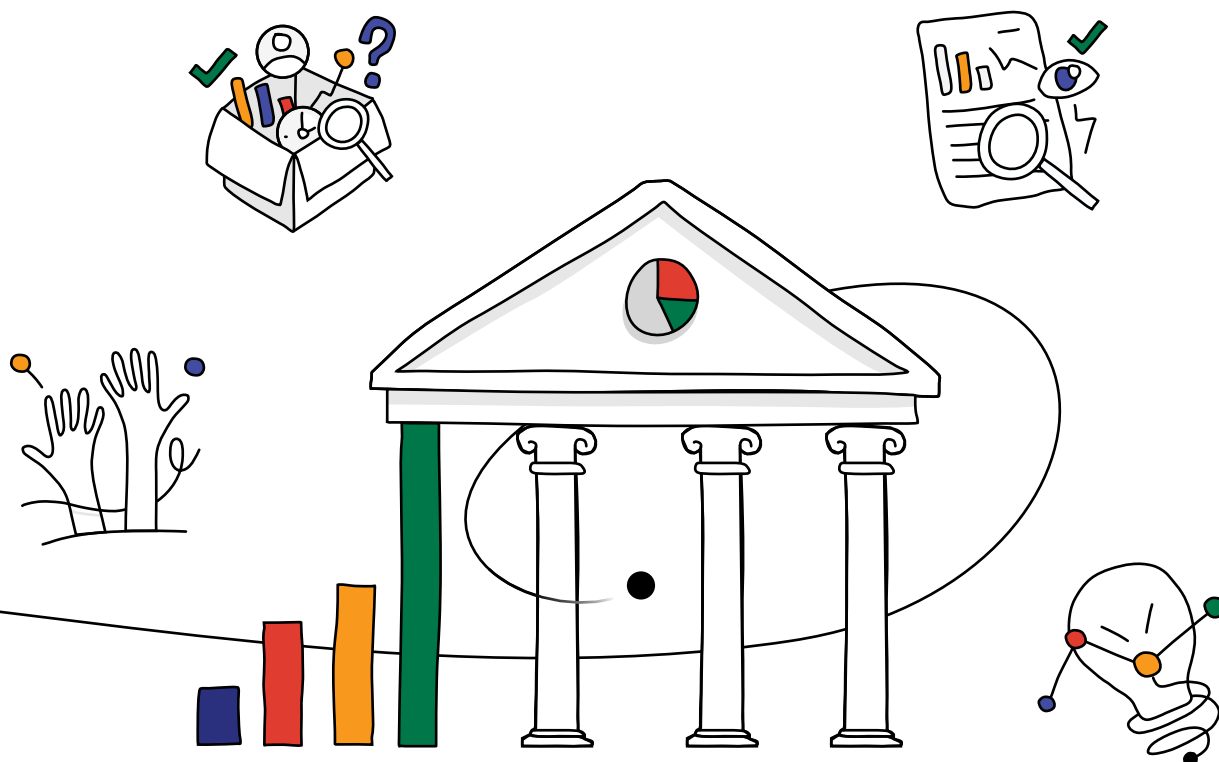




# EU Parliamentary Report

Summary of the Indicators for  
Democratic Parliament



Co-funded by  
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**PMG** PARLIAMENTARY  
MONITORING GROUP  
**OUTA** openup:  
ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

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## 1. Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention On The Elimination Of Discrimination Against Women
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EMB	Electoral Management Body
FOI	Freedom Of Information
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEA	Institute For Democracy And Electoral Assistance
IDP	Indicators For Democratic Parliaments
IEC	Electoral Commission of South Africa
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning And Intersex Persons
M&E	Monitoring And Evaluation
MPS	Members Of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PCI	Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PLS	Post-Legislative Scrutiny
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WFD	Westminster Foundation For Democracy

## 2. Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs), a comprehensive self-assessment tool developed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other international organisations. The IDPs aim to evaluate parliamentary capacity and performance against established democratic standards. They are designed to foster accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and inclusivity in parliamentary operations.

The report evaluates seven main targets, consisting of 25 indicators, 108 dimensions, and 500 assessment criteria. Each dimension is assessed using a six-grade descriptive scale, ranging from "Non-existent" to "Excellent." This method offers a detailed reflection on the current state of parliamentary practices and highlights areas for improvement.

### Key Insights

1. **Effective Parliament:** The report highlights strengths in parliamentary autonomy, procedures, and overall legislative processes. However, it identifies the need for improvements in time management for debates and in ensuring more thorough scrutiny of laws.
2. **Accountable Parliament:** The findings emphasise the importance of accountability mechanisms, such as transparency in financial reporting and public access to parliamentary activities. The report suggests the need for a more rigorous approach to managing public resources and enhancing ethical standards within parliament.
3. **Transparent Parliament:** Transparency is crucial for building public trust. While the report acknowledges the current mechanisms for public and media access, it also calls for further improvements in the timely dissemination of information and digital accessibility.
4. **Responsive Parliament:** The report underscores the importance of engaging with the public and responding to emerging policy issues. Parliament must create multiple avenues for public engagement and ensure that marginalised groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, are represented.
5. **Inclusive Parliament:** Inclusivity remains a critical area of focus. The report stresses that parliaments must proactively engage with diverse communities and ensure that civil society organisations (CSOs) have a voice in legislative processes. Outreach efforts should target historically marginalised populations to guarantee broader representation.

6. **Participatory Parliament:** Participation from citizens is essential for democratic governance. Parliaments need to facilitate better mechanisms for citizen involvement, including open consultations, petitions, and regular feedback on how public input is integrated into parliamentary work.
7. **Representative Parliament:** A parliament should mirror the society it represents, ensuring that all demographic groups, including minorities, have equal access and representation in decision-making processes.

### **Collaboration and Innovation**

In 2024, the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) partnered with OpenUp and the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) to develop the ParliMeter Dashboard, co-funded by the EU Delegation in South Africa, under their Enhancing Accountability Programme towards promoting accountability and transparency in South Africa. This open-source platform aims to enhance transparency and real-time monitoring of parliamentary activities. The dashboard will serve as a tool for assessing parliamentary performance, with a focus on inclusivity, data accessibility, and public engagement. The collaboration will provide stakeholders and citizens with greater insights into the legislative process and the performance of their representatives.

### **Recommendations and Way Forward**

The report concludes with actionable recommendations for improving parliamentary practices. These include enhancing public engagement tools, ensuring diversity in representation, and strengthening accountability mechanisms. The next phase of this initiative will focus on the application of the IDPs within the South African context, providing further insights into the progress and challenges faced by the parliament. Future assessments will continue to monitor each individual IDP target, emphasising continuous improvement in alignment with global democratic standards. This comprehensive approach provides an essential framework for parliaments worldwide, ensuring they uphold democratic values while addressing the evolving needs of society.

### 3. Introduction

This report sets out the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs). It looks at each target, its indicators, dimensions as well as assessment criteria. A description of each indicator, dimension and assessment will be given. According to the developers of the IDPs, they are suitable for all parliaments; this will be determined during the analysis for the reports to follow.

### 4. Background to Indicators for Democratic Parliament

The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IPDs) was an initiative that was developed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in partnership with leading organisations from the parliamentary community, such as: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Directorio Legislativo Foundation, Inter Pares/International IDEA, National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)<sup>2</sup>. Input on the indicators were given from more than 100 people in 50 parliaments.

The IDPs were designed as a comprehensive self-assessment tool that aids parliaments in evaluating their capacity, performance, and practice against already established democratic standards. The IDPs are also developed to support parliaments' learning and development that are brought about through key questions of effectiveness, accountability, transparency as well as various characteristics.

There are 7 targets that incorporate 25 indicators that are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16.6 and 16.7. SDG 16 covers the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building an effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. With regards to the specifics: Target 16.6 refers to the developing an effective, accountable, and transparent institution on all levels. It covers:

*"1. Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector and  
2. Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services".*

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<sup>2</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2024). *Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/impact/democracy-and-strong-parliaments/ipu-standards/indicators-democratic-parliaments>> [Accessed 10 September 2024].

Target 16.7 refers to the responsiveness, inclusivity, participatory and representative division making on all levels. It covers:

*“1. Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups. Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability, and population group”.*

The IDPs are broken down into 108 dimensions that are assigned assessment criteria. There is a total of 500 assessment criteria. The seven targets include: Effective parliament, Accountable parliament, Transparent parliament, Responsive parliament, Inclusive parliament, Participatory parliament, and Representative parliament Indicators<sup>3</sup>.

## 5. Targets and Indicators

For this section the Target, indicators and sub-indicators will be discussed.

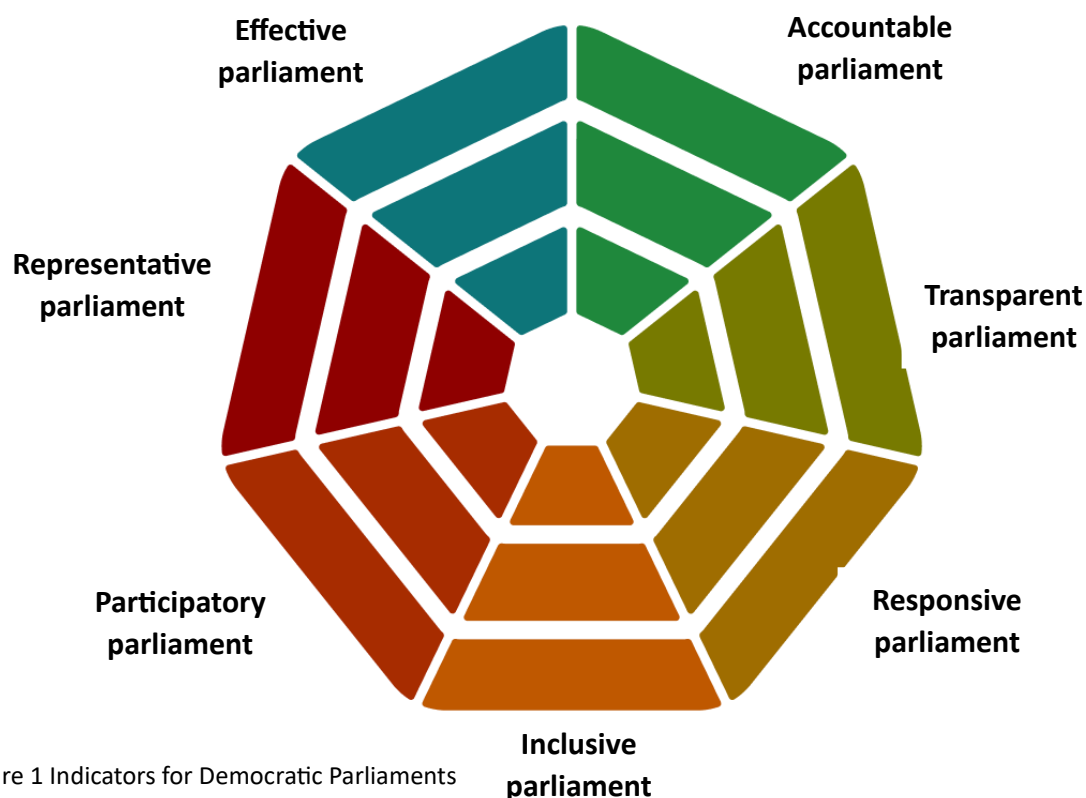


Figure 1 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *About indicators: Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/about/about-indicators> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

## 5.1 Target 1: Effective parliament<sup>4</sup>

The effective parliament is based on the effective organisation of business with regards to the democratic norms and values. This target includes the 11 indicators: Parliamentary autonomy, members of parliament (MPs), parliamentary procedures, parliamentary organisation, administrative capacity and independence, law-making, oversight, budget, representative role of MPs, relations with other branches of government, and key parliamentary powers.

An effective parliament has mechanisms and resources that ensures their own independence and have access to non-partisan professional staff that are separate from those in main civil services. Parliaments need to effectively draw up laws, hold governments accountable and be a national forum for concerning issues. They cooperate and consult effectively with regional authorities, in order to draw up policies that are driven by local needs as well as be involved in international affairs.

### 5.1.1 Indicator 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

This indicator deals with the autonomy of parliament in all aspects of its operations. Parliaments are a supreme representative body which exercise legislative power, set policy priorities, and scrutinise activities from the executive. It has the constitutional and legal power to adapt and adopt its own rules of procedure and set its own structures as well as determine the terms of reference and membership of committees. Furthermore, it may set its own agendas and timetables, set, and control its own budgets. It may set its own administrative and staffing arrangements and ensure it has the appropriate resources to carry out its own mandates. There are 4 dimensions under this indicator: Institutional autonomy, Procedural autonomy, Budgetary autonomy, and Administrative autonomy.

#### 5.1.1.1 Institutional autonomy

For this dimension it focuses on the legal provisions that are established by parliament's institutional autonomy. It is the foundation that aids parliament to represent the interest of the people. This includes convening regular or special sessions, electing its own bodies, establishing committees, and managing its operations. It further extends to drafting, proposing, debating, and passing legislation, overseeing the executive branch's activities, and determining its own rules. This dimension is

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<sup>4</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

established within the constitution, and it depends on the context of each country that may further develop laws and parliamentary rules of procedures.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitutional authority	An independent and autonomous parliament is established in the legal framework and/or by legal precedent.
Assessment criterion 2:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes parliament's autonomy in all areas of its functioning, including in determining its own rules, organisation, and procedures, in electing its own bodies, in establishing its committees, in calling plenary or debate sessions, and in setting its agenda.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, the provisions of the legal framework for institutional autonomy are recognised and followed by all parties, including the executive.

### 5.1.1.2 Procedural autonomy

This dimension is concerned with the provisions that give parliament autonomy over all its procedures. This allows parliament to fulfil its core functions. These procedures can cover matters including: the conduct and behaviour of MPs, including their right to resign; the rights, mandates, and immunities of MPs; the processes of proposing, debating, amending, and passing legislation; the autonomy of parliament in setting agendas, and managing plenary and committee affairs; the election and actions of the Speaker(s) of parliament.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides parliament with the authority to exercise complete control over determining its own procedures, including the power to establish and amend procedures enabling it to conduct its core functions.
Assessment criterion 2:	Rules of procedure	Rules of procedure support the authority granted to parliament under the legal framework to determine its own procedures. Parliament has a robust framework for creating, reviewing, modifying, and endorsing its own procedures. Parliament's rules of procedure do not require approval by the executive.

Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, parliament has autonomy over determining and implementing its procedures. Rules of procedure are developed and modified in accordance with the established framework.
Assessment criterion 4:	Non-partisan implementation	Parliamentary procedures are implemented in a non-partisan manner. The Speaker upholds compliance with those procedures. MPs from different parliamentary parties, factions and other affiliations are treated equally and impartially.

#### 5.1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy

This dimension includes the parliament's autonomy in regard to its own budget, finances and resources that includes offices, supplies, assets, and staff. The budget may include funding various services such as a non-partisan office responsible for providing expert budget analysis for policy implementation and/ or security services for parliament and MPs.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes parliament's autonomy over its own budget, including the authority to approve and manage this budget independently from the executive.
Assessment criterion 2:	Resources	The parliamentary budget provides parliament with the financial resources needed to effectively conduct its mandate. This budget is sufficient to allow parliament to pay MPs' compensation, hire staff, develop, and finance on-partisan analysis and oversight offices, ensure the security of parliament, invest in technology and infrastructure, procure supplies and equipment, and acquire other assets and resources as necessary for its operations.
Assessment criterion 3:	Budget management and scrutiny	Parliament has the expertise and resources to use its funds effectively. Management of the parliamentary budget is subject to regular scrutiny through internal audits and an external, independent supreme audit institution.

#### 5.1.1.4 Administrative autonomy

The dimension covers the extent to which parliament as an independent parliamentary administration allows MPs, staff, and parliamentary offices to function effectively. It refers to the institutional independence of parliamentary services, including staff recruitment and management. It grants a designated parliamentary authority the power to define the organisational structure, establish necessary units, and manage staff independently.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for parliament's administrative autonomy, enabling parliament to organise and staff its administration independently and to exercise effective control over the precincts in which its premises are located.
Assessment criterion 2:	Management	The parliamentary administration is overseen by a non-partisan, objective individual or office, such as a Secretary General, who is exclusively appointed or elected by, and accountable to, parliament.
Assessment criterion 3:	Non-partisan administration	A clear distinction exists between non-partisan staff serving parliament itself, and part is a staff who support individual members and parties.

#### 5.1.2 Indicator 1.2 Members of parliament

The effectiveness of parliament depends on MPs' ability to perform core functions effectively. Key factors that influence this includes provisions for taking up and leaving office, parliamentary immunity, rules on office incompatibility, MPs' remuneration, available support, and resources, as well as opportunities for ongoing professional development. There are 5 dimensions under this indicator: Status of Members of Parliament, Non-accountability and Inviolability, Incompatibility of Office, Access to Resources and Professional Development.

##### 5.1.2.1 Status of members of parliament

This dimension focuses on the formal processes when MPs take up and leave office, as outlined in the legal framework and parliamentary procedures. These provisions should be clear and ensure that elected or appointed MPs can assume and retain their office until the end of their term without unreasonable impediments. MPs are generally expected to serve a full term once in office. In some

cases, MPs may resign before their term ends or be removed from office through a recognised legal process. Forfeiture, often called "disqualification," follows a judicial decision.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Term of office	Provisions of the legal framework and/or rules of procedure clearly defined when duly elected or appointed MPs take up and leave office.
Assessment criterion 2:	Swearing-in of MPs	The legal framework provides for the swearing-in of MPs so that they can participate fully in the proceedings of parliament. The relevant provisions are non-discriminatory; for example, they do not require MPs to take a [religious] oath against their conscience.
Assessment criterion 3:	Ending the mandate before the end of the term	Clear, formal provisions establish the process by which an MP's mandate may end before the end of their term. These provisions include a clearly defined process for MPs to voluntarily resign. Where there are provisions for involuntary leaving of office –such as expulsion by parliament, incompatibility of office, or disqualification–such provisions are limited, specific and implemented in accordance with due-process standards.
Assessment criterion 4:	Leaving a political party	Clear, formal provisions are in place for cases where MPs leave, or are expelled from, their political party before their term of office expires. Individual MPs cannot lose their seat as a result of expressing views that differ from those of their political party.

### 5.1.2.2 Non-accountability and inviolability

This dimension addresses the legal protections that ensure MPs can perform their duties freely without fear of legal consequences. This is also known as "parliamentary non-accountability," that safeguards MPs' freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings, and usually cannot be revoked. They also often extend to former MPs for actions taken during their term in office. Some jurisdictions also grant MPs protections against arrest or detention, even in cases unrelated to parliamentary duties, through "parliamentary inviolability". In such cases, parliament must lift the immunity before an MP can be arrested, detained, or their office searched. However, strict application of inviolability in cases unrelated to parliamentary duties may unfairly deny victims effective legal recourse.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal provisions on parliamentary non-accountability	The legal framework contains strongly entrenched provisions on parliamentary non-accountability for MPs, covering votes cast and expressions made both within and outside parliament. This protection is also extended to former MPs in respect of their previous participation in parliamentary proceedings. It can never be lifted.
Assessment criterion 2:	Restrictions on MPs' freedom of speech	Any restrictions on the free expression of views by MPs both within and outside parliament are clearly defined in the legal framework and are limited to matters such as maintaining order and decorum in the chamber and eliminating hate speech.
Assessment criterion 3:	Legal provisions on parliamentary inviolability	The legal framework contains strongly entrenched provisions restricting the arrest or detention of MPs, and/or searches of their person and their personal/working space, without parliamentary consent. Such consent is always required when an MP faces legal action in connection the exercise of their parliamentary duties.
Assessment criterion 4:	Parliamentary inviolability in practice	Parliament follows due process when it receives a request to lift the inviolability of an MP, including by allowing them to present a defence and by carefully reviewing the legal and factual soundness of the request. The legal framework governing the inviolability of MPs is implemented in a clear and unambiguous manner. MPs, regardless of political affiliation, are not faced with politically motivated legal action.

**5.1.2.3 Incompatibility of office**

This dimension addresses restrictions on MPs holding additional offices or roles, known as "incompatibilities of office". These limits aim to preserve the separation of powers, ensuring parliamentary independence, and to allow MPs to focus primarily on their duties while minimising conflicts of interest.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework places specific limits on MPs holding incompatible offices, such as being a member of both houses in a
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		bicameral parliament, holding judicial office or holding office in the civil service.
Assessment criterion 2:	Resolution of incompatibility of office	The legal framework enables MPs to quickly resolve incompatibility-of-office issues when they arise, and supporting processes are in place for this purpose.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, rules, and provisions on the incompatibility of office of MPs are implemented fully and impartially. Parliament publishes data on other offices and roles held by MPs.

#### 5.1.2.4 Access to resources

This dimension focuses on the remuneration and resources provided to MPs, ensuring they are adequately supported to fulfil their parliamentary duties. This includes salaries, allowances, access to staff, and the necessary facilities and resources for effective work. MPs are also provided with access to facilities such as computing equipment, communication tools, official transport, and constituency offices. Many parliaments allow MPs to hire personal staff, and MPs can also utilise expert services like research and budget analysis provided by parliamentary administrations. These resources should be made available to MPs in a fair, non-partisan manner.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules and procedures	Clear rules and procedures, possibly established in law, govern access to resources for MPs, including how these resources are determined and how MPs have to account for their use of these resources.
Assessment criterion 2:	Adequacy of remuneration and allowances	MPs' remuneration and allowances are set at a level that allows any citizen, regardless of their means, to stand as an MP and to perform their duties effectively.
Assessment criterion 3:	Process for determining remuneration and allowances	A proper process is in place to ensure that MPs' remuneration and allowances are determined fairly and in a non-partisan manner, possibly via an independent body or process.
Assessment criterion 4:	Staff, facilities, and other resources	All MPs, irrespective of their political party, have access to staff, facilities, and other resources, as proportionate to parliament's circumstances and to their particular role, to enable them to perform their duties effectively.

#### 5.1.2.5 Professional development

This dimension focuses on the professional development opportunities provided to MPs to help them effectively perform their core functions. It includes both programmes and resources offered by parliament, as well as those delivered in partnership with other organisations. It excludes political party programs or informal mentoring, though these can also contribute to MPs' development. MPs typically bring diverse experiences and political skills to their roles, but parliamentary work requires specialised knowledge and skills, such as understanding parliamentary procedures, committee operations, and managing constituency offices. Parliament has a responsibility to provide training and support to help MPs develop these capabilities. This task is usually managed by the parliamentary administration. Induction programs for new MPs are especially important, providing essential knowledge early on. Parliament should also offer ongoing professional development opportunities tailored to MPs' evolving needs throughout their term.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Induction programme	Parliament has an induction programme that is tailored to, and attended by, all new MPs, and covers key aspects of their work, rights, and responsibilities. This programme is delivered or overseen by the parliamentary administration.
Assessment criterion 2:	Comprehensive information package	All MPs receive a comprehensive information package, covering parliamentary procedures and their rights
Assessment criterion 3:	Ongoing professional development	All MPs have access to an ongoing professional development programme, which is developed in consultation with MPs and tailored to their needs.

#### 5.1.3 Indicator 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

This indicator focuses on the specific responsibilities assigned to MPs for conducting legislative business, as outlined in the frameworks governing plenary activities. These frameworks are found in a chamber's rules of procedure, regulate MPs' ability to set the agenda, convene meetings, conduct debates, make decisions, and maintain institutional records. It also includes provisions for addressing plenary matters and sustaining parliamentary functions during emergencies or crises. This indicator is essential for ensuring that MPs fulfil their legislative duties in a responsible and accountable manner. There are 9 dimensions under this indicator: Rules of Procedure, Emergency or Crisis Procedures,

Parliamentary Calendar, Convening Sessions and Setting the Agenda, Quorum, Debate, Voting, Record-keeping, and Dissolution.

#### 5.1.3.1 Rules of procedure

This dimension analyses the formal powers and provisions outlined in a parliament's rules of procedure, which codify all procedural aspects of parliamentary business. In unicameral parliaments, a single set of rules governs the entire institution, while bicameral parliaments may have separate rules for each chamber, reflecting their independence. In some countries, a legal framework exists that guides how parliament carries out its mandate, and the rules of procedure should align with this framework.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Autonomy to set own rules of procedure	Parliament has the authority to independently adopt and amend its rules of procedure.
Assessment criterion 2:	Scope	Parliament's rules of procedure are consistent with the legal framework and codify all procedural aspects of parliamentary business.
Assessment criterion 3:	Implementation and interpretation	The rules of procedure are implemented and interpreted consistently. Past practices and interpretations are documented and made available to MPs and the public.
Assessment criterion 4:	Revision of the rules	The rules of procedure are subject to periodic review and proposals for amendments by MPs, typically through a procedure committee.

#### 5.1.3.2 Emergency or crisis procedures

This dimension addresses the procedures that allow parliament to operate during emergencies or crises, potentially altering its regular functioning. These procedures are only activated in legally defined, exceptional circumstances and may be specified in a country's legal framework, parliamentary rules of procedure, or state-of-emergency legislation. These special procedures enable parliament to modify its operations to continue legislative functions during emergencies.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework and legal precedent clarify the role of parliament in emergencies and crises and define the circumstances in which emergency or crisis procedures can be used.
Assessment criterion 2:	Emergency or crisis procedures	Parliamentary rules of procedure outline how debate, agenda-setting, oversight, and law-making activities are to be conducted in an emergency or crisis situation, including clarification of the respective roles of executive and legislative bodies.
Assessment criterion 3:	Flexibility	The emergency or crisis procedure allow for flexibility in the representation and number of MPs present for a debate and prescribe the specific powers available to MPs with regard to speaking time, directives, and voting. They also establish whether parliamentary business may be conducted in person, virtually or using a hybrid model.
Assessment criterion 4:	Business continuity plans	The parliamentary administration has business continuity plans that support the operation of parliament during emergency and crisis situations. Business continuity plans are reviewed and updated periodically.

**5.1.3.3 Parliamentary calendar**

This dimension pertains to the availability of a parliamentary calendar that outlines debate schedules, in-session periods, sittings, recesses, and holidays, as well as committee-related information. It also addresses the procedures for developing and maintaining the calendar, which should be incorporated into parliamentary rules of procedure. Typically, parliamentary leadership is responsible for this process, and in some systems, the calendar requires parliamentary approval and amendment.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Development and maintenance	The rules of procedure outline the times throughout the year when parliament is in session and conducts legislative sittings and other business. They define the process for the development and maintenance of the parliamentary calendar.
Assessment criterion 2:	Scope	The parliamentary calendar includes detailed information related to plenary sessions, committee affairs and forthcoming legislative activity.

Assessment criterion 3:	Transparency	The calendar is publicly available and is regularly updated in a timely manner.
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#### 5.1.3.4 Convening sessions and setting the agenda

This dimension addresses the procedures by which parliament convenes sessions, including initial sessions after elections, and how it sets its agenda during these sessions. It involves the rights of parliament and MPs to hold regular, special, or extraordinary sessions, as well as regulations ensuring a maximum interval between sessions. Furthermore, it focuses on the responsibilities for agenda development and the authority of MPs to vote on agenda changes, including legislative matters for debate. Particular attention is given to MPs' rights to meet regularly to fulfil their core functions, their opportunities to participate in agenda-setting, and the mechanisms for calling special or extraordinary sessions.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Convening parliament after elections	The legal framework specifies a maximum number of days within which parliament must meet for its first session following an election and establishes that parliament meets at regular intervals in order to exercise its core functions.
Assessment criterion 2:	Sessions	Sessions are determined by the parliamentary leadership or special committees as set out in the rules of procedure. Extraordinary sessions, and sittings convened using urgent procedures, are convened in accordance with the rules, and only when required for public-interest reasons.
Assessment criterion 3:	Agenda-setting	All MPs have the right to participate in agenda-setting in accordance with parliament's rules of procedure, including to propose agenda items. Agenda-setting provisions are applied consistently in practice.
Assessment criterion 4:	Publication and advance notice	The agendas for sessions are published well in advance, giving MPs sufficient time to prepare.

#### 5.1.3.5 Quorum

This dimension pertains to the quorum requirements, which specify the minimum number of MPs necessary for parliament to conduct its business validly. A quorum serves as a practical measure that

enables parliament to function without the presence of all MPs. Different countries adopt various practices regarding quorum requirements for debates and voting on legislation. Many parliaments have reduced or eliminated quorum requirements for debates while retaining them for voting on legislation, aiming to prevent decision-making by a minimal number of MPs. Quorum rules are generally outlined in a country's legal framework and the chamber's rules of procedure.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the minimum number of MPs who must be present in order for parliamentary business to be conducted in the event of a quorum call.
Assessment criterion 2:	Right to call for a quorum	Parliament's rules of procedure define the powers of MPs to request a quorum to verify if the number of MPs present is lower than the minimum needed to conduct parliamentary business.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	Quorum rules are consistently implemented in practice.

### 5.1.3.6 Debate

This dimension focuses on the arrangements for parliamentary debate, which is a fundamental right of MPs in democratic systems. Debate allows MPs to publicly express their support or opposition to policies and acts, reflecting the priorities of their constituents and parties. It also serves as a mechanism for oversight of executive actions by discussing government proposals, programs, and services. For effective debate, it is essential for parliament to establish rules of procedure that structure and regulate discussions, ensuring they are clear and impartially applied to all MPs, regardless of party affiliation.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules of procedure	Parliament's rules of procedure clearly define MPs' powers in relation to debate. They give MPs the ability to table motions and determine the order of motions tabled, to make comments for the record, to propose amendments, to raise points of order and to hold open a debate.
Assessment criterion 2:	Time allocation	Ample time is allocated for debate on issues, legislation, and other matters.

Assessment criterion 3:	Transparency	Debates are open to the public in-person and virtually, and official records of debates are published in a timely manner.
Assessment criterion 4:	Impartiality	Debate is conducted in manner consistent with parliament's rules of procedure, which are impartially applied by the Speaker to all MPs regardless of party or group affiliation.

#### 5.1.3.7 Voting

This dimension addresses the arrangements for voting by MPs, either by voice or ballot. The ability of MPs to vote on policies or proposals for laws is crucial for fulfilling their representative role. Voting powers should be exercised solely by MPs, who must be able to cast their votes freely, without interference or influence.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Restricted to MPs	Parliament's rules of procedure set out provisions on voting. Voting powers are restricted to MPs. If parliament allows proxy or remote voting, the related mechanisms are also stipulated in its rules of procedure.
Assessment criterion 2:	Minority right to call for a vote	Parliament's rules of procedure establish how a minority of MPs can call for a vote be held on a specific matter.
Assessment criterion 3:	Recording and publication	Parliament's rules of procedure clearly define how votes will be recorded and published. Any exceptions are set out in the rules.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	Parliament's rules of procedure on voting are applied consistently in practice. MPs are able to vote freely without interference or improper influence.

#### 5.1.3.8 Record-keeping

This dimension focuses on parliamentary record-keeping, which is important for institutional sustainability. Records should encompass formal decisions and proceedings, detailed transcripts of all MP deliberations and votes, daily proceedings, statements, questions for the record, and any other business conducted in plenary. Public access to records is important, except for those from classified or private committee meetings as specified in the rules of procedure.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Record-keeping procedures	Parliament keeps records of all decisions, votes, deliberations, daily proceedings, documents presented and considered, and other plenary business, as well as committee business and hearings.
Assessment criterion 2:	Storage and publication	Parliament's records are stored securely in a central repository that is easily accessible to MPs, staff, and the public in print and online. Any exceptions to the publication of records are defined in the rules of procedure.
Assessment criterion 3:	Availability in all official working languages	Records are made available in the official working languages outlined in the constitution.

**5.1.3.9 Dissolution**

This dimension is concerned with the process of parliamentary dissolution, which allows for new elections to be held. The legal framework should clearly define the powers and arrangements for dissolving parliament, as this authority depends on the government's structure and the powers assigned to both the executive and parliament. Clear guidelines should be established concerning the roles of individuals involved in the dissolution, including rules on the length of the parliamentary term, the procedure at its conclusion, timelines for MPs assuming or vacating office, resources available to outgoing and incoming officials, and requirements for record storage or official record-keeping. Furthermore, parliament's rules of procedure or relevant committee regulations may outline protocols for vacating or transitioning from parliamentary premises.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitutional provisions	The constitution defines the end of the parliamentary term, as well as the authority and procedure for dissolution of parliament before the end of the term. These provisions and any associated rules clearly specify the roles of those involved in this process.
Assessment criterion 2:	Dissolution procedures	The impact of dissolution on the work of parliament is detailed in parliament's rules of procedure and practice, including the procedures for ending the parliamentary session and for the end of the term of outgoing MPs.

Assessment criterion 3:	Archiving and ethics requirements	Parliament's rules of procedure set out the record-keeping, archiving and ethics requirements that outgoing MPs must comply with when parliament is dissolved.
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#### 5.1.4 Indicator 1.4 Parliamentary organisation

Parliament is a unique institution that unites MPs of equal status, representing a spectrum of political opinions. This necessitates a collective decision-making system and a complex organisational structure. The plenary session is the most visible aspect of parliamentary work, serving as the culmination of activities conducted in committees. The presidium, functioning as a collective governing body, ensures that political issues are brought before parliament, while the Speaker manages parliamentary operations in a fair and impartial manner. Parliamentary committees, composed of MPs appointed or elected by parliament, delve into specific issues in greater detail. There are 6 dimensions under this indicator: Plenary, Speaker, Presidium, Parliamentary Committees, Political Groups, and Cross-party Groups.

##### 5.1.4.1 Plenary

This dimension pertains to the arrangements for plenary sessions, where parliament conducts its most critical law-making and oversight activities. These sessions involve hearings with high-ranking state officials, such as presidents and prime ministers. The plenary serves as a platform for political debates and for voting on legislation that has been previously discussed in committees.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for the holding of plenary sessions. All major decisions made on behalf of parliament are debated and voted on by the plenary.
Assessment criterion 2:	Venue	The legal framework establish that plenary sessions are only to be held in the respective chamber(s) on the parliamentary premises, except where alternative venues or virtual sittings are permitted, or in other circumstances where imperative reasons dictate such changes.
Assessment criterion 3:	Transparency	The legal framework establishes that plenary sessions are public. Agendas for plenary sessions are available in advance. Duly accredited media representatives are authorised to attend plenary sessions, as

		are members of the public. Closed plenary sessions are only held in exceptional circumstances as prescribed by law.
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#### 5.1.4.2 Speaker

This dimension focuses on the mandate, role, functions, and duties of the Speaker, who primarily facilitates orderly and meaningful discussion in parliament. The Speaker is a MP elected by peers at the beginning of each legislature to preside over the parliamentary chamber or, in unicameral systems, over parliament as a whole. As "first among equal", the Speaker possesses the necessary authority and resources to fulfil this role.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the mandate, role, functions, and duties of the Speaker, establishes the rules for electing the Speaker and defines the Speaker's term of office.
Assessment criterion 2:	Role	The legal framework mandates the Speaker to coordinate and manage the work of the parliamentary bodies, to manage the overall functioning of parliament or a chamber, to preside over sessions, and to exercise full administrative powers within the parliament or chamber.
Assessment criterion 3:	Impartiality	The Speaker is required to discharge their duties impartially and neutrally, to manage the floor fairly, to provide equal opportunities for all political groups and members to engage in debates, and to distribute parliamentary resources equitably.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	The Speaker has access to the necessary resources to carry out their mandate, including a personal apparatus with sufficient members of staff.

#### 5.1.4.3 Presidium

This dimension addresses the provisions defining the composition and mandate of the collective governing body of parliament, known as the presidium. The presidium is primarily responsible for organising parliamentary work, coordinating committee activities, drafting the agenda for plenary sessions, and addressing other critical operational issues. The presidium reflects the political makeup of parliament, representing both majority and minority parties. It is usually chaired by the Speaker and includes Deputy Speaker(s), committee chairs, and leaders of political groups.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the composition of the presidium and establishes its mandate as the collective governing body of parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Composition	The presidium is representative of the political configuration of parliament. It is chaired by the Speaker, and includes the Deputy Speaker(s), the chairs of parliamentary committees and the leaders of all political groups.
Assessment criterion 3:	Role	The presidium organises the work of parliament, coordinates the work of committees, drafts the agenda for plenary sessions, and decides on other operational issues of importance.
Assessment criterion 4:	Transparency	The presidium meets on a regular basis as foreseen in the rules of procedure. Information about its meetings and conclusions are made publicly available.

**5.1.4.4 Parliamentary committees**

This dimension covers the provisions governing the powers, functions, composition, governance, and procedures of parliamentary committees. A strong committee system enhances accountability and efficiency while facilitating public engagement. The types and roles of committees vary across parliaments, classified into “standing” (or permanent) and “ad hoc” (or temporary) categories. Committee meetings and documents should be publicly accessible unless there are valid justifications for closed sessions.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	Parliament has a clear legal mandate to establish committees, and to define their powers, functions, composition, governance, and procedures.
Assessment criterion 2:	Role	Parliamentary committees are mandated to review proposals for laws, to obtain information from the executive, to summon government officials, to report to parliament on their findings, and to make recommendations.
Assessment criterion 3:	Procedures	Parliament’s rules of procedure provide clear guidance with regard to committee meetings, such as the time of a meeting, notice of a

		meeting, the preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, record-keeping, voting and reporting.
Assessment criterion 4:	Transparency	Committee meetings are open and accessible to the public unless there is sufficient justification for a closed meeting to be held. Meetings are broadcast, live-streamed and/or recorded for future public access. Committee documents are publicly available.
Assessment criterion 5:	Resources	Parliamentary committees are supported by sufficient human, financial and administrative resources, including qualified staff
Assessment criterion 6:	Practice	In practice, committee meetings are held regularly on the basis of a meeting agenda that is duly approved and published. Committees interact with the public in multiple ways. Committee decisions, findings, recommendations, and other conclusions are produced and reported to parliament.

#### 5.1.4.5 Political groups

This dimension addresses the provisions that allow MPs to form political groups to coordinate activities and pursue shared political objectives. Members of a political group belong to the same party. Rules governing political groups, including their formation, privileges, and the rights of independent MPs, differ across parliaments. These rules often establish a minimum number of MPs required to form a political group; this threshold should be reasonable and not hinder MPs' rights to organise.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework clearly establishes the right for MPs to form political groups, and stipulates the rules governing their formation, rights, and responsibilities.
Assessment criterion 2:	Equitable representation	Parliament's rules of procedure guarantee the equitable allocation of speaking time to political groups in plenary sessions and debates and ensure that such groups are represented in parliament's management structures, including the presidium and permanent committees.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	The legal framework grants political groups financial and administrative resources to support their functioning. Political groups account publicly for their use of these resources.

Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, political groups exercise their powers in parliament systematically and rigorously, and all rights prescribed bylaw or in parliament’s rules of procedure, including those on equitable speaking time and access to resources, are duly implemented.
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#### 5.1.4.6 Cross-party groups

This dimension covers the provisions governing the establishment and functioning of cross-party groups, which serve as crucial forums for MPs from different parties to exchange information, discuss policy issues, and engage with relevant organisations. Cross-party groups also referred to as “caucuses”, “all-party parliamentary groups”, or “inter-parliamentary friendship groups” unite MPs from various political parties and, in bicameral systems, from one or both chambers of parliament to advocate for specific causes or issues.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework authorises MPs to establish cross-party groups or presents no impediment to the establishment of such groups.
Assessment criterion 2:	Resources	Parliament provides cross-party groups with meeting venues and, in some cases, other resources such as administrative support.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, cross-party groups have been established in parliament. Cross-party groups meet regularly and interact with relevant organisations, and the public is informed about their work.

#### 5.1.5 Indicator 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

This dimension addresses the necessity for a capable and independent parliamentary administration to support parliamentary business. The administration should operate independently of the executive, free from political influence, and provide impartial support to all MPs. Support from the parliamentary administration varies across parliaments and includes adequately trained staff, appropriate facilities, digital technologies, and the management of documents, policies, systems, and practices. There are 6 dimensions under this indicator: Mandates of the Parliamentary Administration, Human Resource Management, Expert Support, Facilities, Digital Technologies, and Document Management.

#### 5.1.5.1 Mandates of the parliamentary administration

This dimension focuses on the existence and mandates of the parliamentary administration, encompassing its powers, governance, and responsibilities. For effective functioning, the administration must be distinct from the executive and manage its staffing and daily operations without political interference. Furthermore, the administration should publicly report on its activities, monitor, and evaluate its performance, and strive for continuous improvement.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The parliamentary administration is established through a clear legal framework, which codifies its mandates, powers, governance, and responsibilities.
Assessment criterion 2:	Governance	A parliamentary body oversees the running of the parliamentary administration. The day-to-day management of the parliamentary administration is ensured by the Secretary General
Assessment criterion 3:	Responsibilities	The parliamentary administration supports the day-to-day organisational, administrative, and technical functions of parliament. It provides high-quality support and services in line with the principles of impartiality, equity, neutrality, and non-partisanship.
Assessment criterion 4:	Reporting	The parliamentary administration reports regularly to parliament on its work and performance, either in a stand-alone report or as part of regular parliamentary performance reporting.

#### 5.1.5.2 Human Resource management

This dimension focuses on the human resources essential for an effective parliament, addressing non-partisan staff managed by the parliamentary administration, excluding political staff supporting individual MPs and political groups. Effective human resource management is vital for building institutional capacity and ensuring sustained performance. Comprehensive development and training of staff are crucial for the parliamentary administration to meet the long-term needs of parliament.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Policies and leave allocations	Clear human resource policies are established, implemented, and regularly reviewed to support the effective management of parliamentary staff. These policies govern the recruitment and
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		retention of parliamentary staff, as well as disciplinary procedures, ethical conduct, working hours
Assessment criterion 2:	Processes	Processes are in place for planning, performance management and reporting. Clear job descriptions are also in place, along with details of salaries, benefits, and other performance incentives. Human resources are sufficient to support all aspects of parliamentary business.
Assessment criterion 3:	Recruitment and advancement	Rules and procedures determined by parliament are in place for the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff. Parliamentary staff are recruited and promoted through fair and open competition, based on merit, without political involvement.
Assessment criterion 4:	Training and specialisation	The parliamentary administration has a professional development framework for parliamentary staff, which includes training and specialisation in specific areas, and which recognises the unique skills and capabilities required.

### 5.1.5.3 Expert support

This dimension focuses on the expert support provided to parliamentary bodies and MPs to facilitate evidence-informed decision-making. Access to relevant, impartial, and timely information from the parliamentary administration enhances MPs' ability to verify, clarify, or contest executive sources, in order to maintain the separation of powers and improving parliamentary effectiveness. Expert support may be delivered through various means, including procedural and committee staff, research units, parliamentary libraries, and institutes. The parliamentary administration should be equipped to offer expert support across multiple areas, such as budgeting, gender mainstreaming, parliamentary diplomacy, and public participation.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Scope and organisation	Rules, service charters or guides outline the scope and organisation of the expert support available to MPs. Standards of service delivery are specified and monitored through agreed quality-control procedures.
Assessment criterion 2:	Staff	The parliamentary administration has an adequate number of professional staff providing high-quality expert support to parliament.

Assessment criterion 3:	Non-partisan service delivery	The parliamentary administration provides expert support in a non-partisan manner to all MPs, regardless of political affiliation.
Assessment criterion 4:	Expected levels of service	Standards of service delivery are specified and monitored through agreed quality-control procedures. Feedback from MPs is regularly sought and used to improve levels of service.

#### 5.1.5.4 Facilities

This dimension concerns the facilities available to MPs and staff. This dimension addresses the facilities available to MPs and staff, which may include office space, furniture, ICT infrastructure, and other equipment located within parliamentary premises or constituencies. Additional provisions may encompass housing, transportation, parking, catering, cleaning services, and security services. Increasingly, parliaments are also offering childcare facilities for MPs and staff with family responsibilities, as well as access for the media and the public, including individuals with disabilities.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Fitness for purpose	Parliamentary facilities are fit for purpose in terms of the needs of parliament and are appropriately maintained and improved as required.
Assessment criterion 2:	Equitable access	Office space and other facilities are allocated to MPs, political groups, and staff in accordance with transparent rules and in an equitable manner, regardless of political affiliation.
Assessment criterion 3:	Access for all members of the community	Parliamentary facilities are accessible to all MPs and staff, including people living with disabilities.

#### 5.1.5.5 Digital technologies

This dimension addresses the digital technologies accessible to MPs and staff to facilitate their business operations, public participation, and information accessibility. “Digital technologies” encompass hardware, software, infrastructure, and applications hosted on parliamentary premises or in the cloud. For effective digital transformation, parliaments must establish clear strategic directions, including relevant policies and plans, as well as robust ICT governance, leadership, and oversight structures.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Strategic direction	Parliament has a clear strategic direction, including policies and plans, on the use of digital technologies.
Assessment criterion 2:	Governance, leadership, and oversight	Parliament has strong governance, leadership, and oversight processes in place to support its digital transformation, ideally involving MPs. Digital technologies are introduced in line with parliament's needs and strategies and are constantly developed and consolidated.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	The deployment of digital technologies is supported by dedicated and adequate financial and human resources. Parliament has a dedicated ICT budget, and the required hardware and software are accessible to all MPs and staff.
Assessment criterion 4:	Cybersecurity	Cybersecurity is prioritised in order to protect the integrity of parliament's digital assets, and to ensure that MPs and staff are able to conduct their work safely and without undue interference. Cybersecurity systems and processes are robust and use recognised standards and guidelines to proactively monitor and prevent attempts at unauthorised access to any part of the parliamentary digital estate.

**5.1.5.6 Document management**

This dimension focuses on document management systems that facilitate the collection, categorisation, analysis, storage, and dissemination of data and information. Effective document management is crucial for maintaining a record of parliamentary activities, providing MPs and staff with necessary information for their duties, keeping the public informed about parliamentary proceedings, and preserving institutional memory.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules and procedures	Parliament has document management rules, procedures and processes in place covering the creation, processing, categorisation, storage, archiving, retrieval, deletion, and dissemination of information.
Assessment criterion 2:	Central repository	All parliamentary documents are stored securely in one or more central repositories.

Assessment criterion 3:	Access to parliamentary documents	Parliamentary documents can be accessed by MPs and staff as required and by members of the public in accordance with document management rules and procedures.
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### 5.1.6 Indicator 1.6 Law-making

In most jurisdictions, law-making is primarily the function of parliament, with guiding principles typically outlined in the constitution and legal framework. This indicator encompasses the entire law-making process, including legislative drafting, the powers of participants to initiate, debate, amend, and adopt legislation, and the procedural steps legislation undergoes in both houses of bicameral systems. It also addresses fast-tracking mechanisms and the safeguards ensuring adequate consideration during expedited processes. Constitutional amendments are treated separately from ordinary laws. Furthermore, the indicator includes the promulgation of legislation its assent, enactment, and publication in the official journal after parliamentary passage. Many parliaments have established post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) processes, including those for delegated legislation, which are also included in this indicator. There are 7 dimensions under this indicator: Powers in Law-making, Constitution-making and Amendment, Legislative Procedure, Legislative Drafting, Enactment, Official Publication, and Post-legislative Scrutiny.

#### 5.1.6.1 Powers in law-making

This dimension focuses on the powers of participants in the legislative process to initiate, debate, amend, and adopt legislation, primarily concerning MPs. All MPs should possess the authority to initiate legislation and propose amendments. While reasonable restrictions can be imposed such as those related to public expenditure or taxation, these should not unduly limit MPs' engagement in the legislative process.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Right to initiate legislation	The constitution establishes the right of all MPs to initiate legislation in parliament. Any restrictions on this right, such as a requirement for a minimum number of MPs to initiate legislation, or restrictions concerning financial proposals, are limited, and clearly defined. The constitution may also permit other participants to initiate legislation, such as the executive and its agencies, or groups of citizens.
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Assessment criterion 2:	Right to propose amendments	The constitution establishes the right of all MPs to propose amendments to legislation as it proceeds through parliament. Any restrictions on this right, such as restrictions concerning financial proposals, are limited, and clearly defined.
Assessment criterion 3:	Approval of legislation	The constitution establishes that all legislation, including budgetary legislation, must be approved by parliament before enactment. This includes approval by both houses in bicameral systems, except where particular restrictions on the upper house are in place.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, MPs and, where applicable, other participants –are empowered to participate in all stages of the legislative process. Particular attention is given to opportunities for participation for opposition and independent MPs.

#### 5.1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendments

This dimension addresses the processes for making and amending the constitution, which are distinct forms of law-making typically subject to special requirements. These may include the need for a supermajority in parliament, approval from a majority of states or provinces in federal systems, and/or public endorsement. The right to propose constitutional amendments is important.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Initiation of constitutional amendments	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish a range of mechanisms for initiating constitutional amendments, including initiation by MPs and citizen-initiated proposals.
Assessment criterion 2:	Public consultations	Broad public consultations, with reasonably extensive times, are undertaken after the initiation of constitutional amendments.
Assessment criterion 3:	Adoption	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish that parliament must approve a new constitution or a constitutional amendment, ideally by a supermajority.
Assessment criterion 4:	Ease of constitution-making or amendment	In practice, the constitution is not so difficult to amend that constitutional change is impossible to achieve, but not so easy to amend as to threaten its protection of the democratic system as well as minority and other rights.

### 5.1.6.3 Legislative procedure

This dimension addresses the processes for the passage of legislation as defined by the constitution, the legal framework, and the rules of procedure within parliament. These processes should be clear, transparent, and understandable, ensuring proper consideration and debate at all legislative stages. MPs should be afforded adequate time and opportunities to reflect on and debate proposed laws prior to voting. All legislative proposals should be referred to relevant committees for in-depth consideration, with committees empowered to recommend or directly amend legislation. This stage enables public participation, which should be facilitated by parliamentary rules and practices that allow sufficient time for consultation.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Clear provisions for the passage of legislation	The legal framework sets out clear provisions for the passage of legislation through parliament, including through both houses in bicameral systems. The procedures provide mechanisms for their solution of differences between the houses in bicameral systems.
Assessment criterion 2:	Ordinary procedure	The legal framework provides for the use of ordinary legislative procedure as a rule. This procedure includes, as a minimum, general debate on legislation with reasonable time allocated to MPs to prepare and participate in the debate, and opportunities to consider the details of legislation and to propose and vote on amendments.
Assessment criterion 3:	Committee stage	As part of the ordinary procedure, all proposals for laws are referred to one or more relevant committees for detailed consideration and amendment. This committee stage also includes expert and public consultations.
Assessment criterion 4:	Fast-track procedure	Where there is a fast-track procedure for the urgent consideration of legislation, such procedure provides MPs with the opportunity to debate, amend and vote on the urgent legislation, and for reasonable scrutiny mechanisms, such as inserting obligatory post-legislative scrutiny after a period of time, or using sunset clauses.
Assessment criterion 5:	Use of ordinary versus fast-	In practice, most legislation is subject to ordinary procedure and parliament does not unduly rely on the use of fast-track procedure.

	track procedures	
Assessment criterion 6:	Scrutiny of delegated legislation	The constitution, other aspects of the legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure establish that parliament has the opportunity to scrutinise, debate, and approve or reject delegated legislation.

#### 5.1.6.4 Legislative drafting

This dimension focuses on the principles of legislative drafting as they pertain to all proposals for laws introduced in parliament, including amendments to existing laws, delegated legislation, and other legislative instruments. Effective legislative drafting is essential to ensure that legislation is clear, viable, and consistent with the existing legal framework.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Guidance	Guidance for clear and effective legislative drafting is set out in a manual or similar document.
Assessment criterion 2:	Analysis of legislative proposals	An analysis of the proposal for a law is documented, for instance in the form of explanatory notes accompanying the proposal, including the proposal's practical implications, the scope and content of existing legislation on the same subject, and its respect for fundamental rights and public liberties.
Assessment criterion 3:	Clear and plain language	Legislation is drafted in clear and plain language. Ambiguity, vagueness, contradictions, and over-generality within the text and regarding other laws are avoided. Gender-neutral language is used wherever possible.
Assessment criterion 4:	Amendment of existing legislation	Proposals for laws that amend existing legislation follow the structure and terminology of the existing legislation. Amendments are made in a logical order in the form of text inserted into the amended legislation.
Assessment criterion 5:	Drafting resources	Specialist legislative drafting resources are available to all MPs and political groups, including to opposition, minority-party and independent MPs.

#### 5.1.6.5 Enactment

This dimension focuses on the provisions governing how a proposed law, after successfully navigating all stages of the legislative process and receiving parliamentary approval, is enacted into law. Typically, proposals approved by parliament require the consent or signature of the Head of State to enter into force, a process known as "promulgation". The nature of the Head of State's veto power also differs; in some systems, granting assent is merely a formality, while in others, the Head of State has substantial authority to prevent legislation from being enacted or to propose specific amendments to legislative proposals. Overriding a veto requires a supermajority vote in parliament, with the relevant procedures delineated in the constitution. In cases where the Head of State can propose amendments, parliament is generally permitted to approve the legislation by a simple majority if the amendments are fully adopted.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Procedure for the promulgation of laws	The constitution establishes a clear procedure for the promulgation of laws that have been approved by parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Veto powers	Where the Head of State has the power to veto legislation or propose amendments, the grounds on which such veto power might be exercised, and the scope of such veto power, are clearly established.
Assessment criterion 3:	Overriding a veto	Where the Head of State has the power to veto legislation or propose amendments, parliament has the power to override the veto with a larger-than-usual majority.

#### 5.1.6.6 Official publication

This dimension focuses on the provisions governing the official publication of laws, ensuring they are accessible to any interested party. Open and effective access to legislation is crucial for understanding and upholding the rule of law. For laws to be implemented effectively, they must be accessible, predictable, and clear. Citizens are more likely to comply with laws they understand. Recent advancements have led to the expectation of online access to updated, searchable, and accessible legal information.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework outlines the rules on the official publication of legislation, including the procedure and timeline between its passage and publication. Laws only become effective once they have been officially published.
Assessment criterion 2:	Central registry	There is an official collection of laws, which is comprehensive and up to date, and can be accessed online by the public free of charge.
Assessment criterion 3:	Consolidated versions of laws	Amendments to existing laws are published in a consolidated version of the law, allowing users to access the complete text and to easily identify the amendments.

**5.1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny**

This dimension focuses on the provisions that grant parliament the authority to conduct PLS, an essential mechanism for ensuring that laws are implemented effectively, and their impacts are assessed. PLS enables parliament to review how legislation is interpreted and applied by courts and how legal practitioners and citizens utilise its provisions. By identifying legislative gaps and shortcomings, PLS promotes targeted, evidence-based law-making. Furthermore, it allows MPs to scrutinise secondary or delegated legislation, ensuring comprehensive oversight of law implementation. PLS can be an inclusive process, encouraging contributions from political parties, academia, experts, and civil society. Such engagement enriches parliamentary knowledge, enhances the credibility of parliamentary work, and fosters public trust in the institution due to increased transparency.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	There is a legal framework for PLS.
Assessment criterion 2:	Practice	PLS is an established part of the legislative and/or oversight process.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Parliament has the necessary human, financial and administrative resources to conduct PLS, including trained and skilled staff.
Assessment criterion 4:	Inclusiveness	PLS is an inclusive process that invites input from political parties, academia, experts, and civil society.

Assessment criterion 5:	Follow-up	Committees and/or other parliamentary bodies conducting PLS regularly interact with the executive and other stakeholders in order monitor the implementation of PLS recommendations.
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#### 5.1.7 Indicator 1.7 Oversight

Parliamentary oversight is a fundamental function of parliament aimed at promoting citizens' freedoms and well-being while enhancing accountability and transparency within the government. The oversight processes evaluate the effects of government actions on society, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for government programs, identifying any unintended or adverse outcomes of policies, and monitoring compliance with national and international commitments. Effective parliamentary oversight should be rigorous, systematic, constructive, transparent, and evidence based. It should actively involve relevant bodies, organisations, and the wider public to ensure comprehensive scrutiny and foster greater public trust in governmental processes. There are 7 dimensions under this indicator: Election and Dismissal of the Executive, Access to Information from the Executive, Summoning the Executive in Committee, Summoning the Executive in Plenary, Questions, Hearings, and Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry.

##### 5.1.7.1 Election and dismissal of the executive

This dimension addresses three essential parliamentary powers concerning the election and dismissal of the executive: election of the Head of State/Government, vote of Confidence in the Executive, and censure or Impeachment of the Head of State/Government and/or Ministers. The scope of these powers varies across political systems, with the parliament's mandate typically defined in the constitution and further elaborated in relevant laws and parliamentary rules of procedure. In parliamentary systems, the executive's tenure is contingent upon continued parliamentary support, allowing parliament to bring down the executive through a vote of no confidence if necessary.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Election of the Head of State/Government	The constitution lays down clear criteria and rules for the election of the Head of State/Government and, where relevant, the role that parliament plays in this election.
Assessment criterion 2:	Votes of confidence in the executive	In systems where the executive requires parliamentary confidence to govern, the legal framework lays down clear rules and criteria for the establishment of such confidence. In

		systems not based on parliamentary confidence, parliament approves ministers and cabinet members individually.
Assessment criterion 3:	Censure or impeachment of the executive	Parliament has the power to remove the Head of State/Government and/or ministers for breaches of their constitutional duty or for unlawful conduct through processes of censure or impeachment. The rules and criteria for such processes are clearly set out in the legal framework and in parliament's rules of procedure.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, the procedures for electing the Head of State/Government, for holding a vote of confidence in the executive, and for censuring or impeaching the Head of State/Government and/or ministers are applied consistently and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the constitution and other aspects of the legal framework.

#### 5.1.7.2 Access to information from the executive

This dimension addresses the legal authority of parliament, its committees, and individual MPs to access information from the executive for oversight purposes. The legal framework or parliamentary rules should establish clear procedures and timelines for obtaining information, through a variety of mechanisms. Access to classified information, such as state secrets, may be restricted to special committees or MPs with security clearance. Any limitations should be clearly defined by law. In some systems, a minister's failure to provide requested information may lead to censure, impeachment, or breach of privilege.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework parliament, its committees, and individual MPs to obtain information from the executive and establish the obligation for ministers to provide such information in full and in a timely manner.
Assessment criterion 2:	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure establish clear and effective procedures and specific timelines for obtaining information from the executive. These procedures are applied rigorously and systematically in practice.

Assessment criterion 3:	Classified information	Special procedures are in place regarding access to classified information. Any limitations on access to classified information, such as State secrets from the military, security, and intelligence services, are precisely defined by law.
Assessment criterion 4:	Executive compliance with requests for information	Parliament has a designated committee or other body tasked with monitoring the executive's compliance with these legal requirements and procedures and for keeping track of matters such as delays, failures to submit information and justifications for delays.
Assessment criterion 5:	Failure to provide information	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish that ministers or other government representatives are to be held to account for systematically failing to provide information to parliament or to MPs. Such a failure may constitute grounds for censure or impeachment, or lead to other forms of parliamentary action.

#### 5.1.7.3 Summoning the executive in committee

This dimension addresses the legal authority of parliament, its committees, and individual MPs to obtain information from the executive as part of oversight responsibilities. The legal framework and/or parliamentary rules should delineate clear procedures and specific timelines for accessing information from the executive, utilising mechanisms such as: question time during plenary sessions, information provision to parliamentary committees or written responses to individual MPs, submission of questions or letters to the executive, and fact-finding visits to government institutions and other relevant sites for oversight purposes.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework clearly establishes the authority of parliament to summon representatives of the executive to appear before committees. This includes members of cabinet, as well as senior officials of the administration, and of the military, law enforcement and intelligence services
Assessment criterion 2:	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure lay down the procedures for summoning representatives of the executive and provide specific rights for the opposition.

Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Committees have sufficient resources and expert staff to assist with the process of summoning representatives of the executive. Committees gather evidence and information from a wide range of sources to enhance the effectiveness of oversight and questioning.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, parliament consistently summons representatives of the executive, who appear before committees when invited and provide full and timely information to the committee.

#### 5.1.7.4 Summoning the executive in plenary

This dimension pertains to the authority of parliament to summon executive representatives before its committees, a critical function for scrutinising the executive's effectiveness and adherence to relevant policies and laws. Parliament should possess the power to summon ministers, as well as senior officials from the administration, military, law enforcement, and intelligence services. When summoned, ministers should be required to appear personally rather than delegating to subordinates.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework authorises parliament to summon representatives of the executive to appear in the plenary. Representatives of the executive are legally required to respond to an interpellation in person in the plenary.
Assessment criterion 2:	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure establish the procedure for interpellations, including the number of MPs required to launch an interpellation and the possible results of the process.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, parliament makes use of the interpellation procedure and representatives of the executive appear in the plenary when requested to do so.

#### 5.1.7.5 Questions

This dimension pertains to the authority of MPs to submit both oral and written questions to the Prime Minister, ministers, and other executive representatives, ensuring they receive answers. Oral questions enable MPs to address critical political issues publicly. Many parliaments hold dedicated sessions for oral questions, often referred to as "question time", "Prime Minister's hour", or "ministers' hour". During these sessions, MPs should also be permitted to ask supplementary questions for clarification or to address incomplete responses. The Speaker plays a crucial role in managing these sessions by

maintaining a balance among political parties, overseeing discussions, and fostering a constructive debate atmosphere. Parliamentary rules should empower the Speaker to fulfil these responsibilities effectively. Written questions serve as a valuable mechanism for gathering detailed information that may not be readily accessible. Rules of procedure should outline the process for submitting written questions, establish response deadlines, and specify potential sanctions for failing to respond.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework authorises MPs to submit both oral and written questions to the executive and its representatives, which are required to respond to these questions in a full and timely manner or face sanctions.
Assessment criterion 2:	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure set out detailed procedures for the submission of both oral and written questions to representatives of the executive, authorise MPs to ask supplementary questions, and provide the Speaker with the necessary powers to manage the floor effectively during oral questions.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, the submission of both oral and written questions to representatives of the executive is a permanent part of parliamentary life. The procedures are applied consistently and effectively. Representatives of the executive respond in full and in a timely manner to both written and oral questions.

#### 5.1.7.6 Hearings

This dimension focuses on the provisions and practices governing committee hearings, which are essential for parliamentary committees to gather information, obtain data and opinions, and seek evidence from diverse sources. These hearings play a critical role in informing the legislative process and overseeing executive policies and actions. Committee hearings are a prevalent form of public engagement within parliament, allowing individuals and citizen groups to present both written and oral evidence.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes the mandate of parliamentary committees to conduct hearings, both on the parliamentary premises and outside parliament.
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Assessment criterion 2:	Procedures	Parliament has clear rules and procedures on the planning and organisation of committee hearings, and on the production of committee reports.
Assessment criterion 3:	Openness	Committee hearings are open to the public in principle, and any exceptions to this rule are clearly defined. Where possible, committee hearings are broadcast through the parliamentary website.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, parliament rigorously and systematically conducts committee hearings and takes evidence from a wide range of sources. These hearings are open to the public unless there is a legitimate reason to close the meeting. The conclusions and results of committee hearings are documented and published.

#### 5.1.7.7 Parliamentary committees of inquiry

This dimension concerns parliament's authority to conduct independent inquiries into specific issues by establishing a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (PCI). This fact-finding process is primarily designed to investigate potential maladministration, misconduct, or policy failures by the executive.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure contain clear provisions on the establishment of PCIs.
Assessment criterion 2:	Powers	PCIs have the power to summon officials and/or private individuals, to obtain written and oral evidence, as well as information and documentation, from governmental, judicial, administrative, and private institutions, to conduct hearings, and to issue findings and recommendations.
Assessment criterion 3:	Participation	Political participation in PCIs is proportional to political representation in parliament, and the role of the opposition is guaranteed by law. PCIs are open to the public, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	PCIs have the trained personnel and administrative and financial resources necessary to support the process.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, parliament sets up PCIs to investigate possible maladministration, misconduct, or policy failure by the executive. PCIs are able to carry out their inquiry with the full cooperation of

		the relevant authorities. The findings of PCIs result in representatives of the executive being held to account.
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#### 5.1.8 Indicator 1.8 Budget

This indicator addresses parliament's role throughout all stages of the annual budget cycle. The initial phase, termed "ex-ante review", involves the formulation and examination of the draft budget, proposed amendments from MPs, and the budget's subsequent approval. The second phase, "ex-post review", focuses on overseeing budget execution after approval. Specialised parliamentary bodies, such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), along with other committees and the supreme audit institution, play significant roles in this scrutiny process. There are 5 dimensions under this indicator: Formulation, Examination, Amendment, and Approval, In-year and Ex-post Oversight, Public Accounts Committee, Expert Support, and Supreme Audit Institution.

##### 5.1.8.1 Formulation, examination, amendment, and approval

This dimension encompasses all aspects of the process through which parliament considers and approves budget legislation, with particular emphasis on the annual budget. The draft budget serves as the executive's declaration of priorities and commitments and may include both revenue and expenditure proposals, although this varies across parliaments. The parliamentary budget consideration process begins with the formulation of the budget and its subsequent presentation to parliament. Thereafter, parliament examines and deliberates on the budget, during which amendments may be proposed. The final step is the parliamentary approval of the budget.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes clear arrangements covering all aspects of parliament's consideration of budget legislation. Only parliament can give final approval to budget legislation.
Assessment criterion 2:	Information about the draft budget	The executive presents the draft budget to parliament along with detailed supporting information about its proposals and its effect on different groups in society.
Assessment criterion 3:	Time available for budget consideration	There is sufficient time and opportunity for scrutiny of budget legislation, including by the opposition and/or minority parties.

Assessment criterion 4:	Ability to influence the budget	Parliament is substantially involved in the process of formulating the budget. Parliament is able to influence its content and to amend the draft budget. Any limits on the scope of amendments that can be proposed by MPs are reasonable and clearly defined.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, the budget is presented to parliament within the time defined by law. Budget consideration in committee and in the plenary is substantive and in line with parliament's rules of procedures. Parliament approves the budget in a way and within a time defined by law or its rules of procedure.

#### 5.1.8.2 In-year and ex-post oversight

This dimension addresses the provisions and processes through which parliament exercises in-year and ex-post oversight of the budget. Parliament's responsibilities do not conclude with the approval of the budget; ongoing monitoring of budget execution is crucial to ensure that funds are spent for the intended purposes. Parliament can conduct this oversight through several mechanisms.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Role of parliament	Parliament's budget committee, PAC or equivalent bodies conduct periodic in-year review of the execution of the budget as a whole, or of certain parts of the budget, either at their own initiative, or based on the government's monthly and/or quarterly reports on budget execution.
Assessment criterion 2:	Reporting to parliament	Agencies funded by the budget are required to account fully to parliament for their budgetary expenditure and outcomes through regular and comprehensive reporting.
Assessment criterion 3:	Scrutiny by parliamentary committees	Parliamentary committees systematically inquire into the budgetary expenditure and outcomes of executive agencies for which they have responsibility and have access to the information that is needed for effective ex-post oversight, subject to legally defined limitations.
Assessment criterion 4:	Debate of budgetary outcomes	Budgetary outcomes are subject to discussion and debate in parliament, including opportunities for the opposition and minority parties.

Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, budget scrutiny and the debate of budgetary outcomes are regular and meaningful, with wide participation by MPs. Information on budget scrutiny is made publicly available
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#### 5.1.8.3 Public Accounts Committee

This dimension focuses on the role and activities of the PAC, budget committee, or equivalent body responsible for scrutinising the budget both before and after its passage through parliament. The PAC's roles may include providing information to assist in formulating and debating the budget, conducting ex-post oversight of government expenditures, examining the financial affairs or performance of any government entity, receiving and scrutinising reports from the supreme audit institution, and promoting the efficient, effective, and corruption-free expenditure of public funds.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes the PAC as parliament's primary oversight body in relation to budgetary matters. The PAC has a broad mandate to fulfil its budgetary oversight duties and to assess the performance of entities funded by the budget.
Assessment criterion 2:	Composition	Parliament's rules of procedure require that opposition and/or minority parties be represented proportionally in the membership of the PAC and, ideally, that the PAC be chaired by a member of these parties.
Assessment criterion 3:	Access to information	Entities funded by the budget are required to provide the PAC with records and information about their budgets and performance. Such information is readily accessible to parliament.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	The PAC is adequately resourced to enable it to exercise its mandate on behalf of parliament.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, the PAC plays an active role in parliament's scrutiny of the budget. It regularly informs parliament and the public about the outcomes of its budget scrutiny.

#### 5.1.8.4 Expert support

This dimension pertains to the expert support available to MPs to effectively scrutinise the budget and assess government financial management and performance. Parliament requires comprehensive information and expertise to hold the executive accountable for the use of public resources. While the

executive is expected to provide detailed and transparent budgetary information to parliament, it is crucial for parliament to have independent sources of expertise to evaluate this official data. Such outside expertise can provide valuable insights into the budget's impact on various societal groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged or minority communities.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Internal resources	Parliament has a parliamentary budget office or other specialised support service that has sufficient funding and expertise to provide expert support and advice on budgetary matters.
Assessment criterion 2:	External sources of expertise	Parliament routinely engages with external sources of expertise throughout the budget cycle and seeks to gain a perspective on how the budget impacts different groups in society.
Assessment criterion 3:	Capacity building	MPs have access to specialised training to build capacity to scrutinise the budget.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, MPs are well-equipped to scrutinise the budget and have access to and engage with a wide range of internal and external sources of expertise and advice on budgetary matters.

#### 5.1.8.5 Supreme audit institution

This dimension pertains to the role of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) as the entity responsible for auditing public financial administration and the management of public funds. The SAI is important for ensuring the efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable use of public resources that parliament approves through the annual budget process. As an independent source of information, the SAI provides parliament and the public with insights into budget outcomes and performance. An independent SAI is thus an essential component of a democratic system.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework provide the basis for the existence, functions, and powers of the SAI, and define the entities that it audits.
Assessment criterion 2:	Independence of members	SAI members are independent of the executive and the entities that they audit. Members enjoy independence in terms of their appointment to, and cessation of, office, and are persons of integrity and competence.

Assessment criterion 3:	Independence of mandate and resources	The SAI has access to the entities it audits and their records and documents and has the power to require a response to its findings. The SAI has the funding and expert staff necessary to perform its audit functions.
Assessment criterion 4:	Relationship between parliament and the SAI	Parliament and the SAI have a special relationship, which is legally defined and well-functioning in practice. The SAI is legally required to report regularly and independently to parliament and the public.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, the SAI demonstrates its independence, conducts its auditing work thoroughly, and reports regularly and independently to parliament and the public. Parliament systematically scrutinises SAI reports and takes action as necessary on their findings and recommendations.

#### 5.1.9 Indicator 1.9 Representative role of members of parliament

The representative role is fundamental to the functions of MPs. This indicator emphasises two critical dimensions of this role: the interaction between MPs and their constituents, and the function of the opposition. Central to this is the notion that parliament serves as a forum for the diverse opinions of society to be articulated. Democracy is an inclusive process, allowing all citizens regardless of gender or political affiliation to engage in representation. There are 2 dimensions under this indicator: Interaction with the Electorate and Opposition.

##### 5.1.9.1 Interaction with the electorate

This dimension addresses the interaction between MPs and their constituents. MPs have a primary responsibility to represent all constituents, including those who did not vote for them or who did not participate in the electoral process. This representative role is applicable to all MPs, regardless of the political or electoral systems in which they operate. It is relevant to MPs in single-member and multi-member constituencies, as well as those in upper chambers of bicameral or federal systems representing subnational units. The number of constituents an MP represents inevitably influences how they fulfil their representative duties. The parliamentary calendar should facilitate reasonable opportunities for MPs to engage with their constituents.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework clearly sets out the duties and expectations concerning the representative role of MPs.
Assessment criterion 2:	Opportunities to raise issues in parliament	Parliament's rules of procedure provide all MPs with reasonable opportunities to raise issues of concern to their constituents in parliament, including in debates and in committee and plenary work.
Assessment criterion 3:	Parliamentary calendar	The organisation of the parliamentary calendar facilitates the representative role of MPs. MPs have sufficient time available to interact with their electorate.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament provides MPs with adequate resources to support engagement with their constituents. These resources are allocated in an equitable, non-partisan manner.

**5.1.9.2 Opposition**

This dimension examines the various ways in which the opposition can fulfil its functions within a democratic parliament. As an essential component of democracy, the opposition embodies the diversity of society and its opinions. Its primary role is to provide a credible alternative to the ruling majority while overseeing and scrutinising the actions of the executive to promote transparency, integrity, and efficiency in public affairs, thus safeguarding the public interest. The opposition's significance is evident in both parliamentary and presidential systems.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework recognises the special role of the opposition in parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Opposition rights	The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure provide the opposition with specific rights in parliament, such as to scrutinise and question the government, to initiate legislation or motions for debate, to participate equally in debate and votes, to propose amendments to laws, and to be represented equitably on committees and in other parliamentary bodies.
Assessment criterion 3:	Opposition resources	The opposition, including its leader(s), has access to adequate resources and facilities to effectively perform its role. In systems where

		the opposition comprises several parties, resources are allocated in a manner proportional to their representation.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, the above provisions are implemented consistently and without discrimination.

#### 5.1.10 Indicator 1.10 Relations with other branches of government

This indicator focuses on the constitutional separation of powers among the legislative branch, the executive branch, the judiciary, and subnational levels of government. It examines the mechanisms for communication and coordination between parliament and these other branches concerning parliament's jurisdictional powers. Key areas include legislative oversight of the executive, the process of judicial appointments, and the coordination and information-sharing with subnational governments. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Relations with the Executive, Relations with the Judiciary, and Relations with Subnational Levels of Government.

##### 5.1.10.1 Relations with the executive

This dimension examines the relationship between parliament and the executive within democratic systems, where both entities have distinct and autonomous roles supported by established mechanisms for effective collaboration. A crucial function of parliament is to hold the executive accountable, necessitating mechanisms and channels that enable access to information, data, and officials. This access is vital for evaluating public accounts, services, and performance, as well as ensuring accountability for government expenditures and programs. Mechanisms may include roles such as an ombudsperson, auditors-general, inspectors-general, oversight committees, commissions, audit offices, anti-corruption bodies, and information commissions.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitution	The constitution establishes a separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches and establishes a framework for the relationship between the executive and parliament. In countries where the Head of State is a part of the executive branch, there are constitutional and legal provisions regarding the election, mandate, and roles of the Head of State, as well as the conditions and procedures for impeachment.
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Assessment criterion 2:	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the powers and duties of the executive and parliament, as well as mechanisms for a well-functioning relationship between them. The legal framework requires the executive to report periodically to parliament on its activities and establishes a systematic approach to the review and scrutiny of such activities.
Assessment criterion 3:	Information-sharing	There are established mechanisms for periodic information-sharing, as well as for access to, and oversight of, executive expenditure, programmes, services, and performance. Any offices or commissions established for this purpose are non-partisan in nature and enable fluid communication and access to information between the branches.
Assessment criterion 4:	Coordination	Both parliament and the executive have dedicated offices or staff to manage and coordinate issues including parliamentary agenda-setting, prime minister's questions, the participation of ministers in parliamentary meetings, the summoning of executive officials to parliament, answers to MPs' questions, and similar matters.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, there is a well-functioning working relationship between the executive and parliament, which is based on a mutual understanding of, and respect for, their respective roles. Information is shared effectively between the executive and legislative branches.

#### 5.1.10.2 Relations with the judiciary

This dimension focuses on the relationship between parliament and the judiciary, which should be strictly separated under the constitution due to the political nature of parliament and the political impartiality of the judiciary. This relationship encompasses parliament's law-making responsibilities and the judiciary's role in interpreting and applying the law. Parliament must establish a legal framework that clearly defines criteria for judicial appointments, outlines fair procedures for the suspension or removal of judges, and ensures judges have appropriate security of tenure and independence. It is also essential for parliament to allocate adequate budgetary resources to the judiciary.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitution	The constitution clearly establishes a separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches. The relationship between parliament and the judiciary is based on mutual respect and restraint.
Assessment criterion 2:	Legal framework	The legal framework, as established by parliament, sets clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, and establishes appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges. In countries where parliament confirms and/or impeaches senior judges, it does so in accordance with this legal framework, using clear and transparent procedures, and by way of a majority or supermajority vote. Rules on the suspension or removal of judges are unambiguous and fair, and judges may only be suspended or removed for reasons of incapacity or misconduct that renders them unfit to carry out their duties.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Parliament allocates adequate budgetary resources for the judicial system to operate effectively without any constraints.

**5.1.10.3 Relations with subnational levels of government**

This dimension examines the relationship between parliament and subnational levels of government, including states, provinces, and local or municipal authorities. The nature of this relationship can vary widely depending on a country's legal framework and the representational status of parliament. This dimension addresses key issues that apply to the relationship between parliament and subnational governments across various systems, including federations, unitary states, and hybrid models. The constitution and legal framework should clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of both parliament and subnational levels of government.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitution and legal framework	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework clearly delineate the respective roles, responsibilities and authorities of parliament and subnational levels of government.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mechanisms and practices	Parliament has established mechanisms and practices in place for communication, coordination, cooperation, and information-sharing with subnational levels of government.

### 5.1.11 Indicator 1.11 Key parliamentary powers

This indicator focuses on the essential parliamentary powers related to security, defence, and foreign affairs. These policy areas have been largely managed by the executive however, many parliaments possess significant decision-making authority and play a crucial oversight role. As global issues such as climate change, trade, and internet policy increasingly require international collaboration, parliaments are assuming a more prominent role in international affairs. Therefore, regular interaction between parliament and the executive regarding the international aspects of policymaking is vital. There are 4 dimensions under this indicator: Security, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Agreements, and Parliamentary Diplomacy.

#### 5.1.11.1 Security

This dimension focuses on the role of parliament in security policy and governance. State security providers are institutions authorised by the state to use force on its behalf, which includes both the threat of force and the restriction of certain fundamental rights under legally defined circumstances.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework invests parliament with powers to scrutinise, amend, adopt, or reject legislation related to the security sector, to ensure that it is compliant with human rights standards and international obligations, and to hold the executive to account. It also sets out the arrangements for parliamentary access to specific categories of classified information.
Assessment criterion 2:	Parliamentary oversight	Parliament has well-established practices for security sector oversight, including oversight of policies, budgets, and appointments. MPs have the opportunity to debate security-sector policy and practice in the plenary and in committees. A specialised committee has wide-ranging powers to investigate security-sector issues, gather evidence and carry out inquiries.
Assessment criterion 3:	Addressing public concerns	The legal framework establishes an ombudsman or similar public body which addresses public concerns or complaints about security issues, and which reports to parliament.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament has in-house expertise on security-sector issues, and training on such issues is available for MPs and staff.

Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	<p>In practice, the provisions of the legal framework on the security sector and data classification are implemented consistently. The executive cooperates with parliamentary committees and provides the information requested by them in a timely manner.</p> <p>Parliamentary committees conduct regular oversight of the security sector, and undertake investigation and inquiries as needed.</p>
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#### 5.1.11.2 Defence

This dimension focuses on the role of parliament in defence policy, encompassing declarations of war, states of emergency, troop deployments, arms sales and exports, and the protection of civilians during conflicts. Civilian control over defence policy is vital for a well-functioning democratic society. Parliament is tasked with representing the interests of all societal groups and upholding human rights, serving as a safeguard against the unjustified and disproportionate use of force. It is essential that decisions regarding defence policy align with public needs.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Use of military force	<p>The constitution establishes parliament's powers with regard to the use of military force, including the declaration of war and the deployment of troops. Parliament has the authority to investigate and debate the use of military force, including powers to summon representatives of the executive to testify before parliament.</p> <p>Parliament can effectively block the use of military force if there is a majority in favour.</p>
Assessment criterion 2:	Defence budget	<p>Parliament has the legal authority to scrutinise, amend and approve the defence budget, including the authorisation of funding for each deployment of troops, and for arms sales and weapons procurement.</p>
Assessment criterion 3:	Parliamentary oversight	<p>Parliamentary committees have broad mandates to oversee defence issues, including the oversight of arms sales to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and the oversight of gender mainstreaming in defence policy.</p>

Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament has in-house expertise on defence policy and has access to information and regular updates from the executive on such issues.
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#### 5.1.11.3 Foreign affairs and international agreements

This dimension focuses on parliament's role in determining and overseeing foreign policy priorities, as well as its mandate to ratify international agreements. Parliamentary powers regarding foreign policy can vary significantly. Most parliaments have a foreign affairs committee that holds broad oversight responsibilities. In some nations, the executive is obliged to consult with this committee before making significant foreign policy decisions.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Mandate	The legal framework clearly establishes parliament's role with regard to foreign policy. Parliament has a committee with a broad mandate to oversee government policy and action on foreign affairs.
Assessment criterion 2:	International agreements	Parliament is legally responsible for the ratification of international agreements that include significant national obligations. The executive is required to report to parliament on the implementation of international agreements. Where the State is required to report to an international body, the report is debated in parliament first. Parliament also plays an active role in scrutinising agreements with international financial institutions.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Parliament has in-house expertise on foreign policy issues and has access to information and regular updates from the executive on such issues, including on the preparation of international agreements.

#### 5.1.11.4 Parliamentary diplomacy

This dimension focuses on the significance of parliamentary diplomacy in fostering international cooperation. By facilitating political dialogue and mediation, it aids in conflict prevention, crisis management, and addressing political challenges at various levels. Parliamentary diplomacy enhances dialogue between nations and fosters mutual understanding. It can occur through bilateral relations between parliaments or within multilateral organisations. Engagement among MPs from different countries creates flexible channels for dialogue and is often integrated into official delegations during

state visits and international events. Parliaments frequently organise visits and maintain parliamentary friendship groups for ongoing exchanges.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Transparency	Clear and transparent procedures are in place for deciding on parliamentary diplomacy activities, including forming friendship groups, and organising bilateral visits and international engagements.
Assessment criterion 2:	Inclusiveness	There are opportunities for all MPs, including women and young MPs, to participate in parliamentary diplomacy activities. Parliamentary delegations are inclusive of different political groups.
Assessment criterion 3:	Reporting	MPs are required to report back to parliament on their international engagements and other parliamentary diplomacy activities. Parliament monitors and regularly reports on follow-up action taken as a result of parliamentary diplomacy, including how resolutions of multilateral bodies have been addressed.
Assessment criterion 4:	Communication with the executive	There are well-established channels of communication with the executive about parliamentary diplomacy activities.
Assessment criterion 5:	Resources	MPs have access to appropriate resources to support parliamentary diplomacy and international engagements, including financial resources, timely information, and administrative support.

## 5.2 Target 2: Accountable parliament<sup>5</sup>

This target emphasises the accountability of parliament and its members regarding their conduct's integrity. Two key indicators are identified: Parliamentary Ethics and Institutional Integrity. Accountable parliaments feature members who are responsible to their electorate for both their performance and ethical conduct. There should be real possibilities for electoral sanctions, established standards, and enforceable codes of conduct for MPs. Members receive adequate compensation and must disclose their interests as well as income and have limitations on election spending. Furthermore, parliaments regularly and transparently report on their institutional performance.

### 5.2.1 Indicator 2.1 Parliamentary ethics

This indicator addresses the ethical standards expected of parliament as a whole and its members, both within and outside the chamber. There are 5 dimensions under this indicator: Anti-corruption measures, Conflicts of interest, Codes of conduct, Parliamentary Income and Use of Parliamentary Resources, and Lobbying.

#### 5.2.1.1 Anti-corruption

This dimension focuses on parliament's responsibility to combat corruption within public institutions and across society. Corruption is defined as actions intended to misuse public power for private gain, leading to significant negative impacts on the credibility of democratic institutions. It undermines their ability to serve citizens, infringes on human rights, threatens democracy, and hampers economic development. Parliament plays a crucial role in addressing corruption by creating environments that reduce opportunities for corrupt activities. MPs are tasked with ensuring that the legal framework aligns with the UN Convention against corruption, which also extends to all elected officials.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	A comprehensive anti-corruption legal framework is in place and complies fully with the mandatory and recommended legislative measures set out in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
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<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

Assessment criterion 2:	Oversight by committees	Parliamentary committees conduct regular, in-depth oversight of the implementation of national anti-corruption commitments, laws, and policies.
Assessment criterion 3:	National anti-corruption bodies	Parliament ensures that national anti-corruption bodies are adequately funded and able to operate independently, and regularly interacts with them.
Assessment criterion 4:	Elected officials	The anti-corruption legal framework contains provisions relating to all elected officials, including MPs. Parliament's rules of procedure include measures to prevent, detect and address corrupt practices within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.
Assessment criterion 5:	Raising awareness	Parliament engages constructively with efforts by the public and CSOs to raise awareness, and to prevent and address corruption at all levels.

#### 5.2.1.2 Conflicts of interest

This dimension addresses conflicts of interest, where the private interests of an MP or staff member take precedence over public interests, undermining their mandate as public officials. Rules regarding conflicts of interest should be established within parliament's procedural guidelines or national legal frameworks. To effectively combat conflicts of interest, rules should be complemented by strategies that foster an organisational culture of integrity. Non-partisan ethics bodies or commissions can provide mechanisms to prevent conflicts, and transparency in identifying and resolving these situations is crucial.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules on conflict of interest	The legal framework codifies the rules on conflicts of interest and measures for addressing them. Any exemptions to these rules are limited and clearly defined.
Assessment criterion 2:	Parliamentary mechanisms	Parliamentary mechanisms are in place to prevent, detect and address conflicts of interest within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.
Assessment criterion 3:	Provisions regarding potential	Parliament's rules of procedure contain provisions regarding potential conflicts of interests, including the registration of MPs' private interests in parliamentary debates, the holding of multiple

	conflicts of interests	offices, the declaration of assets, the accepting of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments.
Assessment criterion 4:	Compliance	A non-partisan or independent body is tasked with monitoring compliance with these rules and procedures, and with initiating procedures in the event of non-compliance. The process of identifying, resolving, and managing conflicts of interest is transparent.
Assessment criterion 5:	Guidance	Guidance is available to help MPs and staff ensure that they avoid conflicts of interest.

### 5.2.1.3 Code of conduct

This dimension focuses on the parliament's code of conduct, which may exist as a standalone document or be integrated with other ethical guidelines. While many parliaments regulate MPs' conduct through procedural rules, there is a growing trend toward explicitly codifying acceptable standards of parliamentary behaviour in a formal code of conduct. The code should be developed through an inclusive, transparent, and consultative process involving all political parties, and it must be publicly accessible. All MPs should be required to formally accept this code upon taking office. The code of conduct should clearly outline effective and fair rules of behaviour, with mechanisms for enforcement.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Existence of a code of conduct	Parliament has adopted a clear and enforceable code of conduct, which sets out the expected standards of conduct for MPs. Every MP must formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of their parliamentary mandate.
Assessment criterion 2:	Support of all political groups	The code of conduct has been developed via an inclusive, transparent, and consultative process, has the support of all political groups, and is publicly available.
Assessment criterion 3:	Compliance	A designated body is tasked with overseeing compliance with the code of conduct, including receiving complaints, enforcing standards of conduct in parliament, and carrying out regular reviews and updates.

Assessment criterion 4:	Training and guidance	Training is provided on the standards defined by the code, including induction training for new MPs. Guidance from the parliamentary administration is available to help MPs comply with the code.
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#### 5.2.1.4 Parliamentary income and use of parliamentary resources

This dimension addresses the obligation of individual MPs, political groups, and certain staff members to disclose their income, and the use of parliamentary resources or funds allocated from the parliamentary budget. Information regarding the recruitment and remuneration of personal staff, such as secretaries and assistants, should be publicly accessible. There is a legitimate public interest in understanding how MPs and political groups utilise these resources, necessitating accountability. Parliament should regularly publish information on MPs' salaries, allowances, benefits, and claimed expenses.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	MPs' salaries, allowances, benefits, and expenses	Parliament regularly publishes information about MPs' salaries, allowances, and other benefits, as well as the expenses they claim.
Assessment criterion 2:	Funding and expenditure of political groups	Political groups are required by law to report regularly on their funding and expenditure, and these reports are published on the parliamentary website.
Assessment criterion 3:	MPs' personal staff	Parliament's rules of procedure contain clear provisions on recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure for MPs' personal staff who are not part of the parliamentary administration. Information about such recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure is publicly available.
Assessment criterion 4:	Misuse of parliamentary resources	Parliament has rules and procedures in place to prevent the misuse of parliamentary resources, including parliamentary staff, for party-political or other purposes.
Assessment criterion 5:	Compliance	A parliamentary body is responsible for monitoring the compliance of MPs and political groups with these requirements, and for holding them to account in the event of non-compliance.

### 5.2.1.5 Lobbying

This dimension focuses on the regulation of lobbying within the parliamentary context and its practical implementation, as well as the transparency of lobbying activities. Lobbying is defined as actions taken by individuals or groups with specific interests to influence political decision-making. Lobbying can be a legitimate way to represent specific group interests, it also has the potential to sway laws and policies against the public interest. Therefore, effective, and enforceable legal frameworks, along with corresponding parliamentary rules, are essential to prevent undue influence on MPs and other public decision-makers. The law should clearly define lobbying, identify what activities are considered lobbying, and specify who must register as a lobbyist. It is important to note that political activities among MPs aimed at garnering support for their proposals do not fall under the definition of lobbying for this dimension.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework contains provisions on the lobbying of MPs and other public officeholders. It sets out clearly defined categories of lobbyists who are required to register.
Assessment criterion 2:	Rules on transparency, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest	There are clear rules on transparency, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest for lobbyists, as well as for MPs and other public office holders.
Assessment criterion 3:	Register of lobbyists	There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists, with complete information about lobbyists' clients and finances. Information in the register is updated in a timely manner.
Assessment criterion 4:	Reporting of illegal lobbying activity	MPs and other public office holders are obliged to report any suspicions of illegal lobbying activity to parliament and/or to other relevant authorities.
Assessment criterion 5:	Compliance	A non-partisan body is tasked with periodically reviewing compliance with disclosure requirements, and with holding lobbyists, MPs, and other public office holders to account in the event of a breach of the rules.

### 5.2.2 Indicator 2.2 Institutional integrity

In democratic systems, parliaments are seen as the highest institutions and must represent institutional integrity by upholding high standards. This includes accountability for parliamentary funds, transparent procurement, and compliance with freedom of information laws, promoting openness and responsible use of resources. Parliaments must also support the professionalism of their staff, ensuring non-partisan conduct, and focus on institutional development. These efforts are crucial to maintaining public trust and reinforcing the role of parliament as a cornerstone of democracy. There are 5 dimensions under this indicator: Parliamentary expenditure, Public procurement, Freedom of information, Professionalism of the parliamentary administration, and Institutional development of parliament.

#### 5.2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure

This dimension outlines the rules, procedures, and practices that parliament must implement to ensure such accountability. Parliament should follow clear guidelines governing all expenditures, particularly concerning the salaries and allowances of MPs and staff, as well as expenses related to parliamentary officeholders and political groups issues of significant public interest. It is expected to report publicly on all budgetary expenditures, including the activities and performance of the parliamentary administration, along with a breakdown of salaries and allowances for MPs and their staff. These reports should facilitate public understanding by providing comparative data from previous budget cycles. Furthermore, parliamentary expenditures must undergo various oversight mechanisms, including regular independent audits and evaluations by designated parliamentary committees, with findings made publicly available.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules and procedures	Parliament has clear and transparent rules and procedures on the expenditure of parliamentary funds, including the remuneration and allowances paid to MPs and their staff, as well as spending related to parliamentary officeholders and political parties and groups.
Assessment criterion 2:	Public reporting	Parliament is required to report regularly to the public on its expenditure.
Assessment criterion 3:	Independent audits	Parliamentary expenditure is subject to regular, independent audits. Audit reports are made public.

Assessment criterion 4:	Oversight	A parliamentary committee provides oversight, including by scrutinising the reports of the parliamentary administration and the audits of expenditure. Committee findings and reports are made public.
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#### 5.2.2.2 Public procurement

This dimension pertains to public procurement processes within parliament, which should be transparent and competitive. Procurement may be governed by a legal framework applicable to all publicly funded agencies, but some parliaments implement distinct legal frameworks tailored to their specific needs. Procurement is a specialised task requiring specific knowledge and skills, parliament should employ staff with expertise in procurement management, contract oversight, and effective communication regarding complex procedures. Regular mandatory training should be provided for all staff involved in public procurement processes.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	Parliament's procurement process is governed by a legal framework. Parliament has clear and comprehensive procurement guidelines that are in line with national and international obligations and best practice.
Assessment criterion 2:	Expertise	Parliament has staff with expertise in undertaking procurement, managing contracts, achieving value for money, and communicating about complex procurement procedures.
Assessment criterion 3:	Transparency	All stages of the procurement process are completely transparent and open. All information on procurement is made publicly available in a timely manner.
Assessment criterion 4:	Audits	Internal and/or external audits or other reviews provide assurances regarding compliance with the legal framework and procurement guidelines. The reports and findings of such audits or reviews are made publicly available.

#### 5.2.2.3 Freedom of information

This dimension addresses legislation concerning the right to information as it pertains to parliament, commonly referred to as freedom of information (FOI) legislation. This expectation extends to parliament, which should proactively publish information about its functions and also respond to

specific information requests. This can be achieved either by integrating parliament into a general FOI framework or by establishing distinct provisions tailored to parliamentary operations. FOI provisions applicable to parliament should adhere to several fundamental principles.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Parliamentary FOI regime	The legal framework establishes a parliamentary FOI regime, which is in line with national and international obligations and best practice. Any citizen or organisation can request information under the parliamentary FOI regime.
Assessment criterion 2:	Guidelines	Parliament follows detailed FOI guidelines, which require maximum disclosure of information, including information relating to parliament's procedures and processes and to the parliamentary administration.
Assessment criterion 3:	Exceptions	Any exceptions are clearly and narrowly defined by law, with a strong "public interest" test for disclosure. Parliamentary privilege may limit access to information in very specific and clearly defined circumstances.
Assessment criterion 4:	Proactive publishing	The parliamentary FOI regime sets standards for the proactive publishing of predetermined categories of information, including in open and machine-readable formats.
Assessment criterion 5:	Compliance	Information is provided in response to parliamentary FOI requests in a consistent and timely manner. Refusals to disclose information, or failures to disclose full information, are reviewed by an independent external body, whose decisions are binding.

#### 5.2.2.4 Professionalism of the parliamentary administration

This dimension addresses various aspects of professionalism within the parliamentary administration, encompassing ethical standards, complaint procedures, and career management for parliamentary staff. Parliaments typically adhere to either the ethical codes and standards applicable to the civil service or develop specific codes for their staff. Regardless of the approach, these codes should clearly articulate expectations regarding professionalism, ethical conduct, respect for the institution and its personnel, integrity, accountability, and impartiality. Through effective human resources policies and practices, the administration should ensure that staff possess the necessary skills and knowledge to maintain the institution's continuity and integrity.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Code(s) of ethics, standards, and conduct	The legal framework requires the development of code(s) of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff.
Assessment criterion 2:	Scope	Code(s) of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff exist in practice, apply to all parliamentary staff, and set out clear expectations on professionalism and ethical conduct, on respect for parliament, its staff, and the people they serve, and on integrity, accountability, and impartiality.
Assessment criterion 3:	Complaints	There is a clearly defined and robust process for the filing and independent investigation of complaints concerning alleged breaches of the code(s), with sanctions applied where such complaints are upheld.
Assessment criterion 4:	Professional development	The parliamentary administration has a professional development framework that promotes an ethos of parliamentary service and ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to support the institutional continuity and integrity of parliament.

**5.2.2.5 Institutional development of parliament**

This dimension focuses on the processes involved in the institutional development of parliament, including strategic planning and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of parliamentary performance. Parliament is increasingly adopting strategic approaches to development, which involve setting long-term organisational goals, identifying capacity gaps, and determining actions to achieve these goals. M&E systems are essential for tracking progress and pinpointing areas requiring adjustments.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Strategic planning	Parliament has a strategic plan for its institutional development, which sets out a long-term vision and goals and actions to achieve them. Strategic planning is an inclusive process, and the plan is regularly reviewed and updated.
Assessment criterion 2:	Responsibility for	Responsibility for institutional development is clearly allocated within parliament, and the parliamentary administration has established teams to support institutional development.

	institutional development	
Assessment criterion 3:	Common Principles for Support to Parliaments	Parliament has endorsed the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, which are used in practice by parliament and its partners.
Assessment criterion 4:	M&E	Parliament has an M&E system to track progress and identify where adjustments are needed.
Assessment criterion 5:	Innovation	Parliament encourages a culture of innovation that allows new processes to be tested and, where appropriate, incorporated into its work.

### 5.3 Target 3: Transparent parliament<sup>6</sup>

Target 3 focuses on fostering a transparent parliament that is open to the nation and conducts its business with transparency. This target comprises three key indicators: transparency of parliamentary processes, parliamentary communication and outreach, and access to parliament. Open parliaments prioritise transparency in their operations, ensuring that proceedings are accessible to the public and media. They publicise debates in advance and make relevant documents available online. Furthermore, open parliaments typically have dedicated public relations teams and effectively leverage technology to disseminate information to the public.

#### 5.3.1 Indicator 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes

This indicator pertains to parliamentary transparency, founded on the principle that the public should be able to understand, engage with, and observe parliamentary processes. To achieve this, parliament must provide timely information about its decisions and procedures in a format that is accessible and comprehensible to the public. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Transparency of parliamentary work, Transparency of the legislative process, and Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget.

##### 5.3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work

This dimension addresses the principles, policies, and practices governing the transparency of parliamentary work. For citizens to be fully informed about parliamentary decisions and activities, clear policies and practices regarding transparency must be established across all aspects of parliamentary operations. Transparency also necessitates the explanation of parliamentary processes, enabling citizens to learn about and better understand how parliament functions, thereby contextualising the information available to them. To achieve desired levels of transparency, parliament requires a sufficient number of capable staff, digital systems for information storage and access, and additional resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Principles, policies, and practices	Parliament's rules of procedure establish principles and policies on transparency in all aspects of parliamentary work. The rules of procedure also set out how these principles and policies are translated into practice.
Assessment criterion 2:	Information about parliamentary work	Comprehensive information about all aspects of parliamentary work is made available in a timely manner, and in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.
Assessment criterion 3:	Explanatory and educational materials	Parliament regularly publishes explanatory and educational materials on the role of parliament, committees, and MPs, and on parliamentary processes, procedures, and activities.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament has a sufficient number of staff, digital systems, and other resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities.
Assessment criterion 5:	Continual improvement	Parliament regularly evaluates its level of transparency, solicits feedback from the public and looks for ways to further improve transparency.

**5.3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process**

This dimension addresses the transparency of the legislative process, encompassing all stages from the introduction of a proposed law to its adoption by parliament. It also pertains to how information regarding legislation is disseminated to the public, including the scope, channels, formats, and timing of such information.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Information about proposals for laws	Parliament publishes information about all proposals for laws in a timely manner, including the full text and status of proposals for laws or revisions to existing legislation.
Assessment criterion 2:	Information generated during the	Parliament publishes all information generated during the legislative process in a timely manner. This includes the parliamentary agenda and schedules, the texts of all amendments, records of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and all

	legislative process	other reports and background information created for or by parliament that form part of the record on a given piece of legislation, including public and expert opinions submitted to or prepared for parliament.
Assessment criterion 3:	Accessibility of information	Information generated during the legislative process is made available on the parliamentary website in real time or as soon as it is available internally, in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.

### 5.3.1.3. Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget

This dimension focuses on the transparency of the budget cycle, encompassing budget development, adoption, and execution. It emphasises the need for clarity regarding parliament's role in the budget cycle, as well as transparency concerning parliament's own budget. The national budget is the most significant piece of legislation that parliament addresses annually. Therefore, transparency in the budget cycle is essential for public understanding and for enabling parliamentary scrutiny of the executive's spending priorities, planned revenues, capital investments, and public debt.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for the transparency of the budget cycle, including the development, consideration, approval, and execution of the national budget, as well as ex post review.
Assessment criterion 2:	Information about parliamentary actions	Information is made available about parliamentary actions at all stages of the budget cycle, in a timely manner and in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.
Assessment criterion 3:	Explanatory materials	Parliament makes available explanatory materials outlining the parliamentary process related to budget consideration and approval, oversight of budget execution, and ex-post review.
Assessment criterion 4:	Parliamentary budget	The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure require the publication of comprehensive information about all aspects of the parliamentary budget, including on the parliamentary website.

### 5.3.2 Indicator 3.2 Parliamentary communication and outreach

This indicator concerns the approach that parliament takes to institutional communication and outreach. Communicating with the public about what parliament does is a basic condition for people to be able to understand and even participate in parliamentary work. Parliaments use a range of channels to inform and communicate with the public, including broadcasting, websites, social media, and educational materials. They seek to ensure that parliamentary information is accessible to all groups in society, including rural communities and people without access to the internet. Outreach to the public involves a mix of in-person and online activities. It implies creating opportunities for people to interact with parliament on the parliamentary premises, as well as where they live, in their time, on issues which they care about. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Institutional Communication, Parliamentary Website, and Outreach Activities.

#### 5.3.2.1 Institutional communication

This dimension examines the various communication methods employed by parliament to inform the public about its activities. Many parliaments have developed institutional communication policies or strategies and established specialised communications units to enhance these efforts. To effectively reach all segments of society, including children, young people, individuals without internet access, and disadvantaged groups parliaments typically utilise a diverse mix of communication channels. This requires adequate resources and tools to support their communication strategies.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Communication policy or strategy	Parliament has adopted an institutional communication policy or strategy that sets out how parliament aims to inform all groups in society about its work using a range of means of communication.
Assessment criterion 2:	Resources	Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective communication and to enable all groups in society to access parliamentary information.
Assessment criterion 3:	Broadcasting	Parliamentary proceedings, particularly plenary sessions, are broadcast live other than in exceptional cases, which are limited and clearly defined. Live and archived broadcasts are widely accessible at no extra cost to the public.

Assessment criterion 4:	Social media	Parliament has accounts on the main social media channels, and actively posts content and interacts with the public on these channels.
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### 5.3.2.2 Parliamentary website

This dimension focuses on the parliamentary website, which should provide comprehensive, timely, and accurate information about parliamentary activities. The website should facilitate citizen engagement in parliamentary processes, allowing individuals to submit comments, questions, and contact MPs, committees, and parliamentary officials. The website should be user-friendly, accessible to all societal groups, including individuals with disabilities and content should be available in all relevant languages.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Website governance	Governance structures exist that set the goals for the parliamentary website, allocate sufficient human and technical resources, and periodically evaluate progress towards these goals.
Assessment criterion 2:	Website content	The parliamentary website provides comprehensive, timely and accurate information about parliament and parliamentary proceedings.
Assessment criterion 3:	Usability	Information on the parliamentary website is well-organised, including for non-expert users, and is written in plain language. Datasets are available in open, machine-readable formats.
Assessment criterion 4:	Accessibility	The parliamentary website meets recognised accessibility standards, including for persons with disabilities.
Assessment criterion 5:	Dialogue with the public	The parliamentary website provides a range of means for the public to participate in the work of parliament, and to contact MPs, committees, and parliamentary officials.

### 5.3.2.3 Outreach activities

This dimension focuses on parliamentary outreach, which aims to establish direct connections between parliament and citizens through various activities conducted both on and off parliamentary premises. Activities include school visits, open days, parliamentary weeks, and mobile parliament events. To ensure inclusivity, outreach efforts should target diverse societal groups, including civil society organisations, universities, schools, think tanks, and professional organisations. Furthermore,

parliaments support outreach activities by creating explanatory and educational materials, such as bulletins, guides, leaflets, videos, animations, journals, and other publications that provide insights into parliamentary work.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Outreach policy or strategy	Parliament has an outreach policy or strategy, as either a stand-alone document or a part of an overall communication strategy.  Parliamentary staff create and implement an annual plan of activities based on this policy or strategy.
Assessment criterion 2:	Outreach activities	Parliament organises various outreach activities on and off the parliamentary premises, with the participation of the Speaker(s), MPs and a wide range of members of the public.
Assessment criterion 3:	Explanatory and educational materials	Parliament produces explanatory and educational materials that support its outreach strategy.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective outreach to all groups in society.

### 5.3.3 Indicator 3.3 Access to parliament

This indicator addresses public physical access, including for persons with disabilities and the media, to parliamentary proceedings at all venues, including the parliamentary building, plenary chambers, and committee meeting rooms, as well as events organised on or off-site. Ensuring physical access is a vital democratic principle; however, parliaments must also balance this principle with legitimate concerns such as security and public health. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Physical Access to Parliament, Access for Persons with Disabilities, and Media Access to Parliament.

#### 5.3.3.1 Physical access to parliament

This dimension examines public access to parliamentary premises and the ability to observe proceedings, which holds both symbolic and practical significance. Public openness influences citizens' perceptions of and interactions with parliament. Access should be encouraged across all venues,

including the parliamentary building, plenary chambers, and committee meeting rooms, as well as events on or off-site.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for public access to all venues where parliamentary proceedings take place.
Assessment criterion 2:	Restrictions on access	Any restrictions on public access to parliament are established in the legal framework, and are limited, proportional and imposed on reasonable grounds. Information about any such restrictions is made widely available.
Assessment criterion 3:	Guidelines for parliamentary staff	Parliament has clear guidelines for parliamentary staff outlining the management of all aspects of public access. These guidelines are applied consistently.
Assessment criterion 4:	Resources	Parliament dedicates sufficient resources to informing the public about visiting opportunities and arrangements.

### 5.3.3.2 Access for persons with disabilities

This dimension focuses on ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities to parliamentary premises and information. It is essential that parliament is accessible to all societal groups. Older or heritage buildings may pose physical barriers that hinder access to parliamentary chambers and committee rooms, necessitating retrofitting to meet accessibility standards. This includes eliminating barriers to entry and movement, installing accessible restrooms, and providing signage for individuals with hearing or visual impairments. Access to information is equally important, parliamentary proceedings should include sign-language interpretation and be available on the website in formats compatible with assistive technologies.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure require parliament to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities to the parliamentary building, to parliament's processes and proceedings, and to information about the work of parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Physical access to parliament	In practice, there are no obstacles to equal access for persons with disabilities to the parliamentary premises and to its proceedings.

Assessment criterion 3:	Access to information about parliament	Parliament makes information about parliamentary proceedings, as well as parliamentary publications, available in formats that facilitate access for persons with disabilities.
Assessment criterion 4:	Consultation	Parliament consults regularly with civil society organisations to seek input and advice about ensuring that parliament is accessible to all people, regardless of disability.

#### 5.3.3.3 Media access to parliament

This dimension addresses the provisions and arrangements for media access to parliamentary premises. Media plays a crucial role in reporting on parliamentary activities, and parliament must ensure free and unfettered access to its proceedings. Adequate space and conditions should be provided for journalists and technicians to work effectively. If a media credentialing system is implemented, it should allow for the permanent registration of media outlets and facilitate their access without limiting the diversity of reporting or imposing political control.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules of procedure	Parliament's rules of procedure guarantee access for the media to the parliamentary building and to all venues where parliamentary proceedings take place.
Assessment criterion 2:	Restrictions on access	Any restrictions on media access are limited, proportional and imposed on reasonable grounds. There are no unwarranted obstacles preventing the media from reporting on plenary sessions or committee meetings.
Assessment criterion 3:	Credentialling system	Parliament's credentialling system allows a wide diversity of media outlets to access parliament and report freely on parliamentary activities.
Assessment criterion 4:	Space, infrastructure, and technical support	Parliament provides media outlets with appropriate space, infrastructure, and technical support to carry out their work.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, diverse media outlets have equal access to the parliamentary building and to all venues where parliamentary

		proceedings take place and are able to report freely on parliamentary activities.
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## 5.4 Target 4: Responsive parliament<sup>7</sup>

The dimension for a responsive parliament emphasises addressing public concerns and policy issues. This indicator prioritises valuing public input as an indicator. Accessible parliaments actively involve citizens in their processes, providing multiple avenues for individuals to engage with their MPs and ensuring effective consultation before legislation is enacted. Key features of accessibility include the public's right to request action on specific issues and to file complaints regarding grievances. Furthermore, interest groups are permitted to lobby within established legal frameworks that promote transparency in these interactions. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Responding to Public Concerns, Responding to Emerging Policy Issues, and Leaving No One Behind and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 5.4.1 Indicator 4.1 Valuing public concerns

This indicator focuses on parliament's openness and responsiveness to public concerns, which is essential for building trust in the institution. Parliaments are expected to be attentive to public issues and address them promptly and effectively. A key challenge for parliament and its MPs is that the public is not a homogeneous entity, it consists of individuals with diverse and often conflicting interests. Therefore, parliament must employ nuanced approaches to engage various audiences, including both vocal groups and those who typically remain silent. Rapid technological and social changes necessitate that all political institutions, including parliament, constantly evolving, and adapting their strategies to meet the public's shifting needs. This requires a flexible institutional framework and frequently updated working methods and processes. Furthermore, this indicator – consisting of 3 dimensions – assesses how parliament responds to emerging policy issues that fall outside medium- or long-term planning.

#### 5.4.1.1 Responding to public concerns

This dimension focuses on how parliament and MPs listen to and respond to concerns raised by the public. Citizens, either individually or collectively, should be able to bring issues of concern to parliament and trust that their input will be considered appropriately. Responsiveness to public concerns is a fundamental aspect of the representative function. Distinguishing between issues raised with MPs and those brought directly to parliament, or its committees can be challenging. It is vital for

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<sup>7</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

parliament to offer various mechanisms for the public to raise issues, with petitions being one of the most common.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Mechanisms for the public to raise issues	Parliament's rules of procedure establish mechanisms for the public to raise issues of concern with parliament and set out how issues raised through these mechanisms will be dealt with.
Assessment criterion 2:	Processing issues raised by the public	The parliamentary administration processes issues raised by the public in a timely manner and makes information about this public input available to MPs in appropriate formats.
Assessment criterion 3:	Feedback to the public	Issues brought to the attention of parliament are given consideration and the person(s) who raised the issue receive(s) feedback on how it was handled.

#### 5.4.1.2 Responding to emerging policy issues

This dimension focuses on how parliament addresses policy issues that arise outside of medium- or long-term planning. These issues are often unforeseen and can capture significant public attention, becoming matters of common concern. Emerging policy issues may include critical events such as natural disasters, threats to democracy, or outbreaks of communicable diseases, as well as less critical yet urgent matters requiring parliamentary attention. While parliamentary procedures and agendas are typically pre-defined and planned in advance, there should be flexibility in the rules to accommodate emerging issues.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules of procedure	Parliament's rules of procedure establish mechanisms that allow for emerging policy issues to be addressed in parliament, such as through urgent debates or questions.
Assessment criterion 2:	Oversight of the executive's response	Parliament uses its oversight powers to oversee the executive's response to emerging policy issues and holds the executive to account.
Assessment criterion 3:	Communication with the public	Parliament communicates effectively with the public about emerging policy issues, including by providing regular updates on actions and decisions taken.

#### 5.4.1.3 Leaving no one behind and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This dimension focuses on parliament's role in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By engaging with the SDGs, parliaments can effectively address the needs of their citizens and contribute to global sustainability efforts. This ambitious global commitment aims to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive development, as endorsed by government leaders at the UN summit in September 2015. The agenda comprises 17 SDGs and 169 actionable targets, emphasising the principle of "leaving no one behind". United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/159 highlights the crucial role of parliaments in actualising the SDGs through their law-making, budgeting, and oversight powers.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Oversight of executive action	Parliament debates and scrutinises national development plans and government reports to ensure alignment with, and localisation of, the SDGs.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mainstreaming the SDGs in parliament	Mechanisms exist to support SDG mainstreaming in parliament. Parliamentary committees assess policy and legislation in their respective area of responsibility against SDG objectives.
Assessment criterion 3:	Participation in national SDG coordination mechanisms	Parliament participates in national SDG coordination mechanisms and is involved in the preparation of, and follow-up to, national reports on SDG progress to international bodies.

## 5.5 Target 5: Inclusive parliament<sup>8</sup>

The fifth target emphasises an inclusive parliament that addresses the needs and aspirations of all societal segments. Two key indicators are: inclusive law-making, oversight, and budgeting, as well as inclusive institutional practices.

### 5.5.1 Indicator 5.1 Inclusive law-making, oversight and budgeting

Parliament must embody the diverse interests of the populace in its law-making, oversight, and budgeting functions. Inclusive parliamentary practices not only strengthen democracy but also promote integration and mitigate conflicts. To enhance inclusivity, parliament can implement various mechanisms, such as safeguarding human rights during the law-making process, evaluating the impact of its work on different genders, and incorporating the perspectives of youth. There are 5 dimensions under this indicator: Human Rights, Impact Assessments, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-Responsive Budgeting, and Youth Inclusion.

#### 5.5.1.1 Human rights

This dimension focuses on parliament's essential role in safeguarding and promoting human rights while advancing the full spectrum of political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights. The establishment of a specialised parliamentary committee with a robust human rights mandate can convey a strong political message, mainstream human rights within parliamentary activities, and foster collaboration with human rights stakeholders. Furthermore, caucuses or informal groups of MPs dedicated to human rights are common mechanisms within parliaments.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	International human rights obligations	Parliament has a mandate to debate and ratify international human rights treaties, and to ensure that the national legal framework is consistent with international human rights obligations.
Assessment criterion 2:	Specialised committees	Parliament has one or more specialised committees responsible for human rights, with powers to assess legislation and government

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<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

		policy and action, and to ensure their compatibility with human rights obligations.
Assessment criterion 3:	NHRI	The NHRI is established in law and has the necessary mandate and resources to carry out its work. Its relationship with parliament is in line with the Belgrade principles on the relationship between national human rights institutions and parliaments.
Assessment criterion 4:	Engagement with UN human rights mechanisms	Parliament has a clear role in the different stages of the reporting procedures to the UN Human Rights Council under its universal periodic review and to the UN human rights treaty bodies. It contributes to the preparation and presentation of national reports and the implementation of subsequent recommendations.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, human rights are mainstreamed throughout parliamentary work. Parliament interacts on a regular basis with NHRIs, CSOs and UN human rights mechanisms.

#### 5.5.1.2 Impact assessments

This dimension addresses parliament's practices regarding impact assessments, which evaluate the future consequences of current or proposed actions. Impact assessments are crucial for evidence-based law-making, allowing for systematic analysis of the positive and negative effects of legislative proposals. These assessments can be broad, considering economic, social, environmental, and climate impacts, or they can be targeted, focusing on specific groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalised populations.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Use of impact assessments	Impact assessments of the positive and negative effects of proposals for laws on different groups in society are an established part of the law-making process.
Assessment criterion 2:	Expertise	Parliament has the necessary expertise, among parliamentary staff, advisory bodies, or external experts, to analyse impact assessments reports or to conduct or commission its own impact assessments.
Assessment criterion 3:	Publication	The findings and reports of impact assessments, whether carried out by parliament or by the executive, are made available to MPs and the public.

Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, parliament routinely analyses impact assessments provided by the executive, conducts, or commissions its own impact assessments, and uses the related findings and reports to inform its work.
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#### 5.5.1.3 Gender mainstreaming

This dimension focuses on the mechanisms through which gender concerns are integrated into parliamentary processes and outputs, aiming to achieve gender equality and prevent discrimination. MPs have both the duty and authority to ensure that the national legal framework aligns with international agreements on gender equality, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). They are also responsible for holding the executive accountable for progress in gender mainstreaming across all policy sectors. All MPs, regardless of gender, should possess the understanding, skills, and information necessary to effectively utilise parliamentary mechanisms to address gender equality issues. To achieve these objectives, parliament needs to establish institutional connections with various groups, including CSOs, the private sector, and academia, while employing an evidence-informed approach that utilises gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data. Increasingly, gender-sensitive language is becoming standard in law-making and other parliamentary practices.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Commitment to gender mainstreaming	A commitment to gender mainstreaming is publicly manifested in parliamentary rules, strategic planning documents and practices. Parliament regularly monitors and reports on its performance on gender mainstreaming.
Assessment criterion 2:	Law-making and oversight	Parliament has established a gender equality committee or other dedicated body with a mandate to scrutinise legislation and oversee the executive from a gender perspective. Mechanisms exist to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the work of all parliamentary committees.
Assessment criterion 3:	Consultation	National women's groups, gender rights advocates, CSOs, the private sector, academia and other outside sources of expertise are routinely consulted in the work of parliament and its committees.

Assessment criterion 4:	CEDAW Committee	Parliament participates in the preparation and presentation of national reports to international bodies including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) and holds debates on the resulting recommendations.
Assessment criterion 5:	Resources	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, including gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data.

#### 5.5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting

This dimension focuses on gender-responsive budgeting, which involves integrating a gender perspective into parliament's review and approval of the national budget. Gender-responsive budgeting is a widely adopted practice that enables an understanding of how policies impact men and women differently. This allows parliament to question budget priorities, scrutinise the extent to which policies promote gender equality, and influence decision-making during the planning phase.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Gender budget statement	The legal framework requires the executive to produce a gender budget statement to accompany the draft budget.
Assessment criterion 2:	Dedicated body	Parliament has a dedicated body or bodies responsible for supporting gender-responsive budgeting, which have established procedures and authority to obtain supplementary information from the executive.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Parliament has sufficient research and analysis capacity to support gender-responsive budgeting. MPs have access to training on gender-responsive budgeting and to information needed to support their work.

#### 5.5.1.5 Youth inclusion

This dimension addresses the inclusion of young people and youth issues in both formal and informal political processes within parliament. Parliament plays a crucial role in developing youth-sensitive policies and fostering youth inclusion by actively engaging young people, partnering with youth organisations, and creating educational and empowerment programs. To effectively engage youth in

parliamentary activities especially on topics that impact those parliaments should utilise digital tools and channels that resonate with young people.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Consultation	Parliament regularly consults with youth organisations with a view to developing effective mechanisms for including young people in formal and informal political processes.
Assessment criterion 2:	Youth engagement opportunities	Parliament provides young people with meaningful opportunities to engage in core aspects of parliamentary work, including the work of its committees. Such forms of engagement are substantive and influence parliamentary decision-making.
Assessment criterion 3:	Youth inclusion and education programmes	Parliament has developed diverse, meaningful, and youth-friendly programmes for youth inclusion and education, including programmes developed in conjunction with schools, universities, and youth organisations.
Assessment criterion 4:	Continuous improvement	Parliament gathers data and participant feedback on its youth inclusion and education programmes for the purpose of continuous improvement.

### 5.5.2 Indicator 5.2 Inclusive institutional practices

This indicator assesses parliamentary inclusiveness through its institutional practices, highlighting that effective representation and accountability to citizens necessitate an inclusive parliamentary environment. It examines the diversity within the parliamentary workforce, emphasising gender balance among key personnel. Furthermore, the indicator considers the parliament's capacity to accommodate a diverse community, particularly regarding the use of multiple official languages. It highlights the significance of a positive workplace culture, requiring the parliament to prioritise the health, safety, and well-being of members, staff, and visitors. It also mandates proactive measures to prevent sexism, harassment, and gender-based violence against MPs and staff. There are 4 dimensions under this indicator: Workforce Diversity, Workplace Environment, Combating Sexism, Harassment, and Violence and, Multilingual Service Delivery.

#### 5.5.2.1 Workforce diversity

The legal framework should mandate non-discrimination in recruitment, employment, and advancement across all societal groups, establishing parliament as an equal-opportunity employer. This principle affirms that every individual, irrespective of attributes such as race, sex, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, should have equal access to employment opportunities. A gender-balanced parliamentary administration is vital for incorporating diverse perspectives into parliamentary work and is a crucial component of workplace diversity and gender mainstreaming.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Equal-opportunity employer	The legal framework establishes that parliament is an equal-opportunity employer and provides for non-discrimination in the recruitment, employment, and advancement of parliamentary staff.
Assessment criterion 2:	Gender equality policy or plan	Parliament has a gender equality policy or plan that includes a clear and detailed set of objectives and processes for achieving gender balance within the parliamentary administration, including at senior levels.
Assessment criterion 3:	Positive approaches to workforce diversity	Parliament adopts positive approaches that provide real opportunities for all groups in society, including underrepresented groups, to be included in the parliamentary workforce. Human resources policies place a special emphasis on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of underrepresented groups.
Assessment criterion 4:	Monitoring	Workforce diversity, including gender balance, is regularly monitored. Data on the composition of the parliamentary administration is publicly available. The effectiveness of diversity and gender equality policies is regularly reviewed.

#### 5.5.2.2 Workplace environment

This dimension focuses on parliamentary practices and arrangements designed to foster an inclusive workplace environment, which can enhance the effectiveness of MPs, parliamentary staff, and the institution as a whole. Parliament is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of MPs, staff, and visitors, including providing a safe and functional workplace that accommodates the needs of employees with disabilities. This encompasses accessible facilities and information resources. Recognising that many MPs and staff have significant family responsibilities, such as caring for children

or elderly relative's parliament must cultivate a family-friendly environment through supportive institutional procedures and practices

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Health and safety	The legal framework requires parliament to ensure the health and safety of MPs, staff, and visitors to parliament. Health and safety policies and regulations are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation.
Assessment criterion 2:	MPs and staff with disabilities	Parliament provides a safe and functional workplace for MPs and staff with disabilities
Assessment criterion 3:	Breastfeeding or caring for young children	Parliament's rules of procedure enable MPs who are breastfeeding or caring for young children to fulfil their parliamentary duties, including voting.
Assessment criterion 4:	Family-friendly facilities and services	Parliament provides family-friendly facilities and services for MPs and staff, such as breastfeeding spaces, spaces for family members, and childcare facilities.
Assessment criterion 5:	Work-life balance	Parliament takes measures to facilitate work-life balance for MPs and staff, including predictable sitting hours and session periods, flexible working hours, and opportunities for virtual participation and remote working.

### 5.5.2.3 Combating sexism, harassment, and violence

This dimension addresses parliament's responsibility to prevent and combat sexism, harassment, and violence against MPs and parliamentary staff. Such unacceptable behaviours, especially against women, are pervasive in workplaces globally, including parliaments, which are not immune to these issues. A work environment devoid of sexist behaviour and violence benefits all individuals, regardless of gender or role, including MPs, staff, and assistants. To tackle these challenges, parliament should implement a comprehensive workplace policy that aligns with national and international obligations and best practices. The policy should explicitly state its objectives, highlighting the intolerable and illegal nature of sexism, harassment.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Policy for combating sexism, harassment, and violence in parliament	Parliament has adopted a workplace policy for combating sexism, harassment and violence in parliament that is in line with national and international obligations and best practice.
Assessment criterion 2:	Protection against abuse by third parties	Parliament takes specific measures to protect MPs and others working there who are subjected by third parties to threats, assaults, or sexist or sexual violence, including online harassment/cyberbullying.
Assessment criterion 3:	Complaints mechanism	Parliament has a confidential complaints mechanism to receive and process complaints by MPs and staff. This mechanism is confidential; responsive to complainants; fair to all parties; based on a thorough, impartial, and comprehensive investigation; and timely.
Assessment criterion 4:	Awareness-raising and training	Parliament regularly conducts awareness-raising and training programmes for MPs and staff combating sexism, harassment, and violence, both internally and from third parties.
Assessment criterion 5:	Monitoring	Parliament monitors the effectiveness and impact over time of policies to combat sexism, harassment, and violence in parliament, including by collecting baseline data and the experiences and perceptions of people working in parliament

**5.5.2.4 Multilingual service delivery**

This dimension examines how parliament communicates with and provides information to all constituents, irrespective of the languages they speak. To ensure effective communication, parliament must adopt inclusive practices that prevent language barriers from hindering engagement with diverse societal groups. In nations with multiple official languages, parliament should guarantee that information and services are accessible in all official languages, allowing MPs to utilise these languages in their work.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Official languages	In countries with more than one official language, parliamentary information and services are available in all official languages.
Assessment criterion 2:	Languages used by MPs	MPs are able to contribute to parliamentary work in any official language. Simultaneous interpretation between official languages is provided in plenary and committees.
Assessment criterion 3:	Other widely used languages	In addition to official languages, parliament endeavours to make at least the most important information and services available in languages that are widely used in the country.

## 5.6 Target 6: Participatory parliament<sup>9</sup>

The sixth target focuses on participatory parliament, emphasising public and civil society engagement in parliamentary activities. Its 3 indicators are: 1) the parliamentary environment for public participation, 2) public involvement in parliamentary processes, and 3) the inclusion of diverse groups in parliamentary work.

### 5.6.1 Indicator 6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation

This indicator evaluates the legal framework for public participation and parliament's institutional capacity to effectively implement these provisions. It also emphasises the importance of public education regarding parliamentary operations to enhance trust and expand opportunities for citizens to express their interests. To optimise participation, the public must be informed not only about the timing and location of parliamentary processes but also about how to engage in and influence decision-making. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Legal Framework for Public Participation, Institutional Capacity for Public Participation, and Public Education About the Work of Parliament.

#### 5.6.1.1 Legal framework for public participation

A legal framework is essential for fostering public participation in parliamentary activities. The constitution, legislation, and parliamentary rules of procedure should collectively create an enabling environment for civil society, academics, experts, and the general public to engage systematically in both online and in-person parliamentary work. This framework aims to promote, rather than obstruct, public involvement. Clearly defined mechanisms and instances for citizen contributions should be established, along with identification of those responsible for managing participation processes.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework enabling civic space	A legal framework is in place, including laws, decrees, or regulations, which enables and guarantees the civic space necessary for the functioning of civil society and for effective participation in all areas, including but not limited to parliamentary work. This framework includes laws and regulations relating to
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<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

		freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of information, and ease of registration and funding of civil society organisations.
Assessment criterion 2:	Legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament	Provisions in the constitution, laws or rules of procedure establish the right of people to participate in parliamentary business, such as by bringing issues to the attention of parliament, contributing evidence to legislative and oversight processes, and commenting on proposals for laws. The related rules and procedures cover all aspects of public participation, both online and on-site.
Assessment criterion 3:	Protection of privacy	The legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament contains provisions that protect the privacy of members of the public and includes clear rules and procedures to ensure that the right to privacy is implemented in practice.

#### 5.6.1.2 Institutional capacity for public participation

Parliament must develop practical mechanisms and tools to facilitate engagement. Mechanisms of public participation refer to the systems that collectively organise, coordinate, and channel public input to ensure it is considered in all aspects of parliamentary processes. Tools, on the other hand, are specific instruments both online and on-site that enable parliament to effectively operate these mechanisms. These tools must be user-friendly and tailored to meet the diverse needs of various community groups, ensuring meaningful public participation.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Strategic approach	Parliament has an agreed strategy or plan for the implementation and further development of public participation, as well as established policies and practices, with time-bound and measurable objectives.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mechanisms	Parliament's rules, practices and policies contain a comprehensive set of mechanisms for the organisation, coordination, and channelling of public participation. Public participation processes and activities are widely advertised. There are mechanisms by which the public can both receive, and provide feedback on, the outcome of their participation.
Assessment criterion 3:	Tools	Parliament has easy-to-use tools to support public participation, both online and on-site. These tools take account of different groups

		within the community, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access.
Assessment criterion 4:	Monitoring and evaluation	Parliament monitors and evaluates the use of its public participation mechanisms and tools and reports on their use on its website. Parliament adapts and changes its engagement mechanisms and tools in light of the results of this evaluation work.
Assessment criterion 5:	Dedicated resources and staff	Parliament dedicates sufficient resources to public participation activities. Parliament has a dedicated organisational unit for this purpose, such as a public participation office, or has staff members with duties related to public participation.

#### 5.6.1.3 Public education about the work of parliament

This dimension examines parliament's initiatives to enhance public understanding of its role and functions. To maximise participation, the public must be informed not only about the timing and location of parliamentary processes but also about how they can engage and influence decision-making. These efforts should promote an active citizenry in a non-partisan manner, upholding the fundamental principles of democracy. Public education can take various forms, such as direct interactions between MPs and constituents or opportunities for the public to engage with and visit parliamentary offices. Targeted outreach to different community groups is also essential.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Education programmes	Parliament has developed policies and materials for nationwide programmes to educate the public about its role and working methods, as well as about how members of the public can engage in its work.
Assessment criterion 2:	Infrastructure and resources	Parliament has developed infrastructure and has allocated budgetary and human resources to support a range of public education programmes. This infrastructure can accommodate members of the public with special needs, including persons with disabilities.
Assessment criterion 3:	Accessibility	Public education programmes are easily accessible for all groups within the community. Various online and in-person tools are in place to ensure that education programmes reach all sections of

		society, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural or remote communities.
Assessment criterion 4:	Non-partisanship	Public education programmes are non-partisan and promote the basic principles of democracy.

### 5.6.2 Indicator 6.2 Public participation in parliamentary processes

This indicator focuses on the practical implementation of public participation policies within the core functions of parliament. It acknowledges that participation is an active process, offering the public a genuine opportunity to influence parliamentary work and to be consulted and informed about it. Providing feedback to the public on the outcomes of their participation is crucial for enhancing the credibility of these mechanisms and processes. There are 4 dimensions under this indicator: Participation in Law-Making, Participation in Oversight, Participation in the Budget Cycle, and Managing Public Input and Providing Feedback.

#### 5.6.2.1 Participation in law-making

This dimension addresses public participation in the law-making process. It clarifies that public involvement does not replace or undermine the role of MPs, it enhances their understanding of legislation's potential impact on citizens' lives and leads to more effective laws. Engaging the public in law-making fosters trust in parliament, MPs, and the democratic system while reinforcing the rule of law. For this dimension, public participation is defined as the formal process through which parliament consults the public individually or in groups to gather opinions on existing laws, proposed legislation, or policy decisions.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for public participation in the law-making process. There are clear standards on consulting the public, as well as on the criteria that constitute adequate participation.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mechanisms and processes	Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate both general and targeted participation in the law-making process. Parliament ensures that members of the public who are directly impacted by a proposal for a law have sufficient opportunity to provide input to the law-making process.

Assessment criterion 3:	Accessibility	A wide range of groups can participate in the law-making process in a timely manner. Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to explain proposals for laws. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, considering the complexity of the legislation in question.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, public participation is a regular feature of the law-making process. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliamentary consideration of proposals for laws.

#### 5.6.2.2 Participation in oversight

This dimension addresses public participation in parliamentary oversight, a critical process through which parliament holds the executive accountable on behalf of the public. Direct or indirect public involvement in oversight can significantly enhance the quality of accountability. Activities conducted in the chamber(s), by committees, and within electoral districts can provide opportunities for informing, consulting, and interacting with the public. Much of the public participation is likely to occur through parliamentary committees, as activities such as accepting submissions, holding public hearings, and conducting on-the-ground inspections are conducive to public involvement.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes parliament's obligation to facilitate public participation in oversight processes and activities.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mechanisms and processes	Mechanisms and processes are in place for the public to participate in oversight activities, including robust procedures to encourage public participation in all aspects of the work of parliamentary committees. Reference material explaining how the public can contribute to parliamentary oversight is made widely available by parliament.
Assessment criterion 3:	Accessibility	Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to inform the public about parliamentary oversight activities, and relevant documents are made available to a wide range of groups in a timely manner. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, considering the complexity of the issue in question.

Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, public participation is a regular feature of parliamentary oversight. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliament's oversight activities.
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### 5.6.2.3 Participation in the budget cycle

This dimension focuses on public participation in the budget cycle. The annual state budget reflects public interests and priorities, making its preparation, approval, and oversight one of parliament's most critical responsibilities. While the mechanisms and processes for public participation in the budget cycle are similar to those for law-making and oversight, budget transparency is particularly important, as the allocation of public resources signals government priorities. Engaging the public in the budget cycle enhances transparency in government programs and provides insights that help MPs hold the executive accountable. It also fosters better alignment between government priorities and resource allocation, thereby improving service delivery and building trust in parliament and public institutions.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for members of the public to participate in the budget cycle.
Assessment criterion 2:	Mechanisms and processes	Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate public participation in all stages of the budget cycle (pre-budget statement, committee and plenary debate and approval, and in-year and ex-post budget oversight), with a particular emphasis on participation in parliamentary committees or other bodies responsible for the budget.
Assessment criterion 3:	Accessibility of the process	Opportunities for public participation in the budget cycle are announced well in advance, sufficient time is allocated for effective participation, and participation takes place at a time and in a place convenient for a wide range of groups
Assessment criterion 4:	Accessibility of the text	The annual State budget is communicated to the public in plain, easy-to-understand language, enabling active engagement and meaningful contribution from citizens.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	Parliament regularly consults with the public about the budget, using a wide range of instruments and methods.

#### 5.6.2.4 Managing public input and providing feedback

This dimension emphasises parliament's responsibility to effectively utilise public input in its operations. It is crucial for parliament to demonstrate that a functioning system is in place for managing public input, for collecting and analysing proposals related to legislative and oversight actions, and for communicating these to MPs and parliamentary bodies. After soliciting public input, it is equally important for parliament to provide feedback to the public regarding the outcomes of their participation.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Processing public input into parliamentary work	MPs and parliamentary bodies receive information about the main themes emerging from public input in a timely manner and in formats that help them to incorporate this input
Assessment criterion 2:	Providing feedback to the public	Parliament has a functioning system for providing regular feedback to the public on the results of their participation. The effectiveness of this feedback system is regularly evaluated, and improvements are made where necessary.
Assessment criterion 3:	Resources	Parliament has appropriate human and technical resources to process public input, to supply MPs with relevant findings and to provide feedback to members of the public who participate in the work of parliament

#### 5.6.3 Indicator 6.3 Participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament

Making parliament accessible to all groups necessitates strategic and coordinated efforts, as well as adequate resources. This often involves proactive outreach and collaboration with entities that can connect with specific community groups and bridge existing divides. Parliaments have a responsibility to foster an environment where civil society can make its voice heard. Engaging with CSOs is essential to ensure that participatory processes are inclusive and invite contributions from diverse groups. Particular emphasis should be placed on historically marginalised populations, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, and remote or minority groups. Developing targeted engagement tools for these communities is crucial. Without such efforts, parliaments risk engaging only with politically active groups, thus hearing predominantly from those who are already empowered. There are 2

dimensions under this indicator: Engaging Civil Society Organisations and Reaching Out to All Communities.

#### 5.6.3.1 Engaging civil society organisations

This dimension focuses on the involvement of CSOs in parliamentary work. CSO participation brings additional perspectives and expertise to the discussion, contributing to more informed policymaking and amplifying the voices of the most vulnerable segments of society. Therefore, fostering this participation is vital in a thriving democracy.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Legal framework	The legal framework sets out the procedures by which CSOs can participate in the work of parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Consultation	Parliament systematically consults with CSOs in its law-making and oversight activities. CSO representatives can access parliamentary premises and attend relevant meetings. Parliament creates tools for engaging CSOs in consultation processes both in person and online.
Assessment criterion 3:	Diversity	Parliament facilitates participation from a broad range of CSOs representing diverse points of view, including those that work with hard-to-reach and historically marginalised groups. Parliament ensures a level playing field for all CSOs that engage with parliament.

#### 5.6.3.2 Reaching out to all communities

This dimension addresses parliament's capacity to engage with all communities. Without proactive efforts, structural barriers may limit certain voices and exacerbate existing inequalities. It is essential for parliament to promote participation across diverse communities. This requires strategic decisions regarding target groups, identifying effective methods for collaboration, and investing resources to enhance accessibility for all. Groups facing barriers to engagement may include women, youth, older individuals, rural populations, LGBTQI+ individuals, Indigenous communities, as well as national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities, migrants, and refugees.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Policies	Parliament sets out strategies for engaging all groups within the community, especially those facing barriers to engagement with parliament, regardless of their age, gender, location, physical ability, or any other characteristic.
Assessment criterion 2:	Accessibility	Information about parliamentary consultations is made available in a timely manner and to a wide and diverse audience. Parliamentary buildings and infrastructure, as well as print and digital materials, are accessible and inclusive.
Assessment criterion 3:	Engaging women	The participation of women is institutionalised and mainstreamed throughout the work of parliament. Engagement is safe and accessible for women. Parliament ensures that both women and men are equally represented among experts and other witnesses at committee hearings.
Assessment criterion 4:	Engaging youth	Parliament provides targeted engagement opportunities for youth and young people are systematically consulted on matters that are important to them.
Assessment criterion 5:	Engaging remote communities	Parliament proactively offers engagement opportunities for communities that are geographically remote from parliament. These may include bringing people to parliament, organising committee hearings outside the parliamentary premises, or offering educational programmes to people in remote areas.

## 5.7 Target 7: Representative parliament<sup>10</sup>

The final target is a representative parliament, which encompasses an elected body that reflects social and political diversity. This target includes 3 key indicators: electoral integrity, the composition of parliament, and the composition of parliamentary bodies. Representative parliaments are socially and politically inclusive, enabling members to fulfil their mandates freely. They are characterised by free and fair elections, gender balance, open and democratic systems within political parties, and the protection of fundamental rights. These rights encompass freedom of speech and equality of opportunity for all members, including those from opposition parties.

### 5.7.1 Indicator 7.1 Electoral integrity

Parliament plays a crucial role in establishing the legal framework for free and fair elections, which are the cornerstone of any democratic society. Elections should ensure equal opportunities for voters, candidates, and political parties, fostering a level playing field and a safe environment for participation. To maintain the credibility of the electoral process, electoral laws must be stable and aligned with international standards. It is essential that public authorities remain neutral throughout the electoral process. Furthermore, elections should be administered by an independent electoral management body (EMB) that operates transparently, impartially, and accountably. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Voting and Election Rights, Candidacy, Party, and Campaign Rights and Responsibilities, and Role of Public Authorities in Elections.

#### 5.7.1.1 Voting and election rights

This dimension addresses the constitutional provisions and other elements of the legal framework that underpin democratic elections. The constitution establishes fundamental electoral principles, including the electoral system, universal suffrage, the frequency of elections, and the use of secret ballots. Electoral law governs various aspects of election management, such as the composition of electoral administration, boundary delimitation, and procedural matters. It also safeguards fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and access to information during the electoral process. The stability of electoral law is crucial for maintaining the credibility of the electoral process.

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<sup>10</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Constitution and/or legal framework	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish fundamental electoral principles. These provisions are clear, consistent, and unambiguous and are in line with international electoral standards.
Assessment criterion 2:	Stability of electoral law	Changes to electoral law are made in a timely manner and at least one year in advance of any elections.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, elections take place regularly. A significant proportion of citizens participate in these elections. Elections are competitive and citizens' fundamental rights are respected before, during and after election day.

**5.7.1.2 Candidacy, party and campaign rights and responsibilities**

This dimension focuses on the rights of citizens to stand for election and campaign on an equal footing with other candidates. This encompasses the freedom to engage with voters, express political views, move freely within the country for campaign purposes, and access media outlets. Any restrictions on this right should be non-discriminatory, consistent with international obligations, and clearly articulated in law. Once a political party is officially registered, it should have equal opportunities to participate in the electoral process and access the ballot. The legal framework must also provide for the right to appeal against alleged violations of political and electoral rights occurring before, during, and after elections.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Right to stand for election	The legal framework establishes that every eligible citizen has the right to stand for election, including as an individual candidate and/or as a member of a political party.
Assessment criterion 2:	Right to join or form political parties	Individuals and groups have the right to join or form political parties in order to contest elections. Any exceptions to this right are non-discriminatory, consistent with international obligations, and clearly defined by law.
Assessment criterion 3:	Right to appeal	The legal framework guarantees the right to appeal regarding alleged violations of political and electoral rights to a competent and independent body. The appeal procedure, as well as the powers and responsibilities of the bodies involved, are clearly

		regulated. The time limits for lodging and deciding on appeals are reasonably short.
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### 5.7.1.3 Role of public authorities in elections

This dimension addresses the administration of elections by public authorities, emphasising the importance of impartiality, transparency, and independence. Public authorities must uphold their duty to remain neutral during the electoral process and ensure that voters have the right to form opinions freely. Elections should be managed by an independent EMB, which operates in a transparent, impartial, open, and accountable manner. The legal framework should define the composition of the EMB, the processes for appointing and removing officials, their roles and responsibilities, and the mechanisms that guarantee the independent and impartial conduct of elections.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Neutrality of public authorities	The legal framework guarantees the integrity and transparency of the entire electoral process, including sanctions for electoral fraud. The neutrality of public authorities in the electoral process is ensured by law and in practice.
Assessment criterion 2:	Electoral management body (EMB)	An EMB is tasked with ensuring the proper conduct of the electoral process. The EMB operates according to clearly defined and publicly available rules and enjoys independence of decision-making and action. The EMB carries out its tasks impartially and transparently and enjoys the trust and respect of the community.
Assessment criterion 3:	Access to information about the electoral process	Information about the electoral process is widely available, including as part of civic education programmes. Public authorities ensure that voters are aware of electoral procedures and have access to candidate lists and information. Information is available in the languages that are widely used in the country.

### 5.7.2 Indicator 7.2 Composition of parliament

The composition of a democratic parliament should reflect a spectrum of political opinions and societal groups. An unrepresentative parliament risks marginalising certain communities, potentially undermining public life quality and political stability. Multiple factors influence parliamentary composition, including the electoral system, political parties, and electorate preferences. Parliament not only shapes these factors but also ensures it embodies the nation's social diversity. Many

parliaments implement measures like quotas to enhance the representation of women, youth, and other underrepresented groups. There are 4 dimensions under this indicator: Representation of Political Diversity, Representation of Women, Representation of Youth, and Representation of Other Underrepresented Groups.

#### 5.7.2.1 Representation of political diversity

This dimension addresses the legal provisions that facilitate the representation of diverse political opinions in parliament. These provisions encompass the electoral system, procedures for registering political parties and independent candidates, electoral thresholds, and the powers assigned to various political groups and independent MPs.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Electoral system design	The design of the electoral system ensures that the allocation of parliamentary seats accurately reflects the proportion of votes received by political parties and candidates.
Assessment criterion 2:	Party/candidate registration	The legal framework establishes clear and transparent procedures for registering political parties and candidates for elections, including reasonable eligibility criteria, consistent procedures, and feasible deadlines.
Assessment criterion 3:	Electoral thresholds	Where applicable, the legal framework maintains a reasonable electoral threshold for parties and/or candidates to gain seats in parliament.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, political parties are represented in parliament in proportion to their support among the electorate. No parties or candidates are arbitrarily prevented from participating in elections or taking up seats in parliament.

#### 5.7.2.2 Representation of women

This dimension focuses on the legal framework and mechanisms established to achieve gender parity in parliamentary composition and the strategies to advance this objective. The legal framework should ensure equal opportunities for women's political participation and foster an electoral environment free from barriers and violence. Parliament can promote gender parity by enacting legislation for measures such as candidate quotas or reserved seats.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Equal opportunities	The legal framework guarantees equal opportunities for the political participation of women and men in parliament.
Assessment criterion 2:	Measures to increase women's representation	Parliament has adopted legislative and other measures designed to increase women's representation in parliament, such as quotas.
Assessment criterion 3:	Violence against women in politics	Legislative and policy measures are taken to address and prevent violence against women in politics, both as candidates for election and while in office.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, consistent progress is made towards gender parity in parliament and the elimination of violence against women in politics.

**5.7.2.3 Representation of youth**

This dimension concerns the representation of young men and women in parliament. An enabling legal framework, free of restrictive barriers, is important for increasing the political participation of young people. The alignment of the minimum age of eligibility to run for office with the minimum voting age is a considerable factor for youth representation. In the case of bicameral parliaments, it is also beneficial to equalise the age of eligibility for both chambers. Political parties' canals make an impact by introducing voluntary quotas, by strengthening party youth wings/organisations and by promoting young people to run for office. Many parliaments have committees that work on youth issues.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Minimum age of eligibility	The legal framework establishes that the minimum age of eligibility to run for political office is the same as the minimum voting age.
Assessment criterion 2:	Promoting youth representation	Legislative and policy measures are taken to promote youth representation in parliament.
Assessment criterion 3:	Bodies addressing youth issues	Parliamentary bodies, such as committees, caucuses, or networks of young MPs, are mandated to address youth issues.

Assessment criterion 4:	Enabling environment for young MPs	There is an enabling environment for young MPs in parliament, including the availability of training and mentoring.
Assessment criterion 5:	Practice	In practice, there is commitment to enhancing youth representation in parliament. Over the past three parliaments, there has been an increase in both the number and proportion of seats held by MPs under age 45, under age 40 and under age 30.

#### 5.7.2.4 Representation of other underrepresented groups

This dimension focuses on the representation of groups and communities that may be underrepresented in parliament. The definition of "underrepresented groups" varies by country but typically includes national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, Indigenous peoples, and other socially vulnerable groups. These communities often face marginalisation and are disproportionately impacted by poverty, unemployment, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. Achieving representation in parliament is a critical step toward addressing these challenges and fostering broader equality.

#### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Right to participate in public affairs	The legal framework guarantees the right of all people, including underrepresented groups, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to vote and to stand for office, without discrimination.
Assessment criterion 2:	Special measures	Parliament has adopted special measures to promote the representation of underrepresented groups in parliament, such as quotas and reserved seats.
Assessment criterion 3:	Rules of procedure	Parliament's rules of procedure provide opportunities for MPs representing minority groups to participate actively in the work of parliament.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, underrepresented groups are represented in parliament and are able to engage effectively in parliamentary work.

#### 5.7.3 Indicator 7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies

The composition of parliamentary bodies, and of parliament as a whole, should reflect the diversity of political opinions and of social groups within a country. The representation of political groups in the

composition of parliamentary bodies is usually proportionate to the representation of these political groups in parliament as a whole. Parliaments often give special consideration to smaller political groups and independent MPs to ensure their effective representation. Rules and practice have a significant role in determining the composition of parliament's governing bodies, such as the presidium, committees and other parliamentary bodies, and the distribution of leadership roles. There are 3 dimensions under this indicator: Composition of Governing Bodies, Composition of Committees, and Gender and Age Balance in Parliamentary Bodies.

#### 5.7.3.1 Composition of governing bodies

This dimension addresses the provisions that ensure representation and balance among political groups in parliament's governing bodies, such as the presidium, the Conference of Speakers, and administrative and financial bodies. These provisions are typically outlined in the legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure, often ensuring that the representation of political groups in governing bodies aligns proportionately with their overall presence in parliament. Including political groups from the opposition or minority parties in governing bodies serves as an institutional recognition of parliamentary diversity.

##### The assessment:

Assessment criterion 1:	Representation of all political groups	The principles for the composition of parliament's governing bodies are clearly set out in the legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure. These provisions guarantee the representation of all political groups in the governing bodies and ensure an appropriate balance between them.
Assessment criterion 2:	Leadership positions	Parliament reserves leadership positions, such as at least one Deputy Speaker role, for the opposition or political minority groups.
Assessment criterion 3:	Practice	In practice, there is balanced representation of political groups in parliament's governing bodies.

#### 5.7.3.2 Composition of committees

This dimension addresses the rules and practices regarding the composition of parliamentary committees, including membership and leadership roles. It is essential that MPs engage in committee work aligned with their expertise and interests, reflecting the selection and decision-making processes

of their political groups. Political groups typically play a significant role in assigning committee memberships. Committee composition is generally determined at the beginning of a parliamentary term, with the structure usually mirroring the overall composition of parliament.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Rules and procedures for composition of committees	There are clear, fair, and transparent rules and procedures for determining membership of committees and for the selection or election of committee leadership roles.
Assessment criterion 2:	Small political groups and independent MPs	Special consideration is given to small political groups and independent MPs in order to ensure their representation in committees.
Assessment criterion 3:	Expertise and interests of MPs	The expertise and interests of MPs are taken into consideration when assigning committee roles.
Assessment criterion 4:	Practice	In practice, the composition of committees and committee leadership roles reflects that of parliament as a whole.

### 5.7.3.3 Gender and age balance in parliamentary bodies

This dimension addresses the arrangements and practices related to the representation of women and young MPs in leadership positions and parliamentary bodies, including roles such as Speakers, Deputy Speakers, presidium members, and committee chairs and vice-chairs. Ensuring gender and age balance in the leadership and composition of parliamentary bodies allows women and young MPs to influence parliamentary work effectively, ensuring that the needs of these groups are adequately addressed. It is particularly important for women MPs to have access to leadership roles across all policy areas, including key committees such as foreign affairs, defence, and finance. Furthermore, achieving gender and age balance extends to the parliamentary secretariat as well.

**The assessment:**

Assessment criterion 1:	Measures to promote	Parliament takes measures to promote the equitable representation of women and young MPs in all parliamentary bodies.
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	equitable representation	
Assessment criterion 2:	Gender and age balance in leadership positions	MPs of different genders and ages are equitably represented in parliamentary leadership positions, including among committee chairs and vice-chairs.
Assessment criterion 3:	Monitoring and reporting	Parliament monitors and reports on gender and age balance in the composition and leadership of parliamentary bodies

## 6. Assessment

The assessment criteria encompass several critical components, which are essential for ensuring a comprehensive and effective evaluation process. The following elements are considered paramount:

1. **Objectives:** It is imperative to define the objectives of the assessment clearly. This involves determining whether all stakeholders share a common understanding of these objectives and the scope of the assessment. Furthermore, specific indicators that will be evaluated should be identified. The expected outcomes of the assessment must be articulated, along with a detailed explanation of how this evaluation is anticipated to contribute to broader parliamentary reform and development efforts.
2. **Timing:** The timing of the assessment is crucial. Clear timelines should be established regarding when the assessment will be conducted, the expected duration (including the number of days and sessions), and whether an introductory seminar will be held to orient participants.
3. **Political Engagement:** Assessing the level of political support for the assessment is essential. This includes gauging backing from parliamentary leadership and individual MPs. The existence of a cross-party leadership group to oversee the process is also vital, as it fosters a collaborative environment.
4. **Participation:** The composition of participants in the assessment must be carefully considered. It is important to ensure that there is sufficient diversity among participants to reflect varied perspectives. Furthermore, strong engagement at the administrative level in organising the assessment is crucial for its success.
5. **Organisation:** Clear assignments of responsibility for organising the assessment are necessary to streamline the process. An evaluation of whether external expert support is needed should be conducted, alongside an assessment of the availability of such support.
6. **Facilitation:** The method of facilitation for the assessment is a key consideration. Identifying partner organisations that can provide expert support in facilitating the exercise is important for enhancing the quality of the assessment.
7. **Evidence:** The collection and preparation of data and information for evidentiary support should be clearly assigned to specific individuals or teams. Timelines for this process must be established, and any additional background information that may aid participants should be compiled. It is crucial to designate responsibility for distributing both the indicators and supporting evidence to participants.

8. **Documentation:** The process of documenting the assessment must be systematically organised, including specifying who will be responsible for this task.
9. **Outcome:** The types of outcome documents to be produced, such as reports or action plans, should be clearly defined. Responsibilities for the creation of these documents must be assigned to ensure accountability.
10. **Follow-Up:** Finally, a strategic approach to utilising the outcome documents is necessary. Clear responsibilities for follow-up actions should be established, along with mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of these actions.

Each dimension is assessed by six descriptive grades: Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent which will determine the best reflection of the situation in parliament. Furthermore, the assessor needs to provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based. It is recommended that a diverse range of stakeholders – both internal and external – participate collaboratively in the assessment process. This will allow for multiple perspectives and robust analyses.

## 7. Way forward

The next report in this series will cover an in-depth analysis of the application of IDPs within a South African context. This analysis will involve an evaluation of what has been implemented thus far, assessing the extent to which the targets, dimensions, and assessment criteria have been effectively executed. Furthermore, analysing the specific indicators that have not been implemented. The report will explore potential strategies for their implementation.

The collaboration between the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA), OpenUp, and the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) on the ParliMeter dashboard, integrates elements of the IDP, aids as a critical component of this analysis. Future reports will involve a thorough assessment of each individual IDP target in regards to the South African Parliament, as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of each dimensions' assessment. The aim is to provide an understanding of both the progress and challenges related to the implementation of these targets. Thus, providing insight and recommendations for the effective implementation, management and adjustment of each target.

It is acknowledged that these studies and resulting reports will not be definitive, and will have to be revisited regularly. Parliaments continue to evolve, hence having an iterative process will allow for greater accuracy in the assessment of parliaments according to the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments.

## 8. References

Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2024. *Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/impact/democracy-and-strong-parliaments/ipu-standards/indicators-democratic-parliaments> [Accessed 10 September 2024].

Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *About indicators: Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/about/about-indicators> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

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## 9. Glossary

<b>Ad Hoc Committees</b>	Temporary committees formed to address specific issues or challenges, which disband once their task is complete.
<b>Adjournment Debate</b>	A debate held at the end of a parliamentary sitting, often focusing on specific issues raised by individual MPs that may not require formal legislation.
<b>Administrative Autonomy</b>	Refers to parliament's independence in managing its internal operations, staffing, and resources without interference from external bodies.
<b>Bicameral System</b>	A legislative system in which parliament is divided into two separate chambers or houses, typically an upper and a lower house. For example, the South African Parliament has two chambers: the National Assembly (lower house) and the National Council of Provinces (upper house). Each chamber usually has different roles and powers, contributing to a more comprehensive legislative process.
<b>Budgetary Autonomy</b>	The authority of parliament to manage and approve its own budget, ensuring sufficient resources for its functions, including MP compensation and operational costs.
<b>By-election</b>	A special election held to fill a parliamentary seat that has become vacant between general elections, often due to resignation or death of an MP.
<b>Caucus</b>	A group of members of parliament or a political party who meet to discuss and coordinate their policies, strategies, and decisions. Caucuses are often formed based on party lines or shared interests within a party, allowing members to align their efforts on legislative issues and debate party positions before engaging in formal parliamentary sessions.
<b>Censure</b>	A formal disapproval or condemnation of the actions of a government minister or the government itself by parliament, which can lead to political consequences such as resignation.

<b>Civil Society Organisation</b>	Non-governmental organisations that represent the interests and will of citizens, often involved in advocacy, policy discussions, and community-based initiatives.
<b>Committee of Inquiry</b>	A special committee set up by parliament to investigate specific issues, often related to government misconduct or policy failures.
<b>Committee Stage</b>	A phase in the legislative process where a bill is examined in detail by a parliamentary committee. The committee may suggest amendments, consult experts, or hold hearings before reporting back to the full parliament.
<b>Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</b>	An association that supports parliamentary democracy, offering training and collaboration between parliamentarians from Commonwealth countries.
<b>Confidence and Supply Agreement</b>	An arrangement where a minority government secures support from another party to remain in power by agreeing to specific policies or budget measures.
<b>Constituency</b>	The geographical area represented by an MP, who is elected to serve the people in that area within the parliament.
<b>Constitutional Amendments</b>	Special processes that allow for changes to a nation's constitution, often requiring a supermajority in parliament and public consultations.
<b>Convention On The Elimination Of Discrimination Against Women</b>	An international treaty aimed at eradicating discrimination against women in all forms.
<b>Cross-party Group</b>	An informal group of MPs from different political parties who come together to discuss or advocate for specific policy issues, such as environmental concerns or human rights.
<b>Cybersecurity in Parliament</b>	Measures taken to protect parliament's digital assets and infrastructure from unauthorised access, ensuring secure operations for MPs and staff.

<b>Dissolution</b>	The formal process by which a parliament is disbanded, usually leading to new elections. Clear guidelines for dissolution are often established in a country's legal framework. It may occur at the end of a parliamentary term or after a vote of no confidence.
<b>Electoral Commission of South Africa</b>	The body responsible for overseeing elections in South Africa, ensuring free and fair electoral processes.
<b>Electoral Management Body</b>	The authority responsible for managing electoral processes, including planning and conducting elections.
<b>Emergency or Crisis Procedures</b>	Special procedures that allow parliament to function during emergencies, altering its normal procedures in response to crises.
<b>Ethical Standards</b>	The expected conduct for MPs and parliamentary staff, which includes maintaining integrity, accountability, and impartiality in all parliamentary activities.
<b>Fast-Track Legislation</b>	A special process that allows urgent laws to be passed more quickly than usual, often with limited debate or committee scrutiny. This is typically used during emergencies.
<b>Filibuster</b>	A tactic used by MPs or senators to delay or obstruct the passage of legislation by extending debate, often by speaking for long periods.
<b>Freedom Of Information</b>	Refers to laws or regulations that allow public access to government-held information.
<b>Hansard</b>	The official, verbatim transcript of parliamentary debates. It provides a detailed record of all discussions, questions, and speeches made in parliament.
<b>Human Resource</b>	The department or function within an organisation responsible for managing personnel and related administrative tasks.

<b>Impeachment</b>	A parliamentary process in which the Head of State, government officials, or ministers may be removed from office for unlawful conduct or breaches of constitutional duties.
<b>Indicators for Democratic Parliaments</b>	A comprehensive self-assessment tool for evaluating a parliament's performance and capacity against established democratic standards, focusing on effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and other democratic characteristics.
<b>Information Communication Technology</b>	Encompasses technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums.
<b>Institute For Democracy And Electoral Assistance</b>	An international organisation that supports sustainable democracy worldwide through providing comparative knowledge, assisting in reform processes, and influencing policies.
<b>Institutional Autonomy</b>	Parliament's legal ability to represent the people's interests by convening sessions, managing its committees, and passing laws independently.
<b>Institutional Development of Parliament</b>	Efforts made to improve the long-term capabilities and performance of parliament, often involving strategic planning, monitoring, and innovation.
<b>Inter-Parliamentary Union</b>	An international organisation of parliaments that fosters parliamentary dialogue worldwide to promote peace, democracy, and human rights.
<b>Interpellation</b>	A formal procedure where MPs ask detailed questions to government ministers, often requiring a debate or explanation of a particular government action or policy.
<b>Joint Committee</b>	A committee composed of members from both houses of a bicameral parliament. Joint committees often address issues that require collaboration between the two chambers.

<b>Law-making</b>	The core function of parliament, which involves the introduction, debate, amendment, and passing of legislation. It includes various stages such as the first reading, committee review, and final vote.
<b>Legislative Drafting</b>	The process of creating new laws or amending existing ones. This involves drafting clear, precise legal texts that can be debated and approved by parliament.
<b>Legislative Procedure</b>	The formal process through which laws are proposed, debated, amended, and passed in parliament. It includes committee stages, plenary debates, and voting.
<b>LGBTQI+</b>	An inclusive term referring to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Intersex persons, and other sexual minorities.
<b>Motion of No Confidence</b>	A parliamentary motion used to express that the current government no longer has the support of the majority of MPs, which can lead to its resignation or dissolution of parliament.
<b>National Assembly</b>	The lower house of the Parliament of South Africa, representing the people's elected representatives.
<b>National Council of Provinces</b>	The upper house of the Parliament of South Africa, representing provincial interests at the national level.
<b>National Democratic Institute</b>	A non-profit organisation that works to strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through civic engagement, governance support, and election assistance.
<b>National Human Rights Institution</b>	A state-mandated body that works to protect and promote human rights at the national level.
<b>Opposition</b>	The political parties in parliament that do not form the government. They play a crucial role in holding the government accountable through debate, questions.

<b>Parliamentary Autonomy</b>	Refers to the independence of parliament in managing its own affairs, including setting its rules, procedures, and agenda, without interference from the executive branch.
<b>Parliamentary Budget Cycle</b>	The stages through which parliament scrutinises, amends, and approves the national budget, ensuring transparency and accountability in financial decisions.
<b>Parliamentary Calendar</b>	A schedule that outlines the dates for parliamentary sittings, debates, committee meetings, and other official activities throughout the legislative session.
<b>Parliamentary Committee</b>	A group of MPs appointed by parliament to focus on specific legislative areas, such as law-making, oversight of government actions, or financial scrutiny.
<b>Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry</b>	A special committee set up to investigate specific issues of national interest or potential misconduct within the government or executive branch.
<b>Parliamentary Diplomacy</b>	The practice of MPs engaging in international relations through dialogue, mediation, and cooperation to foster understanding between nations.
<b>Parliamentary Ethics</b>	The moral and ethical standards that MPs are expected to uphold, including transparency in the use of public resources and the avoidance of conflicts of interest.
<b>Parliamentary Expenditure</b>	Refers to the financial management and accountability of how parliament spends its budget, including MPs' salaries, allowances, and office expenses.
<b>Parliamentary Immunity</b>	Legal protections granted to MPs, allowing them to speak freely in parliamentary sessions without fear of prosecution or lawsuits for their statements.
<b>Parliamentary Inviolability</b>	A form of legal protection for MPs that prevents them from being arrested, detained, or searched without the consent of parliament, usually related to actions performed in their official capacity.

<b>Parliamentary Majority</b>	The political party or coalition with the most seats in parliament, typically forming the government. They usually have the power to pass legislation and set the parliamentary agenda.
<b>Parliamentary Oversight</b>	The process by which parliament monitors and evaluates the actions of the executive to ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with laws and policies.
<b>Parliamentary Privilege</b>	Special legal immunities and protections granted to MPs, allowing them to perform their duties without interference, such as freedom of speech within parliamentary debates.
<b>Parliamentary Procedures</b>	The rules and guidelines that govern how MPs conduct debates, make decisions, and maintain records within the legislative framework. These procedures ensure that MPs fulfil their legislative duties responsibly.
<b>Plenary Sessions</b>	The full assembly of parliament, where key decisions and votes on legislation are made. It is the most visible part of parliamentary work.
<b>Political Groups</b>	Formal groups of MPs organised by party or political affiliation to coordinate activities and pursue shared legislative objectives.
<b>Post-Legislative Scrutiny</b>	A parliamentary process that reviews the implementation and impact of laws after they have been enacted to ensure they are functioning as intended. A process through which parliaments review and assess the implementation and impact of legislation after it has been enacted.
<b>Presidium</b>	A collective governing body in parliament that organises parliamentary work, drafts agendas, and coordinates committee activities. It usually includes the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and committee chairs.
<b>Private Member's Bill</b>	A bill introduced by an MP who is not part of the government, usually from the opposition or backbenchers. These bills have less likelihood of becoming law but are important for raising issues.

<b>Procedural Autonomy</b>	Parliament's authority to adopt and amend its own rules of procedure, ensuring its operations are independent of the executive branch.
<b>Promotion of Access to Information Act</b>	South African legislation that allows citizens to access information held by the state, fostering transparency and accountability.
<b>Promulgation</b>	The formal process by which a law, after being passed by parliament, is signed by the Head of State (e.g., President) and officially enacted or put into effect.
<b>Proxy Voting</b>	A system that allows MPs to have their votes cast by another MP if they are unable to attend the parliamentary session.
<b>Public Accounts Committee</b>	A parliamentary committee tasked with examining public spending, ensuring that government resources are used efficiently and accountably.
<b>Public Engagement</b>	The methods by which parliament involves citizens in its decision-making processes, including consultations, petitions, and hearings.
<b>Public Finance Management Act</b>	A South African law aimed at securing accountability and transparency in the management of public finances.
<b>Public Procurement</b>	The processes parliament uses to acquire goods and services, which must be transparent, competitive, and in line with legal guidelines.
<b>Question Time</b>	A dedicated period during parliamentary sessions when MPs are allowed to ask questions to the Prime Minister, ministers, or other members of the executive, holding them accountable for their actions.
<b>Quorum</b>	The minimum number of Members of Parliament (MPs) required to be present for parliamentary business to be conducted legitimately.

<b>Second Reading</b>	A key stage in the legislative process where the general principles and purpose of a bill are debated in parliament. It is often followed by a vote on whether the bill should proceed.
<b>Select Committee</b>	A parliamentary committee appointed to investigate and report on specific issues, such as public administration or human rights. Select committees play a vital role in scrutinising government activities.
<b>Speaker</b>	The presiding officer of parliament, responsible for maintaining order during debates, ensuring that parliamentary rules are followed, and representing the authority of parliament.
<b>Speaker's Ruling</b>	A formal decision made by the Speaker of parliament on matters of procedure or conduct within the chamber, ensuring that parliamentary rules are followed.
<b>Standing Committee</b>	A permanent committee in parliament responsible for reviewing and scrutinising specific areas of legislation or government functions.
<b>Standing Committee on Public Accounts</b>	A key parliamentary committee in South Africa responsible for overseeing government expenditures and ensuring fiscal accountability. A key parliamentary committee tasked with scrutinising government expenditure, ensuring that public funds are used effectively and accountably.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>	A follow-up question asked by an MP during question time, often to clarify or challenge the response provided by a government minister.
<b>Supreme Audit Institution</b>	An independent body responsible for auditing government finances, including parliament's expenditures, to ensure proper use of public funds.
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	A set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations, aiming at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all by 2030.
<b>Third Reading</b>	The final stage in the parliamentary debate on a bill, focusing on the final text, after which a final vote is held to either pass or reject the bill.

<b>Transparency of Parliamentary Work</b>	Refers to the openness of parliamentary operations, where decisions, processes, and information are made available to the public.
<b>Unicameral System</b>	A parliamentary structure with a single legislative chamber responsible for passing laws, as opposed to a bicameral system.
<b>Universal Periodic Review</b>	A process conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council to review the human rights records of all UN Member States.
<b>Vote of Confidence</b>	A parliamentary vote to determine whether the executive (government) still has the support of the majority of MPs. If the vote fails, it may lead to the resignation of the government or a dissolution of parliament.
<b>Westminster Foundation for Democracy</b>	A UK-based organisation that promotes democratic governance and supports the development of political systems and parliamentary institutions.
<b>Whip</b>	A party official responsible for maintaining party discipline in parliament, ensuring that members attend important votes and vote according to party policy.