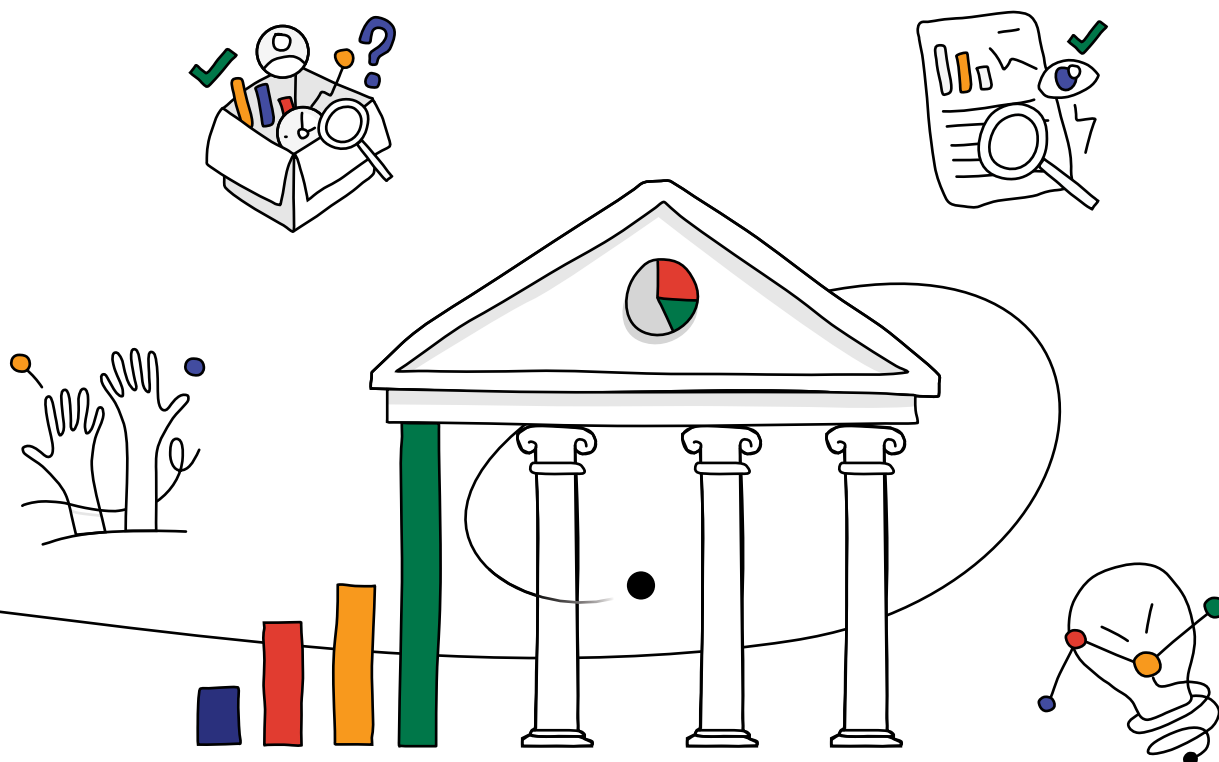




EU Parliamentary Report

Assessing the South African Parliament:
Using the Assessment Criteria of the
Indicators for Democratic Parliament

Target 1: Effective Parliament



Co-funded by
the European Union

PMG PARLIAMENTARY
MONITORING GROUP
OUTA openup:
ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

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1. Acronyms

AGSA	Auditor General of South Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
FMPPLA	Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act
IDPs	Indicators for Democratic Parliaments
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
JSCI	Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence
MPs	Members of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
OUTA	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
PAA	Public Audit Act
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PCI	Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry
PLS	Post Legislative Scrutiny
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
SA	South Africa
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDG 16	Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)
SDG 16.6	Sustainable Development Goal 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels)
SDG 16.7	Sustainable Development Goal 16.7 (Inclusive, participatory, and representative decision making)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

2. Executive summary

This report compiled by the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA), evaluates the Republic of South Africa's (RSA) parliament using the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs) framework. The purpose of the assessment is to examine the effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness of parliament, with a particular focus on Target 1, which evaluates the core functions of law-making, executive oversight, and the representation of the people. The IDP's framework is aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 16. SDG 16.6 which promotes the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, and SDG 16.7, which advocates for inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making.

The report evaluates parliament across several key dimensions, including parliamentary autonomy, legislative and procedural effectiveness, budgetary independence, administrative capacity, and the support provided to members of parliament (MPs). Through an in-depth analysis of these areas, the report identifies both strengths and weaknesses in SA's parliamentary practices, highlighting the constitutional and legal frameworks that support parliamentary functions, while also identifying areas where improvements are needed.

Key findings of the report include:

- **Parliamentary Autonomy:** While SA's Constitution ensures strong legal provisions for the autonomy of parliament, political dynamics and resource constraints sometimes hinder its full independence, particularly in areas of oversight and agenda-setting.
- **Legislative and Oversight Effectiveness:** Parliament is largely effective in carrying out its core functions, but procedural inefficiencies, political tensions, and occasional delays in implementing reforms impact its ability to function smoothly.
- **Members of Parliament:** MPs have access to essential resources, but challenges such as inconsistent professional development, resource disparities, and political dynamics within the parliamentary system limit their ability to perform at their best.
- **Administrative Capacity and Financial Independence:** Parliament's ability to manage its budget and administrative functions is legally protected; however, practical challenges such as underfunding, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate staff training reduce operational efficiency.
- **Inclusivity and Participation:** While parliament operates under a framework designed to ensure inclusivity, smaller parties and independent MPs often face challenges in securing adequate representation, resources, and opportunities to influence decision-making.

The report also outlines several critical challenges faced by the SA parliament, including procedural inefficiencies, the impact of political dominance on decision-making, and inconsistencies in the application of rules and procedures. Furthermore, it acknowledges the capacity issues that affect parliament's ability to fulfil its functions effectively, such as limited financial resources and technological constraints.

The following recommendations aim to address these challenges:

- Strengthening the capacity of parliament through better resource allocation, enhanced training for MPs, and improved infrastructure.
- Enhancing parliamentary autonomy by reducing political influence over its operations and increasing its independence in decision-making.
- Improving procedural consistency and inclusivity, ensuring equal opportunities for all MPs to engage meaningfully in parliamentary processes.
- Expanding transparency and public access to parliamentary records, debates, and decision-making processes.

This report will give an overview of the assessment methodology, key insights under each indicator from the analyses conducted, observations, and will conclude with overall findings and future research possibilities.

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. Together with the development of ParliMeter, the project is complemented by robust research, such as this report which is part of a series of IDP-related research reports.

3. Introduction

This report assesses the Republic of South Africa's (RSA) parliament using the [Indicators for Democratic Parliaments](#) (IDPs). A framework aimed at evaluating and enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of parliamentary institutions. The IDPs framework aligns with the UN SDGs, specifically [SDG 16.6](#) [which focuses on developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions], and [SDG 16.7](#) [which emphasises inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making].

The assessment is structured around [Target 1](#), which specifically focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the SA parliament. This includes its legislative and oversight functions, the capacity of MPs to perform their duties, and the autonomy of parliamentary procedures and operations. The indicators assessed in this report cover a range of dimensions such as parliamentary autonomy, the functioning of MPs, procedural efficiency, administrative autonomy, budgetary control, and the parliament's organisational structure.

Parliamentary committees, which play an important role in the legislative process and are divided into various categories: Ad Hoc Committees, Joint Committees, Portfolio Committees, Standing Committees and Select Committees. They are responsible for overseeing specific areas such as public accounts, finance, health, and justice, among others. These committees hold the executive accountable, they monitor the implementation of policies and also scrutinise legislation to ensure that it aligns with the public's interest.

Each indicator is critically examined against established criteria, evaluating the legal frameworks, practices, and resources available to parliament. The report also highlights the practical challenges faced by SA parliament, including issues of resource constraints, political influence, procedural inefficiencies, and inconsistent enforcement of parliamentary rules. The ultimate goal is to provide actionable recommendations to improve the functioning and governance of parliament, ensuring that it can better serve its democratic mandate and contribute [meaningfully to governance](#).

The following sections provide a thorough analysis of parliament's performance in key areas such as legislative autonomy, budgetary management, oversight practices, and the support available to MPs. It also offers recommendations for improving parliamentary procedures and structures, with a focus on enhancing inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Through this assessment, OUTA aims to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the SA parliament's current state and provide guidance for its continued development in line with IDPs and within the framework of the co-funded EU project on Enhancing Accountability and Transparency in South Africa.

4. Background to and methodology used for the assessment of the IDP framework

The IDP framework provides a tool to help national parliaments assess and enhance their effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. This multi-partner initiative aims to align parliamentary practices with the UN SDGs, targets: 16.6 *[Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels]* and 16.7 *[Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels]*, which aim to develop transparent and accountable institutions and ensure inclusive, participatory decision-making.

The indicators cover various dimensions of parliamentary function, from autonomy and legislative procedures to oversight and public participation, supporting self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The framework is designed to assist parliaments, regardless of their political system or size, in fostering reforms that enhance democratic governance and strengthen public trust.

The framework not only serves as a self-assessment tool for parliaments but also helps guide them through processes of modifying, reform, and greater public accountability. By utilising this tool, parliaments can improve their responsiveness to public concerns, better serve their constituencies, and contribute meaningfully to achieving the broader SDGs of peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Grading	Rate 0-5	Description
	0	The object of the assessment criterion simply does not exist in parliament.
	1	The object of the assessment criterion exists but in a rudimentary form. It is not an established part of parliament's capacity and practice.
	2	The object of the assessment criterion exists in a basic form. It is part of parliament's capacity and practice but is not well-developed.
	3	The object of the assessment criterion is an established part of parliament's capacity and practice and is somewhat developed.

Very Good	4	The object of the assessment criterion is a well-established part of parliament's capacity and practice.
Excellent	5	The object of the assessment criterion is a highly developed part of parliament's capacity and practice, with little obvious room for improvement.

Table 1 Rating Criteria

There are three phases of the assessment:

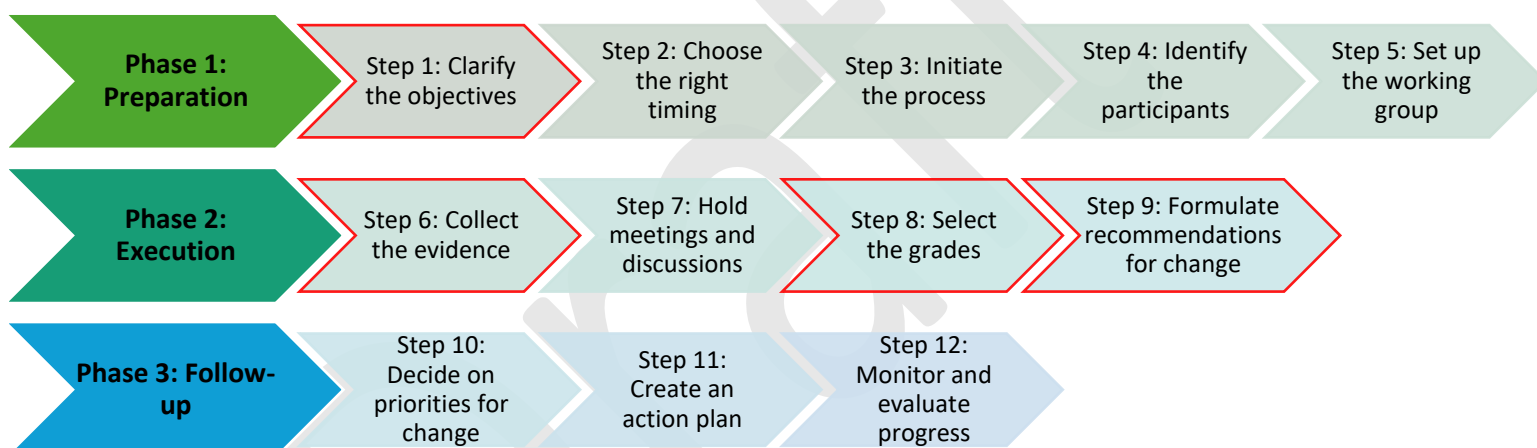


Figure 1 Phases and steps of assessment

Figure 1 indicates the phases of the assessment, and specifically in this report the following phases are covered: Step 1, 6, 8, and 9. It is recommended that the steps not initiated should be completed by parliament internally. The aim of this report is to provide recommendations on how to increase parliament's ratings based on the external assessment ratings we have assigned for each assessment criteria.

The IDPs provide an assessment checklist to guide parliaments through the preparation and execution of the assessment process. This checklist includes ten key items:

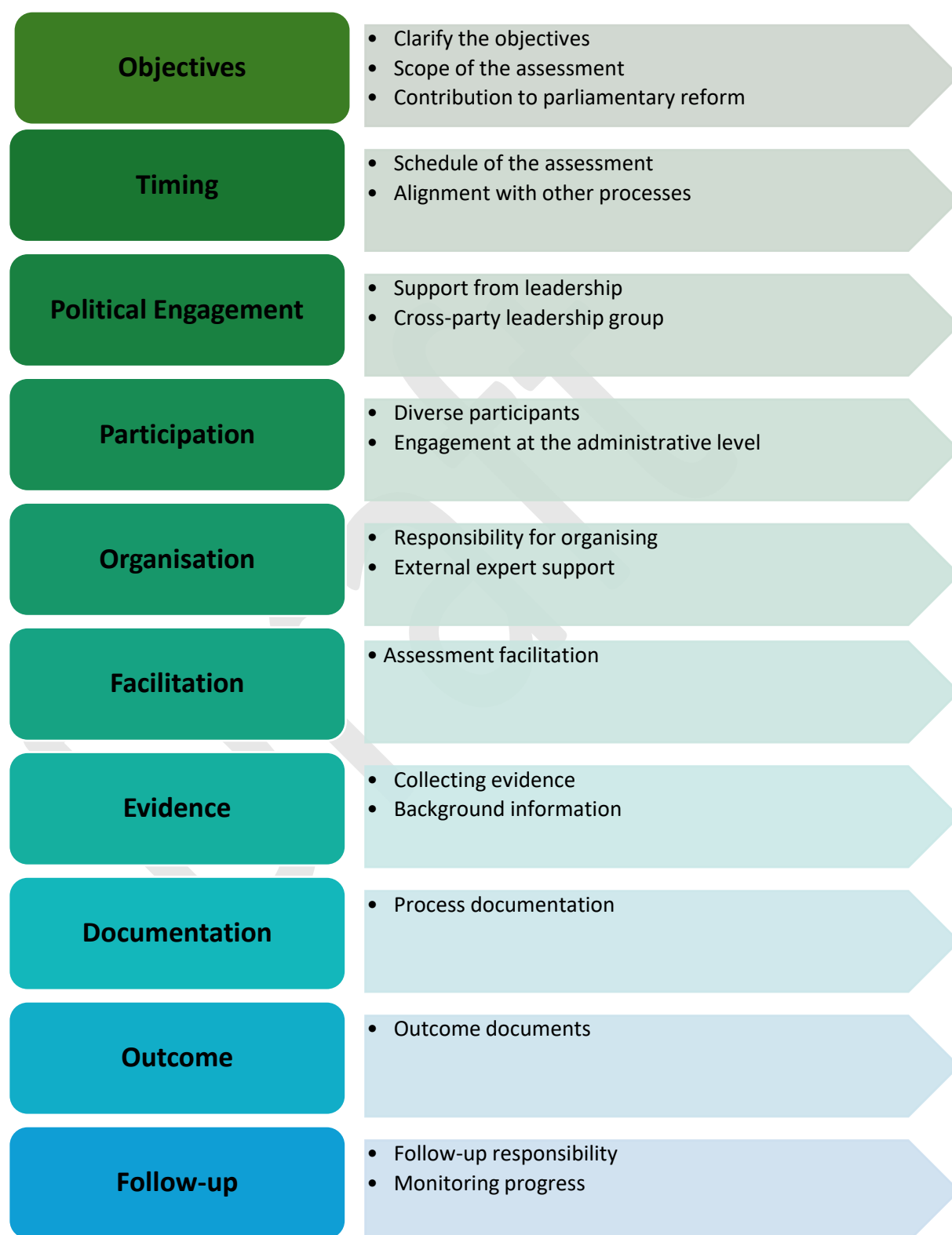


Figure 2 Assessment Checklist

Methodology used:

In order to conduct the assessment of target 1, three research methods have been implemented.

- 1. Document Analysis:** This method was used to search, find and gather qualitative data on parliamentary procedures, laws, and practices. Thereafter a systematic review was conducted to search through and find material from various documents such as constitutional documents, legal manuals, public reports, parliamentary proceedings, budget and financial Reports, international and local civil society reports and IDP publications and articles.
- 2. Case Studies:** This method was used to analyse existing material for both the local and international levels on the IDPs. Academic articles and journals were also searched through to examine what information related to IDPs, and the assessment criteria have been documented before.
- 3. Benchmarking:** This technique was used to analyse what has already been done in South Africa as well as other countries, who have submitted their assessments to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Furthermore, this technique aided in the recommendations provided.

The sources used for this report include the following websites: SA parliament's [website](#), Indicators for Democratic Parliaments [website](#) and [case studies](#), South African Legal Information Institute's ([SAFLII](#)) website, reports and publications from the Inter-Parliamentary Union ([IPU](#)), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — International [website](#) and South African [website](#), Auditor-General of South Africa's ([AGSA](#)) website, Public Protector South Africa's [website](#), South African Human Rights Commission ([SAHRC](#)), National Treasury South Africa's [website](#), and UN Sustainable Development Goal ([SDG](#)) publications. The portals include: the South African Government's [portal](#), South African Institute of International Affairs ([SAIIA](#)) and African Peer Review Mechanism ([APRM](#)). The CSO publications include various reports from: Corruption Watch South Africa's [website](#), Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse ([OUTA](#)), [My Vote Counts](#), and Parliamentary Monitoring Group ([PMG](#)). The academic databases include: [JSTOR](#), [Sabinet](#), and Google Scholar for relevant and reliable international governance reports and articles².

By applying these three research methods to collect information, it enables one to thoroughly research and conduct an external assessment of Target 1 (and the subsequent targets). Thus, using a wide range of legal, procedural, financial, government, parliamentary, CSO publications and academic sources, the report provides a balanced and evidence-based evaluation of the application of this assessment criterion.

² These reports and articles can be found in the reference list.

5. Observations

The following observations are derived from the indicator assessment discussed in the following section:

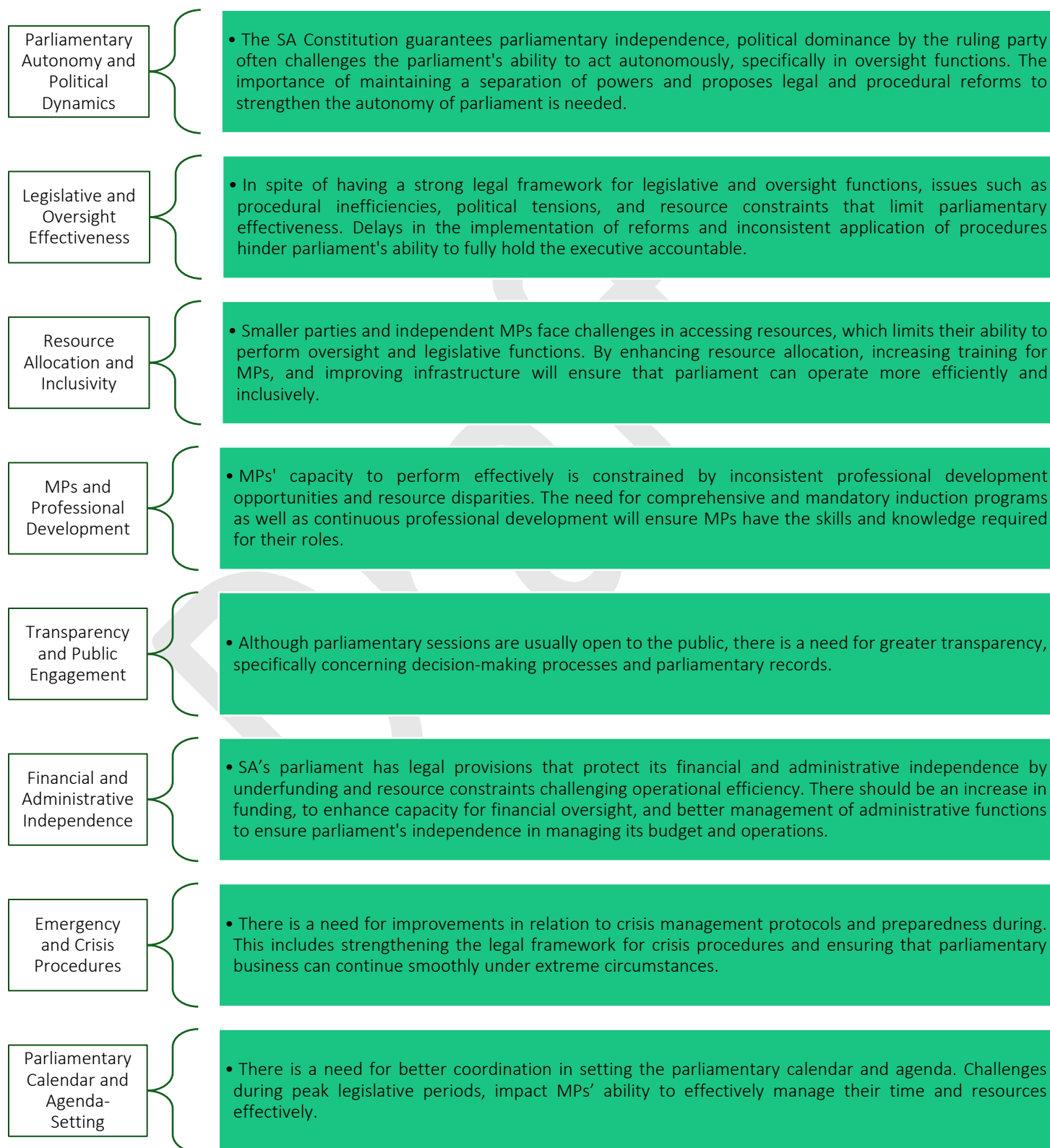


Figure 3 Observations from analysis

6. Assessment of Target One for the South African Parliament

For this section Target 1, its indicators, dimensions, and assessments will be discussed.

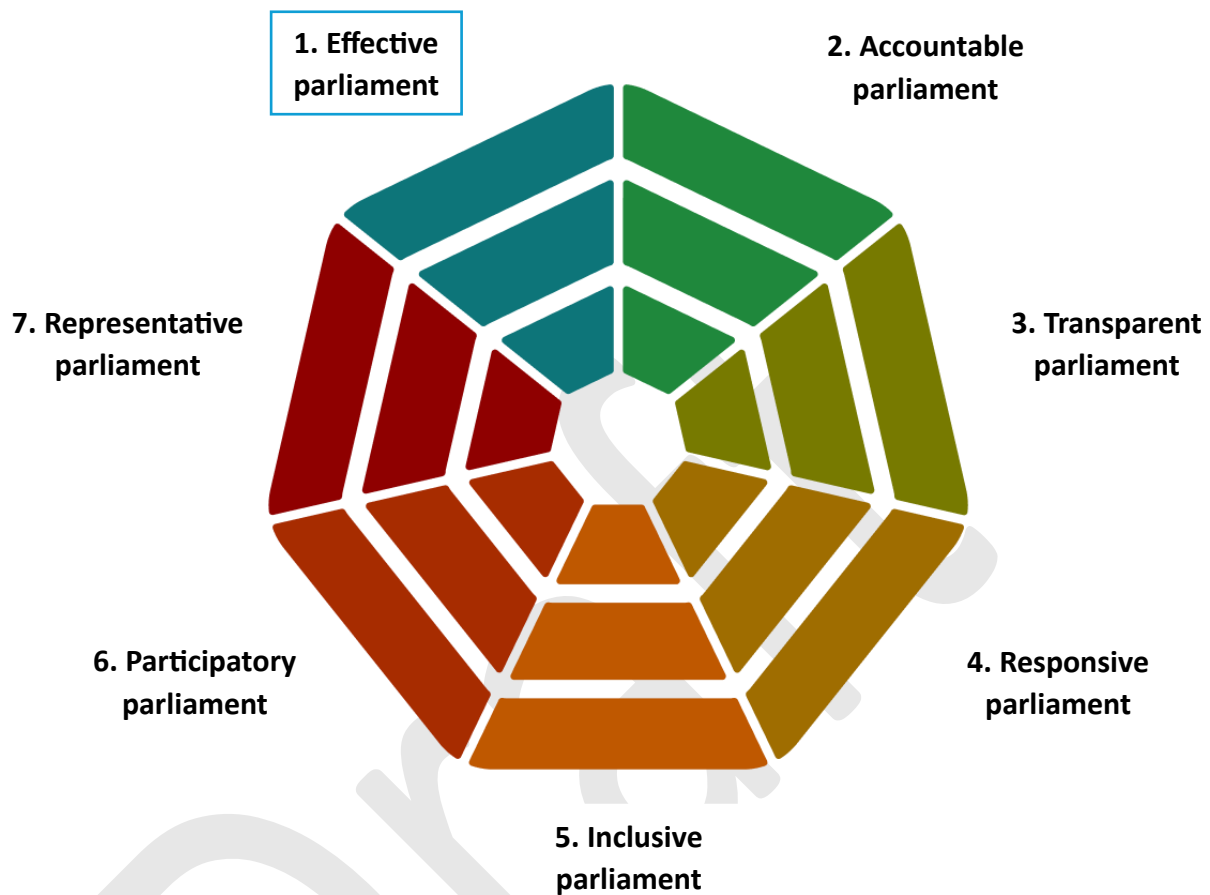


Figure 4 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

Target 1³ focuses on ensuring that parliaments are capable of fulfilling their core functions. This includes law-making, holding the executive accountable and representing the interests of the people. It highlights the importance of institutional structures, operational independence, and procedural effectiveness within the parliamentary functions. It consists of the following indicators:

- Indicator 1.1 Parliamentary Autonomy
- Indicator 1.2 Members of Parliament
- Indicator 1.3 Parliamentary Procedures
- Indicator 1.4 Parliamentary Organisation
- Indicator 1.5 Administrative Capacity and Independence
- Indicator 1.6 Law-making
- Indicator 1.7 Oversight
- Indicator 1.8 Budget
- Indicator 1.9: Representative Role of Members of Parliament
- Indicator 1.10: Relations with Other Branches of Government
- Indicator 1.11 Key Parliamentary Power

Compared with the other targets, it must be noted that Target 1 is by far the longest target, which will inevitably result in a longer report.

³ Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

6.1 Indicator 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy

This indicator assesses the extent to which a parliament is independent and has the legal and practical authority to perform its functions without interference from the executive. This includes the ability to establish its own rules, organise its structure, set its agenda, control its budget, and manage its own administrative resources. Parliamentary autonomy is essential for ensuring that legislative bodies can fulfil their mandate to represent the people, pass laws, and hold the executive accountable. This indicator emphasises the legal framework and practices that ensure a parliament's independence in decision-making and operations, which is foundational for a healthy democracy.

6.1.1 Institutional autonomy

This dimension focuses on the legal provisions that establish parliament's autonomy in its institutional matters. It ensures that parliament has the authority to make independent decisions on its structure, organisation, and operations. Institutional autonomy includes the ability of parliament to call its own sessions, elect its bodies, set up committees, and propose, debate, and approve legislation, all without external interference.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Constitutional authority	An independent and autonomous parliament is established in the legal framework and/or by legal precedent.	The SA Constitution (Chapter 4) establishes parliament as an independent and autonomous branch of government, distinct from the executive and judiciary. Section 44 defines parliament's legislative authority, while Section 57 empowers it to determine its internal procedures. Parliament's independence is explicitly enshrined in the Constitution, ensuring	4	- Strengthen the separation of powers by establishing clearer mechanisms to resolve conflicts between executive and parliament, especially regarding legislative authority and oversight. - Enhance MPs' political independence by reducing ruling party dominance and

			its autonomy in legislative functions. The Constitution grants parliament authority over lawmaking, oversight, and public participation. Legal provisions ensure that no branch of government can unduly interfere in parliament's operations. Political dominance by the ruling party can influence parliament's independence, particularly in oversight functions. In some instances, tensions arise between the executive and parliament regarding the interpretation of autonomy.		improving party representation proportionality. • Strengthen constitutional provisions to explicitly guarantee parliament's independence. • Safeguard separation of powers by enhancing mechanisms to prevent executive overreach. • Promote judicial oversight and legal precedents reinforcing parliament's independence.
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	The legal framework, including parliamentary rules, establishes autonomy in parliament's internal operations. These rules govern procedures for electing parliamentary officers, establishing committees, setting agendas, and managing plenary sessions. Parliamentary rules ensure autonomy in electing the Speaker, Chairpersons, and committee members. Committees operate independently to oversee legislation, budgets, and executive actions. Parliament sets its own agenda, ensuring	4	• Strengthen internal checks and balances to prevent executive influence over agenda-setting. • Provide regular training for MPs and staff on parliamentary rules to ensure independence and compliance. • Review and amend laws governing parliament to codify authority on leadership elections, structures, agendas, and committees.

		plenary or debate sessions, and in setting its agenda.	control over debates and decision-making. The agenda-setting process can sometimes be influenced by the executive, limiting parliament's flexibility. Procedural inefficiencies, such as delays in forming committees following elections, occasionally hinder autonomy.		• Develop clear, comprehensive rules of procedure to minimise ambiguity and prevent external interference. • Ensure transparent funding by allocating parliamentary funds directly through the national budget, independent of executive approval.
3	Practice	In practice, the provisions of the legal framework for institutional autonomy are recognised and followed by all parties, including the executive.	In practice, the legal framework for parliament's institutional autonomy is largely upheld. Parliament conducts its operations independently, with limited interference from other branches of government. Parliamentary rules are consistently applied in electing officers and managing debates. Committees actively perform oversight functions, demonstrating independence in scrutinising executive actions. Public access to parliamentary proceedings and debates enhances transparency and accountability. The executive sometimes exerts indirect influence over parliament through party dynamics, particularly in a dominant-party system. Resource constraints and capacity	3	• Reduce party-political influence by implementing mechanisms to ensure impartial governance and oversight. • Address resource constraints by increasing funding for research, administrative support, and oversight capacity. • Introduce reforms to improve transparency, ensuring debates, proceedings, and legislative actions are accessible. • Establish independent oversight bodies to monitor executive influence and ensure non-partisan application of parliamentary rules.

			issues occasionally affect parliament's ability to fully exercise its independence. Political tensions can undermine impartiality in the application of parliamentary rules.		• Build capacity by training MPs on rights and responsibilities, focusing on resisting undue influence. • Implement enforcement mechanisms through an independent body to monitor compliance with legal frameworks and address violations. • Introduce penalties for breaches of parliamentary autonomy to promote respect for institutional independence. • Foster political will by encouraging respect for parliament's autonomy through clear commitments from major parties. • Promote public engagement by increasing transparency and public participation.
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To enhance the autonomy of the SA parliament, it is essential to strengthen constitutional safeguards, address procedural inefficiencies, and reduce executive influence, particularly in agenda-setting and committee formation. Furthermore, increasing resources, improving transparency, and building the capacity of MPs will ensure that parliamentary practices align with its legal framework and uphold its independence.



6.1.2 Procedural autonomy

Procedural autonomy concerns parliament's authority over its own procedures. This includes the power to define and modify its rules of procedure, the ability to set its agenda, and the management of plenary and committee affairs. Parliament should have the full discretion to determine how it operates and governs the conduct of its members, without external influence or approval, ensuring that all parliamentary processes are fair and non-partisan.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution (Section 57 for the National Assembly (NA) and Section 70 for the National Council of Provinces (NCOP)) grants parliament the authority to determine and amend its internal rules and procedures, ensuring complete procedural autonomy. The Constitution explicitly guarantees parliament's independence in setting its procedures without requiring executive approval. Parliamentary rules are regularly reviewed and updated to align with constitutional principles and legislative needs. Clear separation of powers ensures the executive cannot interfere with procedural decisions. Occasional political tensions arise when procedural changes are	3	• Strengthen consultation and engagement for procedural rule amendments, ensuring all parties have a substantial voice. • Establish a transparent process for reviewing procedures to ensure fairness, avoiding bias towards the majority party. • Create an independent body to assess the fairness of procedural rules, ensuring autonomy without political influence. • Amend legislation to affirm parliament's right to determine procedures independently from the executive. • Safeguard against executive overreach by enacting laws that limit executive influence on parliamentary procedures.

			perceived to favour the majority party, potentially affecting inclusivity.		• Improve oversight by creating provisions for independent review of procedural interference.
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.	Parliament's "Rules of Parliament / Guide to Procedure" provide a comprehensive framework for managing legislative processes, debates, committee operations, and disciplinary measures. The framework is designed to be adaptable and periodically reviewed. The rules of procedure empower parliament to efficiently conduct its core functions, including lawmaking, oversight, and public engagement. Procedural reviews are conducted by multi-party committees, ensuring diverse input. Rules are tailored to address emerging challenges, such as the incorporation of virtual and hybrid sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The process of reviewing and updating procedures can be slow due to lengthy consultations. Some MPs from smaller parties feel that procedural rules are occasionally applied in ways that disadvantage minority voices.	3	• Accelerate rule review and updates, particularly for technological innovations. • Ensure smaller parties' interests are reflected in procedural changes. • Address disadvantages for smaller parties in debates and committee processes. • Develop robust parliamentary rules covering core functions and ensuring regular reviews. • Reinforce executive exclusion by ensuring parliamentary autonomy in procedural matters. • Ensure transparency in rulemaking by involving MPs from all parties and public consultation.

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.	Parliament exercises autonomy over its procedures and adheres to the framework established for creating and modifying its rules. This autonomy is consistently upheld in practice. Rules of procedure are applied consistently, allowing parliament to manage its legislative and oversight functions effectively. Changes to procedures are implemented following thorough debates and approvals by parliamentary committees. Parliamentary autonomy over procedures is respected by the executive, reinforcing the separation of powers. Practical implementation sometimes reflects partisan dynamics, particularly during contentious debates or disciplinary proceedings. Enforcement of procedural rules can be inconsistent, leading to occasional disruptions in parliamentary operations.	3	• Establish oversight mechanisms to ensure enforcement of procedural rules and fair proceedings. • Implement training for MPs and staff on procedural rules, reducing partisan dynamics. • Promote transparency in procedural changes, explaining why and how changes are made. • Build capacity by training MPs and staff on procedural autonomy and adherence to established frameworks. • Create an office or committee to review and update procedural rules. • Set up mechanisms to monitor and report on adherence to procedural autonomy.
4	Non-partisan implementation	Parliamentary procedures are implemented in a non-partisan manner. The	The Speaker and presiding officers are responsible for upholding impartiality in the implementation of parliamentary procedures, ensuring all MPs are treated equally regardless	3	• Strengthen the impartiality of the Speaker by providing training on non-partisan debate management.

		Speaker upholds compliance with those procedures. MPs from different parliamentary parties, factions and other affiliations are treated equally and impartially.	of party affiliation. The Speaker is tasked with ensuring that all MPs, regardless of political affiliation, are afforded equal opportunities to participate in parliamentary processes. Multi-party representation in procedural decision-making committees promotes inclusivity. Mechanisms exist to challenge perceived bias in the application of rules. Opposition parties and smaller factions occasionally allege partiality in rulings by the Speaker, particularly during heated debates. Under the Government of National Unity (GNU), the coalition party-system can create perceptions of procedural bias, even if rules are technically adhered to. Political tensions sometimes undermine the impartial application of disciplinary measures.		• Introduce protocols for managing complaints of bias, ensuring transparency. • Foster impartiality through workshops and public statements on neutrality. • Require the Speaker to commit to fairness, with oversight and consequences for non-compliance. • Develop guidelines to ensure equal opportunities for MPs to participate in debates. • Establish an independent ethics body to handle complaints of partisanship. • Foster consensus-building by consulting all parties when modifying procedures.
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To further strengthen parliamentary autonomy and fairness, it is vital to accelerate the review of procedural rules, particularly for technological advancements, while ensuring all parties, including smaller ones, have equal influence in the decision-making process. By enhancing the Speaker's impartiality through training and clearer oversight mechanisms will foster a more transparent and non-partisan implementation of parliamentary procedures.



6.1.3 Budgetary autonomy

Budgetary autonomy refers to parliament's control over its own financial resources. This includes the right to propose, approve, and manage its budget independently from the executive. The parliament must be able to allocate resources to its operations, including staffing, facilities, and legislative activities, ensuring it has the necessary financial means to function effectively and uphold its responsibilities.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act (FMPPLA) (2009) provides the legal framework for parliament to approve and manage its own budget independently from the executive. This Act ensures parliament's financial independence, aligning with the principles of the separation of powers. Although parliament has the authority to draft, approve, and oversee its own budget, ensuring operational autonomy, it should be noted that parliament faces constraints, which affects its ability to fully leverage its financial autonomy and oversight capacity. These constraints, including financial resource limitations, delays in institutional reforms, and	4	- Strengthen compliance in financial reporting by introducing stricter internal timelines for timely delivery. - Enhance training for parliament's financial management teams to improve audit compliance and reporting. - Assist the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament to improve its focus on risks to financial independence and monitor executive influence. - Amend laws to grant parliament authority to independently manage its budget, preventing executive interference.

			the current practice of determining parliament's budget externally, result in a lower score for financial management and accountability. In the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament meeting held on 26 February 2025, members expressed concerns about this external determination of parliament's budget, citing the significant resource constraints it creates. They have called for the committee to play a more proactive role in influencing the 2026/27 budget. Furthermore, questions have been raised regarding the need for transformation in parliament's procurement processes. The legal framework provides for oversight mechanisms, including internal audits and external audits by the Auditor-General of SA (AGSA). The Act establishes accountability measures, requiring parliament to report publicly on its financial performance. While the framework is robust, delays in financial reporting or compliance with audit recommendations can undermine its		• Introduce safeguards against executive interference in the allocation and disbursement of funds. • Strengthen the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) to support MPs in budget oversight.
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			effectiveness. Perceptions of executive influence over broader fiscal policies occasionally raise concerns about parliament's financial independence.		
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	Parliament's budget is allocated annually by National Treasury under Vote 2, providing resources for MPs' compensation, staff salaries, infrastructure, technology, and operational costs. The budget is generally sufficient to cover basic operational needs, including MPs' compensation and administrative support. Investment in digital tools and hybrid session capabilities has improved operational flexibility. During the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament meeting held on 26 February 2025, members expressed their concerns that budget cuts have resulted in outdated infrastructure , hindering digital strategy implementation. They also raised issues regarding parliament's cybersecurity capabilities. The discussions also highlighted the potential of AI in order to enhance efficiency,	3	• Increase funding for infrastructure maintenance and technology upgrades, including emergency funds for unplanned repairs. • Expand funding for recruitment and retention of skilled staff through competitive compensation and professional development. • Review resource allocation to ensure smaller parties have access to necessary resources. • Advocate for increased parliamentary funding with evidence-based budget proposals. • Ensure competitive compensation for MPs and staff, reducing corruption risks.

		equipment, and acquire other assets and resources as necessary for its operations.	with a call for a clear AI policy. Furthermore, there was a suggestion for a free-to-air parliamentary TV channel to improve public access and interpretation services. Resources are allocated for non-partisan offices, such as the PBO, enhancing oversight and analysis. Resource constraints affect infrastructure maintenance and technology upgrades, particularly after the 2022 fire that damaged key parliamentary buildings. Limited funding impacts recruitment and retention of skilled staff, especially in technical and oversight roles. Smaller political parties report difficulties accessing equitable resources for their parliamentary functions.		• Provide funding for non-partisan offices supporting oversight, such as budget analysis, research, and legislative review. • Invest in technology upgrades to enhance efficiency, transparency, and public engagement. • Ensure resources for securing the parliamentary precinct.
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	Parliament's budget is subject to regular scrutiny, with internal audits conducted by the PBO and external audits performed by the AGSA. Management systems ensure compliance with public finance laws and regulations. Internal controls and audit systems promote accountability in financial management. The	3	• Streamline audit recommendation implementation with a clear accountability structure and deadlines. • Increase capacity in finance and audit teams for thorough scrutiny of budgets and expenditures.

		scrutiny through internal audits and an external, independent supreme audit institution (SAI).	AGSA provides independent oversight, flagging irregular expenditures and making recommendations for improvement. Parliament's financial management framework includes mechanisms for monitoring spending and reporting outcomes. Delays in implementing audit recommendations reduce the effectiveness of oversight. Instances of irregular or wasteful expenditure have been highlighted in AGSA reports, reflecting gaps in financial discipline. Capacity constraints within parliament's finance and audit teams can limit the thoroughness of internal reviews.		• Improve financial transparency by publishing regular reports on budget performance and expenditures. • Provide training for financial staff and MPs on budget management and oversight. • Strengthen internal audit units to ensure financial regulation compliance and detect misuse. • Engage independent audit institutions to scrutinise budgets and publish findings. • Develop KPIs to assess the impact of parliamentary spending on effectiveness. • Establish a dedicated budget oversight committee to ensure funds are effectively spent. • Publish parliamentary budgets and audits for public and civil society scrutiny.
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To improve financial autonomy and accountability, parliament should strengthen compliance with financial reporting, implement more effective mechanisms for budget oversight, and enhance capacity in its finance and audit teams. Thus, increasing funding for infrastructure, technology upgrades, and staff retention will support parliament's operational efficiency, while ensuring equitable resource allocation for smaller parties will foster a more inclusive and effective legislative environment.



6.1.4 Administrative autonomy

Administrative autonomy pertains to parliament's independence in managing its administrative functions. This includes the ability to organise parliamentary services, recruit staff, and manage resources such as IT systems and office facilities. Administrative autonomy ensures that parliament's operations run smoothly and without external interference, enabling it to meet its legislative and oversight duties efficiently.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act 4 of 2004, and the FMPPL Act 10 of 2009, establish parliament's administrative autonomy, enabling it to organise its administration and control its precincts. Parliament has the authority to manage its own staffing, infrastructure, and operations independently of the executive. Legal provisions ensure control over the parliamentary precincts, allowing parliament to regulate access and security. The Speaker of the NA and the Chairperson of the NCOP oversee administrative matters, reinforcing autonomy. The January 2022 fire that damaged parts of the parliamentary precinct highlighted gaps in	3	- Strengthen coordination between parliament and external stakeholders to improve precinct management and security. - Review and enhance security systems, incorporating lessons from the 2022 fire to protect assets. - Define administrative autonomy within the legal framework, preventing executive interference. - Amend laws to grant parliament better autonomy over staffing, organisational structure, and precinct management while ensuring effective external oversight through collaboration with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)

			security and infrastructure management. Coordination between parliamentary administration and external stakeholders can be inconsistent.		and other relevant bodies in order to maintain transparency and accountability. • Although there are dedicated portions of the parliamentary budget for administrative operations, there are factors affecting its overall effectiveness such as adequate oversight, delays in financial reporting, irregular expenditure, and inefficiencies in procurement processes, concerns about misalignment between the allocated resources and the actual outcomes achieved- these need to be reformed so the funds are used effectively. • Legally define parliament's authority over security, maintenance, and modifications of its precincts.
2	Management	The parliamentary administration is overseen by a non-partisan, objective individual or office, such as a Secretary	The administration of parliament is overseen by the Secretary to Parliament (STP), who is appointed by parliament and accountable to it. The STP manages non-partisan administrative functions and ensures the effective functioning of parliament. The STP is responsible for the	3	• Implement policies to reduce turnover in senior management roles by offering development opportunities and stabilising leadership succession.

		General, who is exclusively appointed or elected by, and accountable to, parliament.	impartial and effective management of parliamentary operations. Clear accountability mechanisms are in place, with regular reporting to parliamentary committees on administrative performance. The Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament is involved in the oversight of administrative management. Frequent turnover in senior management roles, including the STP, as well as the high instances of senior staff in acting positions, undermines continuity. Political dynamics can occasionally influence the appointment process, raising concerns about impartiality. Limited resources for training and professional development affect the capacity of parliamentary administrative staff.		• Strengthen the STP's independence by ensuring impartial appointments and reporting. • Invest in training for staff to improve governance, transparency, and operational capacity. • Appoint the STP through a transparent, merit-based process, with non-partisanship emphasised. • Develop an accountability framework requiring the STP to report directly to parliament with periodic reviews. • Protect the STP's office from political interference by ensuring secure tenure and a transparent removal process.
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.	A clear distinction exists between non-partisan parliamentary staff, who serve parliament as an institution, and partisan staff, who support individual MPs or political parties. Non-partisan staff in the Parliamentary Service support committees, legislative drafting, and oversight	2	• Improve distinction between non-partisan and partisan staff roles with clear guidelines for assignments, ensuring neutrality. • Ensure smaller parties have equitable access to administrative support by

			functions impartially. Partisan staff, funded through party allowances, assist MPs with political activities, ensuring a division of roles. Rules governing staff appointments and roles promote transparency and accountability. Instances of perceived partisanship among administrative staff occasionally arise, particularly during politically charged periods. Smaller parties often report difficulties in accessing adequate administrative support compared to larger parties. Resource constraints and uneven allocation of responsibilities can affect the quality of non-partisan support.		increasing resources and creating transparent processes. • Establish internal audits to monitor non-partisan staffing adherence and address partisanship issues. • Define non-partisan and partisan staff roles in policy and practice, ensuring clear job descriptions and performance evaluations. • Provide training and create a code of conduct for non-partisan staff to emphasise neutrality and professionalism. • Establish a parliamentary office or committee to oversee non-partisan staff neutrality and address bias allegations. • Implement a transparent, merit-based recruitment process for non-partisan staff, focusing on impartiality and qualifications. •
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To strengthen administrative autonomy, parliament should enhance coordination with external stakeholders, improve security systems, and define its authority over staffing and precinct management in the legal framework. Thus, [reducing turnover](#) in senior management and ensuring impartial appointments, along with providing equitable resources for administrative support, will improve operational stability and foster a more effective, non-partisan administration.



6.2 Indicator 1.2 Members of parliament

The effectiveness of a parliament is based on the capacity of its members to perform their duties. This indicator evaluates the status of MPs, including their access to resources, professional development, and protection from incompatibilities of office. A strong framework ensures that MPs have adequate remuneration, resources, and opportunities for continuous professional growth to serve their constituencies effectively.

6.2.1 Status of members of parliament

This dimension concerns the legal and constitutional status of MPs. It ensures that MPs have the proper standing and recognition necessary to carry out their duties effectively. This includes their rights, mandates, and privileges, which are designed to safeguard their roles as representatives of the public and enable them to perform their functions without undue interference or constraint.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution, Rules of the National Assembly (9 th Edition) and the Electoral Amendment Act of 2023 clearly define the start and end of MPs' terms. MPs take office after elections (SA has closed-party lists in a proportional representation electoral system), and hold office until the next general election, or due to resignation, or disqualification. Section 47 of the Constitution as well as the Rules of the National Assembly (9 th Edition)	3	- Strengthen legal provisions to ensure political instability and leadership changes do not disrupt parliamentary operations. Implement measures for smoother transitions between terms through enhanced communication across branches. - Explore options to improve timely, predictable election cycles to ensure continuity.

			outlines qualifications and disqualifications for MPs, ensuring clarity about term limits. Provisions are consistent with democratic principles and electoral processes. Processes are transparent, with terms tied to the election cycle. Instances of political instability or leadership changes can disrupt continuity, though this does not affect the legal framework.		• Codify clear guidelines on MPs' terms of office, addressing delays or exceptional circumstances. • Ensure public notification of when MPs take or leave office for transparency. • Formalise comprehensive induction programs, within a realistic timeframe, for new MPs to understand their roles and processes.
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.	Section 48 of the Constitution provides for the swearing-in of MPs, requiring them to affirm faithfulness to the Republic and its Constitution. The oath or affirmation respects freedom of conscience, allowing MPs to choose between a religious or secular pledge. The process is inclusive and non-discriminatory, ensuring MPs can affirm or swear in line with their personal beliefs. Swearing-in is conducted promptly after elections, allowing MPs to participate fully in parliamentary proceedings. Clear guidelines ensure all MPs, regardless of political affiliation or background, undergo the same process.	3	• Monitor the swearing-in process to ensure inclusivity and non-discrimination, accommodating diverse beliefs. • Periodically assess the swearing-in process to prevent delays or challenges, ensuring full participation. • Promote public awareness of the swearing-in process to reinforce democratic understanding. • Ensure the legal framework includes both secular affirmation and religious oath for MPs' freedom of conscience.

					• Implement clear timelines and procedures for swearing-in, allowing MPs to participate without delays. • Conduct transparent, public swearing-in ceremonies to enhance democratic accountability.
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	The Constitution and parliamentary rules define processes for MPs to leave office voluntarily or involuntarily. Resignation is straightforward and requires written notice to the Speaker. Involuntary removal is governed by specific grounds such as criminal conviction, mental incapacity, or failure to attend proceedings without justification. Clear provisions ensure due process in cases of resignation or disqualification. Grounds for involuntary removal are specific, limited, and include procedural safeguards. The framework balances accountability with MPs' rights. Enforcement of rules on absenteeism can be inconsistent, with some MPs retaining their seats despite prolonged absences. Political dynamics can	3	• Strengthen enforcement mechanisms for absenteeism to hold MPs accountable for non-attendance. • Clarify procedures for involuntary removal of MPs, ensuring fairness regardless of party affiliation. • Improve the consistency and efficiency of due-process mechanisms for removals. • Establish a transparent resignation process requiring formal notice to the Speaker. • Define conditions for involuntary removal, such as criminal conviction or violation of codes of conduct. • Ensure due process in involuntary removals, including impartial investigation and MPs' right to appeal.

		disqualification – such provisions are limited, specific and implemented in accordance with due-process standards.	complicate the process for involuntary removal in contentious cases.		
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.	The Constitution uses a proportional representation (PR) system which does not allow MPs to cross the floor or leave their political party without losing their seat. If an MP decides to change parties they are required to vacate their seat, thus ensuring that the composition of the legislature reflects the electoral choices of the South African voters. The framework prevents MPs from being penalised solely for expressing dissenting views. Provisions protect freedom of speech and prevent undue influence by political parties on individual MPs. The rules encourage independent thinking and debate among MPs. MPs elected under proportional representation lose their seats if they leave their party, limiting	3	• Enhance transparency and fairness in the process when MPs leave their party or cross the floor. • Amend the legal framework to protect MPs from losing their seat for expressing differing views. • Clearly define processes for MPs leaving or being expelled from their party, including conditions for retaining their seat current, MPs can switch parties due to the proportional representation system, which allocates seats based on party lists rather than constituencies. When an MP changes parties, the new party must expel an existing member to make space. This process is challenging due to party hierarchy

			individual independence. The system may discourage dissent within parties represented through proportional allocation.		and the strategic management of party lists, but MPs navigate it through negotiations, timing, and political support... • Consider anti-defection measures to prevent personal gain but allow legitimate dissent. • Require MPs to publicly explain their decision to leave or be expelled from their party to enhance accountability.
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To improve parliamentary operations, it is important to strengthen legal provisions that ensure political instability does not disrupt operations, while streamlining the transition between terms, and enhancing the enforcement of absenteeism rules for consistency. Furthermore, safeguarding MPs' rights to represent their constituents independently within the framework of the PR system, while ensuring transparency and fairness in party-switching processes.



6.2.2 Non-accountability and inviolability

This dimension addresses the legal protections afforded to MPs while carrying out their parliamentary duties. It includes provisions that protect MPs from legal actions, arrest, or harassment while performing their functions. Non-accountability and inviolability enable MPs to express themselves freely and independently, ensuring that they can represent their constituents and engage in parliamentary business without fear of reprisal.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, and Section 58 of the Constitution , provide MPs with protection for votes cast and statements made during parliamentary proceedings. These protections extend to former MPs concerning their previous participation in parliament. MPs are protected from civil or criminal liability for actions or statements made in the course of their parliamentary duties. These protections ensure that MPs can debate and act freely without fear of retribution, fostering robust legislative discourse. The protection is permanent and cannot be lifted, safeguarding democratic principles. While the framework is strong, public misunderstandings about these protections sometimes create misconceptions about MPs' accountability.	3	• Increase public education about MPs' protections to mitigate misunderstandings on non-accountability. • Make parliamentary immunity more transparent by publishing detailed reports on its boundaries and intentions. • Regularly review the legal framework to align with democratic principles and prevent abuse. • Amend the framework to explicitly protect MPs from legal accountability for parliamentary duties, including former MPs. • Ensure that parliamentary non-accountability cannot be waived, guaranteeing MPs' freedom to represent constituents. Educate the public on non-accountability to build trust and prevent misunderstandings.

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.	Section 16 of the Constitution and parliamentary rules ensure MPs' freedom of speech within parliament but impose restrictions to maintain order, decorum, and prevent hate speech or incitement to violence. MPs can express views freely during parliamentary debates, promoting diverse opinions. Rules of procedure balance free expression with the need to maintain order and prevent harm. Mechanisms for handling breaches of decorum or hate speech are clear and consistent. Enforcement of restrictions can sometimes appear inconsistent, particularly during heated debates. Allegations of censorship or bias in rulings on speech restrictions occasionally arise, impacting perceptions of fairness.	3	• Establish clear guidelines for enforcing speech restrictions, ensuring consistency and transparency. • Strengthen oversight to ensure impartial enforcement of speech restrictions, particularly in heated debates. • Improve communication about the reasons for speech restrictions to enhance understanding among MPs and the public. • Improve on implementation of laws such as the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 and The Powers, Privileges And Immunities Of Parliament And Provincial Legislatures Act No. 4 OF 2004 and Preventing and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill to define permissible speech restrictions, focusing on hate speech, incitement to violence, and breaches of order. • The NA Rules covered the rules to maintain order while respecting MPs' freedom of speech however, improvements can be
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					made on the boundaries for disruptive speech, and mitigating any public concerns regarding the abuse of parliamentary privilege. • Provide mechanisms for judicial review of speech restrictions to ensure fairness.
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.	The Constitution and relevant legislation restrict the arrest, detention, or search of MPs without parliamentary consent. These provisions apply to actions connected to MPs' official duties and aim to preserve legislative independence. Strong protections prevent arbitrary interference with MPs' functions, safeguarding legislative independence. Parliamentary consent is required before legal action related to an MP's official duties can proceed, ensuring due process. MPs' personal and professional spaces are protected by law. The Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament And Provincial Legislatures Act No. 4 OF 2004 framework does not always specify clear procedures for handling requests to lift these protections. Public	4	• Clarify procedures for lifting inviolability, detailing steps to ensure transparency. • Ensure consistent and transparent upholding of legal protections for MPs, preventing misuse. • Mitigate perceptions of inviolability as a privilege by emphasising its role in preserving legislative independence. • Amend the legal framework to require parliamentary consent before arrest, detention, or searches of MPs. • Define procedures for obtaining consent, including criteria to assess political motivation.

			perceptions of inviolability as a form of privilege rather than a safeguard against undue interference can undermine trust.		• Ensure protections extend to MPs' residences, offices, and communications related to parliamentary work.
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	Parliament applies due process when receiving requests to lift an MP's inviolability, including allowing the MP to present a defence. Protections are implemented to prevent politically motivated legal actions against MPs. Procedures for lifting inviolability are generally followed, ensuring fairness. MPs from all political affiliations are afforded equal protections under the law. Safeguards exist to prevent abuse of these protections for political purposes. Allegations of politically motivated legal action against MPs occasionally surface, even if protections are upheld. The process for lifting inviolability can be slow, potentially delaying justice or accountability. Perceptions of selective application of protections create concerns about impartiality.	3	• Streamline the process for reviewing requests to lift inviolability to prevent delays in legal proceedings. • Implement an independent oversight body to ensure impartiality and fairness in inviolability decisions. • Increase transparency by publishing reports on decisions related to inviolability. • Develop a formal process for reviewing inviolability requests, allowing MPs to present their defence, and supporting evidence. • Strengthen safeguards to prevent politically motivated legal action against MPs. • Publish decisions on inviolability along with reasoning for transparency. • Provide training for MPs and staff on inviolability principles and handling requests.

		with politically motivated legal action.			
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To reinforce parliamentary independence and accountability, it is essential to clarify the procedures for lifting inviolability and ensure consistent, transparent enforcement of speech restrictions. Strengthening public understanding of MPs' non-accountability protections and streamlining the process for lifting inviolability, along with establishing independent oversight, will enhance fairness, transparency, and trust in [parliamentary practices](#).



6.2.3 Incompatibility of office

This dimension relates to the rules regarding the separation of parliamentary office from other positions that may present conflicts of interest. It ensures that MPs are not involved in other professional roles or business interests that might impair their impartiality or create conflicts with their duties in parliament. Incompatibility of office provisions safeguard the integrity of parliamentary functions by preventing MPs from holding offices that could unduly influence their legislative decisions.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework places specific limits on MPs holding incompatible offices, such as being a member of both houses in a	The Constitution of SA (Sections 47 and 106) clearly establishes limits on MPs holding incompatible offices. These include: MPs cannot hold judicial office or civil service positions. MPs cannot simultaneously be members of both houses in the SA parliament's bicameral system	3	Clarify and expand the legal framework on incompatible offices, particularly for new public sector roles that could conflict with MPs' positions.

		bicameral parliament, holding judicial office or holding office in the civil service.	(NA & NCOP). Holding certain roles in public entities may also be prohibited to avoid conflicts of interest. Clear constitutional provisions define incompatible roles, ensuring the integrity of parliamentary functions. Rules safeguard the separation of powers and prevent conflicts of interest. Provisions include mechanisms for disqualification to ensure compliance. Ambiguities may arise in interpreting specific roles within public entities as incompatible offices.		• Ensure the framework accounts for emerging governance structures, such as public-private partnerships. • Amend laws to explicitly define incompatible offices, including judicial, executive, civil service positions, and roles on state-owned entity boards. • Broaden the framework to include conflicts of interest for MPs holding roles in private or public organisations that interfere with parliamentary duties.
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.	Parliament has processes to address cases of incompatibility, allowing MPs to resolve conflicts promptly. The Joint Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests also plays an important role in maintaining ethical standards and ensuring that MPs adhere to the code of conduct. The committee addresses issues related to conflicts of interest, incompatibilities, and violations of parliamentary rules. Furthermore, the committee has mechanisms in place to deal	2	• Set up an expedited process for resolving incompatibility cases, especially in high-profile cases. • Provide legal advice and support to MPs, particularly from smaller parties, to resolve conflicts quickly. • Establish clear timelines for resolving incompatibility issues and guide MPs on steps for resigning from conflicting roles.

			with such matters promptly and fairly, ensuring transparency and accountability. In cases of incompatibility, MPs are provided with the opportunity to resolve conflicts, often through a formal investigation process, that may include recommendations for corrective actions or penalties if and where necessary. This system is essential for maintaining the integrity of the parliamentary institution and promoting trust in its members. Mechanisms include resigning from one of the incompatible positions or legal disqualification. MPs are given clear guidance and timelines for resolving incompatibility issues, ensuring swift compliance. Disqualification procedures are implemented transparently, reinforcing public trust. Resolutions can be reviewed by legal and parliamentary committees to ensure fairness and consistency. Resolution processes may take longer in politically sensitive cases, creating temporary disruptions. Smaller parties or		• Introduce automatic actions for unresolved incompatibility, such as forfeiting a parliamentary seat.
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			independent MPs may lack immediate access to legal advice on incompatibility issues.		
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.	Rules on incompatibility are implemented consistently, with parliament publishing data on other offices and roles held by MPs. Public disclosures aim to ensure accountability and transparency. Parliament actively monitors compliance with rules on incompatibility, ensuring that violations are addressed. Public disclosure of MPs' interests and other roles enhances transparency. Parliamentary committees conduct investigations into potential violations, reinforcing impartiality. Public access to data on MPs' other roles and interests can be inconsistent, limiting transparency. Political dynamics sometimes lead to delays in addressing or resolving high-profile incompatibility cases. The lack of comprehensive auditing of MPs' external roles occasionally allows conflicts to go unnoticed.	2	- Implement a public system for disclosing MPs' external roles and interests, with real-time updates accessible through an online portal. This system should be accessible and provide information regarding MPs' financial interests, outside employment, and other relevant affiliations. The portal should be user-friendly and regularly updated to ensure full accountability. - Committees responsible for overseeing MPs' external roles and interests should make their meetings, agendas, and minutes publicly available. This would provide transparency on discussions regarding MPs' disclosures and ensure that findings are made accessible in a timely manner, not solely when they are formally tabled in the Annual Reports or ATCs (Announced Parliamentary Committees). The current practice of suppressing committee meeting

					minutes from the public should be addressed to increase trust in the process and allow the public to stay informed. • Introduce independent audits or third-party verification of MPs' compliance with incompatibility rules. • While MPs are legally required to disclose changes to their external roles or interests, it is important to encourage a culture of proactive transparency. MPs should be reminded of their legal obligation to report any such changes promptly and should be done in real-time. This could be facilitated by setting clear timelines and procedures for reporting, as well as implementing reminder systems to ensure timely compliance. A proactive approach to reporting would enhance the credibility of the parliamentary oversight process and improve public trust in MPs' transparency and integrity.
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					• Establish a non-partisan body to monitor compliance, investigate breaches, and enforce sanctions such as public reprimands, fines, or removal from office. • Require MPs to publicly declare all positions and roles in annual financial disclosures, published on parliament's website. • Conduct regular audits of MPs' external roles and offices to ensure compliance. • Provide MPs with training on incompatibility rules during induction and periodically thereafter.
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To enhance compliance with incompatibility rules, parliament should establish a more expedited and transparent process for resolving conflicts, particularly for high-profile cases, and ensure that MPs from smaller parties have access to legal support. Furthermore, implementing real-time public disclosures of MPs' external roles, conducting independent audits, and providing ongoing training will foster greater transparency and accountability in parliamentary practices.



6.2.4 Access to resources

This dimension focuses on ensuring that MPs have the necessary resources to effectively fulfil their duties. It includes access to financial resources, staffing, office facilities, research support, and other tools required to perform legislative, oversight, and representative functions. Adequate resources ensure that MPs can serve their constituents efficiently and participate in parliamentary processes without unnecessary hindrances.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act and parliamentary rules govern access to resources for MPs, including allowances, benefits, and requirements for accountability. MPs must adhere to established guidelines for resource usage and are subject to audits. Clear frameworks exist for determining and allocating resources to MPs. Regular audits ensure accountability for resource use. Guidelines promote equitable distribution of resources, fostering transparency. Enforcement of accountability mechanisms varies, with delays in addressing misuse of resources. Some MPs, particularly from smaller parties, report difficulties in navigating resource allocation processes.	2	• Strengthen resource accountability by introducing clear timelines for addressing misuse and ensuring timely follow-ups on audit recommendations. • Create a transparent process for MPs, especially from smaller parties to access resources equitably. • Develop a robust oversight framework to monitor resource use, ensuring adherence to guidelines with frequent audits. • Establish clear rules in law or parliamentary procedures to define and allocate MPs' resources. • Require MPs to submit detailed reports on resource use, with audits and published allocation data to promote transparency. • Ensure equitable resource allocation based on objective criteria, without favouritism and corruption.

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.	MPs' remuneration is determined by the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers and is designed to ensure MPs can perform their duties effectively. Allowances cover travel, accommodation, and other work-related expenses. Remuneration levels are sufficient to attract citizens from diverse economic backgrounds to serve as MPs. Allowances cover essential expenses, reducing financial burdens on MPs. The framework supports MPs in meeting the demands of their roles. Some MPs argue that allowances do not adequately account for the cost of living in urban areas or extensive travel requirements. Public scrutiny of MPs' salaries occasionally leads to perceptions of excess, affecting public trust.	3	• Reevaluate allowances to account for cost of living and travel requirements, ensuring MPs can perform duties without financial strain. • Enhance transparency in remuneration by publishing breakdowns and justifications for MPs' pay and benefits. • Conduct periodic reviews of remuneration to adjust for economic conditions, inflation, and cost of living. • Ensure salaries and allowances are sufficient for MPs' duties while maintaining public trust. • Introduce allowances or support for MPs from low-income backgrounds to encourage broader participation. • Regularly review remuneration levels to reflect economic conditions.
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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.	The remuneration and allowances of MPs are determined by the Independent Commission for Remuneration, ensuring impartiality and fairness. The Commission reviews remuneration periodically, considering economic conditions and public sector benchmarks . An independent body ensures a fair and non-partisan process for determining remuneration. Regular reviews align MPs' salaries with economic realities and inflation. The process includes consultations with parliament and other stakeholders. Perceptions of political influence in consultations may arise, though decisions remain with the Commission. Delays in implementing recommendations from the Commission occasionally occur.	3	• Strengthen the independence of the Remuneration Commission by ensuring impartial and transparent consultations. • Improve timeliness in implementing the Commission's recommendations to align with economic realities. • Increase transparency in decision-making by publishing reports on how remuneration levels are set and explaining the factors influencing adjustments. • Improve on Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act, 1997 (Act 92 of 1997), when reviewing MPs' salaries and allowances, ensuring transparency and independence from political influence. • Include public consultation or reporting to enhance legitimacy and trust in the process. • Prevent MPs from determining their own salaries by requiring independent recommendations.
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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.	MPs are allocated office space, administrative staff, and access to parliamentary research and support services. Resource allocation is guided by parliamentary rules and proportional to MPs' roles and party representation. MPs from all parties have access to basic facilities and resources to perform their duties. Research and administrative staff support MPs in legislative and oversight functions. Smaller parties receive support proportional to their representation, fostering inclusivity. Resource allocation disparities are reported by smaller parties and independent MPs. Infrastructure constraints, exacerbated by the 2022 parliamentary fire, have affected the availability of office space and facilities. Administrative support is sometimes insufficient to meet the workload demands of MPs.	3	• Address resource allocation disparities by ensuring smaller parties and independents receive proportional support, including additional staff and resources. • Invest in infrastructure improvements, particularly following the 2022 fire, to provide MPs with adequate office space and facilities. • Expand administrative and research support to ensure equal access to high-quality assistance for all MPs. • Develop guidelines to ensure proportional resource allocation based on MPs' roles and responsibilities. • Provide training for parliamentary staff to enhance their ability to support MPs. • Invest in modern facilities and tools to improve efficiency. • Create a central office within parliament to manage and equitably distribute resources, ensuring transparency.
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To enhance resource allocation and ensure fairness, parliament should strengthen accountability by establishing clear timelines for addressing misuse, improving the transparency of remuneration processes, and ensuring equitable resource distribution, especially for smaller parties. By addressing infrastructure deficiencies, expanding administrative and research support, and regularly reviewing remuneration to reflect economic conditions will ensure MPs can perform their duties effectively and maintain public trust.



6.2.5 Professional development

This dimension ensures that MPs have access to opportunities for continuous professional growth and development. It covers training, workshops, and educational resources that enhance MPs' skills and knowledge, enabling them to perform their duties effectively. Professional development is crucial for keeping MPs informed about legislative processes, governance practices, and the evolving needs of their constituencies.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The SA parliament provides an induction programme for new MPs, organised by the Parliamentary Administration and overseen by the Parliamentary Service. The programme covers parliamentary procedures, constitutional responsibilities, and MPs' rights and duties. The programme is tailored to familiarise new MPs with parliamentary rules, committee functions, and legislative processes. Multi-party participation ensures inclusivity and broad	3	- Make induction programme attendance mandatory for all new MPs to ensure comprehensive understanding of parliamentary processes, responsibilities, and rights. - Extend the programme for MPs from smaller parties, focusing on their specific needs and providing in-depth knowledge of rules, processes, and oversight.

		parliamentary administration.	representation. Sessions include practical guidance on legislative drafting, oversight responsibilities, and public engagement. Attendance, while encouraged, is not mandatory, leading to inconsistent participation among MPs. Some MPs, particularly those from smaller parties, report that the programme does not fully address their specific needs. The programme is sometimes condensed due to time constraints, limiting its depth.		• Ensure the programme is adequately resourced, including hands-on training and real-world scenarios for better engagement. • Introduce a mentorship system where experienced MPs guide new members, especially from smaller parties, for better integration.
2	Comprehensive information package	All MPs receive a comprehensive information package, covering parliamentary procedures and their rights.	All MPs receive an information package that includes parliamentary procedures, constitutional mandates, codes of conduct, and guidelines on resource allocation and use. The package is provided by the Parliamentary Administration at the start of each parliamentary term. The package is detailed and includes key information about MPs' roles, rights, and responsibilities. Digital versions are accessible to ensure ongoing availability. Updates are provided periodically, reflecting changes in procedures or policies. Some MPs,	3	• Simplify and prioritise the information in the induction package to prevent overwhelming new MPs, focusing on essential duties and rights. • Use dynamic formats like video tutorials, online platforms, and infographics to enhance engagement and accessibility. • Establish a feedback mechanism for MPs to suggest improvements, ensuring the package stays relevant.

			particularly new entrants, may find the volume of information overwhelming. Feedback mechanisms to improve the content and format of the package are limited. In 2024, with the commencement of the 7 th Administration, Parliamentary Administration – particularly through the KIS Division – introduced more diverse components adding value to the induction of MPs.		• Offer periodic refresher courses to keep MPs updated on changes in rules, procedures, or policies.
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.	Parliament offers ongoing professional development opportunities, including workshops, seminars, and partnerships with external institutions. Programmes are developed in consultation with MPs to address specific needs, such as legislative drafting, public speaking, and policy analysis. MPs have access to a range of training options to enhance their skills and knowledge. Partnerships with universities and think tanks provide specialised training on complex topics. Tailored programmes focus on areas such as budget analysis, oversight practices, and ethics.	2	• Tailor professional development to individual MPs' needs, based on committee work, interests, or expertise. • Make professional development more accessible by adjusting scheduling and offering flexible online learning options. • Increase resources for smaller parties and independents to ensure equal access to development opportunities, including specialised training. • Regularly evaluate and update training content to reflect emerging needs, new technologies, and evolving policy issues.

			Participation in professional development is inconsistent, with many MPs citing time constraints as a barrier. Training programmes are not always sufficiently tailored to individual MPs' roles or expertise levels. Smaller parties and independent MPs may face challenges accessing training due to limited resources or scheduling conflicts.		
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To improve the effectiveness of parliamentary training and development, it is crucial to make induction programme attendance mandatory for all new MPs and ensure it is tailored to address the specific needs of smaller parties. Thus, simplifying the information package, increasing accessibility to ongoing professional development, and providing flexible learning options will support MPs in enhancing their skills, ensuring equal access to resources, and keeping them informed on evolving [parliamentary processes](#).



6.3 Indicator 1.3 Parliamentary procedures

Parliamentary procedures are fundamental to ensuring the orderly conduct of legislative business. This indicator assesses the efficiency and clarity of parliamentary rules, crisis management procedures, and the ability to maintain consistent practices for convening sessions, setting agendas, and conducting debates and voting. It ensures that legislative processes remain transparent, structured, and resilient under various circumstances.

6.3.1 Rules of procedure

This dimension refers to the formal rules that govern the conduct of parliamentary business. These rules ensure that parliamentary processes are structured, transparent, and fair. They cover how business is conducted, including the process for debating, voting, and decision-making, providing a framework for MPs and parliamentary staff to follow in all proceedings.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Autonomy to set own rules of procedure	Parliament has the authority to independently adopt and amend its rules of procedure.	The SA Constitution (Section 57 for the NA and Section 70 for the NCOP) grants parliament the authority to independently adopt and amend its rules of procedure. This autonomy is reinforced by the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act. Parliament has full control over its internal operations, ensuring independence from external influence. The process for adopting and amending rules is inclusive and allows input from all parliamentary parties. Rules are updated to reflect changes in legislative and operational needs. Political dynamics occasionally delay or complicate amendments,	3	- Establish clearer timelines and procedures for amending rules to reduce delays caused by political dynamics. - Increase use of public consultations and expert inputs to ensure rule changes reflect diverse perspectives and reduce partisan influence. - Strengthen independent bodies or advisory groups to provide unbiased recommendations, particularly on contentious issues.

			particularly when rules impact contentious issues.		
2	Scope	Parliament's rules of procedure are consistent with the legal framework and codify all procedural aspects of parliamentary business.	The rules of procedure codify all procedural aspects of parliamentary business, including plenary debates, committee operations, oversight functions, and disciplinary measures. The rules are consistent with constitutional and legal frameworks. The rules provide comprehensive guidance on all parliamentary activities, ensuring clarity and consistency. Provisions align with constitutional mandates and principles of good governance. Flexibility in the rules allows adaptation to new challenges, such as hybrid sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The complexity of some rules makes them difficult for new MPs or smaller parties to navigate. Gaps occasionally emerge in addressing novel procedural issues, requiring ad hoc decisions.	4	• Simplify complex rules to make them more accessible, especially for new MPs and smaller parties, through guides or training modules. • Create a dedicated body to address gaps or ambiguities in the rules, ensuring they remain responsive to emerging issues. • Regularly review and update the rules to keep them relevant, especially with technological advancements like virtual sessions.
3	Implementation and interpretation	The rules of procedure are implemented and interpreted	Rules of procedure are implemented and interpreted by the Speaker, presiding officers, and committee chairs. Past practices and	4	• Improve the accessibility and transparency of procedural documentation by making it

		consistently. Past practices and interpretations are documented and made available to MPs and the public.	interpretations are documented for reference. The Speaker and presiding officers ensure adherence to procedural rules during debates and sessions. Documentation of past practices provides guidance for consistent interpretation. MPs and the public can access procedural documentation, enhancing transparency. Perceptions of partisanship in the Speaker's rulings can undermine trust in the consistent application of rules. Limited accessibility of procedural documentation for smaller parties and new MPs affects their ability to engage effectively.		readily available online, especially for smaller parties. • Provide regular training for new MPs and party staff on procedural rules to ensure clear understanding. • Strengthen the impartiality of the Speaker and presiding officers through continuous development and clear guidelines on handling contentious issues.
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.	Rules of procedure are subject to periodic review, typically through a Rules Committee, which includes representatives from all parliamentary parties. MPs can propose amendments, which are debated and adopted through established processes. The Rules Committee ensures that procedural rules remain relevant and responsive to parliamentary needs. Proposals for	3	• Introduce a structured and timely process for reviewing rules, with fixed schedules for regular updates. • Foster a collaborative environment for rule revisions by involving external experts, academics, and civil society groups. • Implement a transparent system for tracking rule amendments, providing

			amendments are considered in a multi-party context, promoting inclusivity. Reviews incorporate lessons from past practices and stakeholder feedback. Periodic reviews are sometimes delayed, leading to outdated provisions. Debates on procedural amendments can become politicised, hindering timely consensus.		regular updates on proposed changes and reasons for delays.
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To improve the effectiveness of parliamentary rulemaking and implementation, clearer timelines, and procedures for amending rules should be established to minimise delays caused by political dynamics. Furthermore, simplifying complex rules, ensuring consistent documentation and transparency, and fostering a collaborative approach in rule revisions with expert input will promote greater accessibility, fairness, and responsiveness to emerging parliamentary challenges.



6.3.2 Emergency or crisis procedures

Emergency or crisis procedures outline the specific steps parliament must take in extraordinary circumstances, such as national emergencies, natural disasters, or other unforeseen events. These procedures ensure that parliament can continue to function effectively and address urgent matters promptly, while maintaining the integrity and order of its operations.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution of SA and parliamentary rules clarify parliament's role during emergencies. Sections 37 (State of Emergency) and 44 grant parliament authority to oversee emergency declarations and legislative adjustments. Legal precedent reinforces parliament's role in scrutinising executive actions during crises. The Constitution ensures parliamentary oversight of executive actions during emergencies. Clear legal guidelines define circumstances for invoking emergency procedures, such as natural disasters, pandemics, or national security threats. Legal provisions safeguard human rights and limit the duration and scope of emergency powers. Ambiguities remain regarding the balance of power between the executive and parliament during rapidly evolving crises. Legal provisions are occasionally bypassed in practice due to political expediency, reducing parliamentary oversight.	3	- Clarify the balance of power between the executive and parliament during crises to ensure effective parliamentary oversight. - Create a committee to provide independent assessments of the executive's use of emergency powers, ensuring checks and balances. - Regularly update legal provisions related to emergency powers, learning from past crises to balance human rights, oversight, and executive actions.

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.	Parliamentary rules provide procedures for debates, agenda-setting, and oversight during emergencies, including provisions for expedited legislative processes. Rules enable faster decision-making while maintaining parliamentary oversight. Specific guidelines clarify the roles of the executive and parliament in crisis management. Committees are empowered to conduct focused oversight of crisis-related executive actions. Expedited procedures can limit robust debate and scrutiny of emergency measures. The capacity to adapt procedures to unique emergencies has been uneven, as seen during COVID-19 as well as the fire at Parliament in January 2022.	3	• Streamline expedited procedures for emergencies while ensuring robust debate and scrutiny through “emergency guidelines.” • Develop flexible procedures for different types of crises to enable appropriate parliamentary responses without sacrificing oversight. • Increase training for MPs and staff on crisis-related procedures, ensuring understanding of roles and responsibilities in emergencies.
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	The rules of procedure allow for flexible representation, hybrid models (virtual and in-person sessions), and adjustments to speaking time and voting protocols during emergencies. The adoption of hybrid and virtual sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and following the wake of the fire decreasing venue capacity,	4	• Improve technological infrastructure to ensure equitable access for MPs, particularly from rural areas, to virtual or hybrid sessions during crises. • Develop protocols for managing hybrid sessions, including attendance verification,

		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.	ensured continuity of parliamentary business. MPs can participate in debates and votes remotely, preserving representation during crises. Flexible speaking and voting rules adapt to the urgency and complexity of crisis situations. Technological constraints and uneven internet access affect MPs from rural areas, limiting their ability to participate virtually. Hybrid systems occasionally face procedural challenges, such as verifying attendance and managing debates. Not all in-person meetings are streamed virtually.		voting, and smooth communication between in-person and virtual participants. Review rules to ensure equal participation for all MPs in debates, regardless of location, during crises.
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.	The Parliamentary Administration has business continuity plans to ensure operations during crises. These plans include technological solutions, security measures, and administrative adjustments. Continuity plans were successfully implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and after the fire, avoiding mass disruption to parliamentary functions. Regular reviews of technological capabilities support operational resilience. Security protocols safeguard MPs and	4	- Regularly review and update business continuity plans, including contingency measures for both physical and virtual sessions, particularly in light of recent crises. - Increase training for MPs and staff on crisis management and continuity procedures, including simulations and drills. - Strengthen physical infrastructure, security, and resilience planning to reduce

			staff during physical or virtual sessions. Plans are not reviewed consistently, reducing preparedness for unforeseen crises. Limited training for MPs and staff on crisis protocols affects effective implementation. Infrastructure damage, such as the 2022 parliamentary fire, highlights gaps in physical contingency measures.		vulnerabilities and ensure minimal disruption during emergencies.
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To improve parliamentary preparedness for emergencies and crises, it is essential to clarify the balance of power between the executive and parliament, ensuring robust oversight during crises. Thus, enhancing flexibility in crisis procedures, improving technological infrastructure for hybrid participation, and regularly reviewing and updating business continuity plans will ensure smooth operations, equitable participation, and resilience during unforeseen events.



6.3.3 Parliamentary calendar

The parliamentary calendar refers to the schedule of parliamentary sessions, meetings, and recess periods. It helps organise and plan parliamentary activities, ensuring that MPs can allocate time effectively for the discussion of legislation, oversight, and constituent matters. A clear calendar supports the efficient operation of parliament throughout the year.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Rules of the NA and Rules of the NCOP specify procedures for setting the parliamentary calendar. The calendar is developed by parliament in consultation with party leaders and relevant committees. The calendar outlines when parliament is in session and allocates time for plenary debates, committee meetings, and constituency work. Processes for developing the calendar ensure input from all parliamentary parties, promoting inclusivity. Periodic adjustments accommodate urgent legislative or oversight needs. Unanticipated disruptions, such as emergencies or delays in committee work, can affect the adherence to the planned calendar. Coordination between the NA and NCOP can be challenging during busy legislative periods.	3	• Strengthen coordination between the NA and NCOP by introducing a joint committee or improved communication for smoother calendar development, especially during busy legislative periods. • Implement proactive contingency planning, such as buffer periods, to accommodate disruptions like emergencies or delays. • Introduce a structured process for soliciting feedback from MPs and stakeholders on the parliamentary calendar to ensure inclusive scheduling. • Consider implementing digital tools to streamline calendar coordination and composition.
2	Scope	The parliamentary calendar includes detailed information	The parliamentary calendar includes details on plenary sessions, committee meetings, budget debates, and constituency periods. It provides a	3	• Improve the level of detail in the calendar, providing specific time allocations for sub-

		related to plenary sessions, committee affairs and forthcoming legislative activity.	structured timetable for legislative and oversight activities. The calendar offers clear schedules for all major parliamentary activities, ensuring MPs can plan their participation effectively. Legislative activity, such as budget debates and policy discussions, is allocated specific time slots, enhancing predictability. Committees are scheduled systematically to avoid overlapping responsibilities for MPs who serve on multiple committees. The level of detail in the calendar can vary, with some events being announced closer to the date, limiting advance planning. High-pressure periods, such as the budget season, can result in congested schedules.		committees, hearings, and informal sessions to help MPs plan ahead. • Address congested schedules, particularly during busy periods like the budget season, and introducing flexible scheduling practices. • Enhance flexibility by introducing responsive scheduling that adjusts to emerging legislative priorities or crises. • More detail should be provided on scheduled events, thus keeping the public more informed.
3	Transparency	The calendar is publicly available and is regularly updated in a timely manner.	The parliamentary calendar is publicly available on the parliament of SA's website and is regularly updated to reflect changes in scheduling. The calendar is accessible to the public, promoting transparency and accountability. Updates to the calendar are made in a timely manner, ensuring stakeholders	3	• Improve timeliness of calendar updates with a system for real-time changes and notifications to keep MPs and the public informed. • Increase public outreach about the availability and usage of the calendar,

			are informed of changes. Public availability supports citizen engagement in parliamentary proceedings and oversight activities. There are no significant challenges regarding transparency; the calendar is consistently updated and accessible, albeit not always in a timely manner.		promoting it through the website and social media. • Implement a public feedback mechanism to gather suggestions and concerns, ensuring continuous improvement and greater transparency.
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To enhance the effectiveness of the parliamentary calendar, improved coordination between the NA and NCOP should be prioritised, particularly during busy periods, and proactive contingency planning should be implemented to accommodate disruptions. Furthermore, increasing the level of detail in the calendar, enhancing flexibility in scheduling, and improving transparency through real-time updates and public outreach will ensure that MPs and the public are well-informed and can plan participation effectively. Developing and utilising digital tools can greatly enhance the coordination of the calendar, thereby improving both accessibility and efficiency.



6.3.4 Convening sessions and setting the agenda

This dimension focuses on the process by which parliamentary sessions are convened and how the agenda for each session is set. It ensures that parliamentary business is structured, and that MPs have the opportunity to address important issues. The agenda-setting process allows parliament to prioritise matters of national importance and allocate time for debate and decision-making.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution of SA (Section 51) requires parliament to convene its first session within 14 days of an election. Subsequent sessions occur regularly, as outlined in the parliamentary calendar and rules. Legal provisions ensure a prompt convening of parliament after elections, enabling the immediate exercise of legislative and oversight functions. The rules ensure parliament meets at regular intervals, promoting continuity and accountability. Extraordinary circumstances, such as delays or emergencies, are addressed within the constitutional framework. There are no significant challenges in meeting this requirement; parliament consistently adheres to the timeframe as was seen after the May 2024 elections and the transition from the 6 th to the 7 th Administration.	4	• Introduce contingency plans for potential delays, ensuring parliament convenes promptly even in exceptional situations. • Strengthen coordination between executive, legislative, and electoral bodies for a seamless transition from election results to parliament's first sitting. • Periodically review the process for convening parliament after elections to identify inefficiencies and improve the process for timely operation.
2	Sessions	Sessions are determined by the	Parliamentary leadership or designated committees, as outlined in the Rules of the NA	3	• Improve the process for calling extraordinary sessions by setting clearer

		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.	and the Rules of the NCOP, determine sessions. Extraordinary sessions can be called by the Speaker or other authorised officials for urgent matters of public interest. Rules provide flexibility for convening extraordinary sessions to address urgent public-interest matters. Regular sessions ensure parliament fulfils its legislative and oversight duties. The Speaker and parliamentary leadership coordinate scheduling to align with national priorities. Extraordinary sessions are sometimes criticised for being called with insufficient advance notice, limiting MPs' preparation time. Political dynamics can delay agreements on session timing during contentious periods.		guidelines for minimum notice periods, ensuring adequate preparation time. • Improve coordination between parliamentary leadership and stakeholders to avoid delays from political dynamics, introducing a more structured approach to session scheduling. • Introduce a formal review process to ensure extraordinary sessions are only called when necessary and aligned with broader legislative priorities.
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.	All MPs have the right to participate in agenda-setting, and it includes proposing items for discussion or debate, subject to procedural approval. The multi-party Chief Whip Forum contributes to inclusive agenda-setting. The agenda-setting process allows MPs from all parties to contribute, promoting inclusivity.	3	• Ensure smaller parties and independent MPs have a structured mechanism to present proposals during agenda-setting, such as dedicated time slots. • Review the agenda-setting process to ensure fair consideration of input from all MPs, including those from smaller parties.

		Agenda-setting provisions are applied consistently in practice.	Committees play a significant role in prioritising legislative and oversight items. Multi-party forums ensure diverse perspectives in agenda formulation. Smaller parties and independent MPs can report challenges in having their proposals included on the agenda. Political dominance by larger parties can result in perceived imbalances in agenda-setting.		• Improve transparency in agenda-setting by publishing reports on how decisions were made regarding agenda items.
4	Publication and advance notice	The agendas for sessions are published well in advance, giving MPs sufficient time to prepare.	Agendas are published on the parliament of SA's website and communicated to MPs well in advance. Rules specify minimum notice periods for ordinary and extraordinary sessions. Advance publication ensures MPs have adequate time to prepare for debates and decision-making. Agendas are accessible to the public, promoting transparency and accountability. Extraordinary sessions also adhere to minimum notice periods whenever possible. In urgent situations, reduced notice periods can limit MPs' ability to thoroughly prepare. Occasionally, last-minute changes to	3	• Strengthen communication to ensure agendas are published well in advance, particularly for extraordinary sessions, with real-time digital access. • Establish a protocol for managing last-minute changes to the agenda, ensuring MPs are notified early to adjust preparations. • Standardise the notice period for extraordinary sessions and explore ways to streamline preparation for cases requiring shorter notice.

			the agenda can disrupt planning and preparation.		
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To enhance parliamentary effectiveness, clearer guidelines should be established for calling extraordinary sessions, ensuring adequate preparation time for MPs, particularly for urgent matters. Furthermore, ensuring a fair and transparent agenda-setting process, with structured mechanisms for smaller parties and independent MPs to present proposals, and improving the timeliness and management of agenda publication and notice periods, will ensure more inclusive and efficient parliamentary operations.



6.3.5 Quorum

Quorum refers to the minimum number of MPs required to be present for parliament to conduct its business. This dimension ensures that decisions made in parliament are legitimate and reflect the participation of a sufficient number of elected representatives. Quorum requirements are essential for maintaining the validity of parliamentary proceedings and the legitimacy of votes.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the minimum number of MPs who must be present in order for parliamentary business to be	The Constitution of SA (Sections 53 and 75) and the Rules of the NA and NCOP establish the minimum number of MPs required to constitute a quorum for parliamentary business. These thresholds vary depending on the type of business, such as ordinary debates or passing legislation. The legal framework clearly defines	4	- Periodically review quorum thresholds to ensure they remain appropriate for modern practices and adequately represent the full parliament. - Strengthen the legal framework to standardise quorum requirements across parliamentary functions, ensuring

		conducted in the event of a quorum call.	quorum requirements for different types of parliamentary business. Provisions ensure that quorum rules are aligned with the importance of decisions, such as higher requirements for constitutional amendments. The framework provides clarity and consistency for legislative and oversight activities. No significant challenges have been identified in the legal framework itself.		consistency in legislative, oversight, and ceremonial activities. Consider introducing stricter quorum requirements for constitutional amendments or significant legislation, with enhanced transparency in how thresholds are set and met.
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.	The Rules of Procedure allow MPs to request a quorum call to verify the presence of the minimum number of members required for business. This right ensures accountability and prevents decisions being made without sufficient representation. MPs from any party can exercise the right to call for a quorum, promoting inclusivity and fairness. Quorum calls are an effective tool for ensuring adequate representation during important decisions. Rules prevent abuse of quorum calls by setting procedural guidelines. Quorum calls are sometimes used strategically to disrupt	3	- Review procedural guidelines for quorum calls to prevent unnecessary disruptions while preserving MPs' right to verify quorum. - Enhance communication about the responsibilities and consequences of quorum calls to ensure they are used constructively. - Limit the frequency or timing of quorum calls during contentious debates to reduce disruptions while maintaining fairness.

			proceedings, particularly during contentious debates. The process can temporarily delay business, impacting efficiency.		
3	Practice	Quorum rules are consistently implemented in practice.	Quorum rules are implemented consistently in most cases, with presiding officers responsible for verifying compliance. Records of attendance are maintained to ensure accountability. Presiding officers enforce quorum rules during sessions, ensuring compliance with the Constitution and rules. Attendance registers and electronic systems help track MPs' presence, supporting transparency. The application of quorum rules reinforces the legitimacy of parliamentary decisions. Instances of MPs leaving the chamber strategically during quorum calls can disrupt proceedings. Attendance during non-high-profile sessions or debates is often low, raising concerns about MPs' commitment. Inconsistent enforcement of attendance requirements undermines the effectiveness of quorum rules.	3	• Strengthen enforcement of quorum rules by implementing electronic tracking of MPs' attendance and reporting to the public. • Increase MPs' accountability for attendance by introducing incentives for consistent participation or consequences for absenteeism. • Implement measures like random attendance checks during low-profile sessions to ensure MPs are fulfilling responsibilities. • Develop a standardised process for managing quorum calls and tracking MPs' presence to prevent strategic absences.

To improve the effectiveness of quorum rules, parliament should periodically review quorum thresholds to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate for modern legislative practices, with a particular focus on significant decisions like constitutional amendments. Strengthening the enforcement of quorum rules, enhancing tracking systems for attendance, and introducing measures to deter strategic absences will improve parliamentary accountability and reduce disruptions caused by quorum calls.



6.3.6 Debate

Debate is a fundamental aspect of parliamentary procedure, allowing MPs to discuss proposed legislation, policies, and national issues. This dimension focuses on the rules and conditions under which debates are conducted, ensuring that all MPs have the opportunity to present their views, ask questions, and influence decision-making.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The Rules of the NA and Rules of the NCOP clearly define MPs' powers in debate. These rules outline MPs' rights to table motions, propose amendments, raise points of order, and engage in open debates. MPs from all parties can table motions and propose amendments, ensuring inclusivity. Points of order and motions are regulated to maintain order and ensure fairness. Rules support the robust exercise of parliamentary functions such as oversight,	4	- Clarify the process for tabling motions, proposing amendments, and raising points of order to ensure transparency, especially for new MPs and those from smaller parties. - Regularly review and update the rules of procedure to stay responsive to changing needs, such as new technologies and governance challenges.

		amendments, to raise points of order and to hold open a debate.	legislative review, and policy discussion. No significant challenges exist in the clarity of the rules, though their application may occasionally face disputes.		Strengthen the dispute resolution process to ensure quicker, more efficient resolution of conflicts, minimising disruption during contentious debates.
2	Time allocation	Ample time is allocated for debate on issues, legislation, and other matters.	Time for debates is allocated by parliamentary leadership, guided by established rules to ensure adequate discussion of legislative and oversight matters. Sufficient time is provided for debates on key issues, with priority given to legislative matters and oversight discussions. Special sessions and extended hours are used when critical or urgent debates arise. Committees are given specific time for detailed discussions, supplementing plenary debates. The allocation of time can occasionally favour the ruling party, reducing opportunities for smaller parties or independents to contribute meaningfully. Some MPs have raised concerns about insufficient time for discussing complex bills or urgent matters.	3	- Introduce structured time allocation procedures to ensure critical issues receive sufficient debate time, with flexible scheduling for important or urgent matters. - Create a transparent and fair mechanism for time allocation, ensuring smaller parties and independent MPs have sufficient opportunities to participate. - Adjust the time allocation process to allow more balanced contributions from all MPs, especially during high-pressure periods.
3	Transparency	Debates are open to the public in-person and	Debates are open to the public in-person and virtually. Records of debates, such as the	3	Enhance the accessibility and timeliness of official records by reducing delays in

		virtually, and official records of debates are published in a timely manner.	Hansard, are published in a timely manner and made available online. Open debates allow the public to engage with parliamentary proceedings, enhancing accountability. Virtual and hybrid sessions implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic have improved accessibility. Hansard records provide a comprehensive and transparent account of all debates. Technological challenges, such as connectivity issues during virtual sessions, can occasionally limit public access. Delays in publishing official records are rare but affect timely public engagement.		publishing Hansard and other records, through improved technological infrastructure. • Address technological challenges to ensure reliable internet connectivity during virtual and hybrid sessions. • Increase transparency by expanding access to debates and records, including real-time updates or live streaming for broader public engagement.
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.	Debate procedures are outlined in the rules, with the Speaker responsible for impartial application. All MPs are expected to receive equal treatment under these rules, regardless of party affiliation. Rules are designed to ensure fairness in debate, with opportunities for all MPs to participate. The Speaker has mechanisms to address breaches of decorum and maintain order. Multi-party representation	3	• Strengthen the independence of the Speaker by providing ongoing training to ensure impartial enforcement of rules. • Introduce clear, transparent procedures for allocating speaking time and making disciplinary decisions to ensure equitable treatment of all MPs. • Implement a system for monitoring and addressing complaints of perceived

			in committees ensures diverse input in discussions. Perceptions of partiality occasionally arise, particularly during contentious debates. Opposition MPs sometimes allege unequal treatment in speaking time or disciplinary actions. Political dynamics can influence the Speaker's enforcement of rules, affecting perceptions of fairness.		partiality, with an independent oversight body reviewing allegations and providing recommendations.
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To enhance parliamentary debate processes, clearer procedures for tabling motions, proposing amendments, and raising points of order should be established, especially to assist new MPs and those from smaller parties. Thus, improving the fairness and transparency of time allocation, ensuring reliable virtual session access, and addressing perceptions of impartiality through transparent mechanisms and ongoing Speaker training will ensure more balanced, inclusive, and accountable debates.



6.3.7 Voting

Voting is the mechanism through which parliamentary decisions are made. This dimension ensures that voting procedures are clear, transparent, and fair, enabling MPs to express their support or opposition to legislation, motions, or other parliamentary matters. The integrity of voting procedures is vital for upholding democratic principles within parliament.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Rules of the NA and Rules of the NCOP specify that only MPs are authorised to vote. Proxy and remote voting mechanisms are defined for extraordinary circumstances, such as hybrid or virtual sessions. Voting powers are strictly limited to elected MPs, preserving the integrity of parliamentary decisions. Rules allow for proxy and remote voting in specific scenarios, ensuring inclusivity during crises or emergencies. Mechanisms ensure that proxy or remote votes are recorded transparently and attributed to the correct MPs. No significant challenges are identified in restricting voting powers to MPs.	4	- Periodically review proxy and remote voting rules to ensure they remain relevant and effective, especially during crises or technological developments. - Enhance transparency by establishing a publicly accessible system to track proxy and remote votes, ensuring accountability. - Implement safeguards, such as independent oversight and regular audits, to prevent abuse or manipulation of proxy or remote voting.
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.	The rules of procedure provide mechanisms for a minority of MPs to request a vote on specific matters, ensuring that minority voices can influence decision-making processes. Rules allow opposition parties and smaller factions to request votes, fostering inclusivity and	3	- Streamline procedural thresholds for minority MPs to call for a vote, ensuring a more effective mechanism for smaller parties and opposition MPs. - Introduce clear, fair timelines for considering minority vote requests,

			accountability. Minority MPs can challenge decisions or initiate debates through procedural votes. This mechanism enhances checks and balances, ensuring that the majority does not dominate decision-making unilaterally. Requests for votes by minority MPs can sometimes be delayed or sidelined due to procedural or political dynamics. Smaller parties occasionally report challenges in meeting procedural thresholds for initiating votes.		prioritising them based on relevance and impact. • Provide additional resources to help smaller parties and independent MPs meet procedural requirements for initiating votes.
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.	Votes are recorded and published in the official Hansard and parliamentary records, ensuring transparency. Rules specify exceptions, such as secret ballots in cases of no-confidence motions or sensitive appointments. Voting records are publicly accessible, promoting accountability and transparency. Electronic systems enhance accuracy and efficiency in recording votes during plenary sessions. Secret ballots are used judiciously, balancing transparency with the need for confidentiality in certain cases. No	3	• Improve the timeliness and accessibility of voting records, considering real-time publishing of votes for full transparency. • Expand the use of secret ballots, ensuring they are only used when confidentiality is required, with alternative mechanisms for transparency. • Enhance vote accuracy by adopting advanced electronic voting systems to reduce errors in large or complex votes.

			significant challenges have been identified in recording and publishing voting records.		
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.	Voting rules are applied consistently, with MPs able to vote freely without undue interference. Voting processes are monitored by presiding officers to ensure adherence to procedures. MPs vote freely and independently, reflecting their party's position or individual conscience as permitted. Proxy and remote voting mechanisms were successfully implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring participation during disruptions. Strict monitoring prevents improper influence or interference during voting sessions. Instances of strategic absenteeism have occasionally disrupted quorum or voting outcomes. Allegations of political pressure on MPs, particularly during high-stakes votes, can affect perceptions of independence.	3	• Prevent absenteeism during crucial votes by holding MPs accountable, such as through public reporting or incentives for consistent participation. • Implement independent oversight bodies to address political pressure or strategic absenteeism during key votes. • Increase training for MPs on voting rules, focusing on independent decision-making, and preventing undue influence in high-stakes votes.

To strengthen the integrity of parliamentary voting processes, it is important to periodically review proxy and remote voting mechanisms to ensure they are effective and transparent, especially during crises. Furthermore, streamlining the procedural thresholds for minority MPs to call for votes, enhancing the timeliness and accessibility of voting records, and implementing independent oversight to prevent absenteeism and political pressure will improve fairness, accountability, and the independence of MPs during critical votes.



6.3.8 Record-keeping

Record-keeping refers to the processes and systems used to document parliamentary proceedings, decisions, and actions. This dimension ensures that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained for all parliamentary activities, including debates, votes, and official decisions. Proper record-keeping is essential for transparency, accountability, and future reference.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Rules of the NA, NCOP, and relevant legislation mandate the maintenance of comprehensive records for all parliamentary activities, including decisions, votes, deliberations, documents, and committee hearings. All plenary sessions, committee meetings, and hearings are documented, ensuring transparency and accountability. Parliamentary records are meticulously maintained in both physical and digital formats.	4	- Invest in advanced technology, such as automated transcription tools, to streamline real-time record-keeping during high-activity periods. - Introduce a system for categorising and indexing records to improve retrieval of relevant information. - Develop a comprehensive training program for record-keeping staff to maintain high-

			Official records such as the Hansard provide verbatim transcripts of debates and proceedings. The volume of records generated can make real-time record-keeping challenging, especially during periods of high parliamentary activity.		quality documentation, particularly during peak legislative sessions.
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.	Records are stored securely in a centralised repository, both digitally and physically. They are accessible to MPs, staff, and the public, with exceptions for classified or sensitive documents defined in parliamentary rules. Digital repositories enhance accessibility, allowing MPs and the public to retrieve records online. Security protocols protect sensitive documents, ensuring confidentiality where necessary. Regular updates to online platforms ensure timely publication of proceedings and reports. Public access to certain records may be delayed due to procedural or technical issues. Limited digital literacy or infrastructure can hinder access for stakeholders in rural areas.	3	- Strengthen digital infrastructure to ensure timely and accessible publication of records, including regular audits of online platforms. - Expand digital literacy programs for MPs and stakeholders, particularly in rural areas, to improve access to online records. - Develop clearer guidelines for timely publication, streamlining internal processes and ensuring transparent communication of any exceptions.

3	Availability in all official working languages	Records are made available in the official working languages outlined in the constitution.	The Constitution specifies SA's 12 official languages, and parliamentary records are expected to be available in these languages where applicable. However, English is the primary language used for parliamentary records. Key documents, including the Hansard and committee reports, are available in English, which is the primary working language. Efforts are made to translate certain critical records into other official languages, particularly where it enhances public engagement. Translation services are available for debates and documents of particular public or regional importance. The majority of records are not available in all official languages due to resource and capacity constraints. Translation delays can affect the timely availability of documents in languages other than English. Public engagement is reduced in communities where English is not widely spoken.	2	• Increase funding to expand translation capacity, ensuring more records are available in all 12 official languages. • Prioritise translating key documents, such as Hansard transcripts, into the most widely spoken languages to enhance public access. • Implement a phased approach to gradually increase the availability of records in all languages, focusing first on documents with the highest public interest.
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To improve the accessibility and efficiency of parliamentary record-keeping, it is essential to invest in advanced technologies like automated transcription tools to streamline real-time documentation, especially during busy sessions. Strengthening digital infrastructure, expanding translation capacity, and ensuring timely and comprehensive publication of records in all official languages will enhance transparency, public engagement, and accessibility, particularly in underserved communities.



6.3.9 Dissolution

Dissolution refers to the formal ending of a parliamentary term, either by the decision of the executive or according to constitutional rules. This dimension covers the legal and procedural steps involved in the dissolution of parliament, ensuring that it occurs according to established laws and that the transition to the next parliamentary session is smooth and orderly.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The Constitution of SA (Sections 49 and 50) defines the term of parliament and provides the authority and procedure for its dissolution before the end of the term. Dissolution may occur if: A motion of no confidence in the Cabinet is passed and the President does not resign. The President dissolves parliament under prescribed conditions. An election term reaches its natural end. Constitutional	4	- Introduce clearer communication and educational materials on the dissolution process, focusing on the roles of the President, Speaker, and MPs to reduce confusion. - Create a contingency plan for rapid dissolution in crisis situations to minimise disruption and ensure continuity.

		associated rules clearly specify the roles of those involved in this process.	provisions clearly define the roles of the President, Speaker, and MPs in the dissolution process. Safeguards exist to prevent arbitrary dissolution, ensuring that decisions are aligned with democratic principles. Rules provide for regular elections within 90 days of dissolution, maintaining continuity of governance. Dissolution during political crises may result in disruptions to parliamentary work, though this is constitutionally managed.		Regularly review and update dissolution provisions in the Constitution to reflect modern governance challenges and evolving political dynamics.
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.	Parliamentary rules and practices outline the impact of dissolution on ongoing work, including the formal closure of sessions, the termination of committee operations, and arrangements for outgoing MPs. Rules ensure an orderly wind-down of parliamentary activities, including the cessation of legislative processes and oversight functions. Clear timelines for concluding business and submitting final reports by committees ensure accountability. Provisions for the continuity of essential functions, such as government	3	- Strengthen the transition process by creating a structured framework for managing dissolution, including winding down committees and finalising unfinished business. - Enhance collaboration between parliament and the executive during dissolution to ensure urgent matters are addressed.

			oversight, mitigate disruptions. Dissolution can lead to abrupt interruptions in legislative processes, particularly for bills not yet finalised. The transition period may create gaps in oversight, especially during politically charged dissolutions.		
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.	Parliament's rules of procedure define record-keeping and archiving responsibilities for outgoing MPs. MPs are required to return parliamentary assets, settle financial obligations, and adhere to ethical standards, such as confidentiality of privileged information. Clear archiving protocols ensure that parliamentary records are preserved for future reference and transparency. Ethical requirements reinforce accountability and prevent misuse of resources by outgoing MPs. Training and briefings on archiving and exit requirements are provided to MPs nearing the end of their term. Compliance with archiving and ethics requirements is uneven, with occasional delays in asset returns or unresolved	3	• Strengthen monitoring and enforcement of archiving and ethics requirements for outgoing MPs by setting up an independent body to track compliance. • Improve training for MPs nearing the end of their terms on archiving and ethics requirements, ensuring they understand their responsibilities. • Develop a robust system for tracking post-office ethical duties and archiving compliance, using digital tools to monitor and report any issues.

			obligations. Mechanisms for monitoring compliance after MPs leave office are limited.		
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To improve the dissolution process and ensure a smooth transition, clearer communication and educational materials should be introduced to clarify the roles of key figures during dissolution, along with a contingency plan to minimise disruptions. Furthermore, strengthening the framework for managing the end of parliamentary sessions, enhancing collaboration with the executive during dissolution, and improving compliance monitoring for archiving and ethics requirements will ensure continuity of [governance](#) and uphold accountability.



6.4 Indicator 1.4 Parliamentary organisation

This indicator focuses on the structures within parliament, including the plenary, the speaker's office, [parliamentary committees](#), and political groups. Effective parliamentary organisation guarantees that each function is performed smoothly and efficiently, with a clear division of responsibilities and equitable representation in decision-making bodies.

6.4.1 Plenary

The plenary refers to the full assembly of parliament, where all members meet to discuss and make decisions on legislative matters. This dimension focuses on the organisation and functioning of plenary sessions, ensuring that parliamentary debates, decisions, and voting procedures are conducted efficiently and transparently in the presence of all MPs.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for the holding	The Constitution of SA and the Rules of the NA and NCOP mandate plenary sessions for	4	Streamline procedures for debating and voting on major decisions, particularly

		of plenary sessions. All major decisions made on behalf of parliament are debated and voted on by the plenary.	debating and voting on major decisions, including legislation, motions, and oversight actions. Major decisions, including legislative approvals, votes of no confidence, and budget discussions, require plenary debate and approval, ensuring democratic accountability. Procedural rules clearly outline the quorum requirements and voting mechanisms for plenary sessions. The framework ensures that all decisions reflect a collective parliamentary process, safeguarding inclusivity, and legitimacy. Extended debates on controversial issues can lead to procedural delays, impacting decision-making timelines.		controversial issues, by introducing flexible timelines or pre-debate discussions. - Enhance inclusivity of plenary debates by creating protocols for equal participation, particularly for smaller parties and independent MPs, such as time allocations based on proportional representation. - Develop a mechanism to periodically review the effectiveness of plenary sessions, incorporating feedback from MPs and stakeholders to improve the framework.
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	Plenary sessions are traditionally held in the NA or NCOP chambers within the parliamentary precinct. Alternative venues or virtual sittings are permitted under extraordinary circumstances, such as emergencies or infrastructure damage. Legal provisions allow flexibility for holding plenary sessions outside traditional chambers, when necessary, such as	3	- Strengthen technological infrastructure for virtual and hybrid sessions, minimising connectivity issues, and ensuring smooth operations. - Improve logistical efficiency for relocating plenary sessions during emergencies, ensuring minimal disruption and maximising accessibility.

		virtual sittings are permitted, or in other circumstances where imperative reasons dictate such changes.	during the aftermath of the 2022 parliamentary fire or the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual and hybrid sessions ensure continuity of parliamentary work during crises, preserving democratic functions. The parliamentary precinct remains the primary venue, reinforcing institutional stability. Technological limitations and connectivity issues have occasionally disrupted virtual sessions. The temporary relocation of plenary sessions to alternative venues can impact logistical efficiency and public accessibility.		• Develop an emergency preparedness plan with backup venues and technologies for seamless transitions during unforeseen events.
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	The Constitution and parliamentary rules mandate that plenary sessions be public, with agendas published in advance. Accredited media and the public are allowed to attend, with exceptions for closed sessions under prescribed circumstances, such as national security concerns and typically the Joint Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests. Agendas for plenary sessions are published well in advance, allowing MPs and the public to	4	• Enhance accessibility by improving live streaming quality and investing in reliable streaming infrastructure. • Expand public access to plenary sessions during emergencies through virtual engagement or alternative platforms, such as mobile apps or social media. • Increase transparency of closed sessions by publishing summaries or redacted versions of discussions, where possible, to provide

		members of the public. Closed plenary sessions are only held in exceptional circumstances as prescribed by law.	prepare. Media coverage and live streaming of plenary sessions enhance transparency and public engagement. Closed sessions are rare and only convened under exceptional and clearly defined conditions, such as discussions of sensitive national security issues. Occasional technical issues during live streaming can affect accessibility for remote audiences. Public access to alternative venues during emergencies may be restricted due to logistical or security concerns.		public insight while maintaining confidentiality.
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To improve the effectiveness of plenary sessions, it is important to streamline procedures for debating and voting on major decisions, particularly during controversial issues, by introducing flexible timelines and ensuring proportional representation in time allocations. Strengthening technological infrastructure for virtual and hybrid sessions, improving logistical efficiency during emergencies, and enhancing public access to plenary sessions will ensure continuity, transparency, and inclusivity, particularly in exceptional circumstances or emergencies. Thus, increasing the transparency of closed sessions through the publication of summaries or redacted versions will maintain public trust while respecting confidentiality.



6.4.2 Speaker

The Speaker is the presiding officer of parliament, responsible for maintaining order during debates, ensuring the rules of procedure are followed, and representing the parliament in its relations with other branches of government. This dimension evaluates the role and responsibilities

of the Speaker, ensuring that they effectively manage parliamentary proceedings and uphold the integrity of the parliamentary process.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution of SA (Section 52) and the Rules of the NA define the mandate, role, and duties of the Speaker, including the rules for their election and term of office. The Constitution mandates that the Speaker be elected by MPs during the first sitting of parliament after elections, ensuring democratic legitimacy. The Speaker's term aligns with the parliamentary term, but they can be removed through a formal process, ensuring accountability. Clear legal provisions outline the Speaker's powers, such as presiding over debates and managing parliament's administration. Political dynamics during the election of the Speaker can occasionally overshadow the impartiality expected of the position.	4	- Strengthen the Speaker's election process by setting clear, unbiased criteria and ensuring transparency to highlight impartiality and competence. - Clarify and ensure strict adherence to procedures for the removal of the Speaker, reducing political influence. - Periodically review and update the Speaker's mandate to stay responsive to evolving parliamentary needs, especially regarding emerging practices.

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.	The legal framework grants the Speaker authority to manage parliamentary functions, coordinate legislative and administrative activities, preside over sessions, and exercise administrative powers over parliament. The Speaker oversees debates, ensuring adherence to rules of procedure and promoting orderly conduct. Administrative responsibilities include managing parliamentary staff, overseeing budgets, and ensuring efficient functioning. The Speaker acts as a representative of parliament in official capacities, reinforcing its institutional authority. The dual role of presiding over debates and managing administrative functions can lead to workload imbalances. In periods of political tension, the Speaker's actions may be perceived as favouring the majority party, affecting their perceived neutrality.	4	• Prevent workload imbalances by redistributing responsibilities or delegating tasks within the Speaker's office. • Introduce checks and balances, delegating administrative duties to an independent body or deputy speakers to ensure impartiality. • Provide regular training to support the Speaker in managing political tensions and maintaining impartial leadership.
3	Impartiality	The Speaker is required to discharge their duties impartially and neutrally, to manage	The Speaker is required to perform their duties impartially, ensure fair representation in debates, and allocate resources equitably among all political parties and MPs. Rules	3	• Strengthen procedures for challenging the Speaker's decisions with a formal, independent review process for contentious decisions.

		the floor fairly, to provide equal opportunities for all political groups and members to engage in debates, and to distribute parliamentary resources equitably.	mandate the Speaker to ensure equal speaking opportunities for MPs and manage debates fairly. Mechanisms such as multi-party committees provide checks on the Speaker's decisions, promoting accountability. The Speaker's decisions can be challenged procedurally, ensuring adherence to impartial practices. Allegations of partiality often arise during contentious debates or high-stakes decisions, particularly from opposition parties. Resource allocation, while generally equitable, sometimes draws criticism from smaller parties that feel underrepresented.		• Create clear resource allocation guidelines to ensure smaller parties are equally represented, supported by regular audits and feedback mechanisms. • Improve transparency in speaking time and resource allocation, particularly during contentious debates, to prevent perceptions of bias.
4	Resources	The Speaker has access to the necessary resources to carry out their mandate, including a personal apparatus with sufficient members of staff.	The Speaker has access to a personal office with dedicated staff, financial resources, and logistical support to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Sufficient administrative support ensures the Speaker can manage parliamentary activities and preside over sessions efficiently. The Speaker's office has access to legal and procedural advisors, enhancing decision-making. Resources are	4	• Increase resource allocation for the Speaker's office during political crises to ensure effective oversight and leadership. • Expand the Speaker's staff, particularly in roles like legal advice, procedural support, and communication, to operate at full capacity. • Improve infrastructure and technological resources, especially for digital

			allocated to support official duties, including representation in national and international engagements. Resource constraints, such as infrastructure limitations, can occasionally affect the Speaker's ability to oversee all aspects of parliament effectively. Increased demands during times of political crises can strain available resources.		communication and data management, to support the Speaker's office in crises and enhance operational efficiency.
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To enhance the Speaker's role and ensure impartiality, it is important to strengthen the election process by establishing clear, unbiased criteria and ensuring transparency, as well as clarifying procedures for their removal to reduce political influence. Therefore, redistributing administrative responsibilities to avoid workload imbalances, creating independent review mechanisms for contentious decisions, and improving resource allocation—particularly during political crises—will support the Speaker in maintaining impartiality and effectively managing parliamentary duties. Expanding staff and improving infrastructure will further enable the Speaker to meet the demands of their office.



6.4.3 Presidium

The Presidium is a leadership body within parliament, typically consisting of key figures such as the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, and other senior officials. This dimension assesses the structure and function of the Presidium, focusing on its role in supporting the Speaker, facilitating parliamentary business, and overseeing the management of parliamentary operations.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the composition of the presidium and establishes its mandate as the collective governing body of parliament.	The Constitution of SA and parliamentary rules define the composition, mandate, and authority of the Presiding Officers Forum, which serves as the presidium. It is tasked with governing parliament's activities and ensuring operational efficiency. The legal framework clearly defines the presidium's composition, including the Speaker, Deputy Speaker(s), and other designated leaders. Mandates are explicitly stated, covering governance, coordination, and oversight responsibilities. The presidium operates under established rules of procedure, ensuring compliance with constitutional principles. There are no significant gaps in the legal framework itself; however, practical execution may sometimes face political influences.	4	- Review and update the legal framework to strengthen mechanisms that prevent political influence in the presidium, ensuring decisions are based on merit and parliamentary efficiency. - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of presidium members during crises to maintain effective governance. - Regularly review the presidium's operation and mandate to align with evolving parliamentary needs.
2	Composition	The presidium is representative of the political configuration	The presidium reflects the political composition of parliament. It is chaired by the Speaker and includes the Deputy Speaker(s), committee	4	Strengthen smaller parties' representation within the presidium by allocating seats or rotating leadership roles.

		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.	chairs, and representatives of political groups. Multi-party representation ensures diverse input in decision-making, reflecting the political configuration of parliament. Leadership roles for committee chairs enhance coordination between plenary sessions and committee activities. The inclusion of political group leaders promotes inclusivity and accountability. Smaller political parties sometimes report limited influence in presidium decisions, citing the dominance of larger parties. Representation can occasionally become symbolic, with decision-making power concentrated among the majority.		• Review presidium decision-making to ensure equitable representation and prevent domination by larger parties. • Increase communication between the presidium and smaller parties to ensure their views are considered, especially during key discussions.
3	Role	The presidium organises the work of parliament, coordinates the work of committees, drafts the agenda for plenary sessions, and decide	The presidium organises parliamentary activities, coordinates committee work, drafts plenary agendas, and addresses operational issues. Effective coordination of committees and plenary sessions ensures efficient parliamentary functioning. The presidium addresses critical operational matters, such as resource allocation and crisis management. It plays a central role in	4	• Improve coordination between committees and plenary sessions by creating clearer guidelines for the presidium to follow, aligning committee decisions with plenary agendas and deadlines. • Establish a stronger oversight framework, such as a task force, to address operational issues and manage coordination.

		son other operational issues of importance.	balancing legislative priorities and ensuring timely decision-making. Decision-making within the presidium can be delayed by political disagreements, especially during contentious periods. Oversight of committee coordination may not always be as rigorous as needed.		• Introduce structured decision-making processes, including deadlines or mediation mechanisms to resolve disputes quickly.
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.	The rules of procedure require the presidium to meet regularly and to make information about its meetings and conclusions publicly available. Regular meetings ensure consistent oversight and governance. Minutes and conclusions from meetings are published, promoting transparency. Media access to presidium updates increases public awareness of parliamentary governance. The level of detail in published information is sometimes insufficient, limiting public understanding of presidium decisions. Delays in publishing updates can undermine perceptions of transparency and accountability. Closed-door discussions, while occasionally necessary, may reduce trust if not clearly justified.	3	• Increase the level of detail in published minutes and conclusions of presidium meetings to improve public understanding. • Implement a consistent timeline for publishing presidium meeting updates to avoid delays. • Review the necessity of closed-door sessions, and when they occur, provide justifiable reasons to improve transparency and public trust.

To enhance the presidium's effectiveness, it is important to review the legal framework to ensure decisions are based on merit and parliamentary efficiency, reducing political influence. Furthermore, strengthening the representation of smaller parties, improving coordination between committees and plenary sessions, and increasing transparency by providing detailed and timely meeting updates will ensure more equitable decision-making and greater public trust in parliamentary operations.



6.4.4 Parliamentary committees

Parliamentary committees are smaller groups of MPs tasked with reviewing specific issues, scrutinising legislation, and overseeing the work of the executive. This dimension evaluates the establishment, organisation, and effectiveness of parliamentary committees, ensuring that they play a critical role in shaping legislation, conducting investigations, and holding the government accountable.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	Parliament has a clear legal mandate to establish committees, and to define their powers, functions, composition, governance, and procedures.	The Constitution of SA and Parliamentary Rules provide a clear mandate for establishing committees, defining their powers, functions, composition, governance, and procedures. Committees include portfolio committees, select committees, and ad hoc committees. The Constitution ensures committees have robust powers to review legislation, summon officials, and oversee government functions. Provisions ensure proportional representation of political	4	- Periodically review and update the legal provisions for committee operations to ensure they remain adaptable to governance needs. - Strengthen enforcement of the legal framework for committees to prevent political influence and external interference. - Introduce regular monitoring to assess committee effectiveness and ensure they fulfil their roles in the legislative process.

			parties in committees, promoting inclusivity. Rules enable committees to initiate inquiries and make recommendations to parliament. Non-significant in terms of the legal framework, though practical implementation can face challenges.		
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.	Committees are mandated to review laws, obtain information from the executive, summon officials, and report their findings and recommendations to parliament. Committees play a central role in legislative review, ensuring detailed scrutiny of bills and policy proposals. Oversight functions are strengthened by the ability to summon government officials and request documentation. Recommendations and reports from committees inform plenary debates and decision-making. Resistance from some government officials during oversight engagements can limit committee effectiveness.	4	• Strengthen mechanisms for enforcing executive compliance with committee requests, including clearer deadlines and penalties. • Provide training and resources to committee members to improve their understanding of complex issues and enhance scrutiny. • Create structured processes for reporting committee findings to parliament, ensuring timely, clear, and actionable reports.
3	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure provide clear guidance with regard to	Parliamentary rules detail procedures for committee meetings, including scheduling, agenda-setting, quorum, chairing, voting,	3	• Strengthen enforcement of procedural rules, particularly quorum requirements,

		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.	record-keeping, and reporting. Clear guidelines ensure structured and consistent committee operations. Procedural rules promote accountability through documentation and reporting. Committees are empowered to manage their own schedules and prioritise work. Delays in publishing agendas or reports can reduce efficiency. Some MPs report uneven enforcement of procedural rules, particularly regarding quorum requirements.		through periodic reviews and training for committee chairs. • Improve agenda distribution and report publication timeliness, setting internal deadlines for these tasks. • Introduce a structured mechanism for prioritising committee work and setting agendas, especially during high-pressure periods.
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.	Committee meetings are open to the public and often broadcast or live streamed via parliament's YouTube channel . Closed meetings are permitted only with sufficient justification, such as national security concerns. Public access to meetings and records fosters accountability and transparency. Live-streaming and broadcasting improve public engagement and oversight. Committee reports and documents are made publicly available online. Technical issues during live-streaming or delays in making recordings publicly available reduce	3	• Enhance technical infrastructure for live-streaming and broadcasting committee meetings, ensuring smooth, uninterrupted access. • Strengthen communication of justifications for closed meetings to improve transparency. • Increase public engagement through social media and interactive platforms to communicate committee activities and reports.

			transparency. Justifications for closed meetings are sometimes not communicated clearly, leading to perceptions of secrecy.		
5	Resources	Parliamentary committees are supported by sufficient human, financial and administrative resources, including qualified staff.	Committees are supported by staff, financial resources, and administrative support to fulfil their mandates. Dedicated researchers and support staff enhance the quality of committee work. Budget allocations provide for hearings, travel, and investigations as needed. Training and workshops are offered to committee members and staff to build capacity. Resource constraints, including understaffing and insufficient funding, affect smaller or less prominent committees. High workloads for committee staff can reduce the thoroughness of support provided.	3	• Advocate for increased funding and resources for smaller committees to ensure they can carry out their mandates effectively. • Implement a capacity-building program for committee staff and members, addressing high workloads and resource constraints. • Regularly assess resource allocation to committees to ensure pressing functions are adequately supported.
6	Practice	In practice, committee meetings are held regularly on the basis of a meeting agenda that is duly approved and published. Committees	Committees meet regularly, interact with the public, and produce reports that are submitted to parliament. Public consultations and stakeholder engagement are integral to their operations. Regular meetings ensure the timely review of legislation and oversight activities.	3	• Ensure consistent scheduling of committee meetings and timely publication of agendas to allow for better planning and participation.

		interact with the public in multiple ways. Committee decisions, findings, recommendations, and other conclusions are produced and reported to parliament.	Public participation is encouraged through hearings and consultations, enhancing inclusivity, but at times can be rushed and communicated to the public in advance with fair notice. This can impact the meaningfulness of public participation. Committees produce detailed reports that inform parliamentary debates and decisions. These reports are not always made available publicly. Participation from the public and stakeholders can vary, with marginalised groups sometimes underrepresented. High workloads and political tensions can hinder effective collaboration within committees.		• Increase public participation by expanding outreach efforts to underrepresented groups. • Strengthen collaboration within committees by introducing conflict resolution mechanisms or independent facilitators. • Provide additional resources to support parliament's Public Participation Section.
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To improve committee functions, the legal framework should be periodically reviewed to ensure adaptability and independence. Strengthening executive compliance, enforcing procedural rules, and improving timeliness in agenda and report publication will enhance efficiency. Expanding resources, building staff capacity, improving live-streaming infrastructure, and increasing public engagement will foster transparency. Thus, boosting public participation, especially from marginalised groups, and improving internal collaboration will strengthen oversight and legislative review.



6.4.5 Political groups

Political groups refer to factions within parliament based on party affiliation or political ideology. This dimension focuses on the role and influence of political groups in shaping parliamentary decisions, forming alliances, and representing the interests of their constituents. It ensures that the parliamentary process is inclusive of diverse political perspectives and that all groups can participate in the legislative process.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution of SA and Rules of Parliament clearly establish the right for MPs to form political groups. These rules define the formation, rights, and responsibilities of political groups in parliament, including proportional representation in committees and debates. The framework ensures all political groups, regardless of size, can participate in parliamentary activities. Proportionality ensures representation aligns with the outcomes of democratic elections. Rules of Parliament allow new and smaller parties to form recognised groups, promoting inclusivity. Non-significant in the legal framework itself.	4	- Strengthen the framework for the formation of political groups by providing clearer guidance and dedicated support for smaller or new groups to navigate rules and gain recognition. - Regularly review and update rules governing the rights and responsibilities of political groups to reflect emerging political dynamics. - Provide regular training for MPs on the rights and responsibilities related to political groups to ensure consistent participation.

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.	Parliament's rules guarantee equitable speaking time for political groups in plenary sessions and debates. They also ensure representation of all groups in the presidium and permanent committees based on proportionality. Speaking time allocation reflects proportional representation, ensuring fairness in debates. Multi-party representation in committees and management structures promotes inclusivity in decision-making. Since the formation of the GNU in 2024 after the elections, smaller parties (forming part of the GNU) are represented in critical oversight roles, enhancing checks and balances. Larger parties may dominate certain debates due to procedural advantages. Smaller parties sometimes report difficulties in influencing decision-making within committees and the presidium.	3	• Implement structured guidelines to ensure smaller parties receive a proportionate share of speaking time, including setting a fixed minimum speaking time. • Enhance representation of smaller groups in parliamentary management structures by creating flexible rules for their involvement in decision-making bodies, such as rotating representation or reserved seats. • Establish clear procedures for equal distribution of speaking time, using technology to track and manage allocations.
3	Resources	The legal framework grants political groups financial and administrative	Political groups are provided financial and administrative resources to support their activities, including staffing, research, and operational needs. Accountability mechanisms	2	• Review and adjust the resource allocation process to ensure smaller groups receive sufficient financial and administrative support.

		resources to support their functioning. Political groups account publicly for their use of these resources.	require groups to report on resource usage. Budget allocations are proportional, supporting equitable functioning of all political groups. Administrative staff and research resources enhance the effectiveness of political groups. Public accountability mechanisms ensure transparency in resource utilisation. Smaller political groups occasionally report insufficient resources compared to larger groups. Resource allocation delays or bureaucratic inefficiencies can hinder group operations.		• Introduce transparent and efficient mechanisms for resource distribution, reducing delays in approvals. • Regularly assess the resource needs of smaller groups and consider establishing a dedicated fund or support office to assist them.
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	Political groups systematically exercise their rights in parliament, including access to resources and speaking time, as prescribed by law and parliamentary rules. Political groups actively participate in debates, committees, and parliamentary governance. Proportional representation ensures diverse perspectives in legislative and oversight functions. Groups can form coalitions or collaborate on issues of shared interest, amplifying their influence. Allegations of uneven implementation of	3	• Strengthen enforcement of equitable speaking time rules, particularly during high-profile debates, with an independent oversight body to monitor and enforce allocations. • Improve logistical support for smaller groups to ensure full utilisation of their resources, including access to research and administrative staff. • Establish a monitoring and feedback mechanism for smaller parties to raise

		access to resources, are duly implemented.	speaking time rules occasionally arise, particularly in high-stakes debates. Smaller parties sometimes face logistical challenges in fully utilising their allocated resources or exercising their rights. Political dynamics can influence the equitable treatment of groups, particularly during contentious periods.		concerns about uneven treatment, reviewed by an independent body to ensure fairness.
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To ensure fair and effective parliamentary participation, it is essential to strengthen the framework supporting smaller political groups by providing clearer guidance, ensuring equitable resource distribution, and enhancing their representation in decision-making structures. Regular review of procedures and independent oversight will promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity across all political groups, fostering a more balanced legislative environment.



6.4.6 Cross-party groups

Cross-party groups are informal groups of MPs from different political parties that work together on specific issues or causes. This dimension examines the effectiveness and role of cross-party groups in promoting collaboration and consensus-building across party lines. It encourages dialogue on issues of national importance and helps bridge political divides, fostering a more cooperative and inclusive parliamentary environment.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework authorises MPs to	The Constitution of SA and parliamentary rules authorise MPs to form cross-party groups	3	Strengthen the legal framework for cross-party groups by formalising their rules and

		establish cross-party groups or presents no impediment to the establishment of such groups.	without legal impediments. These groups can address specific policy issues, collaborate on oversight functions, or advocate for shared interests across party lines. The legal framework supports the formation of cross-party groups, fostering collaboration beyond party boundaries. No explicit restrictions on the establishment or functioning of such groups ensure MPs' freedom of association. Cross-party groups contribute to a more cooperative and issue-focused parliamentary environment. Nonsignificant within the legal framework itself, which indicated that while cross-party groups are permitted by the Constitution and parliamentary rules, they do not fundamentally change the established legislative or constitutional framework. Furthermore, these groups are not given special legal status or powers beyond the general rights MPs have to associate freely. Therefore cross-party groups are seen as a voluntary and are informal		defining their role within parliament, including codifying their rights and responsibilities. • Provide clearer guidelines on the scope of activities for cross-party groups to avoid competing with formal committees or political groups. • Introduce a review mechanism to assess the impact of cross-party groups, ensuring they remain constructive and aligned with democratic principles.
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			arrangements rather than being a legally part of the parliamentary structure or process.		
2	Resources	Parliament provides cross-party groups with meeting venues and, in some cases, other resources such as administrative support.	Parliament provides venues for cross-party groups to meet and, in some cases, offers limited administrative support or access to research resources. Cross-party groups can use parliamentary venues for their activities, ensuring logistical support. Access to parliamentary research enhances the quality of discussions and outcomes. Support promotes engagement on non-partisan issues such as health, education, or environmental concerns. Resources for cross-party groups are limited compared to those for formal committees or political groups. Administrative and logistical support varies, with smaller or less prominent groups struggling to access sufficient resources.	3	• Increase resources for cross-party groups, including consistent administrative support and dedicated staff, to level the playing field with formal committees. • Streamline access to parliamentary research services and create a centralised support service for cross-party groups. • Create a dedicated fund for cross-party groups to support research, meetings, and public outreach activities.
3	Practice	In practice, cross-party groups have been established in parliament. Cross-party groups meet regularly	Cross-party groups are active in parliament, meeting regularly and engaging with external organisations and stakeholders. Their work is publicised to ensure transparency. Several cross-party groups have been established,	3	• Increase the visibility of cross-party groups through regular updates on websites, social media, and press releases. • Make cross-party groups more inclusive by expanding participation beyond niche

		and interact with relevant organisations, and the public is informed about their work.	addressing issues such as gender equality, public health, and youth empowerment. These groups often collaborate with civil society organisations, experts, and international partners, enriching parliamentary discussions. Public engagement through meetings, reports, and media coverage fosters awareness and accountability. Participation in cross-party groups is sometimes limited to MPs with niche interests, reducing their broader impact. Public awareness of cross-party groups and their activities is inconsistent, limiting their visibility and influence.		interests, promoting wider involvement in national policy efforts. • Introduce mechanisms for cross-party groups to report their findings to parliament, ensuring their work is integrated into legislative and oversight processes.
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To enhance the effectiveness of cross-party groups, the legal framework should be strengthened by formalising their rules and clarifying their scope and role within parliament. Thereby, increasing resources, improving visibility through regular updates, and ensuring broader participation will foster greater inclusivity and impact, ensuring cross-party groups contribute meaningfully to national policy and parliamentary oversight.



6.5 Indicator 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence

The administrative independence of parliament is crucial for supporting legislative functions. This indicator examines the capacity of the parliamentary administration to provide impartial and professional support to all MPs, ensuring that parliamentary staff operate free from political interference. It includes aspects such as human resource management, facilities, digital technologies, and document management.

6.5.1 Mandates of the parliamentary administration

This dimension refers to the clear definition of roles and responsibilities within the parliamentary administration. It ensures that the administrative functions of parliament are well-organised, with specific mandates given to different units or officials, allowing for effective support of parliamentary activities. The dimension ensures that the administration has the authority to carry out essential services, such as organising sessions, managing logistics, and supporting MPs.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The parliamentary administration is established through a clear legal framework, which codifies its mandates,	The SA parliament operates under a robust legal framework established by the Constitution of SA, supplemented by laws such as the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act and the FMPPLA. These frameworks clearly define its mandates, governance structure, and financial responsibilities. The Constitution provides explicit mandates for oversight, lawmaking, and public participation. The FMPPLA ensures transparency and	4	• Improve public accessibility to legal frameworks by creating simplified summaries of key documents for wider audiences. • Strengthen enforcement of parliamentary immunity and privileges with clearer, consistent protocols for application and monitoring.

		powers, governance, and responsibilities.	accountability in financial management. Codification of roles and governance ensures consistency and adherence to legal standards. Delays in the implementation of some legislative provisions occur. There is limited opportunity for the public to understand these frameworks. There may be potential gaps in enforcement of parliamentary immunity and privileges.		Regularly review and update legal frameworks to address gaps and ensure alignment with democratic principles and international best practices.
2	Governance	A parliamentary body oversees the running of the parliamentary administration. The day-to-day management of the parliamentary administration is ensured by	Governance is primarily overseen by the Presiding Officers (Speaker of the NA and Chairperson of the NCOP), with operational management under the Secretary to Parliament (STP). The STP ensures the day-to-day functioning of parliamentary administration. There are clear leadership structures at the top level. Regular meetings of governance committees to guide strategic direction occur. Responsibilities for efficient operational management are delegated. Frequent vacancies or instability in the STP's role occur. There is an occasional lack of coordination between political leadership and administration. Allegations of mismanagement and inefficiency in governance practices impact credibility.	3	- Address vacancies and instability in the Secretary's role by implementing succession planning, with training and development for deputies. - Improve coordination between political leadership and administration with clear communication channels, regular cross-departmental meetings, and collaborative decision-making. - Implement governance oversight mechanisms, including independent audits and anonymous reporting of concerns.

		the Secretary General.			
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.	The parliamentary administration is tasked with providing technical, logistical, and https://parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/ProjectsAndEvents/2017-10-02_SALGA_Members_Induction_Programme/docs/Committee_Procedures_Practice_and_Systems.pdf procedural support to MPs, ensuring the effective execution of parliamentary functions. It must adhere to impartiality, equity, neutrality, and non-partisanship. Availability of procedural advisers and technical staff to support MPs. The SA parliament has established well-structured systems for legislative drafting and research, and actively implements programs to build the capacity of MPs and staff. However, there is inadequate support for MPs in rural or underserved constituencies when on constituency leave. Perceived bias in the handling of certain issues or decisions. Struggles with timely delivery of high-quality reports and research due to limited resources.	2	- Enhance support for MPs in rural constituencies by increasing access to digital resources, remote assistance, and establishing field offices. - Ensure impartiality in administrative decisions by instituting clear, neutral guidelines and independent reviews. - Improve the timeliness and quality of reports and research by expanding research staff and providing additional training.

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.	The administration must produce reports detailing its activities, finances, and performance, often through the FMPPLA-mandated annual reports. Parliamentary annual reports provide insight into activities and financial performance. SA parliament actively promotes transparency and financial oversight through public access to some performance data as well as regular audits ensure financial oversight. Reports are often delayed or lack substantive detail on outcomes. Insufficient focus on the performance impact of administrative functions. Limited public and stakeholder engagement in evaluating these reports.	2	• Improve the content and timeliness of parliamentary administration reports by setting deadlines and including specific outcomes and performance metrics. • Increase public and stakeholder engagement with parliamentary reports through independent feedback mechanisms. • Focus on performance impact by introducing audits or impact assessments that measure administrative work outcomes and include these results in reports.
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To improve parliamentary administration, it is crucial to enhance public accessibility to legal frameworks, address instability in leadership roles through succession planning, and improve coordination between political leadership and administration. Thus, expanding support for MPs in underserved constituencies, improving the timeliness and quality of reports, and increasing stakeholder engagement will foster greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability within the parliamentary system.



6.5.2 Human Resource management⁴

Human resource management in parliament focuses on the recruitment, training, and management of staff who support parliamentary functions. This dimension ensures that the parliamentary administration has the capacity to hire qualified individuals, provide professional development opportunities, and maintain a workforce that is capable of meeting the demands of the parliament and its members efficiently.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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 retention of parliamentary staff, as well as disciplinary procedures, ethical conduct, working hours.	Parliament has formal human resource policies covering recruitment, retention, leave allocations, disciplinary measures, ethical conduct, and work conditions. These policies are governed by labour laws and parliamentary-specific frameworks. Policies align with SA's labour laws and collective agreements. Leave policies , including provisions for parental and medical leave, are comprehensive. Clear ethical codes of conduct exist for parliamentary staff. Inconsistent implementation of policies across departments. Delayed updates to HR policies to reflect modern workplace demands, such as flexible working arrangements. Limited	3	- Regularly update HR policies to reflect modern workplace demands, such as flexible and remote work options. - Strengthen enforcement of disciplinary procedures and ethical standards with a clear compliance process and manager training. - Implement a central monitoring system to ensure uniform application of HR policies across departments.

⁴ Note to reader: Due to limited access to Parliament's internal HR processes, a full external assessment is challenging. While some findings, such as issues related to bureaucratic interference and delays, appear valid, the nature of HR matters being confidential and internal makes it difficult to conduct a thorough assessment.

			mechanisms for ensuring compliance with disciplinary procedures and ethical standards.		
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.	Processes for HR planning, performance management, and reporting are in place, supported by job descriptions, salary scales, and benefits frameworks. Parliament must abide by South Africa's Labour Laws, which mandate fair treatment, proper employment contracts, and adherence to performance and disciplinary processes. Performance appraisal systems aim to ensure accountability and staff development, in line with these legal requirements. Detailed job descriptions and clear salary scales are established, and regular performance appraisals are conducted for most staff members. Efforts are made to link performance to career progression and incentives. However, due to the confidential nature of HR policies, procedures, and implementation, it is not possible to provide an accurate external assessment. HR processes are often bureaucratic, causing delays in recruitment and performance reviews .	2	• Streamline HR processes to reduce bureaucratic delays, particularly in recruitment and performance management, by digitising and automating aspects of HR. • Conduct an audit to identify staffing gaps and ensure adequate resources are in place to support parliamentary functions. • Implement performance incentives tied to measurable outcomes, clearly communicating career progression guidelines.

			Insufficient staffing levels in critical areas affect the efficiency of parliamentary operations. Performance incentives might be inconsistently applied, leading to low morale among staff this has been evident from the Public Service Commission (PSC) 2024 report which highlighted that the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) fails to enhance both individual and organisational performance. It often leads to conflict between employees and supervisors and is plagued by significant issues. There is confusion surrounding performance management and the use of scoring matrices for individual performance appraisals. The system is perceived as lacking credibility, with staff viewing it as biased and unfair. Instead of refining the PMDS, it requires a complete overhaul. The PSC recommends removing the use of rating scales or scoring systems for individual assessments and proposes key characteristics for a new system. Furthermore, the PSC also reports on		
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			the Senior Management Service (SMS) in regards to job performance within the public service sector which also supports this. It notes the uneven application of performance incentives that contributes to perceptions of unfairness and decreases morale.		
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.	Recruitment and promotion are governed by merit-based principles, with strict rules ensuring fairness and non-partisanship. However, the practical application of these principles faces significant challenges, such as political interference, institutional capacity and affirmative action tensions. Competitive selection processes include advertising positions, screening candidates, and conducting interviews. In most instances, transparent recruitment processes are advertised publicly. Recruitment processes are slow, leading to delays in filling critical vacancies. Perceptions of favouritism or lack of fairness occasionally arise, undermining trust in the system. Limited	3	• Improve recruitment efficiency by reducing delays and establishing a dedicated recruitment team. • Increase transparency in recruitment and promotion by publishing clear criteria and outcomes regularly. • Create more career advancement opportunities through flexible structures, mentorship programs, and skill-building workshops.

			opportunities for advancement due to a rigid organisational structure.		
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.	The South African Legislative Sector (SALS) , through the Speakers' Forum, has developed capacity-building programmes for members and officials of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures, focusing on areas such as legislative processes, governance, and administration to enhance staff capabilities. Additionally, the South African Parliamentary Institute (SAPI), established in December 2021, supports parliament's functioning by providing capacity development, producing research, and managing knowledge. A professional development framework exists, offering training programs and specialisation opportunities tailored to parliamentary work. Staff are encouraged to develop expertise in legislative procedures, research, and other parliamentary functions. Training programs on legislative processes, governance, and administration are available. Partnerships with external institutions	2	• Increase funding for continuous training programs in critical areas such as legislative drafting and policy analysis. • Align training programs with specific parliamentary needs through regular assessments and targeted development. • Develop specialised leadership training for senior staff to manage complex functions and lead effectively.

			enhance staff capacity-building efforts. Efforts to encourage specialisation in legislative drafting and research. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, misalignment with staff needs, and a lack of targeted development for senior staff hinder the full effectiveness of these initiatives.		
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To enhance parliamentary human resource management, it is essential to update HR policies regularly, improve enforcement of disciplinary measures, and streamline recruitment processes to reduce delays. Furthermore, increasing funding for targeted training programs, creating more career advancement opportunities, and aligning professional development with parliamentary needs will strengthen staff capacity and operational efficiency. It is important to reiterate that this report is conducted from the perspective of an external stakeholder, relying on publicly available information. As such, one cannot accurately assess certain HR components due to the confidential nature of internal processes and policies.



6.5.3 Expert support

Expert support encompasses the provision of specialised knowledge and advice to parliamentarians, enabling informed decision-making. This dimension focuses on ensuring that parliament has access to independent, qualified experts who can offer technical, legal, and policy advice, contributing to the quality of debates, the drafting of legislation, and oversight of government activities.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	Service charters and guides outline the scope of support available to MPs, covering research, legislative drafting, and procedural guidance. Parliamentary committees receive tailored support for oversight and legislative functions. Comprehensive guides exist for MPs, outlining available services and support. Specific service charters define procedural standards and roles of support staff. Clear delineation of responsibilities among departments ensures structured service delivery. Limited awareness among MPs about the full range of available support. Quality-control procedures are inconsistently applied across departments. Monitoring mechanisms for service standards require strengthening to ensure uniformity.	3	• Increase awareness among MPs about available expert support by providing orientation sessions and easy-to-access documentation. • Standardise quality-control procedures to ensure consistent service delivery across departments, including service level guidelines and regular audits. • Implement monitoring mechanisms for service standards, conducting regular performance reviews to identify areas for improvement.
2	Staff	The parliamentary administration has an adequate number of professional staff	The parliamentary administration employs professional staff to provide research, legal, and technical support to MPs. Recruitment policies aim to ensure high levels of expertise.	2	• Address staff shortages by reviewing critical areas for additional resources, including hiring, or outsourcing specific tasks.

		providing high-quality expert support to parliament.	Professional staff include researchers, legal advisers, and technical experts, although the teams can be expanded to provide increased support. Training programs enhance staff capacity in specialised parliamentary functions. Staff members are generally experienced and well-qualified. Staff shortages in critical areas lead to delays in service delivery. High workload for existing staff impacts the quality of outputs. Retention of skilled staff is challenging due to limited career progression opportunities.		• Improve staff retention by creating career progression pathways, offering professional development, and enhancing benefits to increase job satisfaction. • Increase investment in training programs to equip staff with the skills needed for high-quality expert support, particularly in specialised areas.
3	Non-partisan service delivery	The parliamentary administration provides expert support in a non-partisan manner to all MPs, regardless of political affiliation.	Parliamentary support is governed by principles of impartiality and neutrality, ensuring services are available to all MPs regardless of political affiliation. Rules emphasise non-partisanship in all service delivery. A culture of non-partisanship is entrenched in the parliamentary administration. MPs from all political parties' report access to expert support without discrimination. Strict adherence to non-partisan principles in research and legislative drafting. Occasional perceptions of bias in the allocation	4	• Strengthen the culture of non-partisanship by providing periodic training on impartiality to ensure consistent neutrality in service delivery. • Develop transparent guidelines for allocating support resources, ensuring equitable provision regardless of political affiliation. • Implement independent oversight to monitor and address potential bias, especially in contentious legislative matters.

			of resources to opposition parties. Instances where political tensions complicate the delivery of non-partisan support.		
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.	Standards of service delivery are outlined, and MPs are encouraged to provide feedback to improve the quality of services. Quality control is implemented through internal review mechanisms. Standards for service delivery are documented and include feedback mechanisms. MPs have platforms to raise concerns or provide input on service quality. Internal reviews ensure adherence to standards in most cases. Feedback from MPs is not consistently gathered or acted upon. Monitoring mechanisms for quality control are underutilised. Some MPs report dissatisfaction with the timeliness of support services.	2	- Strengthen feedback processes by creating a structured loop that is regularly reviewed and integrated into service improvements. - Improve quality-control procedures by introducing performance benchmarks, regularly reviewing staff performance, and publicly reporting on standards. - Address timeliness issues by setting clear response timelines for urgent requests and implementing a tracking system for MPs to monitor progress.

To improve expert support for MPs, it is crucial to increase awareness of available services, standardise quality-control procedures, and implement monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistent delivery. Addressing staff shortages, enhancing career progression opportunities, and strengthening non-partisan principles will further improve service quality and fairness. Furthermore, enhancing feedback processes and addressing timeliness issues will ensure that MPs receive high-quality, responsive support.



6.5.4 Facilities

Facilities refers to the physical infrastructure and resources necessary for parliament to function effectively. This dimension ensures that parliament is equipped with appropriate spaces for meetings, debates, and committee work. It also includes ensuring that MPs and staff have access to essential services such as office space, chambers, and meeting rooms, contributing to the smooth operation of parliamentary functions.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	Parliamentary facilities , including offices, chambers, and meeting rooms, are designed to meet the needs of legislative processes, committee work, and administrative functions. Facilities include dedicated spaces for plenary sessions, committee meetings, and public engagements. Ongoing maintenance programs aim to ensure that facilities remain operational and fit for purpose. The recent adoption of hybrid and virtual meeting capabilities has expanded operational flexibility. The fire that destroyed parts of the parliamentary precinct in early 2022 has significantly impacted the availability of facilities. Temporary offices and infrastructure – such as the Nieuwmeester	3	- Accelerate reconstruction efforts to repair the damage from the 2022 fire and complete renovations on time to ensure functional spaces for parliamentary activities. - Implement a proactive maintenance program for parliament's facilities, regularly assessing buildings for wear and tear and addressing necessary improvements. - Continue to invest in technology to enhance hybrid and virtual meeting capabilities, improving operational flexibility during crises or when physical space is limited.

			Dome – are not always optimal for parliamentary functions. Delays in reconstruction and improvements have disrupted normal operations.		
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.	Office space and facilities are allocated based on transparent rules that ensure equitable distribution among MPs, political groups, and staff, irrespective of political affiliation. Allocation of office space is guided by parliamentary rules to ensure fairness among political parties and MPs. Opposition parties and minority groups are provided with facilities proportionate to their representation. Equitable access supports inclusivity and collaboration across party lines. Space constraints, exacerbated by the damage to parliamentary buildings, have placed pressure on equitable allocations. Smaller parties sometimes express concerns about the quality of their allocated spaces compared to larger parties.	4	• Address space constraints by developing a long-term expansion plan or improving the use of existing space, including reconfiguring spaces or constructing new buildings. • Regularly review and update space allocation rules, ensuring equitable treatment for all MPs, political groups, and staff, with transparent reporting systems to address concerns about fairness. • Improve office quality for smaller political groups, ensuring their spaces are equipped and functional on par with larger parties, including providing additional resources for space improvements.

3	Access for all members of the community	Parliamentary facilities are accessible to all MPs and staff, including people living with disabilities.	Parliamentary facilities are designed to accommodate all MPs and staff, including those living with disabilities . Accessibility is incorporated into facility design and renovations . Accessibility features, such as ramps, elevators, and designated parking spaces, are available in most parliamentary buildings. Virtual participation options have improved access for MPs with mobility challenges. Efforts to ensure inclusivity are evident in renovations and new infrastructure . Some older buildings lack modern accessibility features, making certain areas difficult to navigate. Limited signage and support services for people with sensory disabilities reduce full accessibility. Delays in infrastructure improvements have slowed progress on accessibility upgrades.	3	• Prioritise installing modern accessibility features, such as ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, with regular audits to identify gaps in compliance. • Improve sensory accessibility by installing features like hearing loops, braille signage, and visual aids to support MPs and staff with sensory disabilities. • Expand virtual participation options and explore remote workspaces for MPs and staff with mobility challenges to enhance their participation without physical presence.
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To improve parliamentary facilities, it is essential to accelerate the reconstruction of damaged areas, implement a proactive maintenance program, and enhance hybrid meeting capabilities to maintain flexibility. Thus, addressing space constraints, ensuring equitable office allocations, improving accessibility features for people with disabilities, and expanding virtual participation options will foster inclusivity and support the diverse needs of all MPs and staff.



6.5.5 Digital technologies

This dimension focuses on the role of digital technologies in supporting parliamentary operations. It assesses the availability and effectiveness of technological tools that enable MPs and the parliamentary administration to perform their tasks efficiently, such as digital communication platforms, legislative tracking systems, and secure data management. The integration of modern technologies enhances the transparency, accessibility, and efficiency of parliamentary processes.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Strategic direction	Parliament has a clear strategic direction, including policies and plans, on the use of digital technologies.	The SA parliament has adopted policies and plans to integrate digital technologies, including initiatives for e-parliament, digital record management, and virtual parliamentary sessions. Initiatives such as the e-parliament strategy aim to modernise parliamentary processes. There are efforts to integrate digital tools in legislative and oversight functions. Virtual sessions are used during emergencies	2	- Develop a clear, actionable digital transformation strategy with measurable objectives, timelines, and deliverables to align with parliament's long-term goals. - Increase stakeholder engagement by involving MPs, staff, and experts in the development of digital strategies through workshops and surveys.

			demonstrates adaptability. The strategic direction for digital transformation is not fully articulated or widely understood. Plans lack clear timelines, measurable objectives, and sufficient stakeholder engagement. There are gaps in the adoption of advanced technologies, such as AI or data analytics, for parliamentary functions, however this also points to opportunities		Accelerate adoption of advanced technologies such as AI and data analytics with a phased implementation roadmap, starting with pilot projects.
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.	Governance structures exist to oversee digital transformation efforts, involving parliamentary committees and administrative leadership. MPs are consulted in the adoption of certain digital tools. ICT leadership provides oversight of digital projects. For example, from 24-28 February 2025, the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies conducted a week-long oversight visit in Gauteng. The visit included engaging with broadcasters at SABC, meetings with SAPO's Business Rescue Practitioners in Pretoria, and discussions on government communications	3	- Establish a dedicated digital transformation committee or task force to proactively review and update strategies. - Increase MPs' involvement in digital tool development by establishing consultation mechanisms, feedback sessions, and digital literacy programs. - Strengthen oversight with regular performance evaluations and audits of digital projects to ensure they meet objectives and improve productivity.

			and community media with GCIS and MDDA. The committee also reviewed Postbank's services, toured Sentech's infrastructure, and conclude the visit in Sedibeng District Municipality, engaging with local media and observing the SA Connect project's impact on internet connectivity. Digital initiatives align with parliamentary needs, such as supporting hybrid sessions. Leadership ensures gradual development and refinement of digital systems. Leadership and governance are reactive rather than proactive in driving digital transformation. Limited involvement of MPs in shaping strategic digital priorities. Oversight mechanisms are not robust enough to evaluate the impact of digital tools on parliamentary performance.		
3	Resources	The deployment of digital technologies is supported by dedicated and adequate financial and human resources. Parliament has a	Parliament allocates a dedicated ICT budget and provides MPs and staff with hardware and software to support digital work. Training programs for using digital tools are offered intermittently. ICT budget ensures procurement of essential tools and systems however, there	2	• Increase the ICT budget to scale advanced technologies like data analytics, virtual collaboration tools, and legislative tracking systems. • Ensure equitable access to digital tools, especially for MPs in rural areas, by

		dedicated ICT budget, and the required hardware and software are accessible to all MPs and staff.	are still insufficient financial resources to scale up and sustain advanced technologies . Access to laptops, tablets, and communication tools for MPs and staff. Basic IT training sessions are available to some users. ICT infrastructure is unevenly accessible, particularly for MPs in rural areas during constituency leave. Lack of dedicated and skilled personnel to manage complex digital systems.		providing devices and improving internet connectivity. Establish a skilled IT team to manage and maintain digital systems, ensuring proper support and quick issue resolution.
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	Parliament has implemented cybersecurity measures to protect digital assets, using firewalls, access controls, and monitoring systems. Efforts are aligned with recognised standards. Basic cybersecurity infrastructure is in place to secure parliamentary data. Monitoring systems help detect and prevent unauthorised access. Awareness campaigns for staff and MPs on safe digital practices. Cybersecurity systems are not robust enough to address sophisticated threats. Limited investment in proactive threat detection and advanced security solutions. Training for MPs	3	- Strengthen cybersecurity by investing in advanced security systems with real-time monitoring and AI-based threat detection. - Increase cybersecurity training for MPs and staff, with regular drills and updates on best practices. - Regularly audit and update cybersecurity protocols in line with international standards, engaging third-party experts for security assessments.

		and guidelines to proactively monitor and prevent attempts at unauthorised access to any part of the parliamentary digital estate.	and staff on cybersecurity best practices is insufficient.		
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To enhance [digital transformation](#) in parliament, a clear and actionable strategy with measurable objectives, timelines, and stakeholder engagement is essential. Strengthening governance and oversight structures, increasing the ICT budget for advanced technologies, ensuring equitable access to digital tools, and enhancing cybersecurity measures will support the effective integration of digital technologies, improve efficiency, and ensure data security.



6.5.6 Document management

Document management ensures that parliamentary records, legislative documents, and other essential materials are properly stored, organised, and easily accessible. This dimension covers the systems in place for managing official records, ensuring that all documentation related to parliamentary proceedings, such as minutes, reports, and bills, is maintained accurately and in a secure, efficient manner.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Rules and procedures	Parliament has document management	Document management rules and procedures exist to guide the lifecycle of parliamentary	3	Standardise document management procedures across departments, creating

		rules, procedures and processes in place covering the creation, processing, categorisation, storage, archiving, retrieval, deletion, and dissemination of information.	documents, including creation, categorisation , storage, and archiving . These are aligned with broader legislative requirements, such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). Formalised procedures for creating, categorising, and storing documents. Established rules for archiving and secure deletion of outdated information. Use of digital tools for processing and dissemination of documents. Implementation of rules is inconsistent across departments. Lack of regular updates to procedures to reflect advancements in technology. Limited monitoring of compliance with document management policies.		centralised guidelines for document creation, processing, storage, and deletion. • Regularly review and update document management rules to incorporate advancements in technology, such as AI-driven tools and automated workflows. • Establish a compliance monitoring system, including internal audits, to ensure adherence to document management practices.
2	Central repository	All parliamentary documents are stored securely in one or more central repositories.	Parliamentary documents are stored in centralised repositories, which include digital systems and physical archives. Digital repositories exist for storing and retrieving documents. Centralised storage facilitates organised access to key parliamentary records. Backups ensure data recovery in case of system failures. Although all of these exist and are in	2	• Accelerate the digitisation of older parliamentary records, setting clear targets and timelines for completion. • Strengthen security for digital repositories with encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regular security audits. • Upgrade legacy systems to integrate with modern platforms, using cloud-based

			place the effectiveness and maintenance of these digital systems can be inconsistent and may not be well-maintained due to issues such as outdated infrastructures, lack of proper digital asset management systems, and insufficient funding for technological upgrades. Legacy systems are still in use, creating inefficiencies in accessing archived documents. Incomplete digitisation of older records hinders seamless retrieval. Security measures for protecting central repositories need strengthening.		storage to improve accessibility, scalability, and backup.
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.	MPs, staff, and the public can access parliamentary documents according to established document management rules. Public access is governed by transparency and privacy regulations, such as PAIA. MPs and staff have streamlined access to key parliamentary documents via internal platforms. Public access is facilitated through websites and portals, improving transparency. Policies ensure access to information while safeguarding sensitive	3	• Improve document retrieval speed and reliability by optimising search functionalities and indexing systems for MPs and staff. • Enhance public access to parliamentary documents by updating publicly accessible records regularly and developing a real-time document update system. • Review access policies for certain document categories, introducing a tiered access

			data. Public access is limited for some categories of documents due to technical or procedural constraints. MPs and staff occasionally report delays in retrieving specific records. Inconsistent updating of publicly accessible records impacts transparency efforts.		system that balances transparency with privacy and security.
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To improve document management, it is essential to standardise procedures across departments, accelerate the digitisation of records, and strengthen security measures for central repositories. Enhancing document retrieval systems, improving public access, and ensuring regular updates to records will further increase transparency, efficiency, and accessibility within parliament.



6.6 Indicator 1.6 Law-making

The law-making process requires a well-defined legal framework and effective legislative procedures. This indicator looks at the capacity of parliament to draft, debate, and enact laws, including provisions for constitution-making and amendments. It assesses the overall integrity of the legislative process, from initial proposals to final enactment.

6.6.1 Powers in law-making

This dimension focuses on the formal powers granted to parliament in the law-making process. It assesses parliament's authority to propose, amend, and pass legislation, ensuring that it has the constitutional and legal powers to enact laws that reflect the will of the people. This dimension highlights the critical role of parliament in shaping national laws and policies.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The SA Constitution allows any MP to initiate legislation, including private member's bills. Financial proposals, however, require the approval of the Minister of Finance, which is clearly defined. Furthermore, portfolio committees are also important in ensuring that the budget aligns with the needs and priorities of the country, however their authority is more advisory and scrutinising instead of decisive in terms of immediate rejection. The executive also has the right to introduce legislation. All MPs have the constitutional right to introduce legislation, ensuring inclusivity. Mechanisms for private member's bills exist, allowing individual MPs to propose laws. Clear rules govern the introduction of financial legislation, ensuring fiscal responsibility. Few private member's bills are successfully introduced and passed, largely due to capacity constraints and political dynamics. The legislative process for private	3	• Streamline the legislative process for private members' bills by providing dedicated resources to MPs and prioritising non-controversial bills. • Introduce mechanisms to fast-track private members' bills, enhancing MPs' participation in lawmaking. • Strengthen the role of opposition and independent MPs by allocating time for their bills and amendments during parliamentary sessions.

		agencies, or groups of citizens.	bills is lengthy and resource-intensive, discouraging MPs from initiating legislation. The dominance of executive-initiated legislation limits the opportunity for MPs to exercise this right effectively.		
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.	MPs are constitutionally empowered to propose amendments to bills during the legislative process, with restrictions only in specific areas such as financial legislation. Parliamentary rules ensure opportunities for proposing and debating amendments. MPs can propose amendments at multiple stages of the legislative process. Committees provide platforms for detailed deliberation and amendment of bills. Protections ensure opposition and independent MPs can contribute amendments. Time constraints and procedural bottlenecks limit the debate and consideration of all proposed amendments. Limited research and technical support for MPs hinder the quality of proposed amendments.	4	• Improve the consideration of proposed amendments by extending debate time and reducing procedural bottlenecks, possibly adjusting the parliamentary calendar. • Enhance research and technical support for MPs by increasing resources in parliamentary research departments and offering targeted training on legislation. • Ensure equal opportunity for all political groups' amendments to be considered, promoting balanced representation in committee deliberations.

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.	The Constitution mandates that all legislation, including the national budget, must be approved by parliament before enactment. SA's bicameral system requires the approval of both the NA and the NCOP, with specific processes for mediating disagreements. The bicameral system ensures representation of both national and provincial interests in legislative approval. The constitutionally mandated process for budget approval ensures parliamentary oversight of government spending. Mechanisms such as the mediation committee that facilitates consensus on contested legislation. The NCOP's role is sometimes criticised as limited, particularly in influencing national priorities. Tight legislative timelines for budget approval may limit comprehensive scrutiny. Political dominance in the NA can lead to a rubber-stamping effect on executive-driven legislation.	4	• Empower the NCOP by increasing its involvement in the early stages of the legislative process and allowing it to amend bills, creating parallel engagement processes with the NA. • Provide additional time for thorough scrutiny of budgetary and critical legislation, adjusting schedules, as necessary. • Enhance committee capacity by increasing staffing and technical support to handle tight legislative timelines effectively.
4	Practice	In practice, MPs and, where applicable, other participants –are	MPs and other participants, such as the public, can engage in all stages of the legislative process. Parliamentary committees play a	3	• Strengthen smaller parties by providing additional resources and partnerships with academic institutions.

		empowered to participate in all stages of the legislative process. Particular attention is given to opportunities for participation for opposition and independent MPs.	critical role in drafting, deliberating, and refining legislation. Committee hearings provide opportunities for MPs, civil society, and other stakeholders to contribute to legislation. Opposition MPs actively participate in legislative debates and oversight. Smaller parties have opportunities to participate, although these are often limited by resource constraints. In practice, executive dominance overshadows the role of individual MPs in initiating and influencing legislation. Committees often face resource constraints and high workloads, reducing their effectiveness. Smaller parties may struggle to match the research and technical capacity of larger parties.		• Improve opposition involvement in the legislative process, ensuring fair participation in key committees and debates. • Increase public participation in the legislative process through expanded public hearings, early engagement with civil society, and platforms for public comment.
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To enhance the legislative process, it is crucial to streamline the legislative journey for private members' bills, provide additional support for opposition and independent MPs, and ensure balanced representation in committee deliberations. Increasing resources for smaller parties, improving public participation, and empowering the NCOP in the legislative process will strengthen parliament's ability to effectively scrutinise and enact laws.



6.6.2 Constitution-making and amendments

Constitution-making and amendment refer to parliament's role in establishing or modifying the constitution. This dimension ensures that parliament has the necessary authority and procedures to propose, review, and adopt constitutional amendments. It ensures that any changes to the constitution follow a transparent, inclusive, and legal process, reflecting the will of the people and the evolving needs of the state.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution allows MPs, the executive, and, indirectly, citizens to propose constitutional amendments. Proposed amendments must follow strict procedural guidelines outlined in Section 74 of the Constitution . MPs and the executive have clear mechanisms to initiate constitutional amendments. The Constitution outlines specific procedures for amendments, ensuring clarity and consistency. Public participation mechanisms indirectly allow citizens to influence amendment proposals. Citizen-initiated proposals lack a direct mechanism and rely on intermediaries. Procedural requirements for initiation, while clear, can be resource-intensive and time-	4	• Create accessible mechanisms for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments, allowing direct submissions to parliament or the executive. • Streamline procedural requirements for initiating amendments, simplifying administrative processes, and offering greater support to MPs. • Encourage MPs to initiate amendments by offering training on constitutional processes and highlighting the importance of reform.

			consuming. Political dynamics often limit the willingness to initiate amendments addressing contentious issues.		
2	Public consultations	Broad public consultations, with reasonably extensive times, are undertaken after the initiation of constitutional amendments.	Public consultations are required for constitutional amendments, with opportunities for written submissions, public hearings, and engagement through parliamentary committees. Public hearings are held, and submissions are solicited during the amendment process. Committees facilitate public engagement and stakeholder input. Transparent processes ensure public awareness and involvement. The depth and reach of public consultations can be uneven, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. Limited timeframes for consultations may restrict meaningful participation. Resource constraints reduce the effectiveness of outreach and feedback collection.	3	• Expand public consultations by increasing outreach in rural and marginalised communities through mobile platforms, virtual hearings, and partnerships with community organisations. • Extend consultation timeframes and allow multiple rounds to gather diverse input on amendments. • Allocate additional resources for logistics, including outreach, translation services, and digital tools to facilitate submission of feedback.
3	Adoption	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework	The Constitution requires supermajorities for adopting amendments: two-thirds of the NA and six provinces in the NCOP for most	4	• Create mechanisms to prevent supermajority requirements from causing delays in passing critical amendments,

		establish that parliament must approve a new constitution or a constitutional amendment, ideally by a supermajority.	amendments, and 75% for amendments to key provisions, ensuring broad consensus. Supermajority requirements ensure broad political agreement and safeguard the Constitution's integrity. Bicameral approval emphasises representation of both national and provincial interests. Robust legislative processes prevent arbitrary or rushed amendments. High thresholds for adoption can delay amendments addressing urgent issues. Political polarisation may hinder consensus, even on broadly supported proposals.		including structured processes for consensus-building. • Strengthen collaboration between the NA and NCOP, such as joint committees focused on constitutional amendments. • Enhance transparency by publicly sharing the rationale behind constitutional amendment decisions to build public trust.
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	The SA Constitution provides a robust framework for initiating, consulting on, and adopting amendments. While mechanisms ensure inclusivity, consensus, and protection of democratic values, challenges remain in ensuring broader citizen participation and balancing flexibility with accessibility. Strengthening public consultation processes and enhancing mechanisms for citizen-initiated	4	• Balance flexibility with democratic protections by creating clear guidelines for when amendments are needed, prioritising pressing national or human rights issues. • Encourage broader citizen participation through direct consultations, online platforms, or town halls on specific proposals.

		well as minority and other rights.	amendments can further bolster democratic engagement in constitutional amendments.		Develop a transparent, predictable system for evaluating amendments, ensuring they serve the best interests of the country.
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To enhance the effectiveness of constitutional amendments, it is essential to streamline the procedural requirements for initiation, create direct mechanisms for citizen participation, and ensure inclusive, extended public consultations, particularly in rural and marginalised areas. Strengthening collaboration between the NA and NCOP, alongside promoting greater transparency and public involvement, will foster a more responsive and balanced constitutional amendment process.



6.6.3 Legislative procedure

Legislative procedure outlines the process through which laws are proposed, debated, and passed in parliament. This dimension ensures that the legislative process is clear, transparent, and efficient, providing guidelines for introducing bills, holding debates, scrutinising proposals, and making decisions. Well-defined legislative procedures ensure that the law-making process is systematic and that all MPs have the opportunity to engage in deliberations.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules provide detailed procedures for the passage of legislation through the NA and the NCOP. Mechanisms such as a temporary mediation committee is established to resolve differences between the two houses. Clear and codified	4	Strengthen inter-house coordination by creating clearer timelines and processes for resolving disagreements between the NA and NCOP, including formalised timelines for the mediation committee.

		bicameral systems. The procedures provide mechanisms for their solution of differences between the houses in bicameral systems.	processes ensure consistency in the legislative procedure. A mediation committee provides an effective platform for resolving inter-house disagreements. Procedural rules safeguard legislative integrity and accountability. Inter-house coordination can be slow, delaying the passage of critical legislation. Political dynamics sometimes limit the effectiveness of mediation mechanisms.		• Increase the mediation committee's capacity by providing dedicated staff and technical support to reduce delays. • Enhance committee involvement in early-stage discussions to prevent bottlenecks and improve efficiency.
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	Ordinary legislative procedures include general debates, opportunities for MPs to propose amendments, and adequate time for preparation and deliberation. General debates are well-established, with opportunities for MPs to raise concerns and propose changes. Sufficient time is allocated for detailed scrutiny of most bills. Mechanisms for public participation enhance transparency. Limited time allocation for debate on controversial or urgent bills. High workloads and limited resources for MPs reduce their ability to engage meaningfully in detailed debates.	3	• Address limited debate time for controversial bills by introducing flexible scheduling or extending time for critical debates. • Increase resources for MPs, especially smaller parties, by providing research assistance and additional preparation time. • Develop a structured approach for managing amendments and ensuring they are debated, particularly for complex or contentious bills.

		consider the details of legislation and to propose and vote on amendments.			
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.	All bills are referred to relevant committees for detailed scrutiny, amendments, and stakeholder consultations. Committees hold hearings with experts and members of the public. Committees provide a platform for thorough deliberation and refinement of legislation. Expert input and public consultations improve the quality of legislative outcomes. Cross-party representation in committees enhances inclusivity. Resource constraints limit the capacity of committees to conduct comprehensive analysis. Public consultation processes are sometimes criticised for being inaccessible to marginalised communities.	3	• Improve committee capacity by increasing staffing and providing more technical and research support for deeper analysis and better legislative amendments. • Strengthen public consultations by ensuring marginalised communities have accessible feedback platforms, such as online consultations, regional meetings, and translated materials. • Ensure meaningful public participation by educating and informing the public in advance. • Improve transparency by livestreaming committee hearings and providing real-time access to relevant materials.
4	Fast-track procedure	Where there is a fast-track procedure for the urgent consideration of	Fast-track procedures exist for urgent legislation but include limited opportunities for debate, amendments, and PLS. Fast-track procedures	2	• Revise fast-track procedures to allow for more thorough debates and scrutiny,

		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 (PLS) after a period of time, or using sunset clauses.	ensure timely responses to emergencies or critical issues. Some provisions include sunset clauses or PLSs to mitigate risks. MPs often have insufficient time to scrutinise fast-tracked bills. Mechanisms are limited for robust debate and amendment in fast-track processes. Over-reliance on fast-track procedures for controversial legislation undermines parliamentary scrutiny.		including setting mandatory minimum debate times for fast-tracked bills. • Introduce mandatory PLS for fast-tracked bills, including sunset clauses to revisit the effectiveness of legislation. • Limit the use of fast-track procedures to truly urgent matters to preserve legislative integrity and avoid bypassing scrutiny.
5	Use of ordinary versus fast-track procedures	In practice, most legislation is subject to ordinary procedure and parliament does not unduly rely on the use of fast-track procedure.	Ordinary procedures are the default for most legislation, with fast-track procedures reserved for exceptional circumstances. The majority of legislation follows the ordinary process, ensuring thorough scrutiny. Clear rules prevent undue reliance on fast-track procedures. Fast-track procedures are sometimes used for politically sensitive bills, bypassing detailed	3	• Strengthen guidelines for fast-track procedures to ensure they are only used in exceptional cases, with clear criteria to prevent misuse. • Enhance scrutiny of fast-tracked bills by providing more time for review and discussion, ensuring important bills are scheduled for debate.

			scrutiny. Insufficient mechanisms to ensure balance between the two procedures.		Regularly review the use of fast-track procedures to ensure they are not disproportionately used for politically sensitive legislation.
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.	Parliament has the authority to scrutinise, debate, and approve or reject delegated legislation. Oversight committees <i>[such as the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Service, Portfolio Committee on Finance, Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA), and Standing Committee on the Auditor-General]</i> review these instruments for compliance and legality. Committees provide a platform for MPs to examine delegated legislation. Mechanisms for public and expert input enhance transparency. Procedural rules ensure accountability for delegated powers. Delegated legislation is sometimes passed with minimal parliamentary scrutiny. MPs lack technical expertise and resources to comprehensively review delegated legislation.	3	- Increase technical expertise available to MPs by providing training in legislative drafting and legal analysis for reviewing delegated legislation. - Strengthen oversight committees' role in scrutinising delegated legislation by providing more resources, including legal and technical experts. - Improve transparency of delegated legislation by mandating clear reports on its purpose, impact, and legal basis.

			Oversight mechanisms are not always uniformly applied across all delegated instruments.		
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To improve the legislative process, it is essential to strengthen inter-house coordination, enhance debate and scrutiny time for contentious bills, and provide additional resources for committees, especially smaller parties, to ensure thorough consideration. Therefore, fast-track procedures should be revised to allow more comprehensive scrutiny, with mandatory post-legislative reviews and limitations on their use to preserve legislative integrity.



6.6.4 Legislative drafting

Legislative drafting involves the creation of legal texts that are clear, precise, and legally sound. This dimension assesses the process of drafting bills and laws, ensuring that parliamentary drafters and legal experts produce legislation that is technically accurate and aligned with constitutional principles. Effective legislative drafting ensures that laws are easy to understand and implement.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Guidance	Guidance for clear and effective legislative drafting is set out in a manual or similar document.	The Legislation Drafting Manual , used by parliamentary legal services, provides detailed guidance for drafting legislation. It ensures consistency and adherence to legislative standards. The drafting manual outlines clear principles, processes, and formats for legislative proposals. It ensures that legislation adheres to	4	• Increase accessibility to the Legislation Drafting Manual by providing it in digital formats and creating an online portal for regular updates. • Conduct mandatory training for MPs, committee staff, and parliamentary staff on the Legislation Drafting Manual, with

			constitutional standards and aligns with existing legal frameworks. Training sessions on the manual are occasionally provided to MPs and committee staff. Accessibility of the manual to all MPs, especially those from minority parties, is limited. Not all MPs are adequately familiar with the manual, leading to inconsistencies in legislative proposals.		periodic sessions tailored to experience levels. Establish a mentoring system where experienced MPs or legal advisors assist newer MPs with the legislative drafting process.
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.	Explanatory memoranda accompany most legislative proposals, analysing the proposal's objectives, its alignment with existing laws, and its impact on fundamental rights and public liberties. Explanatory notes provide valuable context for understanding the rationale and implications of legislation. Committees review the practical implications of proposed laws, ensuring comprehensive scrutiny. Public participation processes enhance the analysis of legislative proposals. The depth of analysis varies across proposals, with some lacking detailed assessments of practical implications. Limited engagement with independent experts	3	- Ensure explanatory memoranda include detailed analysis of practical implications, alignment with existing laws, and impact on rights. - Strengthen engagement with independent experts and civil society for legislative analysis, incorporating formal consultations and partnerships. - Develop a standardised approach for assessing fundamental rights in legislation, integrating them into the core review process.

			or civil society weakens some analyses. Fundamental rights assessments are sometimes treated as a formality rather than a substantive review.		
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.	Drafting standards emphasise clarity and coherence, with gender-neutral language encouraged. Parliamentary legal advisors support MPs in achieving these goals. Legislative texts are generally clear and well-structured, minimising ambiguity, although keeping in mind the complexity of legal terminology and structure. Efforts to use gender-neutral language are evident in newer legislation and is influenced by international best practices such as the UN Women Handbook on Gender-Responsive Law-Making. Parliamentary legal services review drafts to ensure technical accuracy and clarity. Older legislation often contains vague or outdated language, leading to contradictions. Drafts from less-experienced MPs sometimes lack clarity	3	• Incorporate language clarity guidelines into the Legislation Drafting Manual to improve the use of plain, accessible language in bills. • Provide training for MPs and staff on clear and plain language, with workshops and examples of well-drafted legislation. • Review older legislation for clarity, updating outdated language to align with modern drafting practices.

			and coherence. Gender-neutral language practices are inconsistently applied.		
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.	Amendments to existing legislation are made logically, following established structures and terminology. Legal advisors ensure consistency with existing laws. Amendments typically align with the structure and terminology of existing laws. Committees and legal services ensure amendments are logical and coherent. Consolidated legislation incorporating amendments is regularly published for accessibility. Overlapping or fragmented amendments to the same legislation can lead to inconsistencies. Complex amendments sometimes introduce unintended ambiguities. Delays in consolidating amendments reduce the accessibility of updated laws.	3	• Accelerate the consolidation of amendments to legislation and ensure updated laws are promptly available to the public. • Improve coordination of legislative amendments to avoid overlapping changes by centralising coordination within committees or legal services. • Provide clearer guidelines and templates for MPs to amend existing legislation logically and cohesively.
5	Drafting resources	Specialist legislative drafting resources are available to all MPs and political groups, including to opposition,	Specialist drafting resources, such as parliamentary legal services, are available to MPs and political groups. Opposition and minority-party MPs also have access to these services. Legal advisors provide technical	2	• Increase the availability of specialist drafting resources, especially for opposition, minority-party, and independent MPs. • Offer specialised legislative drafting courses and workshops for MPs, particularly for

		minority-party and independent MPs.	support to MPs on legislative drafting. Committees benefit from dedicated staff to assist with reviewing and refining drafts. Opposition MPs can request assistance from parliamentary legal services. Resource limitations lead to delays in responding to drafting requests, particularly for opposition and minority-party MPs. Training on legislative drafting is inconsistent, leaving some MPs reliant on external advisors. Minority and independent MPs often cite insufficient access to drafting resources.		those with less experience or from smaller parties. Allocate more resources to parliamentary legal services, including hiring additional legal staff or external experts to support MPs with technical drafting needs.
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To improve legislative drafting processes, it is essential to increase accessibility to resources, including the Legislation Drafting Manual and specialist drafting services, especially for smaller and opposition parties. Furthermore, strengthening training on clear language, improving the depth of legislative analysis, and accelerating the consolidation of amendments will enhance the quality and efficiency of legislative processes.



6.6.5 Enactment

Enactment refers to the formal approval of laws by parliament. This dimension covers the process of passing legislation, from voting to receiving final approval by the executive. It ensures that enacted laws are formally adopted and come into force, providing legal certainty and clarity to both the public and the authorities.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Procedure for the promulgation of laws	The constitution establishes a clear procedure for the promulgation of laws that have been approved by parliament.	The SA Constitution establishes clear procedures for the promulgation of laws. Once legislation is approved by both the NA and the NCOP, it is sent to the President for assent and promulgation. Promulgated laws are published in the Government Gazette. Detailed constitutional and legislative guidelines ensure consistency and transparency in promulgation. Timelines for presidential assent and publication in the Government Gazette are clearly defined. The Government Gazette provides public access to newly promulgated laws. Delays in promulgation can occur in contentious cases or when administrative inefficiencies arise. Limited public understanding of the promulgation process reduces civic engagement.	3	- Streamline the promulgation process by setting clear deadlines for the President's assent and addressing administrative inefficiencies. - Increase public awareness of the promulgation process through educational materials and outreach efforts to encourage civic engagement. - Introduce an electronic platform to track legislation from approval to promulgation, ensuring transparency.
2	Veto powers	Where the Head of State has the power to veto legislation or	The President has limited veto powers under the Constitution. The President may refer legislation back to the NA if they believe it is	4	Clarify and expand the President's power to propose amendments to improve legislation before referring bills back to parliament.

		propose amendments, the grounds on which such veto power might be exercised, and the scope of such veto power, are clearly established.	unconstitutional or has procedural flaws. This veto is restricted to constitutional or legal compliance, ensuring checks and balances. The President's veto powers are clearly outlined, limiting scope for arbitrary use. Referring bills back to parliament ensures adherence to constitutional principles. The Constitutional Court can provide final adjudication if the President's concerns persist. The veto process may introduce delays in enacting critical legislation. Limited scope for the President to propose substantive amendments, which may hinder improvements to flawed legislation.		• Improve the timeliness of the veto process by setting clear timelines for presidential decisions. • Enhance communication and transparency when the President exercises veto power by publicly explaining decisions, building public trust.
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.	Parliament has the power to override the President's veto by addressing the concerns raised or re-passing the legislation with or without amendments. If the President refers a bill back again, the matter can be referred to the Constitutional Court for a final decision. The requirement to address the President's concerns or seek judicial clarification ensures accountability. The process respects both	3	• Facilitate a more efficient process for parliament to override the President's veto, including an expedited process for re-passing bills. • Establish a mediation or consultation mechanism between the executive and parliament to resolve disagreements before judicial intervention.

			parliamentary sovereignty and constitutional compliance. Judicial oversight prevents abuse of veto powers and ensures laws align with constitutional principles. Complex and time-consuming processes may delay the implementation of urgent legislation. Repeated referrals can exacerbate tensions between the executive and legislative branches.		Foster greater cooperation between the executive and legislative branches during veto and override processes through joint task forces or regular meetings.
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To improve the promulgation and veto processes, it is important to streamline timelines and introduce digital tools to enhance transparency and public engagement. Thus, expanding the President's amendment powers and facilitating quicker veto overrides through mediation and consultation mechanisms will strengthen the efficiency and [co-operation](#) between the executive and legislative branches.



6.6.6 Official publication

Official publication ensures that all passed laws are made publicly available, typically in an official gazette or similar platform. This dimension guarantees that the public is informed about new legislation, ensuring transparency and accountability. Official publication allows citizens, government agencies, and the judiciary to access and understand the laws that govern them.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA legal framework establishes clear procedures for the official publication of legislation. Laws passed by parliament become effective only after presidential assent and publication in the Government Gazette which is managed by the Government Printing Works (GPW). Timelines for publication are generally adhered to, ensuring transparency and legal clarity. Publication in the Government Gazette is in principle an official and accessible process (although the GPW faces its own challenges). The framework ensures that no law is enforceable without public notification. Procedures are constitutionally entrenched, preventing arbitrary implementation of laws. Delays can occur between passage and publication in the Gazette, especially for complex or controversial legislation. Public awareness of the timeline and implications of publication remains low.	3	• Set clear internal deadlines for the publication of laws after passage and assent, streamlining coordination between the executive, legislative bodies, and the Government Printing Works. • Increase public awareness by providing detailed communication on the publication timeline and status of new laws through official government platforms and media. • Introduce a digital tracking system for real-time updates on the publication status of laws, ensuring transparency.

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.	SA has an official collection of laws maintained through government portals as well as the GPW. Public access to these collections is available online and in print. Government portals provide free online access to legislative texts. The registry includes current and historical laws, ensuring a comprehensive collection. Open access promotes transparency and public engagement. Online registries are not always up to date, causing confusion about the current status of laws. The user interface of some government platforms is not user-friendly, limiting accessibility for the public. Technical issues, such as server downtime, occasionally hinder access.	3	- Enhance the user interface and functionality of online government portals, making them more navigable, mobile-friendly, and easier to search. - Regularly update the online central registry to reflect the current status of all laws, including recent amendments, with automatic updates and monitoring systems. - Invest in reliable infrastructure and backup systems to address technical issues like server downtime, ensuring consistent access to the latest laws.
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	Amendments to laws are published, but consolidated versions that integrate amendments into a single, comprehensive text are not consistently provided by the government. Users often rely on unofficial sources or legal publishers for consolidated texts. Amendments should be published	2	- Create a formal policy for publishing consolidated versions of laws, integrating amendments into a single, comprehensive text. - Publish consolidated versions of laws alongside individual amendments in the Government Gazette for easy access.

		identify the amendments.	promptly in the Government Gazette, ensuring transparency. Legal publishers and non-governmental platforms fill gaps by offering consolidated versions of laws. Consolidated versions of laws are not routinely published by the government. Reliance on external providers increases costs for users and risks inaccuracies. The lack of consolidated texts makes it difficult for the public and legal professionals to interpret laws effectively.		• Provide free online access to consolidated versions of laws through government portals to ensure the public and legal professionals have access to the most current versions.
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To improve legislative transparency and accessibility, clear internal deadlines for law publication should be set, and a digital tracking system introduced for real-time updates. Furthermore, the government should prioritise the publication of consolidated versions of laws, ensuring comprehensive and accessible legal texts for the public and legal professionals, while enhancing the functionality of government portals.



6.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny

Post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) refers to the evaluation of laws after they have been enacted. This dimension assesses how parliament reviews the effectiveness of laws once they are implemented, examining their impact, identifying challenges, and making recommendations for improvements or amendments. It ensures that laws remain relevant, effective, and aligned with societal needs over time.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	There is a legal framework for PLS.	While there is no explicit legislation mandating PLS, the SA Constitution and parliamentary rules provide a framework for oversight and review of laws through committees. Section 55 of the Constitution requires parliament to oversee the implementation of laws by the executive. The Constitution establishes broad oversight powers that implicitly support PLS activities. Committee rules allow for the review of legislative implementation and impact. Existing laws, such as the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), include provisions for accountability and reporting, supporting oversight functions. The lack of explicit legal requirements for PLS limits its systematic application. There is variability in the enforcement and interpretation of oversight mandates across committees. There is limited formal integration of PLS into the legislative process.	3	• Introduce explicit legislation mandating PLS to formalise its role in the parliamentary process. • Integrate PLS into parliamentary rules with clear guidelines on conducting reviews. • Strengthen oversight by ensuring committees have clear mandates for PLS, with performance indicators to track effectiveness.

2	Practice	PLS is an established part of the legislative and/or oversight process.	PLS is conducted through parliamentary committees, which review the implementation and effectiveness of legislation as part of their oversight role. This includes hearings and stakeholder consultations. Committees regularly assess the implementation of laws through reports from the executive. Public hearings and stakeholder consultations are used to gather feedback on legislative impact. Some laws, such as financial and environmental legislation, are routinely subjected to PLS. PLS is not consistently conducted across all legislation. Resource and time constraints often limit the depth of reviews. Political dynamics can affect the impartiality and focus of PLS activities.	2	- Standardise PLS processes across committees by creating a formalised framework for systematic reviews of all laws. - Allocate more time and resources for PLS reviews, including dedicated sessions or specialised committees. - Minimise political influence on PLS by establishing independent oversight bodies or advisory panels.
3	Resources	Parliament has the necessary human, financial and administrative resources to conduct PLS, including trained and skilled staff.	Parliament has dedicated committees and administrative staff tasked with oversight functions, which include PLS. Training programs and financial resources are provided, but often insufficient. Committees are supported by research and legal advisory staff. Training programs exist for MPs and staff to enhance	2	- Increase funding for PLS activities, including staff, research, and technical expertise. - Address staff turnover by creating long-term career paths and offering incentives for retention.

			oversight capabilities. Parliamentary budgets include allocations for oversight activities. Limited funding and administrative capacity reduce the effectiveness of PLS. High turnover among committee staff leads to a lack of institutional memory. Inadequate technical expertise in specialised areas limits comprehensive analysis.		Expand training programs for committee staff in areas like policy analysis and financial oversight.
4	Inclusiveness	PLS is an inclusive process that invites input from political parties, academia, experts, and civil society.	PLS processes incorporate input from political parties, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders through public consultations and committee hearings. Public hearings and consultations invite diverse perspectives on legislative impact. Academia and civil society organisations frequently participate in reviews of major laws. Cross-party representation in committees ensures political inclusiveness. Marginalised communities are often underrepresented in consultation processes. Limited outreach reduces the diversity of stakeholder input in some reviews. Feedback	3	- Improve outreach efforts for PLS consultations to better represent marginalised communities through targeted programs and multilingual materials. - Strengthen feedback mechanisms by creating formal processes for collecting and responding to public input, including an online platform for tracking recommendations. - Broaden the diversity of stakeholders engaged in PLS by involving a wider range of experts and community groups.

			mechanisms are not always robust, leading to underutilisation of external expertise.		
5	Follow-up	Committees and/or other parliamentary bodies conducting PLS regularly interact with the executive and other stakeholders in order to monitor the implementation of PLS recommendations.	Committees interact with the executive and other stakeholders to monitor the implementation of PLS recommendations. Mechanisms for follow-up include committee reports and parliamentary questions. Mechanisms such as committee reports and debates allow for follow-up with the executive. Parliamentary questions provide an avenue for MPs to seek updates on PLS-related recommendations. Some committees such as SCOPA, PC on Health, PC on Police and Pc on Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment maintain regular contact with stakeholders for updates on implementation, however, follow-up is inconsistent and often dependent on the priorities of individual committees. Weak enforcement mechanisms limit accountability for implementing PLS recommendations. Limited feedback loops reduce the effectiveness of follow-up actions.	2	• Formalise follow-up procedures by establishing committees or roles to monitor PLS recommendations. • Strengthen enforcement by embedding accountability provisions in parliamentary rules and requiring regular progress reports. • Create structured feedback loops to assess the implementation of PLS recommendations with regular reviews.

To improve PLS in SA parliament, explicit legislation should be introduced to formalise its role, alongside integrating PLS into parliamentary rules with systematic review processes. Resource allocation must be increased to support PLS, including staffing, technical expertise, and training, while efforts to enhance inclusiveness and establish strong follow-up mechanisms are crucial for ensuring effective and representative scrutiny.



6.7 Indicator 1.7 Oversight

A parliament's oversight function is critical for ensuring the executive is held accountable. This indicator measures the processes in place for monitoring and scrutinising the executive, including access to executive information, the ability to summon ministers for questioning, and the use of committees to investigate government actions.

6.7.1 Election and dismissal of the executive

This dimension focuses on the power of parliament to elect and dismiss members of the executive branch, such as the president or ministers. It ensures that parliament has the authority to approve or remove executive officials, thereby maintaining a balance of power and holding the executive accountable to the legislative body. This process is crucial for ensuring that the executive reflects the will of parliament and remains answerable to it.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Election of the Head of State/ Government	The constitution lays down clear criteria and rules for the election of the Head of	The SA Constitution provides clear rules for the election of the President by the NA. The President must be an elected member of the NA and is chosen by a majority vote. The	4	Although South Africa has a closed-party list – proportional representation electoral system, by including and increasing public engagement in the presidential election

		State/Government and, where relevant, the role that parliament plays in this election.	process is explicitly outlined in Section 86 of the Constitution, ensuring transparency and fairness. The requirement for a majority vote promotes democratic accountability within the NA. Provisions for interim leadership are clearly defined in case of presidential vacancies. The ruling party's parliamentary majority often ensures predictable outcomes, limiting contestation. There is no public engagement in the election of the President, as the process is confined to MPs.		process by organising discussions and consultations on the President's role, ensuring an informed electorate. - Consider reforms for a more competitive and transparent presidential election process, particularly in cases of dominant majorities, by allowing cross-party discussions or debates. - Implement a more rigorous candidate vetting process, promoting transparency by informing the public about candidates' qualifications and political alignment.
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	SA's parliamentary system does not explicitly require regular votes of confidence in the executive. However, the Constitution allows for motions of no-confidence in the President or the Cabinet as a mechanism to determine parliamentary confidence. Section 102 of the Constitution provides clear procedures for motions of no confidence, ensuring executive accountability. Parliamentary debates on such motions provide a platform for opposition	4	- Establish clearer criteria and a consistent process for triggering and debating motions of no-confidence, including guidelines on timing and mechanisms for opposition parties. - Create more opportunities for debate and public engagement around no-confidence motions, including consultations with civil society.

		parliamentary confidence, parliament approves ministers and cabinet members individually.	parties to challenge the government. The ability to remove the President or Cabinet via a no-confidence vote ensures accountability to parliament. Ruling party dominance in parliament makes successful motions of no-confidence unlikely. Political dynamics often reduce such motions to symbolic gestures rather than meaningful mechanisms of accountability.		Strengthen the effectiveness of no-confidence motions by implementing safeguards to prevent political manipulation and ensure fair debate.
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	The Constitution outlines clear provisions for the impeachment of the President under Section 89, which allows removal for serious misconduct, a violation of the Constitution, or incapacity. Rules of procedure for impeachment have been further clarified in recent parliamentary guidelines . Clear constitutional and procedural rules ensure the process is well-regulated. Impeachment provisions uphold accountability for constitutional breaches or unlawful conduct. Parliamentary committees play a key role in investigating allegations against the President.	3	- Clarify criteria for impeachment, especially around terms like "serious misconduct" and "violation of the Constitution," to ensure consistency and transparency. - Introduce an independent body or special committee to investigate allegations of misconduct by the President or ministers, reducing political interference. - Strengthen procedural rules for impeachment, including clearer timelines and protocols for investigations and hearings.

		clearly set out in the legal framework and in parliament's rules of procedure.	The process is highly politicised, often leading to delays or contested outcomes. Ruling party influence in parliament can hinder impartial investigations and decisions. Limited clarity on the application of "serious misconduct" and "violation of the Constitution" can lead to legal disputes.		
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	In practice, procedures for electing the President, holding votes of no confidence, and impeaching the President or ministers are implemented according to constitutional and parliamentary rules. Presidential elections in parliament have consistently adhered to constitutional guidelines. No-confidence motions and impeachment processes have been initiated, demonstrating the functioning of these mechanisms. Recent clarifications in parliamentary rules strengthen the consistency of impeachment practices. Executive accountability is often weakened by political majorities, reducing the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Delays and procedural	3	• Ensure consistency in impeachment, no-confidence motions, and presidential elections by creating a transparent, step-by-step guide for MPs and the public. • Strengthen impartiality by increasing independent oversight in impeachment and no-confidence processes. • Promote public trust by enhancing transparency, including live-streaming hearings, and publishing regular updates.

		constitution and other aspects of the legal framework.	challenges hinder the timely resolution of motions and impeachment proceedings. Public confidence in the impartiality of these processes is undermined by political interference.		
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To enhance the processes surrounding the election, accountability, and potential removal of the Head of State/Government, reforms should focus on increasing public engagement, ensuring transparency, and strengthening impartiality. Implementing clearer criteria, improving procedural consistency, and reducing political influence in impeachment and no-confidence motions will ensure greater accountability and public trust in the executive's oversight.



6.7.2 Access to information from the executive

Access to information from the executive ensures that parliament can obtain the necessary data and reports from the government to effectively carry out its oversight functions. This dimension assesses whether parliament has the right to request and receive information from the executive, which is essential for informed decision-making and holding the executive accountable for its actions.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework parliament, its	The SA Constitution establishes parliament's right to hold the executive accountable, including the right to obtain information. Section 92 of the Constitution obliges ministers	4	Strengthen enforcement of ministers' obligations to provide timely information by creating a dedicated oversight body with

		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.	to provide full and timely information to parliament. Oversight mechanisms are further detailed in the Rules of the NA and other parliamentary frameworks. The Constitution mandates executive accountability to parliament. Committees have the authority to summon ministers and request information. Legal provisions establish transparency as a core principle of governance. Some gaps exist in enforcing compliance with these obligations. Ministers sometimes rely on broad interpretations of confidentiality to delay or deny responses.		authority to impose penalties for non-compliance. • Improve transparency by defining and limiting confidentiality clauses, requiring ministers to justify withholding information, with parliamentary review. • Establish a digital tracking system to monitor the timeliness of responses, increasing accountability for information provision.
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	Parliament's rules of procedure outline timelines and mechanisms for requesting information, including written and oral questions, committee summons, and formal debates. Timelines for responses to parliamentary questions are specified. Committees provide structured platforms for requesting and scrutinising information. Mechanisms such as interpellations and written	3	• Ensure consistent enforcement of response timelines by introducing automatic reminders, deadlines, and penalties for delays. • Standardise and streamline the information request process with a unified platform for submissions and tracking. • Enhance procedures for monitoring delays by assigning staff to track responses and

		systematically in practice.	questions allow MPs to demand detailed explanations. Delays in responses from the executive are common. Inconsistent enforcement of timelines and follow-up on late submissions. Lack of systematic tracking of outstanding requests.		escalate unresolved cases to higher oversight levels. Establish a digital tracking system to monitor the timeliness of responses, increasing accountability for information provision.
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.	Special procedures exist for handling classified information, including through oversight committees like the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI). The Protection of State Information Bill outlines limitations on access to sensitive information. Committees like the JSCI oversee matters related to intelligence and security. MPs can access classified information under controlled conditions, ensuring national security is not compromised. Legislation precisely defines the categories of classified information. The Protection of State Information Bill has been criticised for potentially overbroad secrecy provisions. MPs often face difficulties in accessing classified information due to procedural and bureaucratic	2	- Amend the Protection of State Information Bill to ensure narrowly defined criteria for classifying information, balancing security, and transparency. - Improve parliamentary access to classified information by creating clearer procedures for requesting and receiving it in a timely manner. - Establish an independent oversight body to review classification decisions and prevent undue withholding of information.

			hurdles. Limited transparency regarding the classification process creates ambiguity.		
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.	PCs monitor the executive's compliance with requests for information. Reports are tabled on delays or non-compliance, and MPs can question ministers directly during plenary sessions. Committees actively monitor the flow of information and report non-compliance. Parliamentary questions and debates provide mechanisms for holding the executive accountable. Tools such as performance tracking reports help identify delays or failures. There is no central body dedicated solely to monitoring executive compliance. Delays and inadequate justifications for non-compliance are frequent. Limited consequences for non-compliance undermine accountability.	2	- Although there are mechanisms [<i>such as PCs, Public Protector, and Information Regulator</i>] in place to monitor the executive compliances with information requests, creating a dedicated parliamentary unit to monitor executive compliance with information requests, with authority to track and escalate non-compliance can ensure better enforcement of compliancy and enhance oversight. - Strengthen penalties for non-compliance, including public hearings or formal reprimands for repeated failures. - Introduce regular compliance reports from the executive, published publicly for tracking progress.
5	Failure to provide information	The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish that ministers	The Constitution and parliamentary rules allow for censure motions, disciplinary measures, and impeachment for ministers who fail to provide information. However, these measures are	2	Make non-compliance a ground for censure or other disciplinary actions, with clear guidelines for MPs to propose motions of censure.

		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.	rarely invoked for this purpose. Mechanisms such as censure motions and parliamentary questions highlight failures to provide information. Non-compliance can be escalated to the Speaker or relevant committees for further action. Parliamentary debates ensure public attention to non-compliance. Accountability measures for failure to provide information are inconsistently applied. Ministers often provide vague or partial responses without facing meaningful consequences. Political considerations often limit the use of censure or impeachment mechanisms.		• Introduce a formal escalation system for information failures, including parliamentary hearings where ministers must explain delays. • Foster political will for accountability by ensuring tangible consequences for non-compliance, supported by regular public discussions.
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To strengthen parliamentary oversight, [reforms](#) should focus on improving the executive's compliance with information requests, ensuring consistent enforcement of timelines, and holding ministers accountable for non-compliance. Establishing a dedicated monitoring body, streamlining access to classified information, and implementing clear penalties for failure to provide information will enhance transparency and executive accountability.



6.7.3 Summoning the executive in committee

This dimension refers to parliament's ability to summon members of the executive to appear before parliamentary committees for questioning and scrutiny. It ensures that the executive can be held accountable for its actions and policies through detailed examinations in committee sessions, where MPs can probe issues in depth and demand answers from ministers and senior government officials.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution (Section 56 and Section 69) and parliamentary rules explicitly grant parliament and its committees the authority to summon members of the executive, senior officials, and representatives of military, law enforcement, and intelligence services. This authority is a cornerstone of parliament's oversight role. Constitutional and legal clarity ensures robust oversight capabilities. Committees have the authority to summon any individual necessary for legislative or oversight purposes. The executive is obligated to provide information, enhancing accountability. There are occasional disputes between the executive and parliament on the interpretation of	4	- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms by clarifying legal consequences for non-compliance with summonses, including penalties for refusal to appear. - Improve communication between parliament and the executive by setting up regular coordination meetings and clearer guidelines on executive obligations. - Expand the authority to summon individuals beyond the executive to include agencies and state-owned entities, enhancing transparency.

			obligations to appear. In practice, some individuals resist summons, citing procedural or legal technicalities.		
2	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure lay down the procedures for summoning representatives of the executive and provide specific rights for the opposition.	Parliamentary rules outline the procedures for summoning members of the executive and other officials, including timelines, processes for issuing summons, and provisions for opposition participation in questioning. Clear rules empower committees to summon representatives of the executive and demand information. Provisions for opposition parties to participate in questioning enhance inclusivity and fairness. Specific timelines ensure that summonses are issued and responded to efficiently. Procedural delays and inconsistencies in enforcement can undermine effectiveness. Some committees lack clear guidelines for dealing with non-compliance by summoned individuals.	4	• Streamline summons issuance by introducing an automated tracking system to ensure better enforcement of timelines and efficient scheduling. • Provide standardised procedures for non-compliance, including automatic follow-ups and escalation mechanisms. • Increase opposition party participation by ensuring equal questioning opportunities in oversight processes through rotating sessions or time limits.
3	Resources	Committees have sufficient resources and expert staff to assist	Committees are supported by parliamentary staff, including researchers, legal advisors, and administrative personnel, to facilitate the	3	• Increase funding for parliamentary committees to support evidence gathering,

		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.	summoning process and evidence gathering. Dedicated staff provide committees with technical and administrative support. Committees can access external experts to enhance their understanding of complex issues. Resources for evidence gathering include research tools and external consultations. Resource constraints, such as insufficient funding and staff, limit the depth of evidence gathering. High workloads and limited specialisation among committee staff hinder efficiency. Reliance on external expertise is inconsistent, leading to gaps in oversight capacity.		expert engagement, and administrative functions. • Hire specialised staff, such as subject-matter experts and legal advisors, to assist in complex investigations. • Establish a dedicated research and technical support unit with modern tools to assist committees in real-time.
4	Practice	In practice, parliament consistently summons representatives of the executive, who appear before committees when invited and provide full and timely	In practice, committees regularly summon representatives of the executive to appear and provide information. Public hearings and inquiries are common tools for accountability. Committees routinely summon ministers and senior officials for questioning. High-profile inquiries demonstrate the ability to hold the executive accountable. Public access to	3	• Improve enforcement by appointing an oversight coordinator within committees to track attendance and promptly address non-compliance. • Regularly assess and update procedures for summoning and questioning the executive to identify and address inefficiencies.

		information to the committee.	committee hearings enhances transparency. Some executive representatives fail to appear or provide incomplete or delayed information. Political dynamics can result in selective enforcement of accountability measures. Inconsistent follow-up on non-compliance reduces the impact of summonses.		Enhance transparency by broadcasting committee hearings in real-time and promptly publishing summaries and findings to maintain public trust.
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To enhance parliamentary oversight, strengthening enforcement mechanisms and improving resource allocation for committees are essential. This includes implementing automated tracking for summonses, providing specialised staff, and ensuring consistent follow-up on non-compliance. Increasing public access and transparency through real-time broadcasting and publishing of findings will further promote accountability.



6.7.4 Summoning the executive in plenary

Summoning the executive in plenary allows parliament to directly question executive members during full sessions. This dimension ensures that parliament can call the executive to account in a public setting, where discussions and questions from MPs can be heard by all MPs and the public. This process is key to maintaining transparency and accountability at the highest levels of government.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules authorise parliament to summon members of the executive, including the President and Cabinet ministers, to respond to interpellations during plenary sessions. Ministers are legally required to attend and respond to questions from MPs within set timeframes. Constitutional provisions (Section 55) obligate the executive to account to parliament. Parliamentary rules explicitly require ministers to respond to interpellations in person. Mechanisms such as the President's Question Time provide regular opportunities for plenary engagement with the executive. Instances of executive representatives evading direct accountability through vague or incomplete answers. Scheduling conflicts and procedural delays occasionally hinder timely responses.	4	- Strengthen enforcement to ensure ministers provide complete and substantive responses to interpellations, with penalties for evasive answers. - Define acceptable responses to interpellations, requiring ministers to directly address questions and ensuring comprehensive answers. - Implement regular reviews by an independent body to assess adherence to the interpellation process.
2	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure establish the	Parliamentary rules outline procedures for interpellations, including the number of MPs	3	Strengthen enforcement to ensure ministers provide complete and substantive

		procedure for interpellations, including the number of MPs required to launch an interpellation and the possible results of the process.	required to initiate an interpellation and the process for conducting plenary questioning. The NA allows both oral and written questions, with specified timelines for responses. Structured rules ensure orderly and fair interpellation procedures. Provisions allow opposition MPs and smaller parties to pose questions to the executive. Deadlines for responses and guidelines for follow-up questions ensure substantive engagement. Lack of clarity on follow-up actions when responses are deemed inadequate. Limited enforcement of procedural deadlines for executive responses. Some interpellations are overly politicised, reducing their effectiveness as accountability mechanisms.		responses to interpellations, with penalties for evasive answers. • Define acceptable responses to interpellations, requiring ministers to directly address questions and ensuring comprehensive answers. • Implement regular reviews by an independent body to assess adherence to the interpellation process.
3	Practice	In practice, parliament makes use of the interpellation procedure and representatives of the executive appear in the	Parliament frequently uses interpellations, including regular question sessions with the President and ministers. The practice ensures the executive appears in plenary to address pressing issues. The President's Question Time and ministerial Q&A sessions provide platforms	3	• Ensure full participation from all MPs, including opposition and smaller factions, by allocating equal time for their interpellations or creating a rotating schedule.

		plenary when requested to do so.	for robust plenary engagement. Opposition and smaller parties actively use interpellation opportunities to raise concerns. High-profile interpellations often attract public attention, enhancing transparency. Ministers occasionally provide vague or evasive responses, reducing the substantive value of interpellations. Absences or delays by members of the executive can undermine accountability. Political dominance by the ruling party sometimes limits the scope of interpellations.		• Improve ministerial accountability by tracking commitments made during interpellations and providing regular updates on progress. • Address vague or evasive responses by instituting clearer guidelines for full answers and allowing follow-up questions to ensure clarity.
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To improve parliamentary accountability, it is essential to strengthen enforcement mechanisms for interpellations, ensuring ministers provide complete and substantive responses. This can be achieved by implementing penalties for evasive answers, establishing clearer guidelines for responses, and enhancing transparency through regular updates on ministers' commitments and follow-ups. Thereby, expanding participation opportunities for all MPs, including opposition and smaller factions, will ensure a more inclusive and effective questioning process.



6.7.5 Questions

The questions dimension enables MPs to formally ask questions to the executive, either in writing or during parliamentary sessions. This process allows parliamentarians to seek information or clarify government actions, policies, or decisions. It is an essential tool for holding the executive accountable and ensuring that the government responds to the concerns and needs of parliament and the public.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules grant MPs the authority to submit oral and written questions to the executive. Section 92 of the Constitution obliges members of the executive to account for their actions and provide information. Parliamentary rules further specify the obligation to respond in full and in a timely manner. Constitutional and legal provisions mandate executive accountability. The legal framework explicitly requires ministers to respond to questions either orally or written. Questions can address any area of government responsibility, ensuring broad oversight. Limited enforcement of sanctions for delayed or inadequate responses. In practice, some responses lack detail, reducing their value for oversight.	2	- Introduce robust enforcement mechanisms for delayed or inadequate executive responses, such as financial penalties or restrictions on executive actions. - Amend parliamentary rules to define "full" responses, legally obligating ministers to provide detailed answers, particularly on high-priority issues.
2	Procedures	Parliament's rules of procedure set out detailed procedures for	Detailed parliamentary rules outline the procedures for submitting oral and written questions, timelines for responses, and rules for	3	Strengthen procedures to ensure timely delivery of written responses, with

		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.	supplementary questions. The Speaker is empowered to manage debates and maintain order during oral questioning sessions. MPs are allowed to ask supplementary questions, enhancing depth and clarity. Timelines are specified for written responses, ensuring procedural consistency. The Speaker's authority ensures structured and fair debate during oral question sessions. Supplementary questions are sometimes evaded or inadequately addressed by ministers. Enforcement of timelines for written responses is inconsistent, leading to delays. Procedural complexities occasionally hinder the submission process for MPs from smaller parties or independent MPs.		automatic follow-ups and public notifications for delays. • Improve the question submission process by implementing a user-friendly digital platform for MPs, enhancing efficiency and transparency. • Reinforce the Speaker's authority to ensure ministers answer supplementary questions within a defined timeframe.
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	Oral and written questions are a permanent feature of parliamentary activity. Regular question sessions, including the President's Question Time, ensure consistent executive accountability. Written and oral questions are consistently used by MPs to engage the executive. Regular question sessions, such as	2	• Make oral and written responses publicly accessible through official websites and social media to enhance transparency and accountability. • Develop internal guidelines for improving response quality, with regular reviews to monitor effectiveness.

		procedures are applied consistently and effectively. Representatives of the executive respond in full and in a timely manner to both written and oral questions.	ministerial Q&A and the President's Question Time, foster transparency. High-profile questions often receive public attention, enhancing accountability. Responses from the executive are sometimes vague or incomplete. Delays in responding to written questions are common, undermining their effectiveness. Political dynamics can reduce the substantive nature of questions and responses, with some exchanges devolving into political point-scoring.		Encourage a focus on policy issues over political point-scoring by implementing clear guidelines for MPs on the purpose and scope of questions and responses.
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To enhance executive accountability, it is crucial to implement robust enforcement mechanisms for delayed or inadequate responses to both oral and written questions, including penalties and clear guidelines for "full" responses. Furthermore, improving procedural efficiency through a user-friendly digital platform for MPs and reinforcing the Speaker's authority to ensure timely supplementary responses will further strengthen the questioning process. Promoting transparency by making responses publicly accessible and focusing on substantive policy issues over political point-scoring will ensure that parliamentary questions serve their intended purpose of fostering accountability.



6.7.6 Hearings

Hearings provide a forum for gathering testimony from witnesses, experts, and government officials. This dimension ensures that parliament can conduct hearings to investigate specific issues or policies, enabling a thorough examination of matters within the executive's purview. Hearings allow MPs to gather diverse viewpoints and evidence to inform their oversight and decision-making.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes the mandate of parliamentary committees to conduct hearings, both on the parliamentary premises and outside parliament.	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules establish the authority of parliamentary committees to conduct hearings, both on parliamentary premises and outside. Committees are empowered to summon witnesses, gather evidence, and hold public hearings to fulfil their oversight mandate. The Constitution (Sections 56 and 69) grants committees' extensive powers to conduct hearings and gather evidence. Committees can operate outside parliament, enhancing accessibility and inclusiveness. Legal provisions ensure committees can compel witnesses to testify, promoting accountability. No significant gaps exist in the legal framework, but enforcement of committee mandates sometimes faces resistance from summoned individuals.	4	• Introduce penalties or sanctions for non-compliance to ensure witnesses cooperate during committee hearings. • Establish guidelines for conducting hearings outside parliament, ensuring consistency with in-parliament standards. • Adapt procedures to incorporate emerging technological tools for committee work in a digital world.
2	Procedures	Parliament has clear rules and procedures	Parliamentary rules provide clear procedures for planning and organising committee hearings,	4	• Implement a centralised scheduling and management system for hearings to track

		on the planning and organisation of committee hearings, and on the production of committee reports.	including timelines for scheduling, frameworks for inviting witnesses, and requirements for producing committee reports. Rules ensure hearings are well-structured and adequately documented. Committees are required to produce reports that include findings and recommendations, which are submitted to parliament for consideration. Processes for public participation in hearings are clearly defined. Procedural delays in organising hearings are common, often due to administrative inefficiencies. Reports are sometimes delayed or lack detail, reducing their effectiveness.		progress, deadlines, and required documentation. • Ensure reports are produced on time, with clear deadlines and standardised formats for findings and recommendations. • Evaluate the effectiveness of committee hearings through surveys or consultations with stakeholders.
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	Committee hearings are open to the public by default, with exceptions for sensitive matters (i.e. Joint Committee on Ethics and Members' Interest). Many hearings are broadcast via the parliamentary website or covered by media. Public access to hearings promotes transparency and civic engagement. Broadcasting hearings online broadens	3	• Publish clear explanations for closed hearings, particularly regarding national security concerns, to maintain public trust. • Invest in better technical infrastructure for reliable streaming of hearings, and raise public awareness about access, especially in rural areas.

		broadcast through the parliamentary website.	accessibility. Rules clearly define legitimate reasons for closing hearings to the public. Some hearings are closed unnecessarily, raising concerns about transparency. Technical and logistical issues occasionally limit the broadcasting of hearings. Public awareness of how to access hearings remains low in some regions.		• Use outreach campaigns and accessible guides to increase public participation in hearings.
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	Committees actively conduct hearings, take evidence from diverse sources, and produce reports. Hearings are generally open to the public, and their conclusions are documented and published. Committees regularly engage with stakeholders, including civil society, experts, and government representatives. Hearings on critical issues often attract public and media attention, enhancing accountability. Reports document findings and are submitted to parliament for action. Hearings are sometimes under-resourced, limiting their scope and depth. The quality of evidence gathering and reporting varies across	3	• Allocate more funding and staffing for thorough hearings, including external expertise when necessary. • Standardise evidence-gathering and reporting across committees by developing best practices and training staff. • Create accessible engagement platforms for underserved communities, including regional hearings, translation services, and virtual participation.

		are documented and published.	committees. Public participation is uneven, particularly in rural and marginalised areas.		
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To strengthen the effectiveness of PCs hearings, it is essential to introduce sanctions for non-compliance to ensure full cooperation from witnesses and establish clear guidelines for conducting hearings outside parliament. Improving the scheduling and management of hearings through a centralised system, enhancing technical infrastructure for broadcasting, and promoting public awareness will further increase transparency and accessibility. Furthermore, increasing funding, standardising evidence-gathering processes, and creating accessible platforms for public engagement, especially in underserved regions, will enhance the quality and inclusivity of committee hearings.



6.7.7 Parliamentary committees of inquiry

Parliamentary committees of inquiry (PCI) are specialised committees tasked with investigating particular matters of public concern. This dimension ensures that parliament has the authority to establish committees that can conduct detailed inquiries, summon witnesses, and gather evidence on issues that require scrutiny. Committees of inquiry play a vital role in holding the executive accountable and ensuring transparency in government actions.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure contain clear provisions	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules establish clear provisions for the establishment of PCIs <i>[examples: ad hoc committees of the NA - Committee for Section 194 Enquiry into Public Protector and Judicial Commission of Inquiry</i>	4	Set clear timelines for establishing PCIs and introduce expedited inquiry processes for urgent national issues.

		on the establishment of PCIs.	into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector]. Section 56 and Section 69 of the Constitution empower parliament to form committees, summon witnesses, and obtain information to investigate maladministration, misconduct, or policy failures. The Constitution and Rules of Parliament clearly outline the authority to establish PCIs. PCIs can be set up to investigate any matter within parliament's oversight mandate. The framework ensures that PCIs are independent and empowered to act without interference. No significant gaps exist in the legal framework, but delays in establishing PCIs for politically sensitive issues can occur.		Strengthen the legal framework by clarifying PCI powers and scope, updating public guidelines and FAQs on their activation.
2	Powers	PCIs have the power to summon officials and/or private individuals, to obtain written and oral evidence, as well as information and	PCIs have extensive powers to summon officials, request documents, and collect oral and written evidence. They can hold hearings, make findings, and issue recommendations. PCIs can compel attendance and evidence from public and private entities. Committees have the authority to conduct hearings and interrogate	4	- Implement penalties or legal actions for non-compliance with PCI summonses, ensuring full co-operation. - Expand PCI powers to summon international witnesses and access global records for wider investigations.

		documentation, from governmental, judicial, administrative, and private institutions, to conduct hearings, and to issue findings and recommendations.	witnesses under oath. Recommendations issued by PCIs carry significant weight and often lead to parliamentary or executive actions. Non-compliance by summoned individuals or entities can delay proceedings. Some witnesses cite legal or procedural technicalities to avoid providing full disclosure.		Invest in advanced forensic and analytical tools, along with staff training, to process complex evidence effectively.
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.	Political representation in PCIs is proportional to parliamentary representation, ensuring inclusivity. Opposition participation is guaranteed by law. Hearings are open to the public except for exceptional cases involving sensitive information. PCIs reflect the proportional representation of political parties in parliament. The role of the opposition is clearly defined and protected, enhancing oversight. Public access to hearings fosters transparency and accountability. Opposition parties sometimes allege insufficient opportunities to influence PCI agendas. Exceptional circumstances for closing hearings	4	- Ensure opposition parties have meaningful input in PCI agendas, such as guaranteed seats on steering committees or structured processes for minority input. - Ensure transparency when hearings are closed, providing clear explanations, and limiting duration. - Expand public access to hearings by offering sign language, translations, and improving streaming services for inclusivity.

			are occasionally invoked without clear justification.		
4	Resources	PCIs have the trained personnel and administrative and financial resources necessary to support the process.	PCIs are supported by parliamentary staff, including legal advisers, researchers, and administrative personnel. Financial resources are allocated to facilitate investigations. Committees have access to skilled personnel and administrative support. Financial resources are generally adequate to cover operational requirements. Access to external expertise is allowed for complex investigations. Limited financial and human resources constrain the scope of some investigations. High workloads and insufficient specialised training for committee staff reduce efficiency. Delays in securing external expertise can impede progress in technical inquiries.	3	• Increase financial resources and staffing for PCIs, including specialised staff for complex investigations. • Provide regular training in forensic accounting, digital investigations, and evidence handling to improve efficiency. • Formalise partnerships with academic institutions and international organisations for expert support when needed.
5	Practice	In practice, parliament sets up PCIs to investigate possible maladministration, misconduct, or policy	Parliament regularly establishes PCIs to investigate issues such as maladministration, corruption, or policy failures. Findings are published, and responsible authorities are expected to act on recommendations. High-	3	• Establish clear procedures and timelines for following up on PCI recommendations, including an independent monitoring body. • Strengthen mechanisms to guarantee executive cooperation with PCIs, including

		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.	profile inquiries, such as the State Capture Commission follow-up, demonstrate parliament's commitment to accountability. Committees have successfully held hearings, gathered evidence, and issued actionable recommendations. Public engagement in PCI processes fosters trust in parliamentary oversight. Delays in initiating inquiries for politically sensitive matters reduce their impact. Resistance or non-cooperation from the executive and other entities impedes some inquiries. Follow-up on PCI recommendations is inconsistent, limiting accountability.		penalties for non-compliance or interference. • Introduce independent oversight mechanisms to prevent political interference and ensure objective, accountable investigations.
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To enhance the effectiveness of PCIs, it is essential to streamline the establishment process by introducing clear timelines and expedited procedures for urgent matters. Strengthening penalties for non-compliance, expanding PCI powers to access international records, and improving resources for complex investigations will further empower these committees. Thus, ensuring that opposition parties have meaningful input, improving transparency during closed hearings, and increasing public access to hearings will foster greater inclusivity and accountability. Formalising follow-up procedures and establishing independent oversight will ensure that PCI recommendations lead to tangible actions and strengthen executive accountability.



6.8 Indicator 1.8 Budget

The parliamentary role in budgeting involves scrutiny and approval of national budgets. This indicator evaluates how parliament is involved in formulating, examining, and approving the budget. It also assesses the mechanisms for in-year oversight and post-budget approval, ensuring the budget process is transparent, accountable, and responsive.

6.8.1 Formulation, examination, amendment, and approval

This dimension concerns the process by which parliament is involved in the formulation, examination, amendment, and approval of the national budget. It ensures that parliament has the authority and capacity to scrutinise the executive's proposed budget, propose amendments, and ultimately approve or reject the budget. This process is essential for maintaining parliamentary control over government spending and ensuring that public funds are used effectively and responsibly.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes clear arrangements covering all aspects of parliament's consideration of budget legislation. Only parliament can give	The Constitution of SA grants parliament the authority to approve the national budget, ensuring final legislative control over public finances. Sections 214-222 outline parliament's role, while the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act (2009) provides detailed guidance on amending money bills. Parliament has exclusive authority to approve the national budget, ensuring	4	• Simplify the procedural requirements under the Money Bills Amendment Act for more timely and substantive amendments during budget consideration. • Implement regular training for MPs, particularly those from smaller parties, to enhance their understanding of complex budgetary processes.

		final approval to budget legislation.	legislative oversight. The Money Bills Amendment Act enhances parliament's ability to review and amend the budget. The legal framework ensures clear procedures for budgetary consideration and approval. Complex procedural requirements under the Money Bills Amendment Act can delay parliament's ability to make substantive amendments. Limited understanding of budgetary processes among some MPs reduces engagement in detailed scrutiny.		• Introduce mechanisms for greater public and civil society involvement in the budget formulation and scrutiny process, including public consultations.
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.	The executive – via the Minister of Finance – is required to present the draft budget to parliament along with supporting documents, including macroeconomic forecasts, revenue and expenditure breakdowns, and its impact on social and economic groups. The National Treasury provides detailed documentation and explanatory notes, enhancing transparency. Pre-budget briefings and mid-term budget policy statements ensure MPs are informed. Efforts to analyse the impact of budget proposals on	4	• Ensure the National Treasury provides clearer, user-friendly budget documents with simplified charts and visual aids. • Create dedicated teams within committees to assist MPs in analysing budget proposals, particularly regarding vulnerable groups. • Expand public access to budget documents, including making them interactive online and enabling media and civil society organisations to engage with the budget.

			various demographic groups are evident. Limited capacity among MPs to interpret technical data diminishes effective engagement. Budget information, while comprehensive, is sometimes presented in a format that is difficult for non-specialists to analyse.		
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.	Parliamentary rules provide a defined timeline for budget review, with committee hearings and debates allocated before final approval. Opposition and minority parties are given opportunities to participate in budget discussions. Committees are allocated specific periods to scrutinise the budget in detail. Opportunities for opposition and minority parties to raise concerns are enshrined in parliamentary procedures. Annual timelines ensure the budget is reviewed and approved within legal deadlines. The timeline for budget scrutiny is often tight, limiting the depth of analysis. High workloads during budget periods reduce MPs' ability to engage effectively.	3	• Extend the timeline for budget consideration to allow for deeper analysis and debate, adjusting the legislative calendar accordingly. • Address workload during the budget period by providing additional resources, such as temporary staff or external experts. • Implement systems to help MPs focus on critical budget issues, potentially through focused sessions on key topics.

			Committees sometimes struggle to balance oversight with the pace of budget processes.		
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.	Parliament can amend the budget through provisions in the Money Bills Amendment Act, which allows MPs to influence allocations and reprioritise expenditures. MPs have the authority to propose amendments and influence budgetary allocations. Committees provide a platform for substantive debate and recommendations. Opposition participation ensures diverse views on budget priorities. The executive's strong influence over the budget limits parliament's ability to make significant changes. Procedural and technical constraints restrict the scope of amendments MPs can propose. Political dynamics often result in limited adoption of opposition or minority recommendations.	3	• Broaden the scope for budget amendments by removing procedural barriers that limit changes. • Ensure opposition amendments are given serious consideration, establishing clearer procedures for incorporating them. • Foster collaboration between ruling and opposition parties during the budget process through bipartisan working groups.
5	Practice	In practice, the budget is presented to parliament within the time defined by law.	In practice, the budget is presented to parliament within the timelines prescribed by law. Committees and plenary sessions scrutinise the budget, and it is approved before the fiscal	3	• Enhance the substance of budget debates by introducing rules that require MPs to engage in more detailed questioning and scrutiny.

		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.	year begins. The budget is consistently presented and approved within constitutional timelines. Committees conduct hearings and solicit input from stakeholders, including civil society. Parliamentary debates on the budget attract public attention and enhance transparency. Budget discussions in plenary sessions often lack substantive engagement and detailed questioning. Committees face capacity constraints, limiting their ability to conduct in-depth analysis. The implementation of committee recommendations on budgetary matters is inconsistent.		• Strengthen committees' role in monitoring budget implementation, requiring regular reports on spending and progress. • Develop a system to ensure recommendations made by committees during the budget process are followed up and acted upon.
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To improve the effectiveness of parliamentary budgetary processes, it is essential to simplify the procedural requirements for budget amendments and extend the time allocated for scrutiny to allow for deeper analysis. Providing clearer, user-friendly budget documents and increasing capacity through additional resources or temporary staff will help MPs, particularly those from smaller parties, engage more effectively. Moreover, ensuring opposition amendments are seriously considered and fostering collaboration between ruling and opposition parties can enhance the democratic process, while strengthening committees' roles in monitoring implementation will ensure budget recommendations are followed up and acted upon.



6.8.2 In-year and ex-post oversight

In-year and ex-post oversight refers to the mechanisms that parliament uses to monitor government spending both during the fiscal year and after the budget has been executed. This dimension ensures that parliament has the tools to monitor the allocation and use of public funds throughout the year, as well as the ability to review government spending and performance once the budget period has ended, ensuring accountability for financial decisions.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution and parliamentary rules assign the Standing Committee on Appropriations and SCOPA primary responsibility for in-year reviews of budget execution. These committees review government reports, including quarterly expenditure reports and mid-term budget statements. SCOPA conducts detailed reviews of expenditure and identifies irregularities. Parliamentary committees can initiate inquiries into budget execution issues. Mid-term reviews and quarterly reports from the executive provide a basis for oversight. Reviews often focus on high-profile issues, leaving less attention for smaller or less visible departments. Committees face resource	4	- Allocate additional resources to committees, especially SCOPA and the Standing Committee on Appropriations, for comprehensive budget reviews. - Expand reviews to cover more government agencies and expenditures, using a rotating schedule for thorough oversight. - Improve collaboration with the executive to streamline the process for receiving timely budget reports, enabling real-time reviews.

			constraints, limiting their capacity for comprehensive reviews.		
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.	Agencies funded by the national budget are required to submit regular financial and performance reports to parliament. The PFMA mandates quarterly and annual reporting on budgetary expenditure and outcomes. These audits are usually performed by the AGSA. Reporting frameworks ensure comprehensive financial accountability. Agencies must submit performance reports alongside financial statements, promoting transparency. Parliament uses these reports to identify underperformance and irregularities. Some agencies delay submissions or provide incomplete information. The quality of performance reporting is inconsistent, with gaps in measuring outcomes. MPs often lack the technical expertise to interpret complex financial data effectively.	3	• Require agencies to provide detailed performance reports linking financial expenditures to outcomes for better assessment of efficiency. • Standardise reporting requirements for consistency and comparability across departments, including measurable outcomes. • Provide training for MPs, especially on budgetary committees, to better interpret complex financial data and make informed recommendations.

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.	Parliamentary committees, such as SCOPA and portfolio committees, systematically review budgetary expenditure and outcomes. Committees are empowered to summon officials and demand access to financial and performance data. Committees actively review budget implementation, with SCOPA leading investigations into irregularities. Portfolio committees scrutinise the performance of specific departments and entities. Mechanisms for public hearings and stakeholder consultations enhance oversight. Access to information is sometimes delayed or restricted by procedural or bureaucratic barriers. Committee inquiries often face resource and time constraints, reducing their effectiveness. Follow-up on findings and recommendations is inconsistent across committees.	3	• Simplify procedures for accessing financial and performance data, removing bureaucratic barriers. • Establish a dedicated team to facilitate faster access to key data for scrutiny. • Hire more specialised staff to enhance the capacity of committees to conduct in-depth reviews. • Implement a formal follow-up system to track the implementation of committee recommendations by the executive.
4	Debate of budgetary outcomes	Budgetary outcomes are subject to discussion and debate in parliament, including	Parliamentary debates on budgetary outcomes are mandated, with opportunities for opposition and minority parties to contribute. Debates are held during committee reports,	3	• Simplify procedures for accessing financial and performance data, removing bureaucratic barriers.

		opportunities for the opposition and minority parties.	plenary sessions, and public hearings. Opposition and minority parties actively participate in budget debates, raising diverse perspectives. Budget debates receive public attention, enhancing transparency and accountability. Annual reports and audits by the Auditor-General inform debates on expenditure outcomes. Debates often focus on political point-scoring rather than substantive analysis. Limited time for plenary discussions on budgetary outcomes reduces depth. Recommendations from debates are not always acted upon by the executive.		• Establish a dedicated team to facilitate faster access to key data for scrutiny. • Hire more specialised staff to enhance the capacity of committees to conduct in-depth reviews. • Implement a formal follow-up system to track the implementation of committee recommendations by the executive.
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.	In practice, committees and parliament conduct regular budget scrutiny and debates. Reports and findings are made publicly available, ensuring transparency. Committees such as SCOPA and Appropriations meet regularly to review budget execution. Public hearings and media coverage of budgetary outcomes enhance public awareness. MPs across political lines (ought to) contribute to budget oversight	3	• Establish a centralised online platform for public access to all budget-related reports and findings. • Encourage broader participation in hearings and debates by MPs, civil society organisations, and experts. • Create a formal process to track and report on the implementation of

			processes. The depth of scrutiny varies across sectors, with some areas receiving limited attention. Public access to information on budget outcomes is hindered by delays, lack in transparency and technical issues. Recommendations from parliament are not always implemented effectively by the executive.		recommendations made during budgetary debates.
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To enhance the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight over the budget process, it is crucial to allocate additional resources to committees for more comprehensive and timely reviews of budget execution, particularly for SCOPA and the Standing Committee on Appropriations. Expanding the scope of reviews and streamlining procedures for accessing financial and performance data will improve oversight. Ensuring the implementation of recommendations through a formal follow-up system, enhancing capacity with specialised staff, and increasing public access to budget reports will strengthen accountability.



6.8.3 Public Accounts Committee

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a parliamentary committee specifically tasked with reviewing and auditing government expenditures. This dimension focuses on the role and effectiveness of the PAC in holding the executive accountable for its spending. The PAC scrutinises government accounts, investigates financial irregularities, and ensures that public money is spent according to law and policy.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules establish SCOPA as the primary oversight body for public accounts. SCOPA is tasked with scrutinising financial management and ensuring accountability for all entities funded by the national budget. The PFMA and parliamentary rules grant SCOPA the authority to assess performance and recommend corrective actions. SCOPA's mandate includes reviewing Auditor-General reports, interrogating irregular expenditure, and ensuring adherence to financial management laws. It has broad authority to investigate any entity funded by public funds. Legal provisions ensure SCOPA's independence and clear jurisdiction. SCOPA's focus is often reactive, addressing irregularities after they occur rather than proactively strengthening systems. The scope of its	4	• Empower SCOPA to proactively assess budget execution and financial performance across all government entities, including annual pre-emptive reviews. • Amend the legal framework to give SCOPA a direct role in advocating for systemic improvements in financial management. • Expand SCOPA's oversight to include local governments for comprehensive scrutiny across all levels of government.

			mandate sometimes stretches resources, limiting effectiveness in high-demand periods.		
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.	Parliamentary rules require proportional representation in SCOPA, ensuring that opposition parties are represented. By convention, the committee is chaired by a member of the opposition, enhancing neutrality and oversight independence. Proportional representation ensures diverse political perspectives. An opposition chairperson reinforces the impartiality of SCOPA's work. Cross-party representation fosters broader engagement in oversight activities. Political dynamics occasionally undermine the impartiality of committee processes. Opposition members sometimes cite challenges in influencing the agenda or ensuring equal participation.	4	• Ensure all parties, including smaller opposition parties, have an equal opportunity to contribute to SCOPA by rotating the chairpersonship of subcommittees. • Provide more training and support to opposition members of SCOPA, particularly in scrutinising budgetary issues. • Develop clear guidelines for opposition parties to influence SCOPA's agenda, ensuring effective participation.
3	Access to information	Entities funded by the budget are required to provide the PAC with records and information	SCOPA has the authority to request information from any entity funded by the national budget, including financial records, performance data, and explanations for irregularities. The AGSA	3	• Ensure all parties, including smaller opposition parties, have an equal opportunity to contribute to SCOPA by

		about their budgets and performance. Such information is readily accessible to parliament.	reports serve as a primary source for SCOPA's inquiries. The PFMA obligates government entities to provide SCOPA with information upon request. SCOPA's reliance on Auditor-General AGSA reports ensures a foundation of credible data. Hearings with government officials provide additional insights into budgetary performance. Delays in receiving requested information from entities can hinder timely scrutiny. Non-compliance or incomplete submissions by some entities undermine effective oversight. SCOPA sometimes faces difficulties accessing classified or sensitive financial data.		rotating the chairpersonship of subcommittees. • Provide more training and support to opposition members of SCOPA, particularly in scrutinising budgetary issues. • Develop clear guidelines for opposition parties to influence SCOPA's agenda, ensuring effective participation.
4	Resources	The PAC is adequately resourced to enable it to exercise its mandate on behalf of parliament.	SCOPA is supported by parliamentary staff, including researchers and administrative personnel. It also draws on technical expertise from external stakeholders, such as the AGSA's office. Dedicated resources enable SCOPA to analyse financial irregularities and performance issues. Collaboration with the Auditor-General enhances SCOPA's technical capacity.	3	• Allocate more resources to SCOPA, including staff with expertise in financial analysis and auditing. • Partner with external institutions like universities and audit firms to access more expertise.

			Parliamentary staff assist with report writing, coordination, and logistical support. Resource limitations, including understaffing and high workloads, reduce SCOPA's capacity to address all identified issues comprehensively. Budget constraints limit the committee's ability to conduct field visits or engage additional expertise. Training for MPs and staff on technical aspects of financial oversight is inconsistent.		• Develop continuous professional development programs focused on financial oversight skills for MPs and staff.
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.	SCOPA actively scrutinises the budget, reviews AGSA reports, and holds public hearings to address financial mismanagement. It publishes findings and recommendations, which are debated in parliament. SCOPA plays a visible and active role in holding the executive accountable for financial management. High-profile hearings attract public and media attention, enhancing transparency. SCOPA's reports and recommendations inform broader parliamentary debates on governance and fiscal discipline. Limited follow-up on SCOPA's	3	• Establish a system to track the implementation of SCOPA's recommendations, with regular progress reports from the executive. • Allocate equal time and resources to less visible sectors for comprehensive oversight. • Increase public awareness of SCOPA's work through live streaming, public consultations, and making reports more accessible and understandable.

			recommendations reduces their impact. Non-compliance by some entities with SCOPA's findings undermines accountability. SCOPA's focus on high-profile cases sometimes leads to insufficient attention to systemic issues or less visible sectors.		
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To enhance SCOPA's effectiveness, it is crucial to empower the committee to proactively assess budget execution and financial performance across all government entities, including local governments, and advocate for systemic improvements in financial management. Allocating more resources, improving access to information, and increasing training for MPs, particularly from opposition parties, will strengthen their ability to scrutinise financial issues effectively. Furthermore, tracking the implementation of SCOPA's recommendations and increasing public awareness of its work will improve accountability and transparency.



6.8.4 Expert support

Expert support refers to the provision of specialised knowledge and advice to parliament, particularly in relation to budgetary matters. This dimension ensures that parliament has access to independent experts who can assist in analysing government financial proposals, assessing the impact of budgetary decisions, and advising on complex financial and economic issues. Expert support strengthens parliament's ability to make informed decisions on fiscal matters.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Internal resources	Parliament has a PBO or other specialised	The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) is established to provide technical and expert	4	Ensure the PBO is allocated sufficient resources, including hiring expert staff and

		support service that has sufficient funding and expertise to provide expert support and advice on budgetary matters.	support to MPs and committees, specifically for budgetary and fiscal matters. It is funded through parliament's budget and staffed by specialists in economics, finance, and public policy. The PBO delivers independent and impartial analysis of the budget, fiscal policy, and macroeconomic trends. Regular reports, briefings, and pre-budget analyses are provided to committees and individual MPs. The PBO's technical expertise enhances parliament's capacity for detailed budget oversight. The PBO's resources, both financial and human, are often insufficient to meet the high demand from MPs and committees. High turnover of skilled personnel limits institutional continuity and expertise. Outreach and visibility of the PBO's resources among all MPs could be improved.		providing financial resources for timely, high-quality analyses. • Implement policies to retain skilled personnel with competitive salaries and clear professional progression paths. • Increase awareness of the PBO's services among MPs by conducting regular briefings and workshops, ensuring all MPs are aware of the available expertise.
2	External sources of expertise	Parliament routinely engages with external sources of expertise throughout the budget cycle and seeks to gain	Parliament seldomly engages external stakeholders, including civil society organisations, academic institutions, think tanks, and international organisations, to provide insights on budgetary matters.	3	• Broaden the range of external experts consulted, ensuring representation from grassroots organisations, marginalised communities, and academic institutions.

		a perspective on how the budget impacts different groups in society.	Committees – on some occasions – invite external experts during public hearings and consultations. Where present, engagement with external stakeholders enriches debates and offers diverse perspectives on fiscal policies. External experts provide evidence-based analyses on how the budget impacts different societal groups. Partnerships with institutions such as the AGSA's office enhance parliament's oversight capabilities. The reliance on external expertise varies across committees, with less-resourced committees engaging less frequently. Time constraints during the budget cycle limit the scope and depth of external consultations. Limited engagement with grassroots and marginalised communities reduces the inclusivity of the budget process.		• Allocate more time and resources for comprehensive consultations with external experts, including dedicated sessions for civil society, academics, and economic experts. • Ensure that all parliamentary committees, especially smaller ones, have equal access to external expertise for effective engagement.
3	Capacity building	MPs have access to specialised training to build capacity to scrutinise the budget.	MPs are provided with training programs to build their technical capacity for budget analysis and fiscal oversight. These programs are conducted by the PBO, parliamentary staff, and external experts, with a focus on equipping MPs	3	• Develop a comprehensive training program for MPs, particularly focusing on new MPs and committee members in budget oversight, with practical applications and case studies.

			with the skills to scrutinise complex financial data. Specialised training programs improve MPs' ability to engage meaningfully in budget debates. Training initiatives cater to the needs of new MPs and those serving on finance-related committees. Collaboration with international organisations, such as the World Bank and IMF, enhances the quality of capacity-building programs. Attendance at training sessions is inconsistent, often due to MPs' competing priorities. Practical application of training is limited, as programs sometimes lack real-world scenarios. Follow-up mechanisms to assess the impact of training are underdeveloped.		• Implement mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of training programs, including feedback surveys from MPs and evaluations of practical application. • Encourage MPs to attend regular workshops and seminars on budget oversight, using international organisations for advanced training.
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	MPs utilise internal and external resources to scrutinise the budget, and committees actively engage in budgetary oversight through hearings, reports, and public consultations. The PBO's analyses and reports are regularly cited in parliamentary debates. External inputs, such as civil society submissions, inform committee	3	• Ensure equal access to the PBO's analyses and external experts for all committees, particularly smaller ones with fewer resources. • Extend the time for budget consideration to allow deeper engagement with budget

		expertise and advice on budgetary matters.	deliberations on the budget. High-profile debates on fiscal matters enhance transparency and accountability. Some MPs lack the technical knowledge to fully engage in budget scrutiny, reducing the quality of debates. Uneven access to expertise and resources limits smaller or less prominent committees' oversight capabilities. The short time frame for budget scrutiny restricts MPs' ability to explore issues in depth.		proposals, including dedicated sessions for high-priority matters. Equip MPs with dedicated technical staff to aid with interpreting complex financial data and formulating informed questions during budget debates.
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To improve parliamentary capacity for budget scrutiny, the PBO should be allocated more resources and expert staff, with a focus on retaining skilled personnel. Expanding engagement with a broader range of external experts, particularly from grassroots and marginalised communities, will enhance inclusivity in the budget process. By adding comprehensive and practical capacity-building programs for MPs, including better access to training and resources, will ensure more effective oversight. Finally, increasing time for budget consideration and ensuring equitable access to expertise across all committees will foster deeper and more informed debates.



6.8.5 Supreme audit institution

The Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) is an independent body responsible for auditing government accounts and public financial management. This dimension assesses the role of the SAI in providing parliament with objective, credible information on the government's financial activities. The SAI helps ensure that government spending is legal, efficient, and in line with parliamentary and public expectations, supporting parliament's oversight responsibilities.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The Constitution of SA (Section 188) and the Public Audit Act (PAA) establish the AGSA's role, functions, and powers, as a Chapter 9 institution. The AGSA audits public entities, ensures accountability, and reports its findings to parliament. The Constitution guarantees the AGSA's independence and mandates its authority to audit all public entities. The PAA empowers the AGSA to issue binding recommendations and declare material irregularities. The legal framework provides a clear definition of the entities subject to audit. While the framework is robust, enforcement of recommendations often depends on the audited entities and parliament's follow-up actions.	4	- Establish formalised timelines and accountability mechanisms for parliament and the executive to act on AGSA's recommendations, ensuring timely implementation. - Extend auditing to new sectors, including public-private partnerships and complex financial structures. - Strengthen the relationship between AGSA and civil society, encouraging public oversight and increasing pressure for implementing recommendations.
2	Independence of members	SAI members are independent of the executive and the entities that they audit.	AGSA members, including the Auditor-General, are appointed by the President on the recommendation of parliament, ensuring independence from the executive. The	4	Enhance the transparency of the AGSA's appointment by introducing public hearings and consultations during the selection process.

		Members enjoy independence in terms of their appointment to, and cessation of, office, and are persons of integrity and competence.	appointment process emphasises competence and integrity. The Auditor-General enjoys secure tenure and cannot be removed arbitrarily, safeguarding independence. Members of the AGSA are required to operate without external influence, ensuring impartiality. The appointment process involves multi-party parliamentary oversight, reinforcing accountability. Public perceptions of independence can be influenced by political dynamics, though the institution has maintained its impartiality in practice.		• Add safeguards to protect the independence of AGSA members, including clear rules for the cessation of office. • Launch public campaigns to educate citizens about the AGSA's role and independence, increasing public trust and insularity from political influence.
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.	The AGSA has access to all relevant documents and records of audited entities and has the authority to require responses to its findings. Funding and staffing are allocated to enable the AGSA to fulfil its mandate. The AGSA has the legal authority to conduct thorough audits and follow up on irregularities. The PAA ensures that the AGSA has access to all necessary information for its audits. Expert staff and technical capacity enable the AGSA to conduct	3	• Allocate more resources to AGSA, including specialised auditors for complex sectors, to reduce delays and improve the quality of audits. • Provide targeted training for the AGSA's staff on digital auditing and international auditing standards. • Implement stronger oversight mechanisms to ensure entities act on the AGSA's

			complex audits effectively. Resource constraints, including funding and staffing shortages, can limit the AGSA's ability to address all audit demands comprehensively. Delays in implementing AGSA's recommendations by audited entities hinder the overall impact of its work.		findings, such as regular follow-up audits or action plans.
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.	The AGSA's reports directly to parliament through committees such as the SCOPA. The legal framework ensures regular and independent reporting to parliament and the public. SCOPA systematically scrutinises the AGSA's reports and holds entities accountable for addressing findings. The AGSA's relationship with parliament enhances legislative oversight of public finances. Public access to the AGSA's reports promotes transparency and accountability. Parliamentary follow-up on the AGSA's recommendations varies across committees and issues. Some MPs lack the technical expertise to fully engage with complex	3	• Provide specialised training to MPs, particularly those on oversight committees, on interpreting audit findings to drive accountability. • Facilitate regular engagements between the AGSA and parliament for timely responses to audit findings. • Widely publicise the AGSA's reports to increase public pressure for accountability.

			audit findings, reducing the effectiveness of oversight.		
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.	In practice, the AGSA demonstrates independence and conducts its audits thoroughly. It reports regularly to parliament and the public, and parliament reviews its findings and takes action where necessary. The AGSA consistently produces high-quality audit reports that highlight irregularities and financial mismanagement. Material irregularities flagged by the AGSA are followed up through legal and administrative mechanisms. Parliamentary committees, such as SCOPA, actively engage with AGSA's findings during oversight hearings. Not all AGSA's recommendations result in corrective action by audited entities, reducing the impact of its work. Delays in parliamentary action on the AGSA's findings diminish the deterrent effect of audits. Public awareness of the AGSA's work, though improving, remains limited in some sectors.	3	• Develop a system to track and report on actions taken in response to the AGSA's recommendations, with regular public updates. • Speed up response processes by setting stricter deadlines for parliamentary debate on audit findings. • Facilitate more public and civil society involvement in scrutinising the AGSA's reports through consultations or forums.

To enhance the effectiveness of the AGSA's work, it is crucial to increase resource allocation, including specialised auditors for complex sectors, and strengthen follow-up mechanisms to ensure timely implementation of recommendations. By improving the technical capacity of the AGSA's staff, along with targeted training for parliamentarians on interpreting audit findings, will increase oversight quality. Parliament must also enhance its follow-up processes on the AGSA's recommendations and increase public and civil society involvement in scrutinising audit outcomes to foster greater accountability and transparency.



6.9 Indicator 1.9 Representative role of members of parliament

The representative role of MPs is essential for ensuring that the interests of all citizens are effectively voiced within the legislative process. This indicator looks at how MPs engage with their constituencies, their role in opposition, and the mechanisms through which they express public concerns and advocate for policy change.

6.9.1 Interaction with the electorate

This dimension focuses on the relationship between parliamentarians and their constituents. It ensures that MPs actively engage with the electorate, listening to their concerns, communicating legislative developments, and representing their interests effectively. Regular interaction with the electorate is essential for ensuring that MPs remain accountable and responsive to the needs of the public they represent.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework clearly sets out the duties and expectations concerning the	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules outline the representative duties of MPs, requiring them to represent the interests of their constituents and ensure public	4	Develop a framework or guidelines for regular and effective interaction between MPs and their constituents, ensuring uniformity and accountability.

		representative role of MPs.	participation in parliamentary processes. Section 42(3) of the Constitution emphasises parliament's role as a forum for public consideration of issues. Parliamentary rules empower MPs to raise constituency concerns through motions, debates, and questions. Legal provisions ensure that MPs act in the public interest and uphold constitutional principles. The framework does not provide explicit guidelines for how MPs should engage with constituents due to SA not having a constituency-based electoral system, leading to varying practices. Enforcement mechanisms for ensuring that MPs fulfil their representative roles are limited.		• Introduce performance metrics or periodic reviews to track MPs' adherence to their representative duties. • Update the legal framework to encourage MPs to engage with their constituents via digital platforms, ensuring inclusivity for all.
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	Parliamentary rules of procedure grant MPs opportunities to raise constituency concerns through debates, motions, and committee discussions. MPs can also submit questions to the executive in plenary and written formats. MPs can introduce motions, propose debates, and participate in public hearings to address	4	• Develop a flexible scheduling system that allows MPs to address urgent constituency issues, ensuring they have adequate space to speak on behalf of the public. • Allow MPs to submit motions specifically related to their constituencies, especially for underrepresented or minority groups.

		debates and in committee and plenary work.	constituency issues. Committees provide structured platforms for in-depth discussions of specific concerns. Opposition and minority party MPs are afforded opportunities to raise concerns, promoting inclusivity. High workloads and packed agendas often limit the time available for individual MPs to raise issues. Political dynamics sometimes sideline constituency-specific concerns in favour of party priorities.		Strengthen mechanisms for opposition MPs to raise their concerns and have them debated, ensuring more inclusive discussions.
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.	The parliamentary calendar allocates time for plenary sessions, committee meetings, and constituency work periods, aiming to balance legislative duties and constituency engagement. Dedicated constituency periods allow MPs to interact with the public, ensuring participation in both legislative work and community engagement. A flexible schedule accommodates urgent debates and issues raised by MPs. However, constituency periods are sometimes too short for meaningful engagement, particularly in rural areas, and MPs often	3	- Increase the amount of time allocated for constituency work, especially for MPs in rural or underserved areas. - Stagger committee schedules to allow MPs more flexibility and ensure they can balance their legislative and representative roles effectively. - Provide MPs with clearer scheduling to help them plan their constituency engagements and improve balance with legislative duties.

			struggle to balance their legislative responsibilities with effective constituency representation. High committee workloads further reduce the time available for constituency concerns. However, it can be argued that the constituency periods are too long, which might slow down legislative processes. The allocation of excessive time to constituency work may hinder the timely progress of parliamentary work. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these engagements is uncertain, with some questioning whether MPs are achieving meaningful interactions with the public or merely fulfilling formal duties. Therefore, while the calendar seeks to balance these competing priorities, the allocation of time between constituency work and legislative duties remains a contentious issue.		
4	Resources	Parliament provides MPs with adequate resources to support engagement with their	Parliament allocates resources, such as constituency offices, travel allowances, and administrative support, to enable MPs to engage with their constituents effectively.	3	Allocate more resources for constituency offices in rural areas, such as increased staffing, better infrastructure, and higher travel allowances.

		constituents. These resources are allocated in an equitable, non-partisan manner.	Constituency offices ought to provide a direct link between MPs and their communities. Travel allowances and administrative support facilitate outreach to remote areas. Resources are allocated equitably, ensuring non-partisan distribution however some resource allocations are often insufficient, particularly for MPs in rural or underserved areas. Constituency offices are sometimes understaffed or lack the infrastructure needed for effective operations. Limited training on public engagement reduces MPs' ability to maximise available resources.		• Provide training programs for MPs on public engagement, community outreach, and digital communication. • Implement an independent oversight mechanism to ensure fair distribution of resources, targeting underfunded constituencies. • Expand and modernise constituency offices, especially in remote areas, by investing in technology and improving infrastructure.
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To improve the effectiveness of MPs in fulfilling their representative roles, it is essential to provide clearer guidelines for engaging with constituents, allocate more time and resources for constituency work – particularly in rural areas – and ensure that MPs have the necessary tools to effectively balance their legislative and representative duties. Enhanced training in public engagement, along with expanding the use of digital platforms, will ensure MPs are better equipped to connect with all constituents. Thus, strengthening mechanisms for opposition MPs to raise concerns and ensuring equitable resource distribution will foster more inclusive and effective parliamentary representation. It must however be emphasised that SA does not have a [constituency-based electoral system](#), and hence operates within constituencies in a different manner compared with countries who are (such as the United Kingdom).



6.9.2 Opposition

The opposition plays a crucial role in holding the government accountable by offering alternative policies, scrutinising government actions, and providing checks and balances. This dimension evaluates the role of the opposition within parliament, ensuring that it is able to function effectively, participate in debates, and contribute to the legislative process. A robust opposition is vital for maintaining the health of a democratic system.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework recognises the special role of the opposition in parliament.	The SA Constitution explicitly recognises the role of opposition parties in parliament, ensuring their participation in legislative and oversight functions. Section 57(2) mandates that parliamentary rules facilitate public participation and minority party representation. The Constitution guarantees opposition participation in all parliamentary processes, emphasising accountability and inclusivity. The legal framework ensures opposition parties are represented in parliamentary committees and other bodies. Opposition leaders have specific roles, such as the Leader of the Opposition, who is officially recognised in terms of parliamentary protocol. While the legal framework is robust,	4	• Ensure the full implementation and respect of the legal framework guaranteeing opposition participation, with independent reviews to uphold opposition rights during high-profile debates. • Enhance the quality of opposition contributions by introducing clearer procedural rules that ensure all parties have an equal opportunity to influence outcomes.

			its effectiveness depends on consistent implementation and political goodwill.		
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.	Parliamentary rules of procedure provide opposition parties with rights to scrutinise the government, initiate legislation, or motions, propose amendments, and participate equally in debates and votes. Opposition representation on committees is proportional to their seats in parliament. Opposition MPs can introduce private member's bills and motions for debate. Parliamentary questions allow the opposition to hold the executive accountable. Committees ensure proportional representation, giving opposition parties a voice in legislative and oversight processes. Dominance by the ruling party sometimes undermines the effectiveness of opposition rights. Opposition proposals, such as private member's bills, often face delays or rejection due to political dynamics. Time constraints during debates limit opportunities for opposition parties to present their views comprehensively. Within the 7 th Administration,	4	• Implement measures to ensure opposition motions and private members' bills are debated and voted on promptly, with a fixed schedule for such bills. • Provide more time for opposition to engage in significant debates by reviewing time allocations to avoid disproportionate limitations on their contributions. • Facilitate structured opportunities for opposition parties to collaborate, especially on national issues or government policies, for more coordinated opposition strategies.

			there is a change in the status quo due to the formation of the Government of National Unity.		
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.	Resources and facilities are allocated to opposition parties to support their parliamentary work. These include access to parliamentary research services, office space, administrative support, and proportional financial allocations. Opposition leaders, including the Leader of the Opposition, are provided with dedicated resources and recognition. Parliamentary staff and research services are available to assist opposition MPs. Financial resources are allocated based on party representation, promoting equity. Smaller opposition parties often lack sufficient resources to match the demands of parliamentary work. Administrative delays in resource allocation can hinder the opposition's ability to act effectively. Opposition MPs frequently cite challenges in accessing technical expertise for complex legislative issues.	3	• Allocate more resources to smaller opposition parties to ensure they have the support needed to compete effectively with larger parties. • Ensure all opposition MPs have access to parliamentary research services, expert analysis, and technical staff. • Streamline the process for distributing resources to opposition MPs to prevent delays and ensure timely support.

4	Practice	In practice, the above provisions are implemented consistently and without discrimination.	In practice, opposition parties participate actively in parliamentary debates, oversight functions, and committee work. However, the effectiveness of these roles varies depending on the political dynamics and the level of cooperation from the majority party. Opposition parties regularly use tools such as parliamentary questions and debates to scrutinise the government. Committees provide opposition MPs with opportunities to influence legislative and oversight outcomes. High-profile debates and inquiries often see active participation from opposition parties. Political dynamics sometimes marginalise opposition contributions, particularly during high-stakes debates. Instances of partisanship in committee decision-making reduce the impact of opposition scrutiny. The implementation of recommendations from opposition-led initiatives is inconsistent.	3	• Introduce mechanisms to make committee decision-making more impartial, including independent monitoring and stronger codes of conduct to ensure opposition contributions are fairly considered. • Establish a formal system to track the implementation of opposition-led motions, bills, and recommendations to ensure follow-through. • Ensure opposition MPs are given equal opportunity to participate in major debates, especially on key issues like the budget, national security, and constitutional matters.
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To strengthen the role of the opposition in parliament, it is essential to fully implement and respect the legal framework guaranteeing their participation, ensuring that opposition motions and private members' bills are debated and voted on promptly. Allocating additional resources to smaller opposition parties, providing equal access to research services, and streamlining resource allocation processes will ensure that opposition MPs are better equipped to fulfil their duties. Furthermore, enhancing impartiality in committee decision-making and establishing a formal system to track opposition-led initiatives will improve the effectiveness of their [contributions](#) and ensure that their scrutiny leads to meaningful change.



6.10 Indicator 1.10 Relations with other branches of government

The relationship between parliament and other branches of government is key to maintaining a balance of power and ensuring accountability. This indicator examines how parliament interacts with these branches, including its ability to check executive power and uphold the rule of law.

6.10.1 Relations with the executive

This dimension focuses on the relationship between parliament and the executive branch of government. It ensures that parliament has the capacity to hold the executive accountable through various mechanisms such as questioning, debate, and oversight. A healthy relationship between parliament and the executive ensures that the government is answerable to the people's elected representatives and that legislative functions are carried out independently of executive influence.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Constitution	The constitution establishes a separation of powers between the	The SA Constitution establishes a clear separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. It defines the roles,	4	Regularly review the impeachment process to enhance its deterrent effect and ensure it is effectively used when needed.

		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.	mandates, and election procedures for the Head of State (the President), who is also part of the executive branch. The Constitution provides mechanisms for impeachment and oversight. Sections 42, 55, and 92 of the Constitution delineate the roles of parliament and the executive, ensuring accountability. The President is elected by parliament, ensuring democratic legitimacy. Impeachment procedures under Section 89 ensure checks on executive misconduct. Political dynamics, particularly the dominance of the ruling party, can blur the separation of powers. Impeachment procedures, while well-defined, are rarely utilised, potentially reducing their deterrent effect.		• Develop a formal framework for executive accountability to parliament to mitigate political dynamics that undermine legislative scrutiny and ensure the ruling party does not overly control executive actions.
2	Legal framework	The legal framework defines the powers and duties of the executive and parliament, as well as mechanisms for a	The legal framework defines the powers and duties of the executive and parliament. Mechanisms such as the PFMA and the Rules of Parliament ensure that the executive reports periodically to parliament on its activities.	3	• Strengthen enforcement mechanisms for executive reporting by implementing penalties for non-compliance and creating a public registry for overdue reports.

		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.	Parliamentary committees, such as SCOPA, regularly scrutinise executive activities. Annual reports, budget reviews, and Auditor-General findings are mandatory, ensuring transparency. Legal provisions allow for parliamentary questions and debates to hold the executive accountable. Executive reporting is sometimes delayed or incomplete, limiting the effectiveness of oversight. Parliamentary rules governing oversight are not always enforced consistently.		• Provide adequate resources and technical support to committees like SCOPA to enhance their oversight capacity.
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	Mechanisms exist for periodic information-sharing, including quarterly and annual reports from the executive, Auditor-General audits, and committee inquiries. Institutions such as the PBO and SCOPA support non-partisan oversight. Auditor-General reports provide detailed, independent assessments of executive performance. Parliamentary questions and hearings enable information exchange between branches. Committees have the authority to	3	• Introduce clear timelines for the submission of reports and implement a monitoring system to track compliance. Introduce consequences for delays, such as requiring ministers to explain tardiness before parliament. • Increase access to non-sensitive but important documents through public channels to improve transparency and accountability.

		established for this purpose are non-partisan in nature and enable fluid communication and access to information between the branches.	summon executive officials and demand information. Delays in providing information by the executive hinder effective oversight. Non-compliance by some departments or entities with reporting obligations reduces transparency. Access to classified or sensitive information is sometimes restricted unnecessarily.		
4	Coordination	Both parliament and the executive have dedicated offices or staff to manage and coordinate issues including parliamentary agenda-setting, prime minister's/Executive's questions, the participation of ministers in parliamentary meetings, the summoning of executive officials to	Dedicated offices and staff in both parliament and the executive manage coordination, including agenda-setting, question sessions, and ministerial participation in parliamentary activities. Executive Q&A sessions ensure regular engagement between parliament and the executive. Parliamentary liaison offices within ministries facilitate communication. Rules ensure ministers participate in committee hearings and respond to MPs' questions. Coordination is occasionally disrupted by scheduling conflicts or non-attendance by ministers. Limited follow-up on MPs' questions reduces the effectiveness of engagement.	4	• Ensure ministers are consistently available to answer questions in key sessions, such as Executive Q&As, and establish follow-up mechanisms for those who fail to provide satisfactory answers. • Implement a structured scheduling process to prioritise essential engagements and improve coordination between parliament and the executive.

		parliament, answers to MPs' questions, and similar matters.	Political partisanship sometimes affects the quality of coordination.		
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.	In practice, parliament and the executive engage regularly through committee hearings, plenary debates, and information-sharing mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of these engagements varies depending on political dynamics and adherence to rules. Committees frequently engage with the executive to scrutinise policies, budgets, and performance. Information-sharing during budget cycles and oversight hearings is generally consistent. Parliamentary debates on key issues, such as the State of the Nation Address (SONA), promote engagement. Non-compliance with reporting obligations by some executive entities undermines accountability. The dominance of the ruling party can dilute the critical scrutiny of the executive. Limited consequences for delayed or inadequate	3	• Introduce stronger sanctions for non-compliance with reporting obligations, such as fines or ministerial accountability in plenary sessions. • Empower opposition members by providing them more time and platforms to question ministers and raise concerns. • Expand public participation in oversight processes through digital platforms and consultations, enabling citizens to track executive responses and enhance transparency.

			responses from the executive reduce accountability.		
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The SA Constitution and legal framework ensure a clear separation of powers between the executive and parliament, while mechanisms for accountability and information-sharing are in place. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms often suffers due to political dynamics, delays in executive reporting, and inconsistent enforcement of oversight rules. To strengthen the relationship between parliament and the executive, it is recommended to improve compliance with reporting obligations, streamline coordination processes, and empower opposition parties with more time and resources for scrutiny. Furthermore, enhancing [public participation](#) through digital platforms will increase transparency and accountability.



6.10.2 Relations with the judiciary

This dimension examines the interaction between parliament and the judiciary, ensuring that the separation of powers is respected while facilitating cooperation between the two branches. It assesses whether parliament provides for the independence of the judiciary while ensuring that the judicial system can function transparently and impartially. A positive relationship between parliament and the judiciary helps to uphold the rule of law and democratic governance.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Constitution	The constitution clearly establishes a separation of powers between the legislative and judicial	The SA Constitution establishes a clear separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Section 165 guarantees the independence of the judiciary	4	Create detailed guidelines or frameworks for handling judicial review cases to manage occasional tensions between parliament

		branches. The relationship between parliament and the judiciary is based on mutual respect and restraint.	and prohibits interference by other branches. The judiciary is established as an independent branch, with its authority derived from the Constitution. Parliamentary actions are subject to judicial review, ensuring checks and balances. The principle of mutual respect and restraint between parliament and the judiciary is well-embedded in constitutional practice. Tensions occasionally arise between the branches, especially in cases involving judicial review of legislation or executive decisions. Public perceptions of interference in judicial matters, though infrequent, can undermine trust in the separation of powers.		and the judiciary, ensuring clear roles and expectations. • Launch public awareness campaigns in collaboration with the judiciary to explain the checks and balances system, reinforcing mutual respect and trust in the separation of powers.
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	The legal framework provides for judicial independence, clear criteria for judicial appointments, and secure tenure for judges. The JSC oversees appointments, and parliament plays a limited role in judicial impeachments and removals under Section 177 of the Constitution . Judicial appointments are managed by the JSC, ensuring a transparent and	4	• Strengthen parliament's oversight of the JSC by establishing transparent processes for public engagement and consultation on judicial appointments, along with a more rigorous vetting process to reduce perceptions of political influence. • Introduce safeguards to protect judicial independence during impeachment

		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.	merit-based process. Judges enjoy security of tenure and can only be removed for proven incapacity or misconduct. The Constitution mandates clear and transparent procedures for the suspension or removal of judges. Parliamentary involvement in impeachment processes is rare but politically sensitive, which can sometimes undermine perceptions of judicial impartiality. The effectiveness of the JSC has occasionally been questioned due to perceived political influence in appointments.		processes by ensuring that removals are based on genuine grounds of incapacity or misconduct, and ensure public reporting for transparency.
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3	Resources	Parliament allocates adequate budgetary resources for the judicial system to operate effectively without any constraints.	Parliament allocates resources to the judiciary through the national budget, ensuring its operational independence. The judiciary manages its own budget through the Office of the Chief Justice. Judicial independence is supported by financial autonomy, with the judiciary controlling its budget allocations. Budgetary provisions generally ensure the functioning of courts and the delivery of justice. Resources are allocated to improve court infrastructure and technology, enhancing efficiency. Budgetary constraints sometimes delay the expansion of court services, especially in rural areas. Resource limitations affect the maintenance of court infrastructure and the appointment of additional judicial officers. Backlogs in cases indicate a need for increased funding to address workload pressures and recruit more personnel.	3	• Increase funding for judicial infrastructure, case management systems, and recruitment of judicial officers, with a focus on addressing backlogs and improving court accessibility in rural and underserved regions. • Earmark specific budgetary provisions for recruiting and training new judges, expanding court facilities, and increasing specialised court staff to enhance efficiency and timely delivery of justice. • Implement a robust monitoring framework to ensure adequate and timely allocation of resources to the judiciary, with regular audits to ensure resources are used effectively.
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To strengthen judicial independence and efficiency, the SA government should enhance oversight of the JSC and improve the transparency of judicial appointments. By increasing funding for judicial infrastructure and addressing case backlogs, particularly in underserved areas, will ensure better access to justice and support the judiciary's operational needs.



6.10.3 Relations with subnational levels of government

This dimension focuses on the relationship between parliament and subnational levels of government. It ensures that there is clear communication and coordination between parliament and these levels of government, particularly on matters of governance, policy implementation, and resource allocation. Effective relations with subnational governments help ensure that laws and policies are implemented consistently across all levels of government.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local. Chapter 3 establishes the principles of cooperative governance, while Chapters 6 and 7 detail the powers and functions of provincial and local governments. The Constitution emphasises cooperative governance, requiring all spheres to work collaboratively and avoid encroaching on each other's mandates. Provincial legislatures and the NCOP facilitate	4	- Clarify the division of concurrent functions, such as housing, health, and education, by providing more specific guidelines for responsibilities between national and subnational governments. Regular intergovernmental forums could be established to resolve conflicts and enhance alignment. - Strengthen the legal framework for resolving jurisdictional disputes between spheres of government by creating

			representation of provincial interests at the national level. Local government autonomy is protected under Section 151, with municipalities granted authority over their own affairs. Overlapping responsibilities between spheres of government occasionally lead to jurisdictional disputes. The effectiveness of cooperative governance depends on political will, which can vary across provinces and municipalities. Limited clarity in some areas of concurrent functions, such as housing and health, leads to inefficiencies.		formalised dispute resolution mechanisms, including an independent body for quicker resolution of conflicts.
2	Mechanisms and practices	Parliament has established mechanisms and practices in place for communication, coordination, cooperation, and information-sharing with subnational levels of government.	Parliament has established mechanisms for coordination and information-sharing with subnational governments. The NCOP plays a central role in this process, ensuring that provincial concerns are considered in national legislation. Committees, such as those on cooperative governance, oversee coordination between the spheres of government. The NCOP provides a direct link between parliament and provincial legislatures, ensuring subnational	4	• Develop a streamlined communication platform to facilitate ongoing dialogue between national, provincial, and local governments, especially on technical and financial matters. Digital platforms can improve sharing of information and documentation. • Address capacity constraints in municipalities by offering capacity-building programs for local government officials to

			voices are heard. Committees conduct oversight over cooperative governance and municipal affairs, addressing challenges at the provincial and local levels. Public hearings and stakeholder consultations include provincial and municipal representatives. Communication between national and subnational governments can be inconsistent, particularly on technical and financial matters. Capacity constraints in some municipalities limit their ability to engage effectively with parliament. Mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring the implementation of cooperative agreements are weak.		enhance their understanding of national legislative processes and improve engagement in cooperative governance. • Improve the monitoring and implementation of cooperative agreements by introducing a formal mechanism to track progress and providing regular updates to parliament. Ensure clear consequences for non-compliance with intergovernmental agreements.
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To enhance cooperative governance, the SA government should focus on clarifying overlapping responsibilities and strengthening mechanisms for communication and conflict resolution across all levels. Furthermore, improving the capacity of municipalities and ensuring effective implementation of intergovernmental agreements will foster greater collaboration and accountability.



6.11 Indicator 1.11 Key parliamentary powers

This indicator assesses parliament's authority over key areas such as national security, defence, foreign affairs, and international agreements. It ensures that parliament has the necessary powers to make decisions that impact the nation's sovereignty and security, and that such decisions are made transparently and democratically.

6.11.1 Security

This dimension concerns parliament's role in overseeing and ensuring the security of the state. It assesses how parliament engages with security matters, including legislation, policy oversight, and ensuring that the executive implements security measures effectively. This includes the protection of national sovereignty, critical infrastructure, and the safety of citizens, ensuring that security policies align with democratic principles and human rights.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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	The SA Constitution and supporting legislation grant parliament the authority to oversee the security sector, ensuring compliance with human rights standards and international obligations. The Defence Act, Intelligence Services Act, the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Act, and Protection of State Information Bill outline specific provisions for security sector governance, including access to classified information. Section 199 of the	3	- Review the restrictive nature of the Protection of State Information Bill to balance national security and transparency, ensuring classified material is accessible for oversight when necessary. - Streamline the process for parliamentary committees to access critical classified information and introduce a more transparent system for obtaining sensitive documents.

		obligations, and to hold the executive to account. It also sets out the arrangements for parliamentary access to specific categories of classified information.	Constitution ensures the democratic control of the security sector and emphasises human rights compliance. Parliament has the authority to amend, adopt, or reject security-related legislation. Legal provisions require transparency in the security sector while safeguarding national security interests. The legal framework for accessing classified information , is sometimes criticised for being overly restrictive. Gaps in the legal framework occasionally led to delayed access to critical information by parliamentary committees.		Amend the legal framework to ensure security-sector legislation undergoes parliamentary review and approval, empowering parliament to amend or reject legislation and appoint key security-sector officials.
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	Parliament exercises oversight of the security sector through plenary debates, budget reviews, and committee inquiries. The JSCI has specialised oversight powers over intelligence services. Committees like the JSCI and the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans oversee security policies, budgets, and appointments. MPs debate security-related policies and practices, ensuring accountability and public awareness. Parliament can summon	4	- Introduce a system for more public accountability without compromising national security by publishing non-classified summaries of JSCI findings. - Increase funding and expand the capacity of security-sector oversight committees, and institutionalise regular plenary debates on security-sector policies. - Grant parliamentary committees subpoena powers for compelling witnesses and

		the plenary and in committees. A specialised committee has wide-ranging powers to investigate security-sector issues, gather evidence and carry out inquiries.	executive officials to provide information or clarify decisions. The JSCI operates under strict confidentiality, limiting public and broader parliamentary oversight. Resource and capacity constraints sometimes hinder the depth of parliamentary inquiries. Oversight mechanisms are not uniformly applied across all areas of the security sector.		documents, and require executive responses to committee findings within a set timeframe. • Partner with independent bodies like the Public Protector to investigate security-sector misuse of funds and abuse of power.
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.	The legal framework establishes oversight bodies such as the Office of the Military Ombud and the Public Protector, which address public complaints and concerns related to the security sector. These bodies report to parliament. The Military Ombud handles grievances from armed forces personnel and the public regarding the defence sector. The Public Protector can investigate complaints about maladministration or human rights violations in the security sector. Parliamentary committees consider reports from these oversight bodies, facilitating accountability. Public awareness of these oversight bodies is limited, reducing the number	4	• Launch public awareness campaigns about bodies like the Military Ombud and Public Protector to make them more accessible. • Introduce timelines for addressing complaints, and expand the mandate of oversight bodies to focus on security-sector complaints, such as abuse by law enforcement or corruption in security agencies. • Ensure the ombudsman's independence with secure funding and legal protections against political interference. • Create a public-facing portal for lodging complaints and conducting public outreach.

			of complaints submitted. Delays in addressing complaints or implementing recommendations undermine public trust. Oversight bodies face resource constraints, affecting their ability to investigate issues comprehensively.		
4	Resources	Parliament has in-house expertise on security-sector issues, and training on such issues is available for MPs and staff.	Parliament has access to in-house expertise and can draw on external advisors for complex security-sector issues. Training programs for MPs on security matters are available but not consistently implemented. Committees have access to research services and technical staff to support oversight functions. Partnerships with external experts, such as academics or think tanks, enhance capacity. Training initiatives, when implemented, improve MPs' understanding of security issues. Limited resources and insufficient funding reduce the capacity of parliamentary committees. Training on security-sector issues is not consistently provided to all MPs, particularly new members. Specialised expertise within parliament is	3	• Provide MPs with regular training programs on security-sector issues, focusing on human rights compliance, budget analysis, and using digital tools for oversight. • Establish a dedicated research unit to provide continuous support for security-sector oversight, and partner with universities and think tanks for developing training modules. • Equip committees with digital tools to analyse classified documents securely.

			unevenly distributed, affecting the quality of oversight.		
5	Practice	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. Parliamentary committees conduct regular oversight of the security sector, and undertake investigation and inquiries as needed.	Parliamentary committees conduct regular oversight, and the executive generally cooperates by providing information. However, practical implementation varies depending on the issue and political dynamics. Committees regularly scrutinise security-sector policies, budgets, and performance. Investigations and inquiries are undertaken as needed, and findings are reported to parliament. The executive responds to parliamentary questions and provides information in most cases. Delays in the provision of information by the executive limit timely oversight. Political dynamics occasionally hinder thorough investigations or debates on sensitive security matters. Some recommendations from parliamentary inquiries are not fully implemented by the executive.	4	• Set stricter response time guidelines for the executive and hold it accountable for delays in providing information. • Introduce a follow-up mechanism for ensuring the implementation of parliamentary inquiry recommendations, and address non-compliance promptly. • Require the executive to submit regular updates to parliamentary committees on security-sector activities and justifications for withholding classified information. • Institutionalise periodic reviews of security-sector performance and budgets, and enable committees to investigate corruption or inefficiency, ensuring that recommendations lead to tangible reforms.

To improve oversight and accountability in the security sector, the SA parliament should enhance transparency in the JSCI findings without compromising national security, and expand the resources and capacity of security-sector oversight committees. It is essential to strengthen the implementation of recommendations from parliamentary inquiries and ensure the timely provision of information from the executive, while supporting MPs with continuous training and expert support on security issues.



6.11.2 Defence

Defence refers to parliament's role in overseeing national defence policies, ensuring that defence strategies and military activities align with national interests and international commitments. This dimension ensures that parliament has the authority to debate, scrutinise, and approve defence budgets, military actions, and defence-related legislation, maintaining the balance between security needs and democratic oversight.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Use of military force	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 SA Constitution (Section 201) requires the President to inform parliament promptly and in detail about the deployment of troops, including the reasons for deployment, the number of personnel involved, and the expected duration. Parliament has the authority to debate and approve or reject such deployments. Clear constitutional provisions ensure parliamentary oversight of military deployments. Parliament can summon the	4	- Ensure timely and comprehensive information from the executive on military deployments. Establish pre-deployment consultations with parliament to enhance democratic oversight. - Amend the Constitution to require parliamentary approval for troop deployments, with provisions for debates and investigations.

		the use of military force, including powers to summon representatives of the executive to testify before parliament. Parliament can effectively block the use of military force if there is a majority in favour.	executive to provide details and justification for the use of military force. Committees such as the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans provide additional oversight. Parliament's ability to block or influence military deployments is limited in practice, as executive decisions are often implemented before parliamentary debates. Information provided by the executive on military deployments is sometimes delayed or incomplete.		• Introduce a requirement for a majority vote to declare war, approve large-scale deployments, and revoke decisions if necessary. • Require the executive to submit regular reports on military operations, including objectives, costs, and human rights considerations.
2	Defence budget	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.	Parliament has the authority to scrutinise, amend, and approve the defence budget as part of the annual budget process. The PFMA and parliamentary rules ensure that funding for deployments and procurement is subject to oversight. Parliamentary committees review defence expenditures, including weapons procurement and troop deployments. The Auditor-General's reports provide additional scrutiny of defence spending. Public hearings on the defence budget enhance transparency. Limited technical expertise among MPs reduces	4	• Invest in technical expertise among MPs for better defence budget scrutiny. Provide specialised training on procurement and defence-related issues. • Ensure greater transparency in the defence budget approval process, requiring detailed reporting on expenditure categories. • Mandate committees to review the defence budget before plenary approval and ensure transparency in arms sales and procurement.

			the effectiveness of budget scrutiny. Defence budgets are sometimes approved with minimal amendments due to time constraints or political dynamics. The opacity of some defence-related expenditures limits transparency.		• Grant parliament the authority to propose amendments to the defence budget, prioritising areas such as troop deployments and maintenance.
3	Parliamentary oversight	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.	Committees such as the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans and the Joint Standing Committee on Defence have broad mandates to oversee defence policies, arms sales, and compliance with international humanitarian law. Committees regularly review arms procurement and deployment policies. Gender mainstreaming and human rights compliance are increasingly emphasised in defence policy discussions. Oversight mechanisms, such as public hearings and executive questioning, enhance accountability. Oversight of arms sales and compliance with international law is limited by restricted access to information. Resource and capacity constraints hinder in-depth investigations and	4	• Parliament should oversee arms sales and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, with detailed reports on the end-use and recipients of arms deals. • Incorporate gender equality into defence policies through parliamentary oversight. • Empower defence committees to monitor arms sales, gender mainstreaming, and financial accountability. • Institutionalise annual reviews of defence policies, ensuring progress on human rights compliance and strategic goals. • Grant committees subpoena powers to summon military officials and defence contractors for testimony.

			follow-up actions. The implementation of committee recommendations is inconsistent.		
4	Resources	Parliament has in-house expertise on defence policy and has access to information and regular updates from the executive on such issues.	Parliament has access to research and technical expertise to support its oversight of defence policy. Regular updates from the executive provide additional information on military matters. Parliamentary research services provide support on defence policy and military issues. Partnerships with external experts, including academics and think tanks, enhance capacity. Committees receive periodic briefings from the Department of Defence. Insufficient in-house expertise limits MPs' ability to engage effectively with complex defence issues. Budget constraints reduce the availability of specialised training for MPs. Access to classified information is sometimes delayed or restricted, limiting oversight capabilities.	3	• Establish a dedicated defence policy research unit within parliament to provide expertise on military issues and international defence policies. • Improve procedures for accessing classified defence information, enabling more effective parliamentary oversight. • Invest in specialised training for MPs on defence-related issues, including international law and arms procurement. • Equip MPs and committees with the necessary tools, such as secure digital platforms, to access and analyse defence-related data and classified information.

SA parliament should enhance oversight of military deployments and the defence budget by ensuring timely access to detailed information from the executive, with provisions for parliamentary approval before large-scale deployments. Strengthening committees' capacity to scrutinise arms sales, ensure compliance with international law, and incorporate gender mainstreaming in defence policies, along with boosting MPs' expertise, will improve parliamentary accountability in defence matters.



6.11.3 Foreign affairs and international agreements

This dimension focuses on parliament's involvement in foreign affairs, including the ratification and oversight of international agreements and treaties. It ensures that parliament has the authority to scrutinise foreign policy decisions, ensuring that international engagements align with national interests and democratic values. Parliament plays a vital role in ensuring transparency and accountability in foreign relations.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	The SA Constitution and parliamentary rules establish parliament's role in foreign policy oversight. The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation oversees government actions and policies related to foreign affairs. Section 231 of the Constitution provides for parliament's role in approving international agreements. The Portfolio Committee oversees the Department of International Relations and Cooperation	4	- Parliament should create mechanisms for proactive engagement in the formulation of foreign policy, with regular consultations between parliamentary committees and DIRCO. - Strengthen coordination between parliamentary committees for a more integrated discussion on foreign policy. - Amend the Constitution or legislation to grant parliament the responsibility to

			(DIRCO) and holds public hearings to engage stakeholders. The committee reviews government initiatives and policies in foreign relations, ensuring alignment with national interests. Oversight often focuses on high-profile issues, with less attention paid to broader foreign policy themes. Limited capacity within committees to proactively influence foreign policy decisions. Political dynamics can sometimes limit robust critique of executive actions.		oversee the development and execution of foreign policy, including a requirement for the executive to consult parliament on significant decisions. • Expand the foreign affairs committee's mandate to monitor government actions on bilateral/multilateral relationships and human rights implications. • Ensure the committee has broad investigative powers to summon executive officials for testimony.
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	Parliament must approve all binding international agreements before ratification, as per Section 231(2) of the Constitution . The executive is required to report on the implementation of these agreements and international obligations. Parliament plays a direct role in ratifying agreements, ensuring legislative oversight. Reports on international agreements, such as trade deals or environmental treaties, are reviewed by committees. Engagement with international	4	• Debates on international agreements should be extended for deeper discussion, particularly on agreements with significant national obligations. • Streamline the process of reporting on the implementation of international agreements, with clear guidelines and timelines. • Parliament should thoroughly scrutinise international agreements, particularly with

		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.	financial institutions, such as the IMF or World Bank, is scrutinised through committee processes. Reports from the executive on the implementation of agreements are sometimes delayed or incomplete. Debates on international agreements in parliament are often limited in depth due to time constraints. The practice of debating international reports before submission to international bodies is inconsistent.		financial institutions, considering debt sustainability and human rights. • Legislate that significant international agreements must be subject to parliamentary approval before ratification, ensuring comprehensive analysis of their impacts. • Mandate the executive to submit periodic reports on the implementation of international agreements for review and debate in parliament.
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.	Parliament has access to research services and external expertise to support its oversight of foreign policy. Regular updates from DIRCO provide information on international agreements and foreign relations. Parliamentary researchers support committees with analysis of foreign policy issues. Committees receive briefings from DIRCO and other departments, providing updates on foreign relations and agreements. External partnerships with	3	• Parliament should invest in developing in-house expertise on foreign policy by hiring specialists or training MPs and staff on complex international relations issues. • Formalise partnerships with international think tanks and experts to ensure committees have diverse perspectives and access to global best practices. check

			academics and think tanks enhance capacity for specific issues. Limited in-house expertise on complex or technical foreign policy matters. Resource constraints reduce opportunities for MPs to engage in international forums or study tours. Briefings from the executive are not always comprehensive, reducing the effectiveness of oversight.		• Ensure that briefings from DIRCO are comprehensive and address all relevant aspects of international agreements. • Establish a foreign policy research unit within parliament to aid MPs in scrutinising agreements and government actions. • Conduct regular training programs for MPs on international law, geopolitics, and the socioeconomic impacts of international agreements. • Require the executive to provide regular updates on treaty negotiations and foreign policy developments. • Partner with global policy institutions for independent analysis on foreign policy.
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To strengthen parliamentary oversight of foreign policy, SA should enhance the role of parliamentary committees in proactively engaging with the executive, particularly in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Investment in in-house expertise and partnerships with international think tanks will improve the effectiveness of committees in scrutinising international agreements, while increasing the frequency and depth of debates on significant agreements will ensure greater parliamentary influence.



6.11.4 Parliamentary diplomacy

Parliamentary diplomacy refers to the role of MPs in fostering international relations and promoting the country's foreign policy goals abroad. This dimension assesses how parliament participates in international forums, engages with foreign parliaments, and supports diplomatic efforts. Parliamentary diplomacy strengthens bilateral and multilateral relationships, contributing to global peace and cooperation while ensuring that foreign engagements reflect the nation's democratic principles.

The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
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.	Parliamentary rules and procedures guide the formation of friendship groups, the organisation of bilateral visits, and participation in international parliamentary forums. Formal procedures exist for approving international engagements, ensuring oversight and accountability. The NA and the NCOP approve international engagements, making the process inclusive of multiple chambers. Delegations are often aligned with SA's foreign policy priorities. The criteria for selecting MPs for international engagements are not always publicly transparent. Decision-making on diplomatic	3	• Establish clearer criteria for selecting MPs for international engagements, with publicly accessible guidelines on participation. • Publish regular summaries of international engagements, detailing objectives, outcomes, and key players. • Develop formal guidelines for parliamentary diplomacy activities, including prioritising and approving bilateral visits and transparency in fund allocation. • Establish an oversight body to review and approve major diplomatic activities, ensuring alignment with national priorities.

			activities can sometimes be dominated by senior MPs or party leadership.		
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.	Parliamentary rules emphasise inclusiveness in delegations, ensuring representation of women, , and members of different political groups. Delegations are generally inclusive, reflecting SA's diverse political landscape and demographic composition. Efforts are made to include women an in international engagements, promoting equity. Opposition MPs are often part of delegations, ensuring balanced representation. Smaller political parties occasionally report limited opportunities to participate in diplomatic activities. Parliament has a low number of young MPs, which should be attended to. Young MPs and women MPs may face barriers in accessing leadership roles in parliamentary diplomacy.		• Promote leadership roles for young MPs and women in parliamentary diplomacy through mentorship programs and targeted nominations. • Require that parliamentary delegations include MPs from different political parties, with gender and regional balance. • Create a transparent selection process for delegation participation, ensuring equal opportunities for underrepresented groups. • Provide training for young MPs, women, and smaller-party MPs to enhance their effectiveness in international forums. • Establish mentorship programs for young MPs to gain experience in parliamentary diplomacy.
3	Reporting	MPs are required to report back to parliament on their international	MPs are required to report back to parliament on international engagements. Committees are tasked with monitoring follow-up actions stemming from resolutions or agreements	3	• Develop a standardised format for MPs to report back on international engagements, with clear timelines and outcomes.

		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.	reached in multilateral forums. Reports on international engagements are tabled in parliament, providing a degree of accountability. Committees occasionally review follow-up actions to ensure commitments are implemented. Publicly accessible reports contribute to transparency. Reporting back to parliament is inconsistent, with some MPs failing to submit detailed or timely reports. Follow-up on resolutions from multilateral bodies is often weak, reducing the impact of engagements. There is limited tracking of outcomes from diplomatic activities.		• Create a dedicated unit within committees to track follow-up actions on international resolutions and agreements. • Require MPs to submit detailed reports on their international engagements, including key outcomes and recommendations. • Allocate time for MPs to present their reports and discuss implications for national policy. • Establish a mechanism to track the implementation of resolutions and assess the impact of international engagements.
4	Communication with the executive	There are well-established channels of communication with the executive about parliamentary diplomacy activities.	Communication channels between parliament and the executive are established for aligning parliamentary diplomacy activities with national foreign policy priorities. Briefings from the DIRCO provide MPs with updates on foreign policy priorities. Committees engage with the executive to align parliamentary diplomacy with broader diplomatic efforts. Parliamentary delegations often coordinate with SA embassies	4	• Improve communication between parliament and the executive on international engagements through interactive platforms. • Ensure the executive provides MPs with timely, detailed information on international relations and foreign policy priorities.

			abroad. Communication is sometimes limited to formal briefings, with little ongoing engagement. MPs report that information from the executive is not always timely or detailed enough to inform diplomatic activities. Coordination on follow-up actions is inconsistent.		• Develop a structured framework for regular consultations between parliament and the executive on foreign policy. • Establish a parliamentary diplomacy liaison unit within the executive to ensure coordination and provide MPs with timely information. • Require the executive to brief parliament annually on foreign policy goals.
5	Resources	MPs have access to appropriate resources to support parliamentary diplomacy and international engagements, including financial resources, timely information, and administrative support.	Parliament allocates financial and administrative resources to support MPs in parliamentary diplomacy activities. Information is provided through research and advisory services. MPs have access to travel allowances and administrative support for international engagements. Research services provide briefing materials on international forums and foreign policy issues. Partnerships with external organisations enhance capacity for diplomatic engagements. Resource allocations are sometimes insufficient, particularly for smaller delegations or less high-profile activities.	3	• Increase the budget for smaller delegations and less high-profile diplomatic activities, allowing broader participation. • Offer ongoing training on international relations, diplomacy, and the functioning of multilateral forums to enhance MPs' engagement. • Address administrative delays affecting the organisation of visits and participation in multilateral forums. • Provide dedicated resources for MPs, including a parliamentary diplomacy budget for travel, accommodation, and logistics.

			Administrative delays can affect the organisation of visits and participation in multilateral forums. MPs often lack access to specialised training in international relations and diplomacy.		• Create an online portal for MPs to access reports, international agreements, and updates on global issues.
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To strengthen parliamentary diplomacy, SA should ensure greater transparency in the selection and reporting of international engagements, while promoting inclusivity and leadership opportunities for all MPs, particularly women, young MPs, and those from smaller parties. By improving communication between parliament and the executive, enhancing resources for MPs' international activities, and instituting systematic follow-up on diplomatic outcomes will further empower parliament in its oversight and diplomatic functions.



7. Way Forward & Conclusion

This report is an external assessment of the South African Parliament, conducted within the framework of the IDP's assessment guidelines to measure Parliament's capacity and performance. The research is compiled from the perspective of a civil society organisation, based on publicly available information.

The way forward is to conduct research on Target 2-7 and its subsequent assessments of the SA parliament, from a civil society perspective.

Possible research that can be conducted by parliament and other CSOs are:

1. Investigating how digital strategies and technologies can improve performance, transparency, and streamline resource management in parliament(s).
2. Providing mechanisms that enhance understanding of the evolving relationship between the public and parliament, thus increasing public participation.
3. Comparative studies based on international best practices in accountability, transparency and overall performance which can provide insights to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of parliament(s).

In conclusion, this assessment of the SA parliament, on Target 1 Effective Parliament, highlights both the strengths and challenges that effect its accountability, and responsiveness in fulfilling its democratic mandate. Although the legal and constitutional frameworks provide a strong foundation for parliamentary autonomy, there are key areas such as procedural consistency, resource allocation, member support, and crisis preparedness that require improvements.

The aim is to also address long-standing challenges in resource management, performance optimisation, staff retention, and the implementation of audit recommendations, by various entities, departments, CSOs and parliamentarians themselves.

The findings emphasise the need for reforms that enhance parliamentary efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity, and ensuring that all MPs have equitable access to resources and opportunities for professional development.

Strengthening parliamentary autonomy by improving oversight practices, and enhancing crisis management systems will be needed for parliament to fully embrace its role as a cornerstone of democratic governance. SA's parliament can better serve its constituents while upholding the principles of good governance, and contributing to the broader goals of democratic strengthening and sustainable development.

Recommendations for improvement include: better oversight mechanisms, digital strategies, and governance of public entities. This will provide a strong framework that will address the systemic inefficiencies identified throughout the report. However, implementing these recommendations should not be done as isolated or silo interventions but as part of an integrated approach. This approach should include: institutional, academic, government, and parliamentary research, policy development, and needs to be consistently reinforced for long-term improvements.

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9. Glossary

Accountability	The obligation of MPs and governmental bodies to explain their actions and decisions to the public, ensuring transparency in their operations.
Accountable Parliament	A parliament that is responsible for its actions and decisions, ensuring that members and processes are answerable to the public.
Adoption	The process by which a constitutional amendment or legislation is formally approved by parliament, typically requiring a supermajority for most changes.
Amendments	Proposed changes or additions to existing legislation or constitutional provisions, often requiring approval through formal procedures.
Bicameral	A system where the legislative body consists of two separate chambers, such as the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.
Bill	A proposal for a new law or an amendment to an existing law presented for debate and approval in parliament.
Budget Scrutiny	The process by which parliament examines the government's proposed budget, reviewing the allocation of public funds to ensure accountability and alignment with public interests.
Central Repository	A centralised location, either digital or physical, where records, laws, or documents are stored securely for easy access by MPs, staff, and the public.
Civil Society Organisation	A non-governmental organisation that advocates for the interests of society, such as human rights, environmental protection, or other community-focused goals.
Committee	A group of MPs assigned to focus on specific tasks, such as examining bills, budgets, or overseeing government actions.

Constitutional Provisions	The legal rules established within a country's constitution that govern the procedures and actions of parliament, including legislative processes and parliamentary dissolution.
Consultative Process	A method of engaging stakeholders, including the public and expert groups, to provide input into decision-making or the development of policy.
Cross-party Groups	Groups in parliament formed by members from different political parties who collaborate on non-partisan issues, often related to public policy or social issues.
Cybersecurity	Measures and protocols implemented to protect parliament's digital infrastructure and data from threats, ensuring secure and reliable information processing.
Delegated Legislation	Laws or regulations made by an authority under powers granted by an existing Act of parliament, allowing for more detailed regulation or procedural rules.
Digital Infrastructure	The electronic systems and technologies used to facilitate communication, record-keeping, and other essential functions within parliament.
Dissolution	The formal ending of a parliamentary session or term, typically triggered by constitutional provisions or the executive, often leading to general elections.
Electoral Commission of South Africa	The independent body responsible for managing elections in South Africa, ensuring free, fair, and credible electoral processes.
Electoral Management Body	A body responsible for overseeing elections, including the administration, organisation, and implementation of electoral processes to ensure fairness and transparency.
Executive	The branch of government responsible for implementing and enforcing laws, typically comprising the President, Cabinet, and civil service.

Executive Oversight	The role of parliament in monitoring and reviewing the actions and policies of the executive branch of government to ensure accountability.
Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act (2009)	Legislation that outlines the financial management framework for South Africa's parliament, ensuring budgetary autonomy and accountability in managing public funds.
Freedom of Information	Legislation that ensures the public's right to access government information, enhancing transparency and accountability within public institutions.
Gender Equality	The principle that all individuals, regardless of gender, should have equal rights and opportunities, often discussed in parliamentary policies and cross-party groups.
Gender-Neutral Language	The use of language that avoids bias towards a particular gender, particularly in legislative drafting to ensure inclusivity.
Hansard	The official verbatim report of parliamentary debates, providing a detailed record of the proceedings for public access.
Hybrid Sessions	Parliamentary sessions that combine in-person and virtual participation, allowing MPs to attend remotely, especially during emergencies or crises.
Independent MPs	Members of parliament who are not affiliated with any political party and often act as neutral voices or advocates for specific issues.
Information and Communication Technology	Technologies used for communication and the management of information, including digital tools and platforms essential for modern parliamentary functions.
Institutional Autonomy	The independence of an institution, such as parliament, to operate without interference from external bodies, particularly the executive branch.

Inter-Parliamentary Union	An international organisation that brings together parliaments from around the world to discuss issues of global importance and support democratic governance.
Inviolability	Legal protection that prevents the arrest or detention of MPs during the course of their duties without parliamentary consent.
Involuntary Removal	The process through which an MP is removed from office, either through legal grounds or constitutional violations before their term expires.
Law-Making	The process through which proposed bills are discussed, amended, and passed to create or alter laws in a country.
Legislative Agenda	The set of issues or proposed bills that parliament aims to discuss, debate, and pass within a specific time frame.
Legislative Drafting	The process of creating clear, precise, and legally sound bills, regulations, or laws, ensuring that they are understandable and enforceable.
Legislative Procedure	The established steps through which laws are proposed, debated, amended, and passed in parliament, ensuring clarity and transparency in lawmaking.
Mediation Committee	A committee tasked with resolving disagreements between the two chambers of parliament (in bicameral systems) regarding proposed legislation.
Money Bills Amendment Act	Legislation governing the processes for amending national budget-related bills in South Africa, ensuring parliamentary control over financial matters.
Monitoring and Evaluation	The ongoing process of assessing the performance of government programs and initiatives, ensuring they meet their objectives and are being implemented effectively.
National Assembly	The lower house of South Africa's parliament, composed of elected MPs who represent the public and pass laws.

National Council of Provinces	The upper house of South Africa's parliament, which represents provincial interests and participates in the lawmaking process, particularly on matters affecting provinces.
Non-Accountability	The legal protection of MPs from legal actions or sanctions while performing their parliamentary duties, ensuring free expression and independence.
Official Publication	The formal release of legislation after its passage, usually in an official gazette, to ensure it becomes legally binding and publicly accessible.
Oversight	The responsibility of parliament to monitor and review the actions of the executive and other governmental bodies to ensure compliance with laws and accountability to the public.
Oversight Function	The role of parliament in monitoring and reviewing the actions of the executive and other public bodies to ensure laws are being implemented as intended.
Parliamentary Budget Office	A non-partisan body in South Africa that provides independent and professional analysis on the national budget, supporting the legislature's role in financial oversight.
Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry	A parliamentary committee in South Africa that investigates specific matters or allegations, often with the power to subpoena witnesses and gather evidence.
Parliamentary Procedure	The rules and processes that guide how parliamentary business is conducted, ensuring order, fairness, and efficiency.
Parliamentary Sovereignty	The principle that parliament is the supreme legal authority, capable of creating or ending any law, subject to limitations set out by a constitution.

Plenary	The full assembly of parliament, where all members meet to debate and vote on proposed laws and decisions.
Post-legislative Scrutiny	The process of reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of laws after they have been enacted to ensure they achieve their intended objectives.
Promotion of Access to Information Act	South African legislation that provides the public with the right to access information held by the state or other public bodies, subject to certain limitations.
Proportional Representation	A system of electoral representation where seats in parliament are allocated to political parties based on the proportion of votes they receive in an election.
Proportional Representation System	An electoral system where the number of seats a political party receives in parliament corresponds to the number of votes they receive in elections.
Public Accounts Committee	A parliamentary committee responsible for overseeing the government's financial activities, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.
Public Consultation	A process by which parliament seeks input from the public on proposed constitutional amendments or other significant legislative changes.
Public Finance Management Act	South African legislation that regulates the financial management of national and provincial government departments, ensuring fiscal discipline, accountability, and transparency.
Public Participation	The process by which the public is encouraged to engage in governmental decision-making, particularly during legislative procedures or amendments to laws.

Record-Keeping	The systematic process of documenting parliamentary decisions, debates, and other activities to ensure transparency and accountability.
Records Management	The systematic process of creating, storing, categorising, and disposing of documents and records in parliament to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient operation.
Representative Parliament	A parliament that accurately reflects the diversity of society and is capable of representing the interests of all citizens, including minority groups.
Rules of Procedure	The established protocols that govern how parliamentary proceedings, debates, and votes are conducted, ensuring fairness and consistency.
Speaker	The presiding officer in the South African National Assembly, responsible for maintaining order during parliamentary debates and ensuring that parliamentary rules and procedures are followed.
Standing Committee on Public Accounts	A South African parliamentary committee tasked with reviewing the financial activities of government departments and entities to ensure public funds are used efficiently and effectively.
Standing Orders	The formal written rules governing the proceedings and operations of parliament, including how members participate and how decisions are made.
State of Emergency	A government-declared condition that temporarily enhances the executive's powers in response to a national crisis, subject to parliamentary oversight.
Supermajority	A voting requirement that exceeds a simple majority, often used in constitutional amendments or other significant decisions requiring broader consensus.
Supreme Audit Institution	A national institution responsible for auditing government accounts and ensuring that public funds are managed and spent according to legal requirements and policy goals.

Sustainable Development Goals	A set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change, with South Africa aligning its policies to these objectives.
Transparency	The openness of governmental processes, ensuring that decisions, activities, and records are accessible and understandable to the public.
Universal Periodic Review	A UN process by which the human rights records of South Africa, and other member states, are reviewed and discussed with the goal of improving national human rights practices.
Veto	The power of the President or Head of State to reject a bill passed by parliament, typically subject to the ability of parliament to override the veto with a larger majority.
Virtual Sessions	Parliamentary sessions held online or remotely, typically using video conferencing tools, allowing MPs to participate in discussions and decision-making without being physically present.
Voter Representation	The principle that elected representatives in parliament should act in the best interests of their constituents, ensuring diverse and inclusive representation.
Voting Mechanism	The procedures and systems by which MPs cast votes on legislative matters, often involving physical or electronic systems to record individual decisions.
Whip	An MP responsible for ensuring party discipline and voting alignment within their party, often providing guidance to members on how to vote on important matters.