publicly available. Feedback is provided to those who submit an initiative.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**



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## Dimension 6.2.2 Participation in parliamentary bodies

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

The dimension on participation in parliamentary bodies focuses on the involvement of the public in the activities and/or processes of parliamentary committees as well as other bodies that parliaments might establish, such as bodies with civil society actors and similar.

In many parliaments, ordinary committees are likely to have established public participation processes. However, specialized bodies may differ in their composition and, as such, have varying political and administrative procedures that would result in different processes for public participation.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of participation in parliamentary bodies would encompass the following:

There are legal or rules of procedure provisions enabling participation in parliamentary bodies.

Whether through petitions, submissions or direct presentation, mechanisms for participation in such bodies are outlined in laws, rules and/or standing orders.

Information about activities of parliamentary bodies, together with the content of discussions, a list of decisions and feedback on previous participation efforts, are published publicly and widely.

Mechanisms exist to assess the level of public awareness of the means of participation in the activities and processes of parliamentary bodies.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions in the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure for participation in parliamentary bodies
- Evidence of mechanisms for participation in the form of guidelines and/or other documents detailing the means of participation
- Evidence of published information related to parliamentary bodies

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions

There are constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions for the public's participation in parliamentary bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Mechanisms for participation**

Laws, standing orders and rules support the obligation to facilitate public participation within parliamentary bodies, by providing details of the mechanisms for participation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Information on the activities of parliamentary bodies is published and communicated widely**

All information related to the activities of parliamentary bodies is published in advance, thus ensuring sufficient time for the interested public to prepare for participation. Information includes the programme, content and feedback on previous inputs, which is provided in an easy-to-use format.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Mechanisms for assessing citizen awareness**

Mechanisms are in place to assess the awareness levels of citizens regarding participation in the decision-making processes of parliamentary bodies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 6.2.3 Public consultation on draft legislation

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension covers consultation with citizens in the legislative process. While it is the role of MPs to represent the public in parliamentary processes, providing citizens with direct access to processes keeps the legislature abreast of key developments in different sectors and among different groups of people.

For this dimension, public consultation can be defined as the formal process through which parliament collects the views and opinions of citizens, whether in groups or as individuals, on a proposed or existing law or policy decision. As the representative body of the people, effective law-making requires parliament to proactively engage with citizens in order for MPs to have a deeper insight into the potential impact of legislation on citizens' lives. Meaningful consultation helps to identify potential unintended effects of legislation, and its absence can be costly. Inadequate consultation can result in an inaccurate assessment of the potential benefits or drawbacks of new legislation, which can lead to further costs in terms of amending the legislation and renewing public consultation efforts. Consultations can either be general or targeted at a specific audience and, therefore, the specific social groups affected by legislation, as well as the general public have an equal opportunity to participate in the law-making process.

Involving the public in the law-making process contributes to building trust in parliament, its representatives and the democratic system. In addition, when legislation is drafted collaboratively with the public, it can improve compliance with the law once it is implemented. Thus, truly effective public consultation can improve the rule of law.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public consultation on draft legislation would encompass the following:

Constitutional, legal or rules of procedure provisions are in place outlining the parliamentary obligation to adequately involve citizens in the legislative process.

A legislative or rules of procedure framework outlines the scope of consultation required in the legislative process.

There are established mechanisms and processes for consultation in place, including but not limited to public hearings, submissions and presentations by citizens.

Simple language is used in draft legislation, and copies are made available ahead of engagements, including all versions of the draft legislation. Enough time is allocated for adequate engagement, especially regarding complex topics.

Local languages are used to encourage consultation, and additional measures such as pre-consultation engagements are used to further broaden consultation.

Feedback is provided to citizens on their consultation within the legislative process.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A constitutional or other provision for public consultation on the drafting of legislation
- Legislation, rules or standing orders outlining the public consultation framework with regards to law-making
- A record of processes or mechanisms for participation, such as public hearing minutes
- Samples of plain language legislation, and digital copies of draft legislation at each stage of consultation
- Samples of draft legislation in different languages, and the time allocations/considerations for legislative consultations
- Minutes or reports of feedback sessions, or published updates

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or other provisions**

There is a constitutional or other provision that stipulates the role of public consultation in law-making.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislative or rules of procedure framework**

There is a legislative or rules of procedure framework that details the requirements for public consultation in the law-making process. There are clear standards for consultation, as well as criteria for what constitutes adequate consultation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Mechanisms and processes**

There are established mechanisms and processes to facilitate both general and targeted consultation on legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Accessibility**

Public engagements on legislation should be accessible to relevant stakeholders. Simple and plain language is used in the draft legislation, and drafts are made available in a timely manner at every stage of the drafting process to a wide range of stakeholders.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Inclusivity**

All stakeholders impacted by the draft legislation are consulted and involved in the consideration of legislation. Draft legislation is translated into local languages to facilitate the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders. The time and place for engagement is conducive to maximum consultation with relevant stakeholders, taking into account the complexity of legislation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Feedback**

Parliament provides feedback to citizens on decisions taken after public engagements.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 6.2.4 Public participation in the budget cycle

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension considers public participation within the budget cycle. A national budget represents citizen interests and priorities, which makes its oversight one of the most important and critical responsibilities of a parliament. While mechanisms for public engagement in the budget cycle are similar to public engagement in law-making, fiscal transparency is especially significant as the allocation of resources is a clear indication of government priorities.

It is not enough for there to be participation in the budget process. Access must be provided for and inputs sought from all groups, especially vulnerable and marginalized communities in society. How the budget is allocated has implications for agenda-setting, and ultimately, for outcomes and impacts. With scarce resources and ever-increasing and urgent social needs, direct participation by citizens helps to highlight to policy-makers the services that citizens value most, and can give insights into efforts to prioritize.

Ultimately, a more transparent budget cycle can cultivate buy-in with regard to government programmes, and can provide an avenue for novel insights required by MPs to better hold the executive accountable. Public involvement can also create better alignment between government priorities and the allocation of resources, thereby improving service delivery and instilling trust in parliament and other public institutions (note that the transparency of budgetary information in the passage of the budget through the legislature is covered in dimension 3.1.3).

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public participation in the budget cycle would encompass the following:

There is a constitutional or other provision for parliament's oversight of the budget, fiscal transparency, and the engagement of the public in the budget cycle.

A legislative framework supports the provisions facilitating fiscal transparency to assist with the engagement of the public in the budget process.

There are clear mechanisms and processes for participation in the budget process. These can be documented in guidance that outlines the ways in which citizens can participate in the budget process.

Processes for participation are accessible and inclusive, insofar as public engagements are announced ahead of time, enough time is allocated for deliberations, the time and place for deliberations is convenient to all relevant stakeholders, and the content and material used to inform citizens is written in simple language, and is in a language/s understood by locals.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A constitutional provision for participation
- Acts, rules or standing orders supporting public participation in the budget cycle
- A guide, model or other form of documentation detailing mechanisms and processes for participation
- Programmes, schedules, information pamphlets and other supporting documents

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: A constitutional or other provision**

There is a provision in the country’s constitution or another provision for the participation of citizens in the budget cycle, which is facilitated by a requirement for fiscal transparency.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Clear mechanisms and processes for participation**

Mechanisms and processes for participation, in the form of a model or guide, are in place. A particular emphasis should be placed on participation in parliamentary committees or other parliamentary bodies responsible for the oversight of the budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessible and inclusive processes**

Ways in which the public can participate in the budget process are announced well ahead of time, sufficient time is allocated for effective participation, the time and place for engagement are suitable for all sectors of the public, and local language is used to communicate about the budget.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 6.2.5 Public participation in parliamentary oversight

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension describes public participation in parliamentary oversight, which plays a vital role in holding the government accountable on behalf of citizens. Involving the public directly or indirectly in holding the executive to account can greatly enhance the quality of accountability. Oversight activities in the chamber(s), by committees and by constituencies can provide a platform to inform, consult and collaborate with the public.

Much of the public participation with parliament is likely to occur in the work of parliamentary committees as their processes lend themselves well to public involvement. Committee processes, such as the acceptance of submissions, the holding of public hearings, and the use of other consultation processes, such as public meetings and on-the-ground inspections, are tailored to encourage public participation. Parliaments should have robust procedures and well-developed processes to encourage public involvement and participation in all aspects of the work of their committees. There should be monitoring and evaluation of public participation in oversight, preferably with the inclusion of civil society actors, followed by the provision of feedback to the actors involved.

MPs should also develop approaches to the participation of their constituents in their work as parliamentarians. MPs should engage with, inform and consult their constituents or electorate on matters that are to be dealt with by the legislature, their work on committees, and debates on matters of significance and oversight responsibilities in relation to the executive.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public participation in parliamentary oversight would encompass the following:

Parliament has the legal authority to facilitate public participation in all aspects of its oversight function, with an indication of the scope for participation.

Statutes, rules or procedure and/or acts provide the framework for public participation in all aspects of parliamentary oversight by the legislature and its MPs.

Tools for public participation in oversight are in existence, including approaches such as citizen advisors, an ombudsperson, social contracts and integrity pacts. Particular attention is paid to the establishment of robust procedures and processes for the public to participate in the work of parliamentary committees.

There are mechanisms by which the public both receives and is able to provide feedback on the outcome of their participation.

Public participation processes and activities are published widely.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Legal provisions on parliament’s obligation to ensure public participation in oversight
- Legislation or rules of procedure on tools for involving the public in the full range of oversight activities
- Guidance documents detailing how the public can participate in parliamentary oversight processes such as the work of the legislature, committees and MPs
- Website information, pamphlets including distribution information or any other publication of the public’s involvement in oversight activities

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal mandate**

There is a legal provision establishing the obligation of parliament to facilitate public participation in the full range of oversight processes and activities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislative or other provisions**

There are statutes, rules of procedure or acts stipulating the establishment of tools for involving the public in all aspects of the parliamentary oversight function by the legislature and its MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Existence of tools for public participation in oversight**

Parliament has established tools for the public to participate in oversight. In particular, there are robust procedures and processes to encourage public involvement and participation in all aspects of the work of parliamentary committees. MPs also have developed tools for engaging with constituents.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Mechanisms for feedback**

There are mechanisms in place for requesting feedback from and providing feedback to the public on the adequacy and possible impact of their participation in the parliamentary oversight function. The use and effectiveness of these mechanisms are regularly evaluated, and the mechanisms are adapted accordingly to make them even more effective.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Accessibility, availability and inclusivity**

Information on available mechanisms and on public participation in oversight processes and activities is published widely by the legislature. Reference material that allows a citizen to know how to exercise influence over parliamentary oversight is also made available by parliaments.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 6.2.6 Expert consultation

Indicator: 6.2 Participation in parliamentary process

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension addresses parliamentary capacity and performance in consulting experts in decision-making processes. Effective consultation that contributes to better laws and public policies requires legal authority, clear and transparent procedures for gathering and processing expert input, and well-defined mechanisms for taking into account this input and for tracking its impact.

For the purpose of this dimension, the impact of expert involvement might include, for example, amendments to a law as a result of the expertise provided, a better understanding of a specific issue by MPs resulting in more informed decision-making or more informed deliberation of a law or policy.

The dimension on expert consultation considers both parliament as a whole and parliamentary committees. Committees may be expected to draw more on the use of experts. The expert community, in this case, refers to individual experts, professional associations, academia, experts from businesses and other organizations. The types of expert consultation may include various types of involvement, such as:

- Participation in committee meetings
- Consultations and debates on specific issues
- Making submissions
- Hiring experts to provide research papers, recommendations or other expertise on specific subjects
- Inviting experts to provide information and views to parliament

The dimension assesses the legal power, procedures and practices in a parliament related to expert consultation.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of expert consultation would encompass the following:

Parliament and its committees have the legal authority and sufficient resources to consult and/or employ experts.

Clear, transparent and user-friendly procedures for various forms of expert consultation are in place.

Expert input on draft legislation and on public policies is systematically sought and received through different means and from a broad range of experts.

Expert inputs are systematically collected, processed, considered and taken into account.

Records are kept of expert involvement and its impact.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific rules or procedures that provide for the involvement of experts in parliamentary business
- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committees' provisions that set out the specific issues on which expert consultations can be held
- Parliamentary records with data on expert involvement (such as the number of experts and the number of and data on expert organizations)
- Excerpts from parliamentary and committees' reports containing information based on expert consultation and its impact

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal power

Parliament has the legal power to consult with and/or to employ experts to obtain expert support, opinion or information on relevant issues in parliamentary work. This authority is also delegated to committees and, if applicable, to the parliamentary administration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Financial resources

Parliament has sufficient resources, allocated in the budget, to hire experts when needed. Appropriate parliamentary provisions define financial terms for hiring experts in a clear and consistent manner.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Procedures

Clear, transparent and user-friendly procedures for various forms of expert consultation are in place. The requirements for an expert to be hired are strictly defined (for example, in terms of expertise, experience, involvement in projects and publications), as well as the types of consultation. A process for the selection of experts, and expected deliverables, are clearly specified and transparent.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Implementation in practice**

Expert input on draft legislation and public policies is systematically sought and received through different means and from a broad range of experts. Expert inputs are systematically collected, processed, considered and taken into account.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Transparency**

All parliamentary rules and regulations related to the hiring of experts, information on the process of their selection and their work, as well as expert inputs and the records kept, are available to the public. This includes detailed data on the fees paid to experts.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Indicator 6.3 – Other forms of public engagement

Participatory parliaments are the essential component of the democratic system and are key to improving trust in legislative institutions. Citizens often do not have the opportunity and means to take part in the decision-making process directly. Civil society actors enable different groups of the public to organize, pool their resources, and support participatory parliamentary processes on specific issues of interest or critical importance, while civic education contributes to increasing public understanding of parliament's role, as well as the notion of the separation of powers and democratic system in general.

The legislature is responsible for making itself accessible to civil society and for educating citizens about the role and mandate of the parliament. Giving civil society a more direct role in the setting of policy agendas and the shaping of decisions that affect them strengthens the legitimacy of such decisions and results in better policy outcomes.

Parliaments are responsible for creating an environment that allows civil society to make its voice heard. Along with other forms of public engagement, consultations with civil society actors and civic education represent important components of the participatory approach of parliaments. The enhanced participation of citizens in the decision-making process requires the public to be aware of the basics of parliamentary process, namely when parliamentary processes take place and how citizens can participate.

The assessment of the indicator on other forms of public engagement comprises the following dimensions:

- 6.3.1 Partnerships for participation – consultation with civil society organizations
- 6.3.2 Civic education



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## Dimension 6.3.1 Partnerships for participation – consultation with civil society organizations

Indicator: 6.3 Other forms of public engagement

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

The dimension focuses on partnerships for participation and in particular, consultations with civil society organizations. Civil society organizations and groups represent an opportunity for citizens to organize, pool their resources, and support participatory parliamentary processes on specific issues of interest or critical importance.

For the purposes of this indicator, civil society organizations refer to organizations that work in the arena between the household, the private sector and the state, with the intention of negotiating or bringing to the attention of parliamentarians matters of public concern.<sup>100</sup> They can include, but are not limited to, NGOs, private sector organizations, academia, and think-tanks.

The united participation of organized civil society groups in parliamentary processes brings additional expertise and views of citizens to the discussion, and has the potential to amplify the voices of the most vulnerable in society, and thus should be encouraged in a thriving democracy. Specific support should be made available to engage civil society groups, as they can provide parliaments with access to communities that would otherwise remain disengaged from the political system. Strengthening civil society actor engagement with parliament can contribute to more informed policy-making and wider agreement across party lines on laws and policies initiated by national legislatures, and, more broadly, to democracy.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of partnerships for participation – consultation with CSOs would encompass the following:

A legislative framework that enables consultations with civil society organizations and groups, as part of the public participation process, is in place. Rules of procedure, standing orders and laws define the parameters within which civil society actors can request information, propose initiatives and make submissions on matters that are already on the agenda.

Remedies for redress where the legal obligation of consultation are not met, are stipulated within the legislative framework.

Information related to parliamentary processes is published in a timely manner and in the local language, to facilitate accessibility and inclusiveness.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

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<sup>100</sup> Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TASCO), [CSOs and Citizens' Participation](#) (TASCO, July 2011).

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The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions in the constitution stipulating the involvement of civil society actors
- Legislation, rules or standing orders to support consultation with civil society actors
- Clauses specifically focused on remedies or redress where participation obligations are not met
- Evidence of published information on parliamentary processes

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and report) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework

The legislative framework enables the routine consultation of civil society organizations and stipulates the parameters of that participation, including the manner in which information is requested and inputs are provided.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Broad consultation

Parliament, including its bodies and MPs, systematically consults with civil society groups when facilitating public participation, for different perspectives to be represented adequately. Civil society actor representatives can access parliamentary premises and attend relevant meetings. Parliament creates tools for engaging in consultation processes with civil society actors both in person and electronically.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessible information

All information including the programme of parliament, logistical information in relation to parliamentary processes, as well as the content of these processes, must be made available and accessible to all civil society actors, both in physical and digital format.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 6.3.2 Civic education

Indicator: 6.3 Other forms of public engagement

Sub-target: 6. Participatory parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

The dimension on civic education focuses on the parliamentary efforts aimed at increasing public understanding of parliament's role, as well as the notion of the separation of powers, and at strengthening democracy. In order to maximize participation, the public should not just know where and when parliamentary processes take place, but also how they can participate and influence decision-making. These efforts aim to ensure an active citizenry, which can be defined as citizens who are tolerant of diverse views, and who strive to build and contribute to a democratic society for the public good. Civic education programmes must be non-partisan and promote the basic principles of democracy.

Civic education can take many forms, including direct interaction by MPs with citizens through their constituencies, or opportunities for the public to engage or visit parliament and its offices. Civic education can also target different groups in society. While the aim of civic education is to encourage broad participation, it is also important to place a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups to ensure that those with the least resources and access to decision-making processes are not left out. Vulnerable or marginalized groups may not have ready access to information on parliamentary processes. Such groups can include, but are not limited to, women, children, rural communities and the unemployed. Civic education programmes can be stand-alone programmes designed for different groups in society, or can be integrated into the broader education system within both school and post-school curricula.

Parliaments may develop general civic education plans for active citizenship, and create, manage and promote courses, policies and manuals on civic education. Education programmes for children and youth should be adapted to target different age groups, from pre-schoolers to university students.

The role of civic education in enhancing public participation is indeed far-reaching. The right to participate in democracies is bestowed on all citizens of a country, and civic education empowers all citizens to engage with public representatives in meaningful ways.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of civic education would encompass the following:

Civic education programmes are custom designed to empower a broad range of stakeholders, with the intention of improving the breadth and depth of public understanding about and participation of society in the work of the legislature.

Parliament has established infrastructure, policies and manuals for civic education. Programmes are provided nationwide with a particular focus on youth and marginalized groups.

Civic education programmes are free from partisanship, and focus on promoting democratic principles.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Infrastructure, policies and manuals for providing nationwide civic education, with a particular focus on children and youth
- Policies, models or other documents outlining the process for engaging vulnerable communities and groups of people in civic education. Lists of organizations, communities, groupings and/or platforms engaged with during outreach
- Civic education courses promoted by the parliament
- The number of individuals taking part in parliamentary civic education programmes per year

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Civic education infrastructure and established practice**

Parliament has developed infrastructure, policies and manuals for providing nationwide civic education for all groups of society, with a particular focus on children and youth. Different courses intended for an active citizenry, as well as civic education policies and manuals, are developed, managed and promoted by parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Civic education of especially vulnerable groups**

Clear policies, procedures and mechanisms are in place to ensure that civic education programmes reach the most vulnerable in society.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Non-partisanship**

Civic education programmes are non-partisan and promote the basic principles of democracy.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## 7 – Representative parliament

Representative parliament is one that:

- Reflects, to the extent possible, the diversity of society and political affiliation in its composition
- Ensures representation for all population groups through free and fair elections
- Reflects in its composition all population groups, particularly women, youth, and geographical and minority groups

This sub-target on representative parliament is the fourth element of Sustainable Development Goal target 16.7 – Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament.

Democratic parliaments need to be representative in the broadest sense of the notion. As parliament is a representative body, its composition should reflect the party/political situation within the country, geographical diversity through the inclusion of all regions and electoral districts, and an accurate representation of society as a whole, with due regard to population characteristics such as gender, age, disability, religion, language and ethnicity. The representative nature of the parliament is determined by multiple factors, including the legal framework on elections, electoral system, election regulations and administration, and parliamentary practices for the inclusion of the different societal groups in its work.

Free and fair elections ensure that the elected members of parliament reflect the choices of the public. The rights to vote and stand for elections, campaigning rules and the responsibilities assigned to public authorities are complex matters that are addressed in different ways across countries. However, there are common basic standards that provide for equal and fair opportunities to run for political office and succeed. The first indicator addresses the overall legal framework for elections established by the parliament, which serves as a basis for free and fair elections.

The second indicator concerns the representative nature of the legislature's composition, with a primary focus on the representation of the diversity of political opinion, as well as women, youth and other population groups such as minorities and indigenous peoples. A parliament that does not adequately represent its society will leave some social groups and communities feeling disadvantaged or completely excluded from the political process. This in turn, is likely to impact the stability and legitimacy of the political system and the quality of public life in general.

The third indicator concerns the representative nature of the parliamentary bodies, including in the leadership or in other structures such as committees. When assessing the representative nature of the composition of parliamentary bodies, different aspects should be taken into account, including a political balance between the government and the opposition parties, the rules and practice of selecting committee chairs and members and the percentage of women, young MPs and contextually relevant population groups in the parliamentary leadership.

The sub-target on representative parliament comprises the following indicators:

- 7.1 Electoral integrity
- 7.2 Composition of legislature
- 7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies

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## Indicator 7.1 – Electoral integrity

The role of parliament is central to ensuring that elections are free and fair, which constitutes the cornerstone for any democratic society. Elections should reflect the will of the voters, be transparent and inclusive, and provide voters, candidates and political parties with equal opportunities for participation, a level playing field and a safe environment.

This indicator covers the right to vote and the right to be elected, as well as the institutional mechanisms necessary to ensure these rights.

In order to maintain the credibility of the electoral process, it is necessary for electoral legislation to be stable and for the right and opportunity to participate in public affairs, vote and be elected to be safeguarded. This encompasses universal and equal suffrage, as well as opportunities for every eligible person to register as a voter and to cast a secret ballot without fear or interference. Democratic elections require people to be presented with a real choice in the elections. The right of every citizen to freely compete in elections as an independent candidate or as a member of a political party must be ensured in law and in practice.

Elections are administered by an independent electoral management body (EMB) that operates in a transparent, impartial, open and accountable manner. The EMB observes its duty of neutrality in the electoral process and enjoys independence in decision-making. Its role in conducting the electoral process is respected by the community.

The assessment of the indicator on electoral integrity comprises the following dimensions:

- 7.1.1 Voting and election rights
- 7.1.2 Candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities
- 7.1.3 Public authorities' roles in elections



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## Dimension 7.1.1 Voting and election rights

Indicator: 7.1 Electoral integrity

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines provisions by which the constitution and national legislation of a country establish an adequate basis for democratic elections. While the constitution contains fundamental electoral principles such as the election system, universal suffrage, periodicity of elections and voter secrecy, electoral legislation includes issues related to election management (composition of administration, boundary delimitation) and other procedural matters.

The stability of electoral legislation is crucial to the credibility of the election process. The recommendation based on the best international practice is for the legislation to be amended at least one year ahead of the subsequent elections,<sup>101</sup> to provide participants in the process (such as candidates, parties and voters) with adequate time to become familiar with and adapt to the electoral rules. Revising the legal framework should be an open and inclusive process, and provide an opportunity for public debate and consultation with stakeholders.

States guarantee constitutional recognition of universal suffrage (the right to vote and to be elected) and equal suffrage (equal voting rights and power) in a non-discriminatory manner. These rights are often subject to reasonable qualifications such as age, citizenship and residency requirements. The countries may also adopt diverse approaches to the limitation of voting rights, which need to be clearly listed and defined in electoral legislation.

Equality of access to registration and voting for all eligible persons, including women, ethnic minorities, citizens with disabilities and language minorities, is guaranteed. In order to ensure the exercise of the voting right of all societal groups, states provide, *inter alia*, accessible voting facilities, adapted polling stations for disabled people, and electoral materials that are translated into all national minority languages.

Enforcement of electoral rights requires the availability of effective remedies in the national legislation. Citizens, political parties and other civil society groups are provided with the opportunity to appeal to a competent and independent election management body and/or court when a violation of electoral rights has allegedly occurred.<sup>102</sup> To ensure the protection of voting rights, the law defines strict deadlines for the review of complaints, and mandates the election management body and courts to provide prompt decisions.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of voting and election rights would encompass the following:

Voting and election rights are protected by the constitution and national legislation. The parliamentary practice guarantees the stability of electoral law(s) and ensures that all significant changes take place well in advance of any subsequent election, in line with international standards.

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<sup>101</sup> European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), '[Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#)', (Venice: Venice Commission, 2002), 24.

<sup>102</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), '[International Electoral Standards Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections](#)' (Sweden: International IDEA, 2002).

Every citizen enjoys the protection of universal and equal suffrage, equal access to voting in periodic elections and fundamental human rights that are especially relevant during elections, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of movement, peaceful assembly and association, and access to information. The electoral system allows voters to cast their vote individually and the secrecy of the ballot is ensured. Any limitations on these rights are clearly prescribed in the law in accordance with objectively verifiable criteria, in a non-discriminatory way, and are consistent with international obligations.

The legal framework provides for effective mechanisms and remedies for violations of the right to vote and to be elected. Citizens, political parties and other civil society organizations may appeal before the EMB or the courts. The detailed procedures are defined in the law(s).

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution that define the periodicity of elections, voter secrecy and the election system
- Specific articles of the constitution that guarantee the universal and equal suffrage of every citizen of a certain age
- Established practice that demonstrates that the changes to the electoral law(s) take place at least one year in advance of subsequent elections
- Adapted facilities for disadvantaged groups (such as adapted polling stations and electoral material translated into minority languages)
- Specific articles of the constitution that uphold fundamental human rights
- Specific articles of electoral legislation
- Detailed legal provisions that ensure effective mechanisms and remedies for violations of voting rights
- Other rules that regulate electoral matters

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

Constitutional and/or legislative provisions clearly define the main elements of elections, including the electoral system, periodicity of elections and voter secrecy. Legislative provisions are clear, consistent and unambiguous.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Stability of electoral law(s)

There is an established practice demonstrating that amendments to the main provisions of the electoral law(s) take place at least one year ahead of subsequent elections. Changes to the electoral legislation are conducted in an open and inclusive way, and public debate and consultations with stakeholders are ensured.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Universal suffrage**

There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions that guarantee the right of universal and equal suffrage for all citizens who have reached the age of legal majority. Limitations or restrictions on the right of suffrage are clearly set out in the national legislation. Universal suffrage is exercised in a non-discriminatory manner and criteria such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, do not result in any restrictions.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Access to voting**

There is evidence of legislation ensuring that all eligible voters have access to registration and are provided with, *inter alia*, accessible voting facilities, adapted polling stations for disabled persons, and electoral materials that are translated into all national minority languages.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Protection of fundamental human rights related to participation in elections**

There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions that uphold the rule of law and guarantee respect for human rights with regard to the electoral process. This includes freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of movement, equal protection and accountability before the law, the right to security and freedom from all forms of violence, including violence against women in elections, and the right to ballot secrecy.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 6: Rights to remedy

Detailed legal provisions ensure effective mechanisms and remedies for the enforcement of electoral rights. Citizens, political parties and civil society groups are entitled to appeal before the competent election management body and/or court, and request prompt consideration of the case.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#), CDL-AD(2002)023rev2-cor (Venice: Venice Commission, 2002).
- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2006).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2010).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [Electoral Management Design: Revised Edition](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Electoral Standards Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2002).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Obligations for Elections: Guidelines for Legal Frameworks](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
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- International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Stockholm University, [Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2013).

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- IPU, '[Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections](#),' adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (Paris: IPU, 1994).
  - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), '[International Standards and Commitments on the Right to Democratic Elections: A Practical Guide to Democratic Elections: Best Practice](#)', ODIHR.GAL/44/02/Rev.1 (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2002).
  - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), '[Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections](#)' (New York and Geneva: UN, 1994).

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## Dimension 7.1.2 Candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities

Indicator: 7.1 Electoral integrity

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension refers to the provisions under which the legal framework of a country guarantees the right of every citizen, whether individually or through a political party, to stand for elections and to conduct a campaign on an equitable basis.

States should guarantee the right of individuals and societal groups to establish political parties, subject to reasonable exceptions clearly stated by law. Once registered, the parties must have an equal opportunity to gain access to the ballot. The same protection should be provided for an eligible citizen to run as an independent candidate.

Granting ballot access to a political party or an independent candidate may be subject to some requirements such as: having a monetary deposit that is refundable if a candidate/party wins or gains a certain percentage of votes; collecting a specific number of validated signatures of registered voters and; winning a seat or achieving a minimum threshold of votes in the previous elections. All the procedures related to the practical implementation of these requirements must be clearly defined in the law and not be such as to unduly restrict possible participation in the electoral process.

National legislation may provide some specific provisions to promote the inclusion of under-represented groups, such as women and national and/or ethnic minorities in elected institutions. Such legislative provisions may refer to the implementation of quotas for under-represented groups in candidate lists, reserved seats, or may encourage the establishment of an internal party quota system for candidate selection.<sup>103</sup>

In order to genuinely reflect the will of citizens in the representative government, all campaigning parties and candidates must enjoy freedom of expression and association, have an equal opportunity to reach out to voters at large, and to disseminate their messages, policies and programmes without fear. Access to the media and “equitable treatment in media owned or controlled by the state” must be guaranteed by the law.<sup>104</sup>

Access to campaign financing is another right that should be protected by national legislation. It is essential that when public funding is provided, it is clearly regulated and the principle of equal opportunities is applied. Some states require public funding to political parties to be directed to women candidates' campaigns. States allowing private contributions to the election campaign must ensure a level playing field for contestants with regard to the raising of private funds. Reasonable caps on campaign contributions/spending and a transparent system of disclosure of assets and expenditure should be detailed in the national legislation.

The national legislative framework should provide for the right to appeal regarding alleged violations of political and electoral rights that take place prior to, during and after elections, to a competent and independent election management body and/or court. While time limits for lodging appeals must be short, they should be long enough to make an appeal possible. The time for making decisions should be equally brief to allow the effective restoration of electoral rights.

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<sup>103</sup> See Indicator 7.2 Composition of legislature.

<sup>104</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Electoral Standards Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2002), 62.

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities would encompass the following:

The legal framework ensures that everyone has the right to stand for elections in the country on an equal footing with other candidates, including the right to join or, together with others, register a political party or organization to compete in elections. Whenever restrictions limit these rights, they are objective, non-discriminatory and consistent with international obligations, and are clearly stated in the legislation.

The legal framework ensures that candidates have the right and the opportunity to freely express their opinions to the electorate, and to campaign on an equal basis with other candidates and political parties. This includes the regulation of access to private or publicly-owned media.

Political funding is regulated and a policy of financial transparency is established with regard to election campaign funding. Where public funding is provided, it is clearly regulated and the principle of equality of opportunity applies. States allowing private contributions to the election campaign ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all candidates to raise private funds.

Legislative or other regulatory measures enable the mutual respect of rights and freedoms among candidates and political parties standing for elections, and the commitment to not engage in violence or improper interference in the campaigns of others.

Every elector, candidate and political party is protected by the law and has a right to a remedy by an independent and impartial authority for acts violating political and electoral rights. Where an individual or a political party has had their election rights obstructed or unduly restricted, they have the right to appeal to a competent authority and to have a prompt and effective remedy.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution ensuring the right of citizens to stand for elections as a candidate or/and as a member of a political party
- Specific articles of the electoral law defining all the criteria for participation in the elections
- Other rules that regulate electoral matters
- Rules that regulate political funding
- Rules that regulate the electoral dispute resolution system
- Reports and media coverage that show actual practice

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Right and opportunity to stand for elections

There are legal provisions that guarantee the right of an eligible citizen to stand for elections as an individual candidate or by joining/establishing a political party in order to compete in elections. All the restrictions for participation in the elections are defined in the law and they are not discriminatory towards minorities, people with disabilities or based on religion, sex, ethnicity or race.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Equal opportunity and freedom of expression**

There are legal provisions and evidence of practice where candidates and political parties stand for elections campaign on an equal basis, including with the party that forms the existing government. This includes the freedom to reach out to voters and express political views, freedom of movement within a country to campaign for election, and access to private and publicly-owned media.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Transparent political funding**

There are legal provisions that clearly regulate the rules on the funding of candidates, political parties and electoral campaigns. Political funding is transparent and a process to monitor the financial status of candidates and political parties before and after their term in office is in place. Candidates and political parties have access to a level playing field for the raising of campaign funding, and the process is subject to supervision.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Right to security and responsibilities of the candidates**

There are legal provisions that ensure the security of the lives and property of candidates, and provide for sanctions when these provisions are violated. These also refer to the potential engagement of candidates and political parties in violence or improper interference in the campaigns of other candidates/political parties.



Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 5: Right to appeal

There are legal provisions that guarantee the right to appeal and to remedy for violations of human rights and electoral regulations. The appeal procedure, as well as the powers and responsibilities of the bodies involved, are clearly regulated. The time limits for lodging and deciding the appeals are reasonably short to effectively remedy the breaches of electoral rights in a timely way.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), '[Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#)', CDL-AD(2002)023rev2-cor (Venice: Venice Commission, 2002).
- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2006).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2010).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Obligations for Elections: Guidelines for Legal Frameworks](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Electoral Standards Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2002).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), '[Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections](#)', adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (Paris: IPU, 1994).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), '[International Standards and Commitments on the Right to Democratic Elections](#):'

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*[A Practical Guide to Democratic Elections: Best Practice](#)*, ODIHR.GAL/44/02/Rev.1 (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2002).

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *[Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections](#)* (New York and Geneva: UN, 1994).

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## Dimension 7.1.3 Public authorities' roles in elections

Indicator: 7.1 Electoral integrity

Sub-target: 7. Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions under which the legal framework of a country guarantees the rights of all eligible citizens to universal, equal, free and secret suffrage through the impartial, transparent and independent administration of elections by public authorities.

National legislation requires voter registration to be a simple, permanent and fully transparent process. Responsible public authorities ensure the completeness and accuracy of the electoral register, and allow electoral participants and voters to request changes and additions to the register which should be a systematically updated and publicly available document. The right to register as a voter may be subject to some requirements, such as age, nationality or residency. All the requirements should be clearly defined and not be subject to arbitrary decision or change.

Public authorities should observe their duty to remain neutral in the electoral process and guarantee the freedom of voters to form an opinion. Legislation obliges state institutions to “honour their duty of even-handedness, particularly where the use of mass media, billposting, the rights to demonstrate on public thoroughfares and the funding of parties and candidates are concerned”.<sup>105</sup>

Ballot secrecy is crucial for ensuring free suffrage and for protecting voters from threats or interference that they might face during voting, whether this comes from the authorities or individuals. Ballot secrecy should be ensured and respected by public authorities, and applied to the entire electoral process, especially during the casting and counting of votes.

Proper administration of elections requires the election management body to be impartial and independent from political influence. While in some countries national and local government institutions are trusted to handle the electoral process, other countries establish an independent elections management body (EMB). The composition of the EMB, the procedures for the appointment and removal of EMB officials, their duties and responsibilities, and the guarantee for the election process to be conducted in an independent and impartial manner should be defined and protected by the law.

To increase the transparency and credibility of elections, many countries provide for the presence of observers, both domestic and international, in addition to the representatives of political parties, candidates and the media. Clear criteria, procedures and time-frames for election accreditation should be defined by the law.

Effective mechanisms and remedies for the enforcement of electoral rights must be guaranteed by national legislation. Citizens should be able to challenge the failure to comply with the electoral law before competent and independent authorities. The law should establish strict deadlines for reviewing complaints and mandating EMB, and for the courts to deliver prompt decisions.

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<sup>105</sup> European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), ‘[Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#)’, CDL-AD(2002)023rev2-cor (Venice: Venice Commission, 2002), 18.

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Please see also dimension 7.2.1 on representing diversity of political opinion, and the sources for further reading.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of public authorities' roles in elections would encompass the following:

Public authorities maintain a register of voters and ensure the registration and updating of details of voters in a fully transparent manner. The register is a permanent, public and accurate document, and an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory procedure for the registration of voters is guaranteed.

Public authorities ensure that the population is aware of electoral procedures and that the electorate has access to the lists and information on candidates standing for election.

Public authorities observe their duty to remain neutral in the electoral process and guarantee the freedom of voters to form an opinion.

The electorate is protected from threats or constraints that hinder its right to freely cast its votes, regardless of whether the interference derives from the actions of the authorities or other individuals. Ballot secrecy is ensured and respected by public authorities and applied to the entire electoral process, especially during the casting and counting of votes.

To increase the transparency and credibility of elections, national legislation provides for the presence of observers during the entire electoral process, from the pre-election period through to the delivery of final results.

There is an electoral management body in charge of administering and ensuring the proper conduct of the electoral process. The electoral management body operates on the basis of clearly defined rules, enjoys independence of decision-making and action, carries out its tasks impartially and transparently, and enjoys the trust and respect of the community.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the law on the maintenance of the electoral register
- Specific articles of the electoral law mandating the public authorities to provide civic education and information programmes about the electoral procedure
- Specific articles of the electoral law on ballot secrecy
- Specific articles of the electoral law allowing for the presence of observers
- Legal authority and rules of the electoral management body
- Documents produced by election observers
- Reports and media that show actual practice

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

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**Assessment criterion No. 1: Electoral register**

National legislation provides for a permanent and public electoral register that is regularly updated. The criteria for voter registration (such as age, nationality and residency) are clearly defined and applied without discrimination of any kind. A procedure for making changes and additions is in place.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Equal access to information on the electoral process and candidates**

There are legal provisions for ensuring non-discrimination in the process of voter education and candidate presentation, such as by making the information available in the languages of national minorities. There are national programmes for civic education and publicity about the electoral process

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Guarantee of the freedom of voters to form an opinion**

There are legal provisions ensuring the neutrality of public authorities in the electoral process. They provide equal opportunities for parties and candidates, and ensure the uniform application of the law to all. This includes the conditions for the use of media (especially publicly-owned media), billposting, the right to demonstrate on public thoroughfares, and access to public funding for parties and candidates.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Guarantee of secret suffrage and the freedom of voters to express their opinion**

Public authorities are mandated to implement measures to ensure that ballot secrecy is respected during the whole electoral process, so that no voter can be identified when the votes are counted. There are legal provisions

that prevent and sanction the violation of ballot secrecy and/or other practices intended to control the vote of a third person, including those carried out by the authorities or other individuals with the aim of preventing voters from freely casting their vote.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Election observation and democratic practices**

There is evidence of legal provisions that ensure the integrity and transparency of the entire electoral process, including sanctions for electoral fraud. There is also evidence that those responsible for managing the electoral process are trained and act impartially, and that the presence of observers (national or international), party agents, candidates' representatives and the media is allowed throughout the entire electoral process, including during voting and counting.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Organization of elections by an impartial body**

Legal provisions mandate an electoral management body to administer the core aspects of the electoral process. They require the electoral management body to have clear and publicly available rules and procedures to ensure an inclusive and qualified composition and leadership, transparency of its actions, and effective communication with the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Right to remedy**

There are detailed legal provisions that ensure effective mechanisms and remedies for the enforcement of electoral rights. Every citizen and electoral participant (political party, candidate, party agents, candidates' representatives, local observers and the media) is entitled to appeal to the competent election management body and/or court, and request prompt consideration of the case.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Recommendations for change

### Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#), CDL-AD(2002)023rev2-cor (Venice: Venice Commission, 2002).
- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition](#) (Geneva: IPU, 2006).
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- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [Electoral Management Design: Revised Edition](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Obligations for Elections: Guidelines for Legal Frameworks](#) (Sweden: International IDEA, 2014).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), '[Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections](#)', adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (Paris: IPU, 1994).
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- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections](#) (New York and Geneva: UN, 1994).

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## Indicator 7.2 – Composition of legislature

A democratic parliament has the ability to reflect diversity not only in terms of political preferences, but also with regard to the different groups and segments of society. Democratic parliaments should represent the political will of voters as expressed in the elections, and the proportion of votes cast must be transformed into seats distributed in the legislature. Parliaments need to reflect the social diversity of the population in terms of gender, language, religion, ethnicity, or other significant characteristics. A parliament that is unrepresentative of its society will leave some social groups and communities feeling disadvantaged in the political process or even excluded from it altogether, with consequences in terms of the quality of public life or the stability of the political system and society in general.<sup>106</sup>

The representative nature of the parliament is determined by multiple factors, including the election system, regulations and administration, as well as existing parliamentary practices for the inclusion of different social groups in its work. Free and fair parliamentary proceedings, non-partisan delimitation of election districts, reasonable election thresholds, clarity of party registration rules and accessibility of election information are factors that contribute to the overall diversity of political opinion in the national legislature. Democratic parliaments are also responsible for promoting the representation of women, youth, minority or other disadvantaged groups or communities in the composition of parliament, by introducing temporary special measures if needed.

The assessment of the indicator on the composition of legislature comprises the following dimensions:

- 7.2.1 Representing diversity of political opinion
- 7.2.2 Gender
- 7.2.3 Youth
- 7.2.4 Other under-represented groups

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<sup>106</sup> David Beetham, *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice* (IPU, 2006).



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## Dimension 7.2.1 Representing diversity of political opinion

Indicator: 7.2 Composition of legislature

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the legal framework ensures the diversity of political opinions in national parliaments. The electoral system, the delimitation of electoral district boundaries and the procedures for registering political parties and independent candidates, as well as the powers attributed to different political groups and independent members in parliament determine the diversity of political opinion in the legislative process (indicator 7.1 Free and fair elections (electoral law) covers different aspects of representative parliaments, as well as other dimensions that address the powers of elected parties and members).

The electoral system (the rules defining the way votes are cast and counted) is fundamental in reflecting the overall preferences of voters in the allocation of parliamentary seats, and in ensuring proper representation.

The delimitation/redistricting of electoral district boundaries has a profound effect on the composition of the parliament. While delimitation/redistricting practices vary across countries, some universal principles are generally guaranteed in national laws. For example, the populations of constituencies are as equal as possible, and electoral district boundaries are drawn in a non-partisan manner and are not aimed at achieving a particular political outcome. The electoral boundary delimitation must avoid discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, or related status which could affect the composition of the legislative body. The delimitation of electoral districts has to be an inclusive and transparent process that is based on consultations of the political spectrum and other stakeholders.

National legislation must also guarantee clear and transparent procedures for registering political parties. Fairness of the registration process ensures equal treatment for all candidates and parties. Reasonable and transparent eligibility criteria, uniform procedures and feasible deadlines are also important for avoiding arbitrary decisions and ensuring the predictability and fairness of the process. Ambiguous and unduly restrictive procedures that could prevent political stakeholders from participating should be avoided.

Countries that have proportional electoral systems should establish a reasonable electoral threshold to ensure diverse political representation in the parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of representing diversity of political opinion would encompass the following:

The constitutional framework establishes an electoral system that ensures that the votes cast in elections are fairly translated into the seats won by the political parties and candidates, thus facilitating broad representation of political stakeholders in the parliament.

The guiding procedures for the delimitation of electoral boundaries are clearly defined in the national legislation. The practice of boundary delimitation excludes manipulations and discrimination against voters on grounds of race, colour, language, ethnicity, religion, or related status. Electoral boundaries are drawn in

a manner that enables electoral districts to grant voters an equally weighted vote in the election of representatives.

The national legislation defines clear and transparent procedures for registering political parties and candidates for the elections. The law sets out reasonable eligibility criteria, consistent procedures and feasible deadlines.

The legal framework maintains a reasonable electoral threshold for political stakeholders to gain seats in the parliament, thus facilitating diverse political representation in the legislative institution.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution establishing an electoral system that allows different political opinions to be represented in parliament
- Specific articles of national legislation on the delimitation/redistricting of boundaries of electoral districts
- Specific articles of election law on party/candidate registration
- Specific articles of constitution or laws on election thresholds
- ODIHR election observation reports

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the electoral system

The constitutional and legal framework establishing the electoral system ensures the diversity of political opinions in national parliament. The votes cast in elections are fairly translated into the seats won by the political parties and candidates, thus securing a broad representation of political actors in the parliament.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the delimitation/redistricting of electoral districts

The delimitation/redistricting of electoral districts is regulated by legislation, and arbitrary decisions are excluded. Boundary delimitation is an open, transparent and non-partisan process. In counties with a single district, a representation based on the entirety of the country as one jurisdiction/district is regulated by legislation, which ensures accessibility avenues for citizens living in rural or remote areas to allow effective two-way access between citizens and government and holistic representation.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Legal framework on party/candidate registration**

There are clear and detailed procedures for party/candidate registration. The law sets out clear eligibility criteria, uniform procedures and reasonable deadlines. Political parties/candidates have access to necessary information required for party/candidate registration.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Legal framework on election thresholds**

The electoral threshold established by the law enables diverse political representation of the legislative institution.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Diverse political representation in parliament**

There is evidence of the representation of diverse political parties in the parliament. No parties or candidates are arbitrarily prevented from participating in the elections or are deprived of their seats in the legislature.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

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**Sources for further reading**

- Venice Commission, [\*Report on thresholds and other features of electoral systems which bar parties from access to parliament\*](#), (Strasbourg: 2010).
- Dr Lisa Handley, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), [\*Challenging the Norms and Standards of Election Administration: Boundary Delimitation\*](#), (IFES, 2007).

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## Dimension 7.2.2 Gender

Indicator: 7.2 Composition of legislature

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

Democratic parliaments are required to reflect society as a whole, and equal representation of women in parliament is essential to ensure inclusive decision-making and the systematic integration of women's perspectives in legislative and policy work. While the number of women in parliaments worldwide has increased since the mid-twentieth century, gender balance in most parliaments is still far from being achieved.<sup>107</sup> This dimension examines the legal framework and mechanisms to achieve gender parity in the composition of parliament and the means to make progress towards it.

Equal access to parliament positions, without discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, race, disability or other grounds, is determined by a country's legal framework. The constitution and the electoral legislative framework should guarantee equal opportunities for the political participation of women as candidates, and an electoral environment that is free from barriers and violence. The type of electoral system can also be a determining factor for gender balance in parliament, with research demonstrating that proportional representation systems, particularly in combination with a closed-list system, are more conducive to the election of women than majority electoral systems.<sup>108</sup>

Parliament can take the lead in legislating for temporary special measures (TSMs) such as candidate quotas or reserved seats to promote gender balance.<sup>109</sup> Quotas for women MPs, when designed to include aspirational targets and sanctions for non-compliance and when supported by resources, political will, and commitment from parliamentary leadership, are proven to promote gender balance.<sup>110</sup> Quotas can be voluntary or legislated, and their design and clear objectives are essential to achieving an impact. They should be tailored to a country's electoral system. TSMs are intended to be withdrawn once they have achieved a sustainable political and societal change. Additional legislation and measures can incentivize political parties to increase women's representation in leadership structures and set voluntary party quotas.

Parliamentary political parties can improve the gender balance of parliament by including quotas of women on party lists or women-only shortlists in constituency-based systems, and by ensuring that women are selected for 'winnable' seats. Both parties and MPs can promote the representation of women and persons of different SOGIE<sup>111</sup> in parliament and hierarchies, and advocate against cultural and attitudinal barriers preventing women, persons of all SOGIE and marginalized groups in society from playing an active role in public life.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of gender balance in the composition of the legislature would encompass the following:

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<sup>107</sup> As of 1 January 2021, the global share of women in national parliaments is 25.5 per cent, and with progress at the current rate, it would take another 50 years before gender parity is achieved in parliaments worldwide. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Women in parliament in 2020: The year in review](#) (IPU: 2021).

<sup>108</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Gender-sensitive parliaments: A global review of good practice](#) (IPU: 2011).

<sup>109</sup> [UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#).

<sup>110</sup> In 2020, parliaments with quotas elected 11.8 per cent more women to single and lower chambers, and 7.4 per cent more women to upper chambers. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Women in parliament in 2020: The year in review](#), (IPU: 2021).

<sup>111</sup> Sexual orientation, gender identity and (gender) expression.

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The legal framework including the constitution and electoral laws support equal representation of women and men in parliament. Restrictions on candidate eligibility are not based on gender or on other factors such as religion, ethnicity, race or disability. The electoral system promotes gender-balanced representation by gender in parliament. Violence against women candidates in elections is addressed in legal and policy measures.

Temporary special legal and policy measures are in place to strengthen the representation of women in parliament. Where quotas exist, they are well-designed, with aspirational targets and sanctions for non-compliance, and there are institutional bodies to supervise their implementation. These quotas are supported by measures to generate political and public support.

Mechanisms exist within parliament to advocate for and support measures to ensure gender-balanced representation, such as gender equality committees or cross-party caucuses. Such mechanisms have clear and permanent mandates, are well-resourced and engage with civil society and other stakeholders on a regular basis. Mechanisms against violence and harassment of women MPs are in place.

The parliamentary secretariat is clear in its support of women entering parliament. It provides women MPs with dedicated induction programmes and ongoing professional development to address common challenges faced by women MPs, and provides gender-sensitivity and mainstreaming training for all MPs. The parliamentary secretariat communicates with the public about the positive role of women in parliament, and organizes events and produces materials targeting potential women candidates, particularly from vulnerable and minority groups.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Numbers of women and men holding seats in parliament (currently and in the recent past)
- Articles in the constitution highlighting the importance of equal opportunities for women's political participation
- Specific articles in national electoral laws or other legislation that aim to promote a gender balance, such as TSMs in parliament
- Parliamentary committee reports indicating recommendations for the amendment and/or review of legislation that may create barriers for the political participation of women
- Laws legislating special measures such as quotas to promote gender balance in parliament
- A parliamentary strategic plan, department plans, service statements or other documents highlighting specific support for women MPs
- Parliamentary communication documents promoting women MPs' work, including the parliamentary website
- Terms of reference of gender equality committees or cross-party caucuses

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Progress in achieving gender balance in parliament

Considerable progress in improving women’s representation in the parliament and in leadership positions is recorded over time, and is assessed against international data and against national and/or regional targets where they exist.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework encourages gender representative parliament**

The legal framework does not create barriers for the participation of women. The constitution, electoral laws, political party laws, campaign financing laws and other legislation ensure that women are supported when running as candidates for election, and also provide for sanctions in the event of non-compliance (for example, the creation of barriers to women’s representation).

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Measures to increase women’s representation**

There are well-designed measures aiming for aspirational targets of woman representation set by parliament. Those measures might include gender-sensitive policies and special and temporary measures, such as legislated gender quotas in case of a significant imbalance between male and female MPs. Measures are aligned with the electoral system and are accompanied by sanctions for non-compliance or disciplinary actions, as well as introduced and communicated effectively to the entire institution and the public.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Addressing the issue of violence against and abuse of women candidates**

Parliament has passed or amended legislation related to issues of gender-based violence against and abuse of candidates, which is consistently implemented in practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Political participation of persons of different SOGIE and marginalized groups**

There is evidence that the legal framework does not create barriers for the participation of persons of different SOGIE and any marginalized groups in society in public life. This includes provisions related to issues of violence against and abuse of candidates based on sexual orientation or expression.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), [Gender equality in national parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament](#) (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union: 2019).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Stockholm University, [Atlas of electoral gender quotas](#) (Stockholm: 2013).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#) (IPU: 2011).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Women in parliament in 2020: The year in review](#) (IPU: 2021).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Guidance Note: Strategies and good practices in promoting gender equality outcomes in parliaments](#) (UNDP: 2016).



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## Dimension: 7.2.3 Youth

Indicator: 7.2 Composition of legislature

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the degree to which youth is represented in the composition of parliament. According to IPU data “only 2.6 per cent of the world’s parliamentarians are under age 30”.<sup>112</sup> Young women’s political representation is even less - only 1 per cent. The political participation of youth in the formal political process remains a challenge, and young women, in particular, are the least represented in leadership positions.

The global targets for youth participation in national parliaments set by the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians based on youth proportions in the global population, which are to be implemented by 2035 are as follows:

- 15 per cent of young parliamentarians under 30
- 35 per cent of young parliamentarians under 40
- 45 per cent of young parliamentarians under 45

While building the capacity of youth through the development of their civic knowledge and skills enables them to be active citizens, an enabling legal framework, free of restrictive barriers, is important for increasing the formal political participation of youth.

The alignment of the minimum voting age with the minimum age of eligibility to run for office is a considerable factor for formal youth participation. In the case of bicameral parliaments, it is also beneficial to equalize the eligibility age for both chambers. The age of eligibility to stand for public office is a key impediment to youth representation in parliament. In 69 per cent of countries in 2020, the voting age was lower than the legal age to hold parliamentary office.<sup>113</sup>

The introduction of voluntary political party quotas, the strengthening of party youth wings/organizations, the promotion of young women to run for office and the creation of a level playing field for youth (for example, by regulating/capping electoral campaign spending) can be other means of promoting youth political participation. Some countries have also introduced a variety of mandatory quota systems, such as legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats.

Another important aspect of youth political empowerment is support for young MPs, especially young women MPs and the promotion of their work. This can be achieved through different means. In some cases parliaments form caucuses dedicated to youth issues or caucuses of young MPs, while in other cases they develop networks of young parliamentarians. Many parliaments have committees that work on youth issues.

Please also see dimension 5.1.5: Youth engagement.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of youth would encompass the following:

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<sup>112</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Youth participation in national parliaments](#) (2021).

<sup>113</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Youth participation in national parliaments](#) (2021).

Constitutional or legal provisions stipulate a reasonable minimum voting age that is aligned with the minimum age of eligibility to run for political office.

Parliament has policies and actions in place to ensure that young parliamentarians are provided with the opportunity to represent their constituency and to be promoted to leadership roles/parliamentary positions, with a particular focus on young women MPs.

Parliament has established bodies mandated to address youth issues, whether these are committees, caucuses or networks of young parliamentarians.

Parliament has developed a support package for young MPs to enable them to work effectively while considering work-life balance.

Training and mentoring support are available to young MPs. Contributions of young MPs in parliamentary work are promoted in parliamentary communications. Young MPs are welcome to contribute to the modernization of parliamentary operations.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution on the minimum voting age and the minimum age of eligibility to run for office
- Parliament's policies, structure or other documents addressing the engagement of young MPs and the support provided to them
- The number of MPs under the age of 45
- Evidence of parliamentary communication promoting young parliamentarians' work

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Alignment of ages for voting and eligibility for political office

There is evidence in constitutional or legal provisions of the alignment of the age for voting with eligibility to run for political office.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Policies and actions ensuring the representation of young MPs

There is evidence that the parliament’s policies and actions ensure the engagement of young parliamentarians in decision-making and their promotion to leadership roles. Such policies include a special focus on young women parliamentarians.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Bodies addressing youth issues**

There are established bodies that address youth issues, such as parliamentary committees and/or other bodies, including youth caucuses and networks of young parliamentarians.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Enabling environment for young MPs**

There is evidence that parliament has developed a support package for young MPs to enable them to work considering work-life balance. This package may include, among others, childcare facilities, a flexible work schedule and remote working possibilities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Supporting the work and promotion of young MPs**

There is evidence of training and mentoring support available to young MPs. The contribution of young MPs in parliamentary work is promoted in parliamentary communications. Young MPs are invited to contribute to the modernization of parliamentary operations.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**

There is evidence of both regulatory and institutional commitments to expanding youth representation in parliament. There is a progress over time (e.g. in the last 3 convocations) in the number and proportion of seats held by MPs who are under the age of 45, as well as MPs belonging to age groups under 30, 40 and 45 years.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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## Dimension 7.2.4 Other under-represented groups

Indicator: 7.2 Composition of legislature

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

One of the criteria for democratic parliament is that it should reflect the diversity of the population in terms of gender, language, religion, ethnicity or other characteristics. Representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in politics and the decision-making process is an essential component of representative parliaments. Vulnerable groups in society often face marginalization and are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. Fair representation of minority and indigenous peoples in the parliament is important for overcoming these challenges and ensuring overall equality.

The Lund Recommendations advise states to “guarantee the right of persons belonging to national minorities to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including through the rights to vote and stand for office without discrimination”.<sup>114</sup>

Adequate representation of minority and indigenous peoples in the composition of the legislature is a challenge across countries. The electoral systems and rules have a major impact on both the nature and the extent of minority presence in the national legislature.

Different mechanisms for promoting minority participation are applied across different countries. In some systems that impose restrictions on the formation of political groups on the basis of ethnic, religious or linguistic identity, measures to mainstream political parties and improve their ability to ensure representation of minorities and indigenous groups are important. Special electoral measures for ensuring parliamentary presence of minorities and indigenous peoples are often used.<sup>115</sup> These special measures vary in their nature and sometimes voluntary internal party quotas are used.

Political representation of minority groups can be also affected by the boundaries of electoral districts, access to election proceedings and information in the languages of minority groups, the independent administration of elections, and fair regulations on the formation of political groups.

Parliamentary rules are another important instrument for ensuring the effective representation of minority and indigenous peoples by elected representatives. Parliament might be required to use more than one language in parliamentary proceedings or introduce other supporting practices to secure the effective engagement of these representatives in legislative work.

Parliaments frequently have specialized bodies that address minority/indigenous matters. In some cases, they may be a parliamentary body with a broader human rights mandate that includes minority/indigenous matters.<sup>116</sup> Other important mechanisms for promoting the effective representation of minority and indigenous peoples' effective in the legislature include specialized committees, councils, caucuses, cross-party groups or any other formal or informal platforms within the parliament.

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<sup>114</sup> OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), [The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life](#) & Explanatory Note (OSCE, 1999), 8.

<sup>115</sup> Dr. Oleh Protsyk, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament](#) (Mexico: IPU and UNDP, 2010).

<sup>116</sup> Dr. Oleh Protsyk, [The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament](#) (Mexico: IPU and UNDP, 2010).

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On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of other contextually relevant groups (for example, minorities and indigenous peoples) would encompass the following:

The constitutional framework guarantees the right of persons belonging to minorities or indigenous peoples to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including through the rights to vote and stand for office without discrimination.

Legal framework establishes special measures that promote the political representation of minority and indigenous groups in the composition of the legislature.

The electoral system facilitates minority representation and influence. Where there are different demographics or electoral systems, other elements may increase the representation of minorities, such as:

- The territorial concentration of minorities in the form of single member districts
- The existence of a proportional representation system, that is, where a political party's share in the national vote is reflected in its share of the legislative seats
- The establishment of some form of preference voting, in which voters rank candidates in order of choice, which may also promote inter-communal cooperation.
- The existence of lower numerical thresholds for representation in the legislature<sup>117</sup>

The geographical boundaries of electoral districts facilitate the equitable representation of national minorities.

Parliamentary rules provide opportunities for minority and indigenous representatives to engage effectively in parliamentary work, including through access to information in their own language, and the establishment of caucuses, formal or informal groups.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution guaranteeing the political rights of minority and indigenous peoples and prohibiting discrimination
- Specific articles of law on special measures targeting minority and indigenous peoples
- Evidence of parliamentary committee, caucus, council or minority and indigenous group representatives
- Statistical data on minority and indigenous representatives in the sitting parliament

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional provisions

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<sup>117</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, [Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process](#), (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2001).

There is evidence that the constitutional framework guarantees the right of persons belonging to minorities or indigenous peoples to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including through the rights to vote and stand for office without discrimination.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Special measures**

There are special measures that promote the political representation of minority and indigenous groups in the composition of the legislature, or measures that encourage political parties to establish voluntary quotas for minority and indigenous groups in their own structures.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Legal framework**

There is evidence that the geographical boundaries of electoral districts are delimited in a manner that facilitates the equitable representation of national minorities, or that the electoral system facilitates minority representation in other ways. Access to election proceedings and information in minority languages and the independent administration of elections are guaranteed in law and in practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Parliamentary practice**

Parliament provides opportunities for minority and indigenous representatives to engage effectively in parliamentary work, including through access to information in their own language, and the establishment of caucuses or formal or informal groups.

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Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), [\*The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life\*](#) (OSCE, 1999).
- OSCE/ODIHR, [\*Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process\*](#), (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2001).
- Dr. Oleh Protsyk, [\*The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in parliament\*](#), (Mexico: IPU and UNDP, 2010).



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## Indicator 7.3 – Composition of parliamentary bodies

The parliament, as the main representative of diverse political opinions and different groups in society, which comprises equal members who have been elected directly by the citizens, has a unique way of organizing its work. The representative nature of a legislature requires this diversity to be reflected in the composition of all parliamentary bodies, whether in leadership structures or other formats such as committees.

Democratic parliaments ensure a political balance between the majority and minority parliamentary (party) groups in the governing bodies of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies). The representation of political parties in the parliamentary leadership is usually proportionate to political party representation, though special consideration may be given to smaller groups to ensure their effective engagement in parliamentary work.

In assessing the representative nature of the composition of parliamentary bodies, different aspects are to be taken into account, including a political balance between the majority and minority parliamentary (party) groups, the rules and practice of selecting committee chairs and members, and the proportion of women and young MPs (and other contextually relevant groups) in the parliamentary leadership.

The assessment of the indicator on the composition of parliamentary bodies comprises the following dimensions:

- 7.3.1 Composition of parliamentary leadership
- 7.3.2 Composition of committees
- 7.3.3 Gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies

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## Dimension 7.3.1 Composition of parliamentary leadership

Indicator: 7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the legal framework ensures political balance between the majority and minority parliamentary (party) groups in the governing bodies of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies). Parliament, as an institution that reflects society in the diversity of its composition, grants institutional recognition for the representation of opposition parties in the parliamentary leadership.

While the legal status of the opposition in national parliaments varies considerably by country, most legislatures guarantee institutional representation of the opposition in the governing bodies of the parliament, reflecting the proportionality of political party representation. If the system provides for deputy chairmanship, at least one deputy speaker's seat must be guaranteed for the opposition.

National legislation, or the rules of procedure of the legislature, secures the deputy chairmanship of the parliamentary committees/sub-committees for opposition MPs. In many countries, the chairmanship of the standing committees is shared between the opposition and the majority parties in line with the principle of proportionality.

The establishment of parliamentary groups, which is the main instrument for the representation of the parties in parliamentary structures, is guaranteed by national legislation. The law enables opposition MPs to freely set up political groups, and requires a reasonable number of MPs for group formation. The law also contains no undue barriers that prevent the political parties from fully and easily engaging in parliamentary activities.

In order to achieve proper balance between the majority and the opposition in governing bodies of the parliament, the national legislation provides independent MPs with the same rights as those enjoyed by opposition members of the parliament. This includes the right to be represented in the leadership positions of standing committees and sub-committees (chair or deputy chair). Some legal systems allow independent MPs to set up parliamentary non-party groups, and grant them the right to be represented in the governing structures of the parliament.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of composition of parliamentary leadership would encompass the following:

The constitutional and legal framework guarantees a political balance between the majority and minority parliamentary (party) groups in the composition of the parliamentary leadership. Opposition political parties are represented in the governing bodies of the parliament, such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies, in accordance with the principle of proportionality. At least one deputy speaker position is secured for opposition MPs.

National legislation guarantees the proportional representation of opposition MPs in the chairmanship of standing committees and sub-committees. The law ensures equal and proportional representation of opposition MPs as deputy chairs of the committees/sub-committees.

The rules of procedure of the parliament establish clear and transparent regulations for the formation of political groups in the parliament, including a reasonable minimum number of MPs.

The rules of procedure of the parliament entitle independent MPs to be represented in the parliamentary leadership. This includes the allocation of seats in the bureau, and in the leadership of standing committees and sub-committees.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or national legislation defining the authority of opposition MPs to be represented in the governing structures of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies)
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure granting the seat of a deputy speaker to an opposition MP
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure granting the leadership of the standing committees/sub-committees to the opposition MPs, in accordance with the proportionality principle
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure granting independent MPs representation in the governing bodies of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers, and administrative and financial bodies)
- Specific articles of national legislation establishing clear and transparent procedures for the formation of political groups in the parliament
- The number of opposition MPs represented in the governing bodies of the sitting parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies)
- The number of opposition MPs chairing the standing committees/sub-committees in the sitting parliament

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal framework

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which MPs from minority parliamentary (party) groups are represented in the governing structures of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies).

Non-existent	Poor	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the allocation of a deputy speaker's position to the opposition

There is evidence of legal provisions that guarantee at least one seat of a deputy speaker of the parliament for an MP from a minority parliamentary (party) group.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Legal framework on the allocation of standing committee/sub-committee leadership roles for opposition MPs**

There is evidence of legal provisions that ensure the representation of MPs from minority parliamentary (party) groups in the leadership of standing committees/sub-committees in accordance with the proportionality principle.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Legal framework on the representation of independent MPs in the governing bodies of the parliament**

There is evidence of legal provisions by which independent MPs are entitled to be represented in the governing bodies of the parliament (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies). This encompasses the right to take up the position of chair in standing committees and sub-committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Legal framework on the formation of political groups**

There are legal provisions establishing clear procedures for setting up parliamentary political groups, as well as a reasonable number of MPs required for the formation of a group.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Established practice of balanced political representation**

In practice, there is balanced representation of minority parliamentary parties in the governing structures of the legislative branch (such as the bureau, conference of speakers and administrative and financial bodies). Balanced political representation can be reflected through the practice of sharing leadership roles between the majority and the minority parliamentary parties in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Council of Europe, European Conference of Presidents of Parliament, [Majority and opposition – striking a balance in democracy](#), 11-12 September 2014, Oslo.
- Council of Europe, [Report on the role of the opposition in a democratic Parliament, adopted by the Venice Commission, at its 84th Plenary Session](#), 15-16 October 2010, Venice.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Guidelines on the Rights and Duties of the Opposition in the Parliament](#), unanimously adopted by the participants at the Parliamentary Seminar on Relations Between Majority and Minority Parties in African Parliaments, 17-19 May 1999, Libreville, Gabon.

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## Dimension 7.3.2 Composition of committees

Indicator: 7.2 Composition of parliamentary bodies

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

### About the dimension

The committee is one of the key elements of the structure of the legislature, and has a vital role in the organization of parliamentary work. Parliaments are authorized to organize their work through committees by the standing order/rules of procedure and the committee statute. This dimension outlines only the rules and practices regarding the composition of committees, as the other aspects of committee work are addressed in dimension 1.4.4 Committees.

Committee membership is usually determined at the start of a parliamentary term, after an election. It is the right of an elected representative to engage in the thematic work of the legislature, in accordance with personal expertise and/or interest, as well as political party selection and decision-making processes. Legislatures usually require each representative to sit on at least one committee, while some legislatures also limit the number of committees on which each member can sit.

The individual members are usually assigned to committees by the party groups. While larger parties normally have more flexibility in the assignment of members to various committees, smaller parties or independent MPs may face difficulties. Generally, the composition of committees reflects that of the entire parliament. Special consideration may be given to smaller groups or independent MPs to ensure their proportional representation in committees. Parliaments often allow substitute members to represent the same political group as the member who is to be replaced. The rules of procedure also can provide for the representation of independent MPs or MPs from smaller party groups in particular committees.

The committee leadership is usually elected by and from the committee members after the composition of the committee is determined and, as a rule, these elections take place soon after the first gathering of the newly elected parliament. Different legislatures might have various rules for distributing committee leadership positions among political groups. In some systems, the party with majority seats obtains chairmanship of all committees, while in others, the committee leadership positions are distributed among various political groups based on the principle of proportionality.

In democratic parliaments the rules of procedure often explicitly assign leadership of some committees (such as a budget monitoring committee, human rights committee and/or other) to opposition MPs. Political plurality in the committee leadership must be defined by the rules of procedure, and the roles of committee chair and deputy chair should be assigned to representatives of different political groups. The distribution of the seats of committee chairs and deputy chairs may also be subject to political consensus. In any system, it is important for parliament to establish and follow a transparent and fair method for the composition of committees and the selection or election of the committee leadership.<sup>118</sup>

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of composition of committees would encompass the following:

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<sup>118</sup> Please also see dimension 7.3.1 Composition of parliamentary leadership.

Parliament has a clear constitutional or legal mandate to determine committee composition and leadership.

The law provides for transparent, fair and clear rules and procedures with regard to committee composition, as well as for the selection/election of the committee leadership.

The political proportionality of political representation is ensured when the composition of committees is defined and when committee chairs and deputies are selected.

Special consideration is given to smaller groups or independent MPs to ensure their representation in the committees, either as full members or as observers.

## Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the composition and governance of committees
- Specific articles of rules of procedure on the distribution of committee leadership positions among political groups
- The number of committees or sub-committees chaired by opposition MPs

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

### Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the composition of committees

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which parliament defines the composition of committees, and ensures proportional political representation and transparency of the process.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion No. 2: Composition of the committee leadership

There is evidence of the proportional distribution of committee leadership positions (chair and deputy chairs) among different political groups, with special consideration given to relatively small political groups and independent MPs.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice**

There is evidence that opposition MPs are elected/selected as chairs or vice-chairs of committees and sub-committees.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
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**Recommendations for change**

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### Dimension 7.3.3 Gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies

Indicator: 7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies

Sub-target: 7 Representative parliament

Target: 16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament

#### About the dimension

Effective, accountable and inclusive parliaments should represent women, youth and other groups in society not only through their membership, but also in leadership positions within parliament and parliamentary bodies, thus directly influencing how the institution functions. This dimension outlines how a balance can be achieved in the representation of women and young MPs<sup>119</sup> in key positions and in parliamentary bodies, including as speakers or deputy speakers, in the bureau or on the board, on administrative and financial bodies, as committee chairs and vice-chairs, and as members of different portfolio committees. This could also include the leadership of the parliamentary secretariat, such as the positions of secretary-general, deputies and assistants of the secretary-general, in parliaments where these political positions exist and are elected or appointed by the parliament.

Achieving a gender and age balance in the leadership and composition of parliamentary bodies enable women and young MPs to be in a position to influence the policies of parliament, assess and revise parliamentary procedure and practices, serve as role models to others, and provide varied perspectives in parliamentary debate. It also helps women and young MPs to achieve career progression inside parliament and hold positions with higher allowances and resources. Attaining such a balance helps to ensure that parliament functions as an institution that is fully representative of society, and can advance causes of gender equality and contribute to meeting the needs of young people and other groups.

At the highest level in parliament, relatively few women serve as speakers or presiding officers of their respective parliaments.<sup>120</sup> While the number of women chairing committees has increased, the committees that they chair tend to specialize in specific 'soft' portfolio areas, such as women's affairs, employment and education, rather than 'hard' policy areas such as foreign affairs, defence and finance.<sup>121</sup> A balanced representation in different committees ensures different perspectives across all sectoral areas addressed by parliament.

Parliament should have strategic plans and policies that reflect the need to promote women and young MPs in senior positions in the parliament. Amendments to internal rules to create special measures, such as giving preference to women and young MPs where qualifications are equal, could also support more balanced representation. Other means that parliaments have used include the rotation of positions of parliamentary leadership between men, women and other groups, and dual leadership of parliamentary structures, for example, through the appointment of both a man and a woman.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of gender and age balance in the composition of parliamentary bodies would encompass the following:

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<sup>119</sup> The IPU defines MPs as 'young' if they are under 45, due to the fact that some countries limit access to some houses of parliament to only men and women aged 45 or above. However, the IPU collects data on young MPs in three age ranges: under 30, under 40 and under 45 years old.

<sup>120</sup> Globally, 58 women held speaker positions in national parliaments in 2020. Regarding young MPs, one speaker of parliament was under 30, 20 were under 40 (of whom one was a woman) and 34 were under 45 (two of whom were women). Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Youth participation in national parliaments](#) (IPU: 2021).

<sup>121</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Women in parliament in 2020: The year in review](#) (IPU: 2021).

There is representation of different genders and ages of MPs in positions of parliament leadership, including as speakers or deputy speakers, in the bureau or on the board, on administrative and financial bodies, and as committee chairs and vice-chairs.

Measures exist to ensure that women and young MPs and other groups are represented across different portfolio committees.

The legal framework, rules of procedure, parliament's strategic plan, policies or plans of action include measures to promote the representation of women and young MPs in different parliamentary bodies.

Parliament implements special measures or rule changes to help women and young MPs to take up leadership positions in parliamentary bodies, such as quotas in leadership structures.

### Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- The number of women and young MPs holding senior positions in parliament
- The number of women and young MPs holding positions of committee chairs and vice-chairs
- A list of members of different portfolio committees in a parliament
- Articles in national legislation and/or parliament's standing orders or rules of procedure that ensure a gender and age balance in parliamentary bodies and in the positions of chair and members of parliamentary committees
- Objectives and actions in parliament's strategic plan and other policies outlining steps or special measures to ensure balanced representation of women and young MPs on parliamentary bodies
- Parliament's communication material showcasing the positive role that women and young MPs play across parliament's work

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

#### Assessment criterion No. 1: Presence of women MPs in leadership positions in parliament

Women are equally represented in leadership positions in parliament, including as speaker or deputy speaker, in the bureau or on the board, in administrative and financial bodies, as committee chairs and vice-chairs and across different portfolio committees including in 'hard' and 'soft' areas.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion No. 2: Presence of young MPs in leadership positions in parliament

There are young MPs in leadership positions in parliament including as speaker or deputy speaker, in the bureau or on the board, in administrative and financial bodies, as committee chairs and vice-chairs and across different portfolio committees including in 'hard' and 'soft' areas.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Measures to ensure a balance in composition of parliamentary bodies**

Parliament’s strategic plan, policies or action plans identify special measures or affirmative action to ensure that women and young MPs serve in leadership positions. Measures can include quotas, rotation of positions, or dual positions. Parliament has mechanisms to assess, report on and take action to address imbalances in leadership bodies and committees, including the encouragement of political parties to balance their selections for key parliamentary roles.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Evaluating the gender-sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit](#) (IPU: 2016).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Gender-Sensitive parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#) (IPU: 2011).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Women in parliament in 2020: The year in review](#) (IPU: 2021).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Youth participation in national parliaments](#) (IPU: 2021).

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## How to use the indicators – Assessment guidance

The “indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG sub-targets 16.6 and 16.7” (hereinafter “parliamentary indicators” or “indicators”) cover parliamentary capacity and performance in the most relevant areas of parliamentary work. They address both the formal powers of parliament, the way these powers are used in practice and the resources available to parliaments to fulfil their mandates.

The indicators are structured around the aspirational targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): effective, accountable and transparent institutions (SDG target 16.6), and responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (SDG target 16.7), adapted to the institution of parliament

Parliamentary indicators are intended to be reliable, comprehensive, usable and useful, and universally relevant to all parliaments, in different parliamentary systems and various political, cultural, historical and other contexts.

Parliaments will engage with the indicators on a voluntary basis. The assessment process is owned and led by parliament itself. Parliaments will need to decide how best to use the indicators in their own context, in accordance with their priorities.

This guidance provides a clear outline of the assessment process, and highlights a range of issues that parliaments need to consider during the preparatory stage (the objectives of such a process, who will initiate it and who will be involved, how and when will it be organized, etc.).

We invite parliaments to contact the IPU or other partners for further assistance and guidance on carrying out the assessment of indicators. Sharing parliamentary feedback with us will be much appreciated and will contribute to improving the indicators for democratic parliaments.

### How can parliaments benefit from assessing the indicators?

Parliamentary indicators are a tool for learning and development, aimed at assisting parliaments in benchmarking themselves against a universal set of indicators to gain an understanding of where they can improve their performance.

Citizens everywhere are rightly demanding more from their governments than ever before. Various global surveys indicate that people often do not feel confident that democracy and political institutions are acting in their interest. Parliaments have a central role to play in addressing these challenges. Progress on democracy, for everyone, can only be achieved if there are strong, democratic parliaments that represent the will of the people. The parliamentary role is twofold. First, parliaments need to constantly ensure their development so they can address people’s expectations in today’s fast-changing world. And second, they need to ensure that the executive branch delivers in line with society’s requirements.

Thousands of organizations worldwide, including private companies, public administrations, and international and civil society organizations (CSOs), have applied the (self) assessment approach to their organizational development. And in each case, they share a common goal: to better understand the factors that underpin or restrict their performance, so that they can improve it.

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The IPU has used the self-assessment approach to parliamentary development since 2008. The principle of parliamentary ownership of its development, which is a central tenet of the self-assessment approach, has been further reinforced in the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments*.<sup>122</sup>

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As the *Common Principles for Support to Parliament* make clear, only parliament can take responsibility for its own development. Assessment of a parliament's strengths and weaknesses and its capacity and performance based on indicators should be carried out by parliamentarians and senior parliamentary staff themselves, who bring a unique perspective (by virtue of the clear stake they have in the effective functioning of the institution) and who take "ownership" of the process.

The assessment of indicators is a process that involves diagnosing and considering strengths and weaknesses, i.e. the things that parliament is doing well, and the things it could do better or more effectively, taking into account established good practices that are described in the indicators. These comprehensive and high-quality insights provide a solid foundation for identifying changes for improvements and may lead to action.

The assessment of indicators can help parliament to identify and introduce improvements that are necessary, in accordance with parliamentary needs and the views of MPs (or the public). The indicators can be helpful in enhancing the role of parliament in achieving SDG targets. They can be very useful as a part of a strategic planning process, as well as at the beginning or end of a legislature, or as part of some other reform initiative. Indicators can be used in preparation for a parliamentary strengthening project with partners or donors, for the evaluation of progress over time, and as the basis for development or improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems (M&E) in parliaments.

Parliament sets the objectives of the assessment and owns the results. Ideally, the exercise should lead to a vision of the priorities and actions for strengthening parliamentary capacity and performance in the areas of parliamentary work covered by indicators that have been assessed. It can serve as a solid basis for both short-term and long-term planning of actions to be followed up, as well as for monitoring future advancements in given areas.

Parliament needs to select the indicators that it wants to assess, based on its own priorities and context. Assessing all indicators that consider the work of the entire parliament would give an overall picture of

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<sup>122</sup> The IPU [Common Principles for Support to Parliaments](#) set out the fundamental principles for planning and implementing programmes to strengthen parliaments. They have been endorsed by 138 national parliaments, eight parliamentary assemblies and 19 partner organizations.

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parliament's capacity, performance and recommended changes to achieve SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7. However, assessing all indicators at once is most likely impractical, due to the scope of indicators and the often busy nature of the parliamentary agenda.

The recommended approach is to select one of the seven sub-targets and assess all indicators within that sub-target, or to choose several indicators to assess specific segments of work that are of particular interest to a parliament in a given situation and at a specific time.

Depending on parliament's objectives, the indicators for democratic parliaments can be used as a standalone resource or in conjunction with other benchmarks and toolkits published by the IPU and other partner organizations. The IPU has published a number of self-assessment toolkits, which parliaments have used to make tangible progress in various areas of their work.<sup>125</sup>

## Scope of the indicators

There are 25 indicators in total, which are structured within seven sub-targets - effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliament (the list of indicators is annexed to this guidance). The sub-targets have different numbers of indicators depending on the scope of functions and segments of work. The sub-target with the highest number of indicators is the first sub-target on effective parliament, with 11 indicators, which is due to the significance and complexity of the areas of work that it covers.

Each indicator has several dimensions for assessing parts of the parliamentary capacity and performance regarding that indicator. Each dimension has an average of four criteria, but their number can range from two to ten, depending on the scope and complexity of a dimension. Assessment is carried out at the level of criteria.

## Assessment process

Good planning is crucial to the success of the assessment. Identifying stages and steps of the process and preparing for each of them in advance can make the entire "assessment journey" easier, smoother and more effective for participants, thus contributing to successful outcomes.

A fundamental principle of self-assessment is that parliament takes full ownership of the exercise. The methodology proposed below is based on the experience of the IPU and partner organizations in supporting parliaments in carrying out the assessment. However, it should only be taken as a starting point. Parliaments may wish to review the methodology and adapt it to their own circumstances and objectives.

For an effective assessment process, it is important to consider and agree on some issues well in advance of the assessment exercise and to ensure an effective assessment process leading to desirable outcomes. Three key stages of the assessment process are preparation, performance of the assessment exercise and follow-up, each with specific issues.

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<sup>125</sup> Some of the available toolkits:

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Evaluating parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliaments](#) (2008)

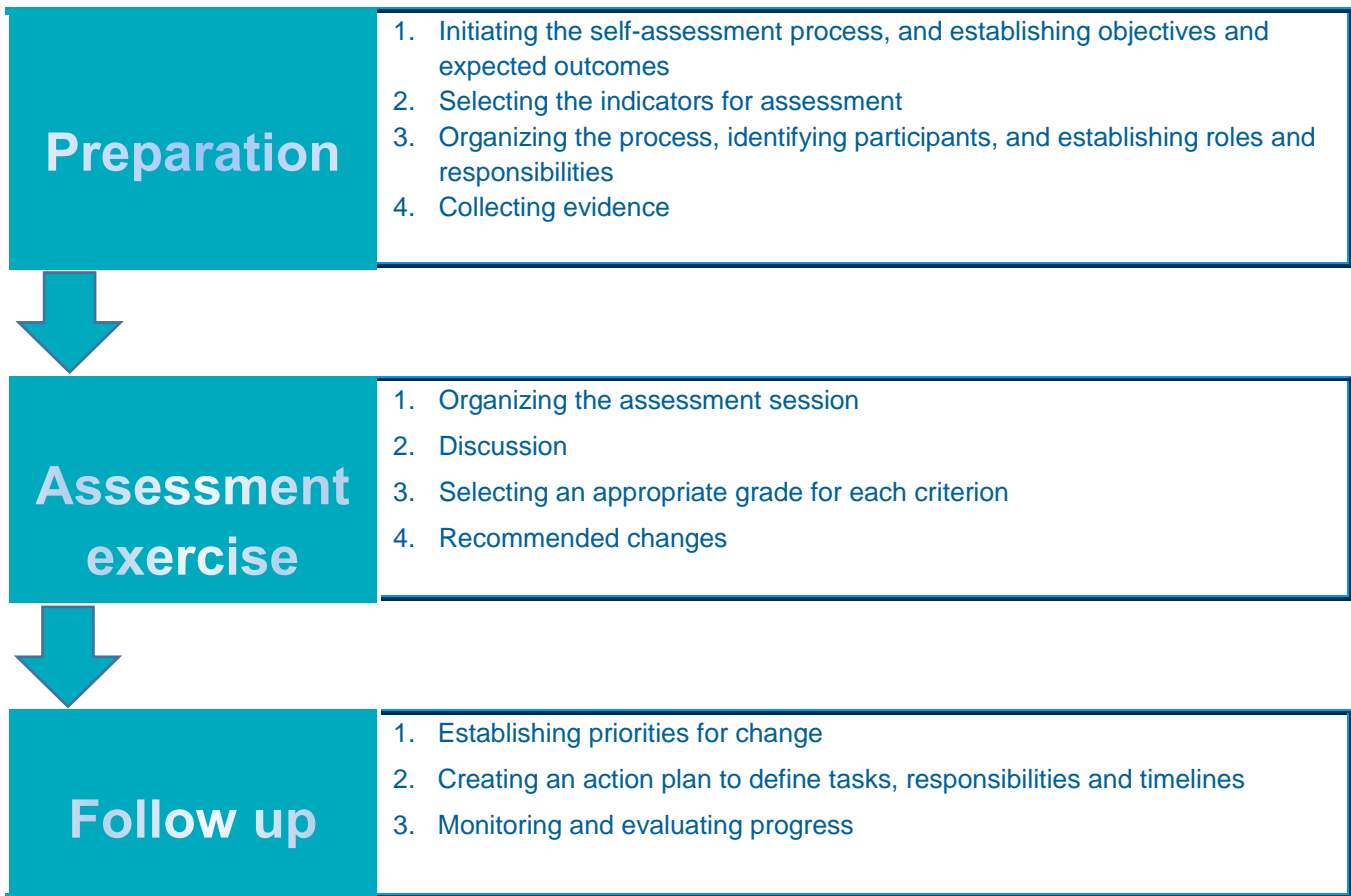
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (2006)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), [Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit](#) (2016)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit](#) (2016)

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## Stages of the assessment process



### Preparation

#### Initiating the self-assessment process

When?

Parliament should think carefully about when an assessment would be most valuable. Certain moments can be more opportune or advantageous than others. As mentioned earlier, these include:

- at the beginning of a reform process
- at the start of a new legislature<sup>126</sup> (parliament would have ample time to take action and monitor results, there is likely to be greater sustainability and continuity of outcomes, and new members could be encouraged to learn and use opportunities for change)
- when preparing or reviewing the parliamentary strategic plan, or when planning to modernize parliamentary work or enhance parliament's capacity and performance in certain segments of work
- when applying or preparing for an external technical support project, to identify needs and priorities in preparation for an assessment

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<sup>126</sup> Other terms in use: "new legislative term", "new convocation" or "new parliament".

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- when parliament has previously used indicators for assessing its capacity and performance in an area of work and wants to monitor progress over time
  - at any other time in the life of parliament, to help it to exercise any of its roles more effectively.

Who?

The self-assessment process can be initiated by any stakeholder in parliament, including parliamentary leadership, committees, individual parliamentarians or groups of members of parliament, or the parliamentary administration. Stakeholders outside parliament, such as CSOs, can also propose the initiation of the process.

Experience shows that assessments are usually most fruitful and successful when the initiative comes from, or is strongly supported by, the parliamentary leadership. This signals to other stakeholders (members, the parliamentary administration and the general public) that parliament is committed to the exercise, and to following up on its results.

A parliamentary committee may wish to carry out the exercise itself on the subject within its competencies. After assessing its capacity and performance, the committee may identify ways to improve its procedures or introduce new practices and activities. A successful assessment exercise at committee level can have a ripple effect across parliament as a whole.

A parliamentary (party) group can also initiate and organize an assessment exercise for its own members, using indicators of their particular interest.

Finally, the assessment can be used to assess the independence, capacity and performance of the parliamentary administration.

### **Establishing objectives and expected outcomes**

The objectives and expected outcomes should be clearly set in advance. Parliament needs a clear idea of why it is undertaking an assessment and what it hopes to achieve by doing so.

The specific objectives will depend on who initiated it and why. It is good practice to link the assessment to an existing parliamentary body, such as a committee, depending on its scope of work. Thus, the exercise will have an institutional owner, and its outcomes can feed directly into the other activities of parliament.

All participants must share a common understanding of what the self-assessment is seeking to achieve. Communicating the objectives to the entire parliament raises awareness and promotes ownership of the process, and lays the ground for acceptance of changes that might follow the exercise.

### **Selecting indicators for assessment**

The choice of indicators to be assessed should be based on the objectives of the assessment exercise. If parliament wishes to assess its strengths and weaknesses in one or more segments of its work that it deems to be the most relevant to its current needs, it can select an entire sub-target or corresponding indicators.

The selection of the scope and number of indicators for assessment might also depend on the time available for assessment and on the organization of the exercise itself, and on whether one or more groups of participants will be engaged in the exercise.



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## Organizing the process, identifying participants, and establishing roles and responsibilities

Various organizational issues should be considered well in advance to ensure that the assessment exercise is conducted smoothly and effectively.

### Getting the timing right

The overall time frame should take into account the time needed to prepare for the assessment, to collect the evidence, and to leave enough time for participants to read the indicators prior to the assessment. Follow-up activities, such as reporting on the outcomes, should also be considered. The assessment exercise itself may take several hours, depending on the scope of indicators that are the subject of the assessment and number of participants.

The dates for the assessment should also be carefully planned in advance. The exercise should be scheduled in line with the parliamentary agenda, and ideally at a time when parliamentarians might be less busy with other matters.

### Identifying participants

Before starting the assessment of one or more indicators, parliament needs to decide who will be involved. Parliamentarians (and parliamentary staff) are typically the main participants. Inclusiveness is vital to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the exercise. Participants should represent the entire parliament in terms of political party membership, gender and age, with due consideration given to under-represented groups or other relevant features.

Experience has shown that parliamentary assessment is more likely to be useful and effective when it is run by a group chaired by the Speaker, a committee chair or other senior parliamentary authority. Possible options are to use an existing parliamentary structure, such as a committee in charge of the area of work covered by indicators to be assessed, or to establish an ad-hoc committee or a steering group to conduct the assessment.

Having senior parliamentary staff involved in the exercise can prove highly beneficial, since they often bring a different or additional perspective. Administrative autonomy, capacity and performance are also the subject of several indicators.

Parliament may opt to invite external stakeholders, such as the supreme audit institution, the ombudsperson, experts in certain areas, civil society actors, or the media, to participate in, or assist with, the assessment of indicators. One option is to send selected indicators to one or more civil society organizations and ask them to assess parliamentary capacity and performance in a given area, by grading criteria and providing other comments. Parliament will weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of involvement of stakeholders.

### Establishing roles and responsibilities

For the success of any assessment exercise, it is important to clearly define in advance who will do what. The roles and responsibilities of parliamentary leadership, parliamentarians and staff in the respective stages of the process, including political decisions and organizational issues, should be carefully planned and identified well in advance.

### Collecting evidence

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The validity and reliability of the data used in an assessment is very important. When carrying out an assessment, parliament (or another organization) should gather evidence (information and data about the subject of the indicators that are assessed). Written evidence is a fundamental component of an assessment.

Each indicator is composed of several dimensions that consider a specific segment within that indicator. Each dimension has several assessment criteria with statements based on which parliament will assess its level of compliance with each criterion. Under each criterion, there is a scale with descriptive grades for assessment and there is also a field for evidence. This is a very important stage in the assessment of the dimension, as it provides a basis for discussion at the assessment session and for the assessment itself. Evidence also serves as a justification of the grade selected.

It is strongly advised that the parliamentary administration (committee staff, research service, library or other units) collect data and information for each criterion. The indicators to be assessed, together with written evidence that has been collected for each dimension, should be shared with all participants of the assessment exercise ideally a week or two before the exercise. Making this information available to participants of the exercise in advance of the assessment and selection of a grade should contribute to higher time-efficiency, accuracy and overall effectiveness of the assessment.

Examples of possible evidence that can be collected are given for each dimension. The evidence can include any information and data that could prompt a constructive, evidence-based discussion. This information should be (easily) accessible and contained in legal and parliamentary records, and should generally be publicly available. Feedback received from parliaments that organized a test-assessment of indicators generally indicates that it was relatively easy for parliaments to collect evidences for assessment.

Parliamentary administration (a research or similar service) could be also tasked with producing a research paper on comparative practices and mechanisms in other parliaments (including examples of good practice) in the area covered by the indicators that will be assessed, or with compiling relevant data from other sources. These are just a few approaches that could be adopted. In any event, parliamentary administrations are encouraged to prepare sound information for evidence, based on their understanding of what parliamentarians need.

Organizing a separate “information session” before beginning the assessment exercise can also help to ensure a common understanding of the exercise’s objectives and the scope of indicators.

## **Assessment exercise**

### **Organizing the assessment session**

The arrangements for the sessions will depend on the parliament and its political context, the number and scope of indicators selected for assessment, and on the number and composition of participants. If a parliament plans to involve a large number of parliamentarians in the exercise, two or more groups can be established to assess different indicators. Each group could have a rapporteur to present its key findings and recommendations to all participants at the wrap-up session.

It is very important to ensure that all participants in the assessment exercise have a common understanding of the assessment tasks and how the exercise will be carried out.

Experience shows that it is useful to set “ground rules” at the beginning of the exercise. These rules could be called the “code”, “guidelines” or “standards” to make them sound less restrictive and punitive. They may cover a range of issues, such as the maximum time a participant is permitted to speak, or key messages such as “all

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ideas are valid” and “let us remain open to new ways of doing things”. The exercise is likely to be more efficient and effective if the rules are accepted by all participants at the outset and are displayed in a place in which they can be seen at all times.

Bicameral parliaments can decide whether to organize the assessment together or separately, depending on the parliamentary context and the level of cooperation between the two houses.

## Discussion

For an effective and fruitful discussion, it is crucial that all participants carefully read the indicators and dimensions that are the subject of the assessment, and be well-prepared for the session.

Each dimension has several parts that should help participants to objectively assess their strengths and weaknesses in a specific domain of parliamentary work, and to inspire them to recommend changes for improvements:

- an introductory part that describes the dimension and provides key information about its purpose and what are some general practices and trends in that area across parliaments,
- an inspiring goal, which portrays the ideal parliamentary capacity and performance in a given segment of parliamentary work,
- an assessment section which contains assessment criteria and a scale with grades and an evidence field for carrying out the assessment.

Information given within each dimension, as well as evidence collected in advance, should provide a sound basis for a constructive discussion, enriched with the personal experience and views of MPs and parliamentary staff. Assessment is not a party-political exercise. It is fundamentally about the parliament as an institution, in which all parties and citizens hold a stake. Although nothing in parliament is free of political considerations, the IPU’s experience is that self-assessment works best when there is an open discussion and an exchange of views, opinions and ideas.

Facilitating the discussion is an important component of every assessment session. Smooth and efficient facilitation is vital to achieving the best outcomes. Facilitators also help to ensure that all participants share a common understanding of the exercise’s objectives, and are there to channel the discussion, especially in a politically sensitive parliamentary environment.

Facilitators can be national or foreign, and can be selected from within or outside the parliament. National facilitators and those from within parliament (parliamentarians or senior staff members) usually have a good insight into parliamentary processes, the political environment and the local context. External facilitators, on the other hand, might bring to the table other forms of expertise, or be able to explain issues and present examples of good practices from other parliaments. One option is to have two or more facilitators with different backgrounds. In any case, facilitators should be experienced in and trained for the role. The IPU or other partner organizations may be able to provide organizational and expert support if required.

## Selecting an appropriate grade for each criterion

The indicators enable scoring based on objective criteria. Scoring based on an assessment and aggregation of the indicators provides a user-friendly way to measure current status and to focus attention.

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It is accepted that not everything a parliament does can be measured. It is also recognized that parliaments are complex institutions with competing interests, whereas many other public institutions may share a more clearly defined common objective against which performance can be measured.

Scoring should be understood as part of a process that helps parliaments to identify gaps in their work and to guide them towards good practices, based on evidence and dialogue from the assessment exercise.

The criteria are the central part of each dimension aimed at assessing the specific issue. Each criterion provides a short description (statement), and a scale which offers six descriptive grades: “Excellent”, “Very good”, “Good”, “Basic”, “Poor” and “Non-existent”. Participants need to assess to what extent their parliament complies with each criterion by selecting one of the six grades that corresponds best to their parliament. In the majority of cases, it is expected that the criteria will be simple and relatively easy to assess. Nevertheless, some criteria inevitably concern more than one element and participants will need to weigh these elements to decide which grade is the most accurate in their context.

Ideally, an open and constructive discussion on each criterion among participants in the assessment exercise should lead to a common agreement on which grade corresponds best to a given parliament. If it is not possible to reach ready agreement, other options, such as calculating an average grade or accepting a grade selected by the majority of participants (if a political balance is achieved) may be considered. A group, with the assistance of a facilitator, may need to find a solution that best fits a given political context, if different grades are given by members of majority and minority parliamentary groups.

In any case, scores should not be the sole focus of the exercise. Assessments based on the indicators include a qualitative analysis that helps parliaments to prioritize their reform efforts. The indicators are not intended to generate a comparative ranking of parliaments. Scores are valid primarily in the context of the parliament that is being assessed.

Descriptive grades offered for criteria are considered more meaningful to end users than numerical ones, and are more in line with the objectives of the assessment, which are learning and development.

However, if parliament wishes to have aggregating scores at the level of entire indicator or a sub-target, the following corresponding numerical values for descriptive grades can be used:

1. Grade “Excellent” corresponds to numerical grade 5;
2. Grade “Very good” corresponds to numerical grade 4;
3. Grade “Good” corresponds to numerical grade 3;
4. Grade “Basic” corresponds to numerical grade 2;
5. Grade “Poor” correspond to numerical grade 1, and
6. Grade “Non-existent” corresponds to numerical grade 0.

The score at the level of the dimension can be calculated by simply adding up the numerical grades of all criteria in a dimension and dividing it by number of criteria. Similarly, the aggregate score of an indicator is the sum of the scores of all dimensions divided by the number of dimensions, and the aggregate score of a target is calculated based on the average of the scores across all indicators in the target.

The indicator framework is intended to provide a tool that is relevant and applicable to all parliaments, regardless of their parliamentary context. Criteria are written in a way that seeks to encompass practices in all parliaments with different parliamentary systems: those with parliamentary, presidential or hybrid systems; unicameral or bicameral parliaments; and systems with federal or state parliaments. Therefore, where a parliament does not have a particular legal provision, or capacity or performance required by a criterion, it is not possible to assess the

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criterion as “non-applicable”. It will instead be rated as “non-existent” In these cases, the grade “non-existent” means that a given parliament does not have a certain capacity or performance described in a criterion, which, according to a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, a democratic parliament should have.

However, if participants in an assessment exercise consider that some criteria are genuinely not applicable in their parliament, and do not concern a non-existent practice that ideally should be present, such information should ideally be shared with the IPU or partner organizations, through the feedback form (available at the indicators’ website). This would contribute to improving the indicators and ensuring their universal relevance.

Though indicators should be relevant and applicable in all parliaments, regardless of their size, parliaments in smaller countries may need to make some adjustments in the assessment of part of a criterion. It is understandable that parliaments with a small number of parliamentarians cannot have, for example, separate committees for every single area, or entire units specialized for every segment of work, as large parliaments usually have. In such cases, small parliaments should adapt the criteria to their circumstances. They are also encouraged to contact us for assistance.

### **Recommendations for change**

The discussion at the assessment session should result in the identification of gaps or areas for improvements in parliamentary capacity and performance, as well as ideas for further action. The main findings and conclusions should be summarized at the end of the assessment of each dimension and be noted in the box for recommendations for change. This wrap-up can focus on identified strengths and weaknesses, areas recognized as priorities for further improvement, possible actions to be undertaken and potential obstacles to be overcome. Recommendations for change may range from significant changes to constitutional or legal provisions to more modest proposals to change procedures, allocate resources or adjust existing practices.

Although the dimensions contain an area to summarize the recommendations for change, main findings and conclusions of the assessment exercise, the discussion will likely generate more ideas and suggestions, which should also be documented. It is therefore advisable to prepare a written summary of each assessment session, and to circulate this among the participants. Audio or video recordings could also be taken.

### **Follow-up**

#### **Deciding on priorities for change**

The assessment exercise is not a goal in itself but rather a first step towards improvement. It is important to identify changes that parliament needs to introduce, as short-term or long-term goals, depending on the parliament’s current capacity. This may require some political decisions to be made based on the assessment outcomes and on the objectives of the assessment set at the preparatory stage. As indicated above, these changes may be large or small in scale, depending on the gaps identified and parliamentary priorities.

Deciding on how to introduce changes and who will be responsible can be a next step. Parliament may have sufficient internal capacity for making such decisions, but may also wish to ask for support from an external expert, such as a parliamentary strengthening organization, or to learn from the experience and good practice examples in other parliaments. Sources for further reading that are made available at the end of dimensions, whenever applicable, can be also consulted, which can contribute to gaining a better understanding of the issue and to obtaining insights into the global trends and experience and practices across parliaments.

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Parliament may wish to make publicly available the assessment process, the findings of the exercise and the action to be taken for improvement. If appropriately communicated, including in the media, a parliament's initiative to assess its capacity and performance in certain areas of its work could have a positive impact on public perceptions of the institution.

### **Creating an action plan**

It is advisable to create and adopt an action plan or similar planning document that will help to translate assessment outcomes and needed improvements into regular parliamentary procedures and practice. Such a document should define clear tasks, responsibilities and timelines. Making it publicly available could be beneficial as a confirmation of parliamentary commitment to develop and improve, while also maintaining parliamentary accountability for its implementation.

There may also be financial implications of any desired improvements and implementation of the action plan, which will need to be taken into account in the preparation of the action plan, including the possible sources of the necessary funding. Expected costs should be estimated in advance – if possible, at the parliamentary budget planning stage. If funds are not available from the current parliamentary budget, the parliament can request external financial support.

### **Monitoring and evaluating progress**

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of an action plan or other outcome documents is an important part of the process. It allows for the identification of possible challenges or impediments to the introduction of changes, thus allowing them to be addressed in a timely manner. Monitoring and evaluation of progress should continue even after the changes are implemented to make sure that changes are sustained and implemented well. Assessment of the same indicator(s) based on which the improvements have been initiated may be repeated at a certain point to assess progress over time.

Regular reporting to the public on the implementation of an action plan and on the progress achieved should be also be part of the follow-up process.

## Checklist

Political engagement	Is there political support for the self-assessment from the parliamentary leadership and from parliamentarians? Is there a cross-party leadership group to lead the process?
Initiating the self-assessment	Who will initiate the assessment, and when?
Objectives	What are the objectives of the exercise? Does everyone involved share the same understanding? What are the expected results? How is the assessment expected to contribute to parliamentary reform and development?
Organization	Is responsibility for organizing the assessment clearly assigned? Is there strong engagement at the administrative level for the organization of the assessment? Is there need for support from an external expert? Is it available?
Participation	Who will participate in the self-assessment? Are the participants sufficiently diverse?
Facilitation	How will the exercise be facilitated? Which partner organization can provide expert support in facilitating the exercise?
Timing	When will the self-assessment take place? How long will it last (number of days and sessions)? Will an introductory seminar be held for participants?
Collecting evidence	Who will collect and prepare information and data for the evidence part of dimensions? When will this be done? What additional background information can be provided for participants? Who will be responsible for sharing the indicators, the evidence collected, and additional information with participants?
Documenting the process	How will the process be documented, and by whom?
Outcome	What outcome documents will be produced (e.g. report, plan of action)? Who will be responsible for producing these documents?
Follow-up	What will be done with the outcome documents? Who will be responsible for follow-up? How will follow-up be monitored?