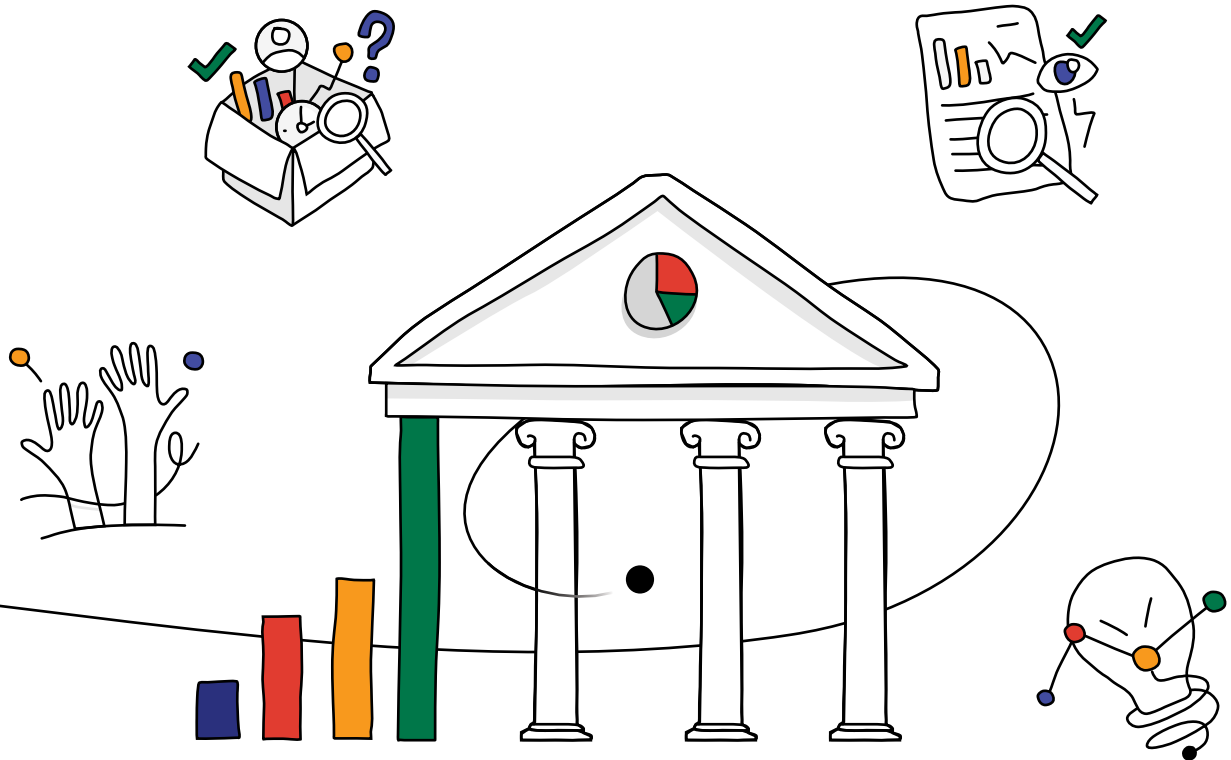




# EU Parliamentary Report

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

Target 6: Participatory Parliament



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the European Union

**PMIG** PARLIAMENTARY  
MONITORING GROUP  
**OUTA** openup:  
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## 1. Acronyms

ATC	Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GNU	Government of National Unity
IDP	Indicators For Democratic Parliaments
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
OUTA	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPs	Members of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PCS	Parliamentary Communication Services
PEO	Public Education Office
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
SA	South Africa
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## 2. Executive summary

[Public participation](#) is a cornerstone of democratic governance and a critical measure of parliamentary legitimacy. In South Africa (SA), parliament is constitutionally mandated to facilitate meaningful [public involvement](#) in legislative processes, oversight activities, and the national budget cycle. These obligations are reinforced through enabling legislation, parliamentary rules, and institutional policies that collectively seek to promote transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusivity.

This report presents an external civil-society assessment of the South African parliament against Target 6: Participatory Parliament, of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs). The assessment evaluates the extent to which parliament provides an enabling environment for public participation, facilitates engagement across its core functions, and ensures the inclusion of diverse groups in its work. The analysis draws on document review, benchmarking, and publicly available parliamentary and civil-society sources.

The assessment finds that SA's parliament has established a strong legal and institutional foundation for public participation. [Participation mechanisms](#) such as public hearings, written submissions, committee consultations, and outreach programmes are established and utilised. Engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) is a particular strength, and public participation is formally embedded in law-making, appointments, and budgetary processes.

However, the report also identifies significant challenges that limit the effectiveness and democratic value of participation. While participation is institutionalised, implementation remains uneven across committees and processes, and accessibility remains inconsistent, particularly for marginalised and under-represented groups. [Feedback](#) to the public on how their input influences parliamentary outcomes is often limited, reducing transparency and undermining public confidence in participatory processes.

The findings indicate that participation in parliament is frequently procedural rather than substantive. [Engagement opportunities](#) exist, but they do not always translate into visible influence on decision-making. Participation is often dominated by well-resourced and technically proficient actors, while ordinary citizens, rural communities, youth, persons with disabilities, and smaller CSOs face structural and practical barriers to meaningful engagement.

Overall, the assessment concludes that parliament has made notable progress in establishing participatory mechanisms but must now focus on deepening the quality, inclusivity, consistency, and impact of public participation. Strengthening these areas is essential for enhancing democratic

legitimacy, improving policy responsiveness, and aligning parliamentary practice more closely with the objectives of the IDP framework and Sustainable Development Goal 16.

*Key Findings of the Report:*

- SA's parliament operates within a robust constitutional and legal framework that guarantees public participation across legislative, oversight, and budgetary functions.
- Public participation mechanisms are well established and routinely applied, including hearings, submissions, and consultations.
- Implementation of participation practices is inconsistent across committees, leading to unequal engagement opportunities.
- Accessibility barriers persist for marginalised groups, particularly rural communities, persons with disabilities, youth, and digitally excluded populations.
- Feedback mechanisms are uneven and insufficiently transparent, limiting public understanding of how input influences outcomes.
- Participation in the law-making process is regular, but public input is not always clearly reflected in final legislative decisions.
- Public participation in oversight and the budget cycle is more limited for ordinary citizens and remains dominated by organised civil society actors.
- Engagement with CSOs is a key strength, but participation is unevenly representative, often favouring larger and better-resourced organisations.
- Public education and civic literacy initiatives exist but are unevenly distributed and insufficiently scaled to reach underserved communities.
- Monitoring and evaluation of public participation practices is underdeveloped, limiting institutional learning and improvement.

*The following recommendations aim to address these challenges:*

1. Strengthen the standardisation of public participation practices across all parliamentary committees: Establish minimum participation standards to ensure consistency in outreach, consultation, feedback, and reporting.

2. Strengthen feedback and accountability mechanisms: Introduce a transparent system to track public submissions and clearly demonstrate how public input influences parliamentary decisions.
3. Improve accessibility and inclusivity of participation mechanisms: Expand offline and low-tech engagement options, simplify language, provide multilingual materials, and ensure full accessibility for persons with disabilities.
4. Enhance public education and civic literacy programmes: Invest in sustained, community-based education initiatives to improve public understanding of parliamentary processes, particularly oversight and the budget cycle.
5. Broaden participation beyond organised civil society: Increase efforts to engage individual citizens, grassroots organisations, and under-represented communities.
6. Deepen public participation in the budget cycle: Simplify budget information, introduce user-friendly tools, and enable earlier and more meaningful public engagement in fiscal decision-making.
7. Mainstream the participation of diverse groups: Integrate the perspectives of women, youth, rural communities, and marginalised groups into core parliamentary processes rather than limiting engagement to standalone initiatives.
8. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of participation practices: Implement a comprehensive M&E framework with regular public reporting to support continuous improvement and institutional learning.

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 SA.

### 3. Introduction

[Public participation](#) is a defining feature of democratic governance and a central pillar of parliamentary legitimacy. In SA, parliament is constitutionally required to facilitate meaningful [public involvement](#) in [legislative processes](#), oversight activities, and the national budget cycle. These obligations are reinforced through enabling legislation, parliamentary rules, and institutional policies that collectively frame participation as an essential mechanism for [accountability, transparency](#), and responsiveness.

This report presents an external civil-society assessment of the SA's parliament against Target 6: Participatory Parliament of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs). The assessment evaluates the extent to which parliament creates an enabling environment for public participation, facilitates engagement across its core functions, and ensures the inclusion of diverse groups in its work. It focuses on three interrelated indicators: a. parliamentary environment for public participation, b. public participation in parliamentary processes, and c. participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament. SA's parliament operates within a comparatively strong legal and [constitutional framework](#) for participation. Public hearings, written submissions, committee consultations, outreach initiatives, and digital platforms are established features of parliamentary practice. Dedicated structures and staff further demonstrate institutional recognition of participation as a democratic imperative. However, the existence of formal mechanisms does not automatically translate into effective or equitable participation.




The analysis highlights a recurring gap between formal commitments and practical outcomes. Public participation is widely acknowledged and routinely facilitated, yet its implementation is uneven across committees and policy areas. Accessibility barriers, inconsistent feedback to participants, and limited visibility of how public input influences outcomes undermine the depth and perceived value of participation. Engagement tends to be dominated by organised and well-resourced actors, whereas ordinary citizens, rural communities, persons with disabilities, youth, and smaller CSOs face structural and practical constraints. This assessment therefore moves beyond a descriptive account of participatory arrangements to interrogate the quality, consistency, inclusivity, and impact of participation. By drawing on documentary analysis, benchmarking, and civil-society evidence, the report identifies both strengths and systemic weaknesses in parliament's participatory practices. The findings are intended to support institutional reflection and reform, contributing to a participatory model that strengthens democratic legitimacy, improves policy responsiveness, and enhances public trust in parliamentary processes. The evolving political context, including the [Government of National Unity](#) (GNU) and upcoming local government elections, may further shape patterns of public participation and engagement.

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

The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs) 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 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 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 modernisation, 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.




 <b>Good</b>	3	The object of the assessment criterion is an established part of parliament’s capacity and practice and is somewhat developed.
 <b>Very Good</b>	4	The object of the assessment criterion is a well-established part of parliament’s capacity and practice.
 <b>Excellent</b>	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:

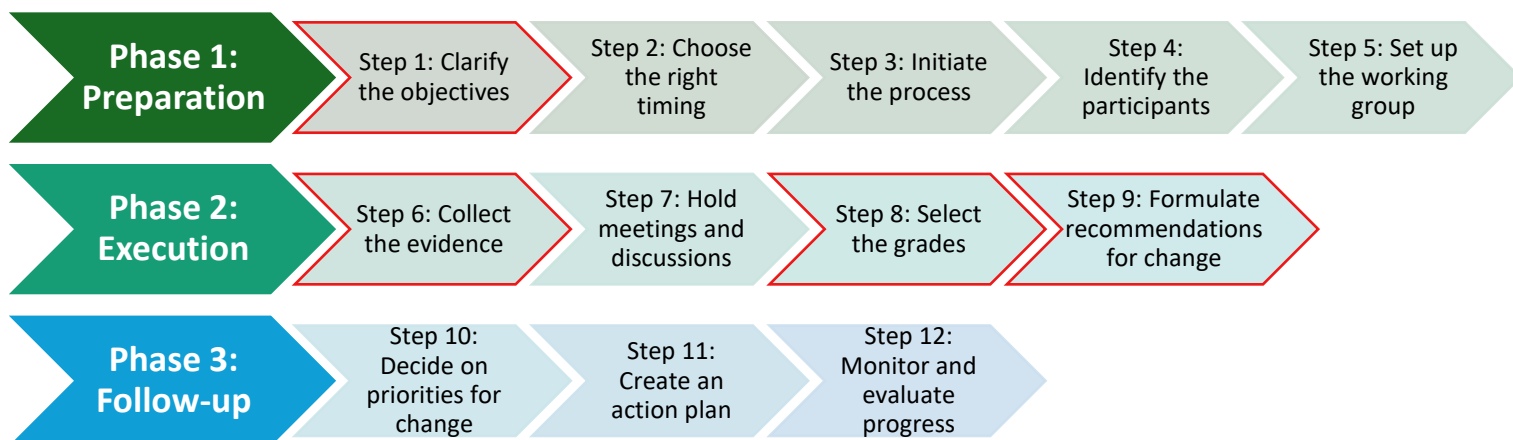


Figure 1 Phases and steps of assessment

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 provides an Assessment Checklist to guide parliaments through the preparation and execution of the assessment process. This checklist includes ten key items:

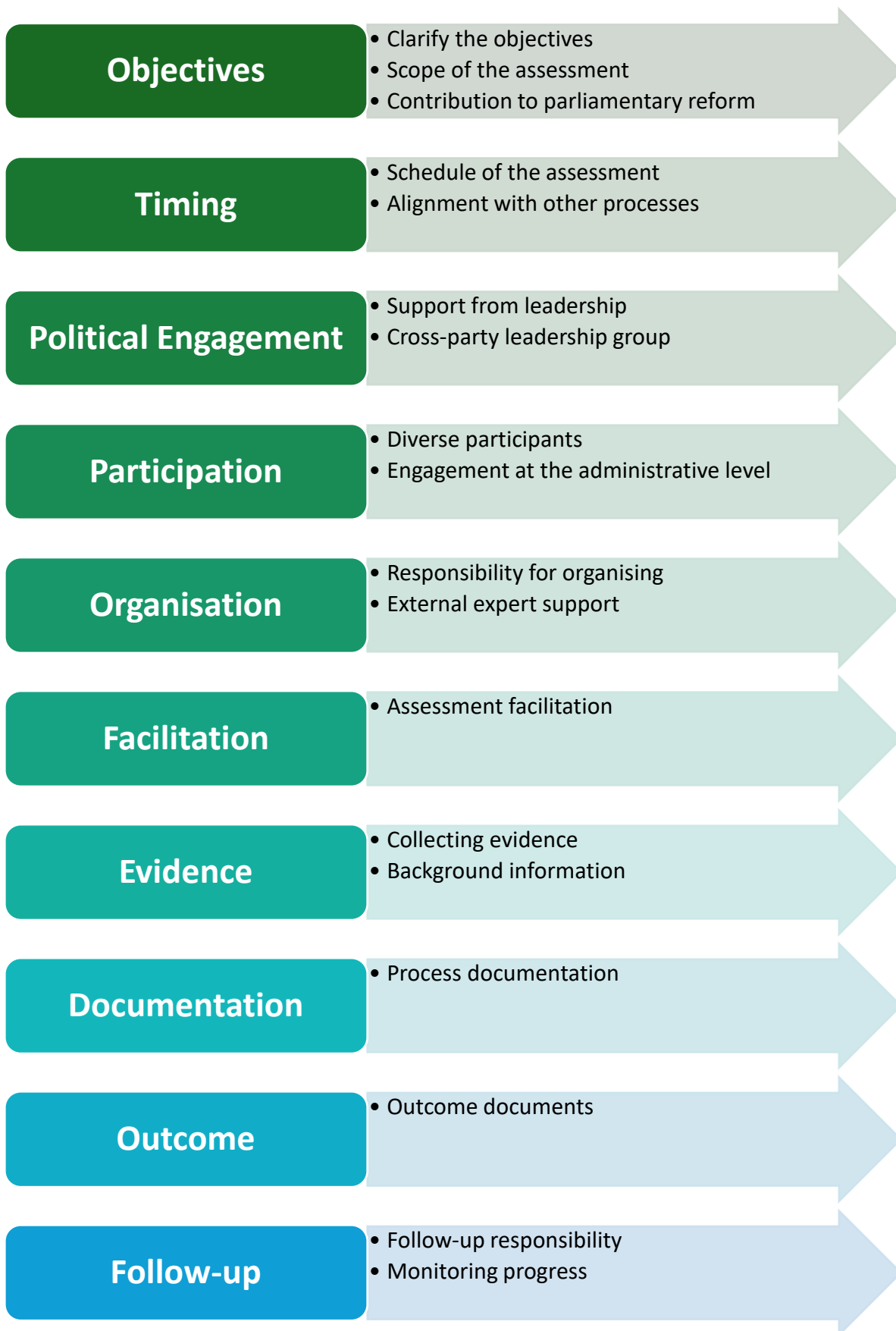


Figure 2 Assessment Checklist

### *Methodology used:*

In order to conduct the assessment of Target 6, 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 scrutinised to examine what information related to IDPs and the assessment criteria that have been previously documented and applied.
3. **Benchmarking:** This technique was used to analyse what has already been done in SA as well as other countries, which 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 CSOs 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 articles.

By applying these three research methods to collect information, it enables one to thoroughly research and conduct an external assessment of Target 6 (and the other targets). Thus, using a wide range of legal, procedural, government, parliamentary, CSOs publications and academic sources, the report provides a balanced and evidence-based evaluation of the application of this assessment criterion.

## 5. Observations

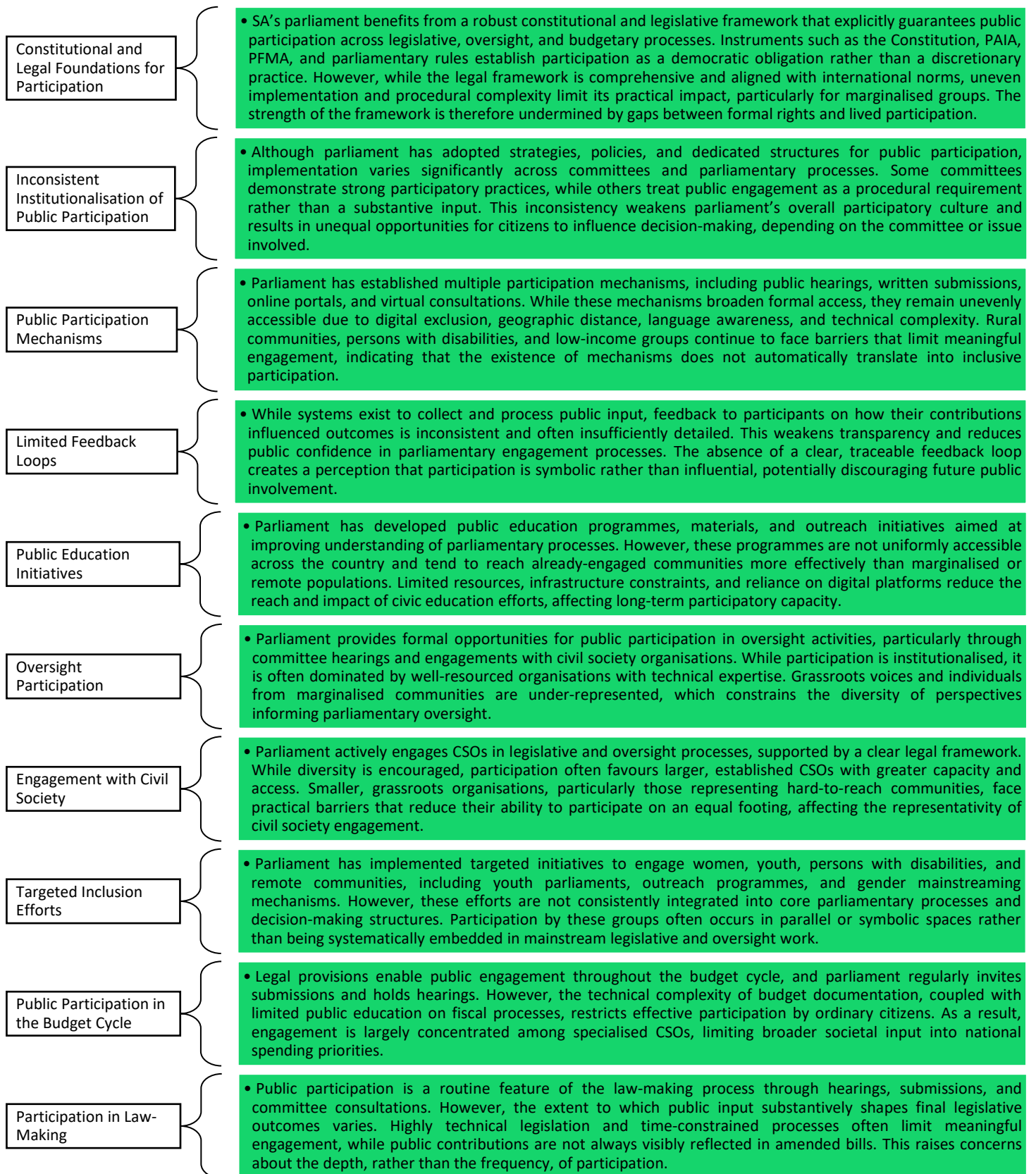


Figure 3 Observations from analysis

## 6. Assessment of Target Six for the South African Parliament

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

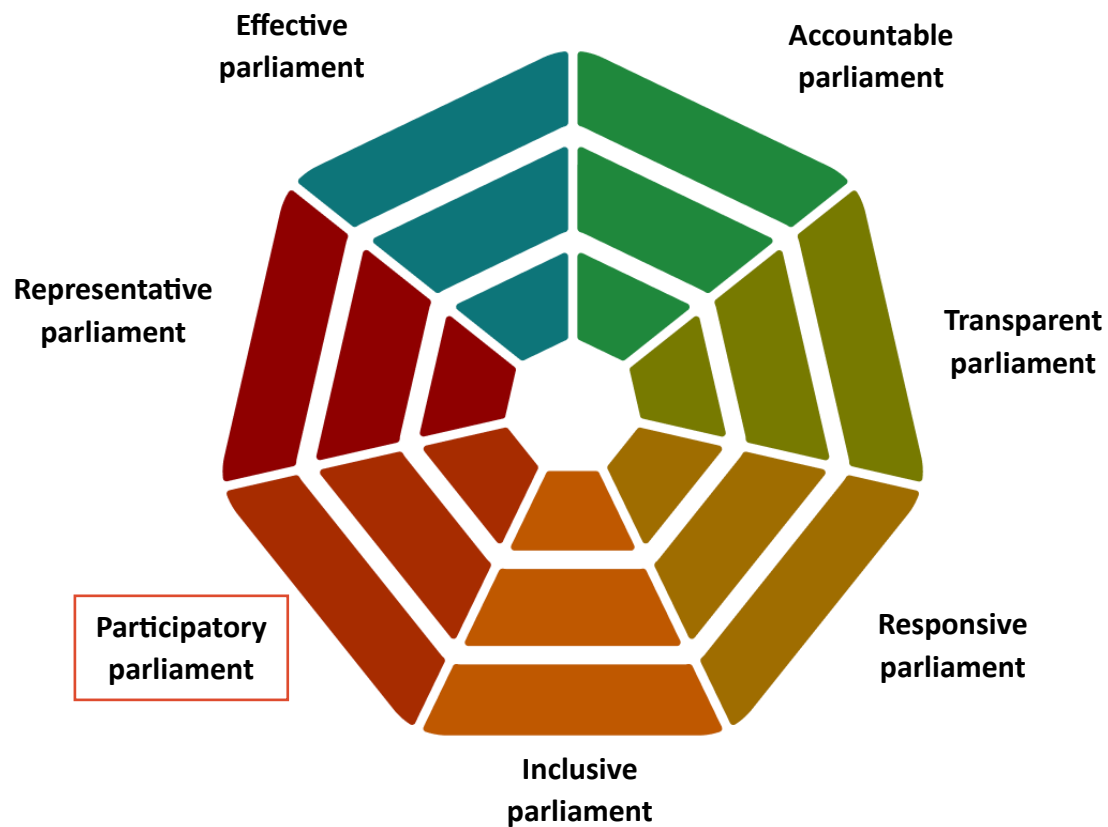


Figure 4 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

Target 6, Participatory parliament<sup>2</sup> ensures that the public has the opportunity to engage in the legislative process, offering various avenues for citizens and diverse groups to contribute to law-making, oversight, and budgeting. It values citizen input, encourages participation in parliamentary proceedings, and fosters an inclusive and transparent environment where all voices can be heard.

- Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary Environment for Public Participation
- Indicator 6.2: Public Participation in Parliamentary Processes
- Indicator 6.3: Participation of Diverse Groups in the Work of Parliament

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

### 6.1. Indicator 6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation

A participatory parliament encourages citizen engagement and provides mechanisms for public participation in its processes. This indicator examines the legal and institutional frameworks that facilitate public participation, including the capacity of parliament to manage public input and educate the public about parliamentary work. A conducive environment for public participation allows citizens to engage with their representatives, influence policy discussions, and contribute to the democratic process. A participatory parliament values the active involvement of the public as a cornerstone of its legitimacy.

#### 6.1.1. Legal framework for public participation

This dimension examines the legal provisions that enable and regulate public participation in parliamentary processes. It ensures that there are clear, established laws that facilitate citizen engagement, allowing the public to have a say in legislative matters, policy discussions, and decision-making. A strong legal framework supports an inclusive and participatory democracy, ensuring that public input is considered in parliamentary work.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework enabling civic space	A legal framework is in place, including laws, decrees, or regulations, which enables and guarantees the civic space necessary for the functioning of civil society and for effective	SA has a comprehensive legal framework that ensures the protection of civic space, including constitutional guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly, and association. The <a href="#">Constitution</a> enshrines the rights to freedom of expression and information, which support the functioning of civil	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify the registration process for <a href="#">CSOs</a> and streamline access to funding to promote the growth and sustainability of independent groups.</li> <li>Strengthen enforcement of freedom of information laws to ensure that public access to information is not hindered by delays or bureaucratic barriers.</li> </ul>

		<p>participation in all areas, including but not limited to parliamentary work. This framework includes laws and regulations relating to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of information, and ease of registration and funding of civil society organisations.</p>	<p>society and enable active <a href="#">public participation</a>. SA also has legislation such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) that provides citizens and organisations with the right to access government-held information. Ongoing reforms to PAIA and its implementation frameworks indicate a shift toward strengthening access to information and accountability mechanisms. The legal framework in SA is robust and aligned with international <a href="#">human rights</a> standards. Laws such as PAIA, the right to assemble, and the active protection of free speech create an enabling environment for civil society to thrive. Despite these legal provisions, civil society groups still face challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles in accessing funding, long delays in obtaining information from government bodies, and occasional political tensions that can</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the protection of <a href="#">civil society space</a>, particularly for those that advocate for transparency, accountability, and human rights.</li> </ul>
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			undermine the functioning of independent CSOs. In some cases, there is a perceived threat to freedom of speech and press, especially for critical voices.		
2	Legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament	Provisions in the constitution, laws or rules of procedure establish the right of people to participate in parliamentary business, such as by bringing issues to the attention of parliament, contributing evidence to legislative and oversight processes, and commenting on proposals for laws. The related rules and procedures cover all aspects of public	SA's parliament has provisions in place to ensure <a href="#">public participation</a> in parliamentary work. Citizens are encouraged to contribute to parliamentary processes through public hearings, submissions to parliamentary committees, and participation in public consultations. The Constitution and laws such as the Public Participation Guidelines establish a framework for citizens to bring issues before parliament and engage in legislative processes. <a href="#">Public participation</a> is a well-established part of the parliamentary process, and there are multiple avenues for citizens to contribute to debates and decision-making. Parliamentary committees	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase outreach and education efforts to ensure that all citizens, including marginalised groups, are aware of the opportunities for participation in parliamentary work.</li> <li>• Streamline the process for submitting <a href="#">public comments</a> on bills and proposals to make it more accessible and user-friendly, particularly for those without legal or technical expertise.</li> <li>• Expand online and digital participation tools to ensure wider public engagement, particularly in remote or underserved areas.</li> </ul>

		participation, both online and on-site.	regularly hold public hearings and solicit input on <a href="#">bills and policies</a> . Furthermore, SA has made efforts to improve online participation in parliamentary activities, making it easier for people to engage remotely. Even though <a href="#">public participation</a> is supported legally, the process can be intimidating or inaccessible for some groups, especially those without the resources or knowledge to navigate the complex procedures. There is also a risk that participation is limited to a vocal minority, with less opportunity for marginalised communities to contribute meaningfully. The Courts have routinely affirmed the rights of the public to participate in law-making and policy development.		
3	Protection of privacy	The legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament	SA's legal framework includes provisions to protect the privacy of citizens engaging with parliament. Recent	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to <a href="#">promote awareness</a> of privacy protections under POPIA to ensure that</li> </ul>

		<p>contains provisions that protect the privacy of members of the public and includes clear rules and procedures to ensure that the right to privacy is implemented in practice.</p>	<p>amendments to the <a href="#">Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)</a> ensures that personal data is handled responsibly, and there are regulations in place to safeguard the identities of individuals participating in public hearings and consultations. These protections are important for ensuring that people can engage with parliament without fear of undue exposure or reprisal. SA's parliament has a strong legal foundation for protecting privacy, with laws that ensure citizens' personal information is handled with care. The country's commitment to <a href="#">privacy rights</a> supports the safe participation of the public in parliamentary activities. However, there is often a gap between legal protections and practical implementation. For example, while laws protect privacy, the effective enforcement of these laws in the context</p>	<p>citizens understand their rights when participating in parliamentary activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the implementation of privacy safeguards during public hearings and online consultations to ensure that participants' information is adequately protected.</li> <li>• Conduct regular reviews of the privacy policies in place for public participation to ensure they remain effective and aligned with best practices.</li> </ul>
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			of public participation could be improved, particularly when sensitive information is involved.		
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Ensure that public participation processes are accessible to all citizens, particularly those from [marginalised communities](#). This could include providing translation services, simplifying participation procedures, and offering greater support for individuals with disabilities. Make the process for engaging with parliament more user-friendly, particularly for those without legal or technical expertise. This may include clear, simple guides on how to participate in public hearings, comment on bills, or submit evidence. Expand efforts to raise awareness about the opportunities for public engagement in parliamentary work. This can be done through media campaigns, community outreach, and social media to ensure that citizens understand how to participate and influence legislative decisions. While the legal framework for privacy protection is strong, more can be done to ensure that these laws are effectively implemented. This may involve increasing the capacity of oversight bodies to monitor the handling of personal information during public participation processes.



### 6.1.2. Institutional capacity for public participation

Institutional capacity refers to the resources, structures, and systems that parliament has in place to support public participation. This dimension assesses whether parliament has the necessary mechanisms, such as dedicated committees, platforms, and staff, to facilitate meaningful engagement with the public. Institutional capacity ensures that citizens’ voices are effectively integrated into parliamentary processes.

**The assessment:**

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Strategic approach	Parliament has an agreed strategy or plan for the implementation and further development of public participation, as well as established policies and practices, with time-bound and measurable objectives.	SA's parliament has developed a <a href="#">public participation</a> strategy that aims to improve and expand <a href="#">public involvement</a> in the legislative process. Parliament's rules and procedures also outline public participation objectives, and regular reviews are conducted to assess progress toward these goals. However, the implementation of this strategy varies across different parliamentary bodies and committees. The commitment to public participation is articulated clearly, and there are policies in place to encourage greater <a href="#">civic engagement</a> . Parliament's approach includes regular feedback and efforts to adapt and improve processes. However, the strategic framework exists, its application across all parliamentary committees and activities is inconsistent.	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more detailed, time-bound action plan with specific objectives and outcomes to ensure that the public participation strategy is uniformly implemented across parliament.</li> <li>• Ongoing review and refinement to make sure the plan and approach is fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Strengthen the integration of public participation into the day-to-day operations of parliament, with clearer mechanisms to measure success and adjust approaches when necessary.</li> <li>• Develop and streamline better feedback mechanisms between the public and parliament following public participation efforts.</li> </ul>

			Not all public participation efforts are always followed through with clear, measurable outcomes, and some areas may not have well-defined time-bound objectives.		
2	Mechanisms	Parliament's rules, practices and policies contain a comprehensive set of mechanisms for the organisation, coordination, and channelling of public participation. Public participation processes and activities are widely advertised. There are mechanisms by which the public can both receive, and provide feedback on,	SA's parliament has a number of mechanisms in place for <a href="#">public participation</a> , such as public hearings, online consultations, and submission processes for bills and proposals. These mechanisms are generally advertised through various channels, including parliament's website and social media. There are also feedback systems in place, such as public reports on the outcomes of submissions and consultations. Parliament has established clear channels for participation and feedback. <a href="#">Public hearings and consultations</a> are well-advertised, and there is an established procedure for citizens to engage with	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve outreach efforts, particularly for marginalised communities, to ensure that all citizens are aware of opportunities for participation.</li> <li>• Strengthen feedback mechanisms to ensure that citizens know how their input is being considered, and enhance transparency around the outcomes of public participation processes.</li> </ul>

		the outcome of their participation.	parliament. Public feedback is often incorporated into the legislative process, contributing to more inclusive decision-making. While the mechanisms are in place, their accessibility and effectiveness can vary. Some citizens may not be aware of participation opportunities, particularly marginalised groups or those in remote areas. Thus, there may be barriers to full participation, such as a lack of clarity on how public input is used or addressed.		
3	Tools	Parliament has easy-to-use tools to support public participation, both online and on-site. These tools take account of different groups within the community, including women, youth, persons with disabilities,	Parliament has developed tools to facilitate <a href="#">public participation</a> , including an online portal for submissions, virtual hearings, and other digital platforms that allow citizens to engage remotely. On-site participation is supported by various resources such as in-person public hearings and workshops. However, challenges remain in ensuring that all groups, particularly those in remote	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that public participation tools are designed with accessibility in mind, including offering offline or low-tech options for those without internet access.</li> <li>• Expand efforts to support marginalised communities in engaging with digital tools, including providing <a href="#">training</a> and resources for those with limited digital literacy.</li> </ul> <p>-</p>

		disadvantaged groups, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access.	areas, or those with limited digital access, are fully included. The introduction of <a href="#">digital tools</a> has expanded the reach of public participation, making it easier for people to engage without being physically present in parliament. On-site opportunities also provide a more accessible means of engagement for citizens who may not have internet access. Although digital tools have made participation easier for many, they can exclude those with limited internet access, particularly in rural or low-income areas. There may also be barriers for individuals with disabilities or those who are not tech-savvy.		
4	Monitoring and evaluation	Parliament monitors and evaluates the use of its public participation mechanisms and tools	SA's parliament generally reports on <a href="#">public participation mechanisms</a> , and activities on a regular basis, mainly through annual reports and planning documents. However, these reports are	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a more formalised monitoring and evaluation system for public participation, with regular and detailed reports on the effectiveness of engagement tools and mechanisms.</li> </ul>

		<p>and reports on their use on its website. Parliament adapts and changes its engagement mechanisms and tools in light of the results of this evaluation work.</p>	<p>not consistently robust, as they tend to emphasise activity levels and participation volumes more than the quality, inclusiveness, feedback loops, or clear influence of public input on parliamentary outcomes. The reports on public engagement activities are available on parliament’s website. Feedback from public participation processes is used to refine and improve engagement tools. However, the evaluation of <a href="#">public participation</a> efforts is not always as thorough as it could be, and there are areas for improvement in terms of consistent reporting and data collection. Parliament is committed to monitoring public participation and uses feedback to adapt and improve its mechanisms. Regular reports are published, and there is evidence that public input influences parliamentary decisions. The lack of comprehensive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that feedback from evaluations is used to refine <a href="#">public participation</a> processes, and make the results of these evaluations easily accessible to the public.</li> </ul>
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			and consistent reporting on the use of <a href="#">participation</a> tools and feedback mechanisms can make it difficult to assess the overall impact of public engagement efforts. More systematic and detailed evaluations would improve parliament's understanding of how to better engage citizens.		
5	Dedicated resources and staff	Parliament dedicates sufficient resources to public participation activities. Parliament has a dedicated organisational unit for this purpose, such as a public participation office, or has staff members with duties related to public participation.	SA's parliament has a dedicated public participation office that manages engagement activities (the Public Participation Section). There are staff members who oversee <a href="#">public participation</a> processes and coordinate efforts across different parliamentary bodies. However, the resources allocated to public participation may not always be sufficient to fully meet the demands for engagement from the public. The establishment of a public participation office is a strong indicator of parliament's commitment to citizen	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase funding and resources allocated to the public participation office to ensure that it can meet the growing demand for citizen engagement.</li> <li>• Expand the <a href="#">capacity of the public participation</a> office by hiring additional staff or increasing training opportunities to support effective engagement.</li> <li>• Collaborate with CSOs and stakeholders to maximise reach</li> </ul>

			<p>engagement. Dedicated staff ensure that public participation activities are properly coordinated and resourced.</p> <p>Despite the dedicated office, the resources allocated to public participation may not always be adequate to support the increasing demand for engagement, particularly in terms of outreach to marginalised communities or the facilitation of large-scale public hearings.</p>		
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Increase outreach efforts, particularly to marginalised groups such as rural citizens, low-income communities, and people with disabilities, ensuring they have access to both online and on-site participation opportunities. Enhance the transparency of public participation processes by ensuring that feedback is effectively communicated back to the public. Regular, detailed reports on participation outcomes should be made publicly available to increase accountability. Introduce a more comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating public participation activities, ensuring that the results of these evaluations are used to refine and improve engagement strategies. Ensure that the public participation office has sufficient resources and capacity to manage the growing demand for public engagement, including investing in both staff and technology to support inclusive participation.



### 6.1.3. Public education about the work of parliament

Public education involves informing and educating citizens about the functions, procedures, and activities of parliament. This dimension ensures that parliament provides accessible resources and outreach to help the public understand how parliamentary processes work, how they can participate, and the importance of their involvement. Public education fosters transparency and empowers citizens to engage actively in the democratic process.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Education programmes	Parliament has developed policies and materials for nationwide programmes to educate the public about its role and working methods, as well as about how members of the public can engage in its work.	SA's parliament has developed a variety of public education programs aimed at raising awareness about the role and functions of parliament. These programs include <a href="#">outreach initiatives, workshops, and informational materials</a> about parliamentary processes, as well as opportunities for the public to engage directly with MPs and parliamentary committees. <a href="#">Parliament's educational efforts</a> are comprehensive, with various resources available to the public, including brochures, online content, and community outreach programs. These initiatives aim to increase civic	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand outreach efforts to ensure that educational programs reach underserved communities, including remote areas and marginalised groups, through targeted campaigns and local events.</li> <li>Regularly update educational materials to reflect changes in parliamentary processes and ensure that they remain relevant and accurate.</li> </ul>

			<p>engagement and ensure the public is aware of how parliament operates.</p> <p>While programs exist, they may not always reach the full spectrum of society, particularly marginalised or less-engaged groups. There is also a challenge in ensuring that the materials are always up to date and accessible to those with limited access to technology or formal education.</p>		
2	Infrastructure and resources	Parliament has developed infrastructure and has allocated budgetary and human resources to support a range of public education programmes. This infrastructure can accommodate members of the public with special needs,	SA's parliament has invested in infrastructure to support public education programs, including a dedicated office for public outreach and engagement. Parliament has established Parliamentary Democracy Offices (PDOs) in 3 provinces. Parliament has also capacitated and resourced parliamentary constituency offices (PCOs). Parliament provides resources for <a href="#">public hearings, workshops, and educational events</a> . Efforts have also been made to ensure	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase investment in infrastructure and resources for public education programs, particularly in rural and underserved communities.</li> <li>• Strengthen accessibility by ensuring that all public education initiatives are inclusive, offering materials and events that accommodate persons with disabilities and those with limited digital access.</li> </ul>

		including persons with disabilities.	accessibility, such as providing support for persons with disabilities during events and activities. Parliament has a dedicated office responsible for public education (the Public Education Office/PEO), and substantial resources are allocated for <a href="#">educational programs</a> . In-person events and workshops are regularly held, with some efforts made to include accessible formats for people with disabilities. However, although the infrastructure is in place, the resources may not be sufficient to scale public education efforts nationwide, particularly in rural and remote areas. Accessibility can also be a challenge for people with disabilities or those without access to digital tools.		
3	Accessibility	Public education programmes are easily accessible for all groups within the	Public education programs in SA are accessible through a mix of in-person and online tools, including social media campaigns, websites, workshops, and	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand efforts to bridge the digital divide by providing offline access to public education materials, such as through</li> </ul>

		community. Various online and in-person tools are in place to ensure that education programmes reach all sections of society, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural or remote communities.	outreach events. These initiatives aim to reach all sections of society, with a particular focus on youth, women, and persons with disabilities. The use of diverse <a href="#">communication channels</a> , including social media and public broadcasts, helps make the programs more accessible. These are managed through the Parliamentary Communication Services section (PCS). Parliament also hosts in-person events that can be attended by various groups, including youth and rural communities. Accessibility issues remain for certain groups, particularly those in rural areas with limited internet access or digital literacy. Thereby, ensuring that the content is culturally and linguistically appropriate for all groups can be challenging.		printed materials, local radio, or community-based workshops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase collaboration with <a href="#">community organisations</a> and local governments to reach remote and marginalised communities with educational programs.</li> </ul>
4	Non-partisanship	Public education programmes are non-	SA's <a href="#">public education programs</a> are designed to be non-partisan, focusing on	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all public education materials, particularly during election periods,</li> </ul>

		<p>partisan and promote the basic principles of democracy.</p>	<p>educating the public about the democratic process, parliamentary functions, and the importance of civic engagement. These programs emphasise the values of democracy, transparency, and accountability, and they avoid promoting any particular political ideology or party. The non-partisan nature of the educational materials and programs is a key strength, ensuring that the public receives balanced information about parliamentary procedures and democratic principles. While the programs are generally <a href="#">non-partisan</a>, there may be instances where public education efforts are perceived as favouring certain political positions or parties, especially during election periods. Ensuring complete neutrality is crucial to maintaining trust in these programs.</p>		<p>remain strictly neutral and focus on educating the public about the democratic process rather than any political party.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review and audit public education programs to ensure they align with the core principles of democracy and non-partisanship.</li> </ul>
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Increase efforts to reach underserved communities, particularly in rural and remote areas, through targeted educational campaigns and accessible formats, including offline resources. Focus on making all public education programs fully inclusive, particularly for persons with disabilities and communities with limited digital access. This can be achieved by offering educational materials in multiple formats, such as print, audio, and video, and ensuring that events are physically accessible. Invest further in the infrastructure and resources necessary for scaling public education initiatives, particularly in less-represented communities.

This could include expanding the staff dedicated to public outreach and increasing the budget for educational activities. Reinforce the non-partisan nature of public education programs by implementing clear guidelines and audits to ensure that the content remains focused on the democratic process and not on any particular political ideology.



## 6.2. Indicator 6.2 Public participation in parliamentary processes

Public participation in parliamentary processes ensures that the needs and concerns of citizens are considered in law-making, budgeting, and oversight. This indicator assesses how parliament integrates public input into its legislative procedures, oversight mechanisms, and budget discussions. It evaluates the systems in place for soliciting, managing, and responding to public feedback, as well as how effectively parliament engages with citizens through consultations and hearings. A participatory parliament ensures that the voices of its people shape decisions at all stages of the legislative process.

### 6.2.1. Participation in law-making

This dimension focuses on the ways in which the public can engage in the law-making process. It ensures that citizens and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the drafting, debate, and amendment of laws. Effective participation in law-making allows parliament to be more responsive to the needs and concerns of the public, promoting legislation that reflects the collective interests of society.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for public participation in the law-making process. There are clear standards on consulting the public, as well as on the	SA's <a href="#">Constitution</a> guarantees the right to participate in the legislative process, and the legal framework, including the parliament's rules and the PAIA, supports public participation in law-making. These laws require parliament to consult the public when drafting laws and regulations, and they set standards	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the implementation of public consultation provisions in law-making to ensure that every legislative proposal involves meaningful engagement with all affected groups.</li> <li>Ensure that public participation is not only legally required but also systematically applied throughout the legislative process,</li> </ul>

		criteria that constitute adequate participation.	for ensuring adequate participation. The legal framework is well-established, with clear guidelines for <a href="#">public participation</a> in the legislative process. The inclusion of public consultation requirements in the law-making process ensures that citizens and stakeholders can contribute to the creation of laws that affect them. Although, the legal framework is robust, the practical application of public consultation can be inconsistent. Some legislation may not fully reflect the consultation or engagement of affected groups, and the public may not always have the resources to engage effectively.		with a focus on ensuring that consultations are thorough and inclusive.
2	Mechanisms and processes	Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate both general and targeted participation in the law-making process. Parliament ensures	SA's parliament has mechanisms such as public hearings, submissions to parliamentary committees, and consultations on bills and policy proposals. These processes are intended to facilitate both broad <a href="#">public engagement</a> and targeted input from	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve targeted outreach to ensure that marginalised and affected communities are given a genuine opportunity to participate in the law-making process.</li> <li>• Strengthen follow-up mechanisms to inform the public about how their input has influenced the law-making process</li> </ul>

		<p>that members of the public who are directly impacted by a proposal for a law have sufficient opportunity to provide input to the law-making process.</p>	<p>affected communities or stakeholders. Parliament has established formal processes for engaging the public, including public hearings, online submissions, and consultations with stakeholders, ensuring a level of inclusivity. The <a href="#">parliament website and other digital platforms</a> are often used to advertise participation opportunities, and specific communities or groups affected by legislation are consulted in a targeted manner. Even though, there are various mechanisms in place, their effectiveness and timeliness in reaching all impacted groups remains inconsistent. Certain groups, such as rural communities or marginalised populations, may not always have the opportunity to engage meaningfully. Thus, there may be a lack of follow-up on how public input has been</p>		<p>and to ensure that public feedback is reflected in the final legislative proposal.</p>
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			incorporated into the final legislative outcomes.		
3	Accessibility	A wide range of groups can participate in the law-making process in a timely manner. Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to explain proposals for laws. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, considering the complexity of the legislation in question.	SA's parliament has made efforts to ensure that <a href="#">public participation</a> is accessible by using plain and multiple languages in public education materials, providing consultation in multiple formats, and holding events at various locations. Parliament also uses online tools to reach a wider audience, especially for those who cannot attend in-person consultations. Accessibility is a priority in SA's <a href="#">public participation process</a> . Parliament employs a range of formats, including in-person hearings, digital submissions, and public awareness campaigns, to ensure that a broad spectrum of the public can participate. Efforts to make materials accessible, including translating documents and providing audio-visual content, are valuable. Despite efforts to	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to increase accessibility for marginalised groups by expanding outreach efforts to rural areas and providing information in multiple accessible formats, such as audio or visual content.</li> <li>• Simplify the language and content of proposed laws to ensure that complex legislation is understandable to all citizens, and provide support for those who need assistance in understanding proposals.</li> </ul>

			increase accessibility, challenges remain for certain groups, particularly those in remote areas or those without internet access. Furthermore, some legislative proposals are highly complex and may be difficult for the general public to fully understand, even with simplified materials.		
4	Practice	In practice, public participation is a regular feature of the law-making process. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliamentary consideration of proposals for laws.	In practice, public participation is a regular and important feature of the law-making process in SA. Public hearings, written submissions, and consultations are frequently used to gather public input on bills and policy proposals. Although <a href="#">parliamentary committees</a> receive regular feedback from the public, the extent to which it is incorporated into their deliberations remains limited, and the degree of influence varies depending on the issue(s). Public participation is a well-established and regular feature of the	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that public contributions have a meaningful impact on the law-making process by strengthening the mechanisms for incorporating feedback into the final decisions.</li> <li>• Foster greater consistency in public participation efforts across all areas of law-making, ensuring that the public is regularly engaged in both high-profile and routine legislative proposals.</li> </ul>

			<p><a href="#">legislative process</a>. Parliamentary committees make efforts to include public input, and CSOs are often involved in the consultation process, helping to ensure that public contributions are considered in law-making. However, this is not always effective in practice, especially in terms of feedback integration into deliberations and final outcomes. While public participation is common, its effectiveness in influencing legislation can vary. <a href="#">Public contributions</a> are not always adequately reflected in the final outcomes, and participation may be more limited for less controversial or technical issues. Thus, not all members of the public participate consistently, which can lead to a narrow range of opinions being represented.</p>		
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Continue to strengthen targeted outreach to marginalised and affected communities, ensuring they are meaningfully engaged in the law-making process, particularly for complex or high-stakes legislation. Increase transparency and timeliness in the public participation process by providing clear information on how public input has influenced legislative proposals. This will build trust in the process and demonstrate the value of public contributions. Focus on making proposed laws easier to understand for the general public, particularly those without legal expertise, by simplifying language and using accessible formats. Provide additional resources for citizens to ask questions and clarify complex points in legislation. Make public participation a consistent and integral part of the legislative process, ensuring that all sectors of society, including those in remote areas, have the opportunity to contribute to law-making.



### 6.2.2. Participation in oversight

Participation in oversight refers to the involvement of the public in monitoring government activities and the implementation of laws and policies. This dimension ensures that parliament creates opportunities for citizens to participate in oversight functions, such as scrutinising government performance, examining policy outcomes, and holding the executive accountable. Public participation in oversight strengthens parliamentary accountability and governance.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework establishes parliament’s obligation to facilitate public participation in oversight processes and activities.	SA's legal framework, including the <a href="#">Constitution</a> and the <a href="#">Rules of the National Assembly</a> (NA), provides for public participation in oversight activities. Parliamentary committees are required by law to invite public input during their oversight processes, and	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the consistent application of <a href="#">public participation provisions</a> across all parliamentary committees to ensure uniform engagement in oversight activities.</li> </ul>

			<p>provisions in the <a href="#">PAIA</a> ensure that citizens have access to information that enables their participation. The legal framework clearly establishes the rights of citizens to engage with parliamentary oversight. This includes providing opportunities for the public to <a href="#">submit written submissions, attend public hearings</a>, and participate in committee discussions. <a href="#">Legal framework</a> exists, the actual implementation of public participation in oversight may vary across different committees, and there can be inconsistencies in how public input is solicited or integrated into the oversight process.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular updates to the public on how their input has influenced oversight activities and legislative outcomes.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
2	Mechanisms and processes	Mechanisms and processes are in place for the public to participate in oversight activities, including robust procedures to	<p>SA's parliament has several mechanisms to facilitate public participation in parliamentary oversight, including <a href="#">public hearings, submissions, and consultations</a> during committee reviews of government policies and programs.</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that public participation processes are regularly advertised through multiple channels, <a href="#">including local media, social platforms, and community networks</a>, to reach wider and more diverse groups.</li> </ul>

		encourage public participation in all aspects of the work of parliamentary committees. Reference material explaining how the public can contribute to parliamentary oversight is made widely available by parliament.	Information about these opportunities is made available via parliament’s website and other communication channels. Parliament has established formal and accessible mechanisms for <a href="#">public involvement</a> , and public hearings are regularly held to gather input on oversight activities. The processes are well-structured in theory, however, in practice, the depth of these processes is not always convincing, and public participation can at times appear more tick-box than meaningfully influential. In addition, other barriers include access, particularly for members of the public who face digital, geographic, or resource constraints.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional resources or support to marginalised groups to facilitate their participation, such as covering transportation costs for attending public hearings or offering translated materials.</li> </ul>
3	Accessibility	Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to inform the public about parliamentary	SA’s parliament has made efforts to ensure that public participation in oversight is accessible. Parliamentary documents are made available in plain language, and consultations are held at	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase efforts to bridge the digital divide by providing offline access to relevant oversight documents and opportunities for in-person engagement.</li> </ul>

		<p>oversight activities, and relevant documents are made available to a wide range of groups in a timely manner. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, considering the complexity of the issue in question.</p>	<p>times and places designed to maximise participation. Information is often disseminated online and in print to ensure that citizens can easily access it. The use of <a href="#">plain language</a> in documents helps to make oversight activities more accessible, and parliament ensures that key documents and materials are distributed widely. Public hearings are scheduled in various locations to accommodate different groups, including those in remote areas. However, notifications and invites are not always shared in a timely manner, providing insufficient opportunity for the public to prepare and mobilise. Accessibility is prioritised, digital barriers remain for certain groups, especially those in rural areas with limited internet access or those without <a href="#">digital literacy</a>. Complex issues may also remain difficult to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify the <a href="#">language</a> used in documents and briefings, particularly for highly technical or complex oversight matters, to ensure clarity for all members of the public.</li> </ul>
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			understand, even when simplified language is used.		
4	Practice	In practice, public participation is a regular feature of parliamentary oversight. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliament's oversight activities.	In practice, <a href="#">public participation</a> is a regular and integral part of parliamentary oversight in SA. However, it is limited. Some committees are deliberate and make an effort to solicit public input, hold colloquiums and respond positively to request for engagements. Public hearings are held frequently, and civil society organisations, as well as individual citizens, regularly contribute to the oversight process. Parliamentary committees encourage public participation in reviewing government actions and policies. Public participation is institutionalised within the <a href="#">oversight</a> process, with committees frequently conducting public hearings and soliciting submissions. CSOs and various stakeholders contribute actively to	2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand outreach to underserved communities to ensure that public participation is truly representative of SA's diverse population.</li> <li>• Provide more opportunities for individuals and organisations from marginalised communities to engage in oversight activities, including financial support for those who need it.</li> </ul>

			discussions and review processes. While public participation is regular, the range of participants can be limited. In some cases, participation may be dominated by well-resourced groups or individuals with access to parliament's platforms, while others, especially in marginalised communities, may not engage consistently or meaningfully.		
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Strengthen the application of public participation provisions across all parliamentary committees, ensuring that each committee actively engages the public during the oversight process. Work towards [overcoming barriers](#) that limit public participation, particularly in rural or digitally excluded communities, by providing offline and in-person engagement opportunities and using multiple communication channels. Enhance efforts to ensure that marginalised and less-represented groups can participate meaningfully in oversight activities, including through outreach and support mechanisms such as transportation assistance or access to legal/technical resources for understanding complex issues. Strengthen the feedback mechanisms by clearly communicating how public input influences the oversight process and legislative outcomes. Ensure that parliament reports on the public's contributions and integrates their feedback into its decision-making.



### 6.2.3. Participation in the budget cycle

This dimension evaluates the public's ability to engage in the budget process, which includes formulating, examining, amending, and approving the national budget. It ensures that citizens can provide input into budgetary decisions that affect their lives, promoting transparency, accountability, and the effective allocation of public resources. Public involvement in the budget cycle helps ensure that national priorities align with the needs of society.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework provides for members of the public to participate in the budget cycle.	SA's legal framework supports public participation in the budget cycle. The Constitution, the <a href="#">Public Finance Management Act</a> (PFMA), and the <a href="#">Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act</a> mandate that the public be given the opportunity to engage in the budget process. The public is allowed to provide input during various stages, including the pre-budget statement, committee debates, and post-budget reviews. The legal framework is robust and clear, establishing a solid foundation for public participation in the <a href="#">budget process</a> . The	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the implementation of public participation provisions across all stages of the budget process, ensuring that participation is not only a legal requirement but also a routine part of the process.</li> <li>Provide greater clarity on how public input will be incorporated into the final budget decisions.</li> </ul>

			<p>inclusion of public participation in the budget process ensures that citizens can have a say in government spending priorities. The legal framework allows for participation, the practical application of these provisions can be inconsistent. Ensuring that the public is meaningfully involved at every stage of the budget cycle remains a challenge, particularly for marginalised communities.</p>		
2	Mechanisms and processes	<p>Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate public participation in all stages of the budget cycle (pre-budget statement, committee and plenary debate and approval, and in-year and ex-post budget oversight), with a particular emphasis</p>	<p>SA's parliament has established mechanisms for public participation in the budget process. Public hearings and submissions are held during the pre-budget phase, <a href="#">parliamentary committees debate</a> and <a href="#">review the budget</a>, and there are opportunities for public input during the approval and oversight stages. Public participation is primarily focused on parliamentary committees, which often conduct consultations and invite public input on</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the reach of public participation mechanisms to ensure that all relevant groups, particularly marginalised and vulnerable communities, can actively participate in the budget cycle.</li> <li>• Provide support to help citizens engage effectively in budget debates, such as simplified explanations of complex budget issues.</li> </ul>

		on participation in parliamentary committees or other bodies responsible for the budget.	budget proposals. The mechanisms for participation are established, and committees consult the public on budget matters, but this engagement is not always sufficiently regular, consistent, or extensive to support meaningful participation. Public hearings provide opportunities for citizens to express their views on the <a href="#">budget</a> , and parliamentary committees ensure that these views are heard during their deliberations. Mechanisms are in place, however, <a href="#">public participation</a> can be limited by factors such as accessibility, awareness, and the technical complexity of the budget. Ensuring meaningful participation from a wide range of groups, particularly those who are directly affected by budget decisions, is an ongoing challenge.		
3	Accessibility of the process	Opportunities for public participation in	SA's parliament ensures that public participation opportunities are well-	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that consultations are held in locations and at times that are accessible</li> </ul>

		<p>the budget cycle are announced well in advance, sufficient time is allocated for effective participation, and participation takes place at a time and in a place convenient for a wide range of groups</p>	<p>publicised and accessible, with announcements made well in advance of <a href="#">hearings and public consultations</a>. However, the timing and locations of consultations may not always be convenient for all groups, particularly those in rural or remote areas. Furthermore, the <a href="#">budget cycle's</a> complexity can be a barrier to effective participation. Parliament provides timely notices of participation opportunities, and consultations are generally scheduled with ample notice. The process is designed to be as inclusive as possible by offering various ways for the public to engage. While opportunities for participation are advertised, marginalised groups, especially those in remote areas, may still face barriers to participation due to the timing, format, or location of events. More work is needed to ensure that all sections of</p>	<p>to marginalised and rural communities, potentially through mobile consultations or virtual meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide adequate time for public participation, ensuring that all stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to engage and provide input on the budget.</li> </ul>
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			society have the opportunity to engage meaningfully.		
4	Accessibility of the text	The annual State budget is communicated to the public in plain, easy-to-understand language, enabling active engagement and meaningful contribution from citizens.	SA publishes the <a href="#">state budget</a> in a variety of formats and makes efforts to present the budget in an accessible manner. However, the complexity of the budget and technical jargon can make it difficult for ordinary citizens to fully understand the proposals. Parliament has made efforts to communicate the budget in accessible ways, including producing <a href="#">summary documents and providing explanations</a> in plain language for key aspects of the budget. Despite efforts to simplify the budget, the technical complexity of fiscal matters can make it difficult for many citizens to fully grasp the details of the budget. This may limit their ability to provide informed input.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify the language used in budget documents, and provide additional resources such as infographics, videos, or interactive tools to help the public better understand the budget.</li> <li>• Offer <a href="#">training and educational resources</a> to help citizens interpret and engage with the budget, particularly for those who may not have a background in finance or economics.</li> </ul>
5	Practice	Parliament regularly consults with the	In practice, public participation in the budget process is a regular feature of	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase efforts to encourage broader public participation, particularly from less</li> </ul>

		<p>public about the budget, using a wide range of instruments and methods.</p>	<p>parliamentary activities. <a href="#">Public hearings, submissions, and consultations</a> are held at key points throughout the budget cycle. However, participation is sometimes dominated by more organised groups, and the level of engagement from the general public can fluctuate. Public participation is a regular and established part of the budget process, and many CSOs actively contribute to discussions about the budget. Parliament's willingness to engage the public in the <a href="#">budget process</a> helps increase transparency and accountability. Public participation in the budget process is not always representative of the broader population. More work is needed to encourage widespread engagement from ordinary citizens, especially those who are directly impacted by budget decisions.</p>		<p>organised or marginalised groups, by providing more accessible and tailored engagement opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement measures to track and report on public participation levels, and use this data to refine and improve public participation strategies.</li> </ul>
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Increase efforts to educate the public about the budget process and provide resources that simplify complex budget concepts. This can include training programs, simplified documents, and outreach campaigns targeting underserved communities. Improve the accessibility of public participation processes by considering the needs of rural, marginalised, and digitally excluded communities. Ensure that consultation opportunities are available in multiple formats, such as in-person, online, and through radio or community events. Make budget documents more accessible by simplifying the language used and presenting key information in easy-to-understand formats, such as infographics, videos, and interactive tools. Work to increase engagement from a diverse cross-section of the population, ensuring that participation goes beyond organised civil society groups and includes everyday citizens. More outreach to marginalised communities is essential for broad-based public participation.



#### 6.2.4. Managing public input and providing feedback

Managing public input and providing feedback focuses on how parliament handles the feedback, suggestions, and opinions from citizens. This dimension ensures that there are effective systems in place for gathering, reviewing, and responding to public contributions. By managing public input effectively and providing feedback, parliament can demonstrate that it values citizen engagement and incorporates their views into decision-making processes.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Processing public input into parliamentary work	MPs and parliamentary bodies receive information about the main themes emerging from	SA's parliament has established procedures for processing public input, with parliamentary committees regularly receiving submissions from the public, civil society organisations, and other	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the system for summarising and presenting public input to ensure that the key themes and concerns are clearly identified and communicated to MPs in a</li> </ul>

		<p>public input in a timely manner and in formats that help them to incorporate this input</p>	<p>stakeholders. These submissions are reviewed and summarised by parliamentary staff to highlight key themes. The information is presented in formats that help MPs incorporate the public's input into <a href="#">legislative processes</a>. The process for collecting and summarising public input is generally effective, and MPs are provided with relevant <a href="#">information</a> in a timely manner. Parliamentary committees have a clear procedure for incorporating public input into their deliberations. Although input is processed, there are challenges in ensuring that all themes and opinions are adequately represented. In some cases, public input can be overwhelming or detailed, making it difficult to ensure comprehensive consideration of all views. Furthermore, the time available to MPs to review public submissions may sometimes be limited, impacting how</p>		<p>way that facilitates their integration into parliamentary work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that MPs have sufficient time to review public input, particularly for complex or highly detailed submissions, to ensure that citizens' views are fully considered in the decision-making process.</li> </ul>
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			deeply public input is integrated into the legislative process.		
2	Providing feedback to the public	Parliament has a functioning system for providing regular feedback to the public on the results of their participation. The effectiveness of this feedback system is regularly evaluated, and improvements are made where necessary.	SA's parliament has a feedback mechanism in place for informing the public about the outcomes of their participation (such as the <a href="#">Public Participation Framework</a> , <a href="#">Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports</a> (ATC) and <a href="#">Parliament TV</a> ). Other forms include parliamentary reports, websites, and press releases. Parliament makes efforts to communicate its proceedings and participation processes, but it is less effective in showing how public input has actually been integrated into legislative deliberations and outcomes, these are areas for improvement in terms of consistency and transparency. Parliament has a feedback system, but there is limited evidence showing how consistently citizens are informed about the influence of their	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the transparency and detail of feedback provided to the public, ensuring that they understand how their contributions have influenced the legislative process.</li> <li>• Regularly evaluate the feedback system and gather public input on how it can be improved. Ensure that feedback is more than a simple acknowledgment and includes specific examples of how public input was incorporated.</li> <li>• Create a formal system for tracking public input and feedback throughout the legislative process, allowing citizens to easily access updates on their contributions.</li> </ul>

			input on legislative decisions. The public can follow up on their submissions and learn about the outcomes through various media. The feedback system could be more robust. Some feedback is provided, it is not always sufficiently detailed, and citizens may not always feel that their contributions have been fully taken into account. Therefore, the evaluation of the feedback system itself may not be as comprehensive or consistent as it could be.		
3	Resources	Parliament has appropriate human and technical resources to process public input, to supply MPs with relevant findings and to provide feedback to members of the public	SA's parliament should have dedicated staff and technical resources to manage public input and ensure that it is processed and integrated into the legislative process. The <a href="#">parliamentary research unit</a> and public participation model help MPs review submissions and summarise key points for consideration. However, resources may not always be sufficient to manage the volume of input	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase staffing for the research unit and provide more resources for the public participation model and to ensure that they can efficiently process public input, particularly during peak periods of legislative activity.</li> <li>• Invest in technical tools and systems to streamline the processing and analysis of public input, allowing for faster and more</li> </ul>

		<p>who participate in the work of parliament</p>	<p>during high-profile legislative periods or complex consultations. Parliament has invested in a system to process <a href="#">public input</a>, with dedicated staff and technical support in place to ensure that public contributions are reviewed, categorised, and communicated to MPs. There is also a focus on providing MPs with the necessary findings to make informed decisions. While resources are in place, there may be capacity limitations, especially when there is a large volume of public input or when issues require highly specialised analysis. More resources may be needed to ensure the efficient processing of public input and the timely provision of feedback to the public.</p>		<p>accurate communication of key findings to MPs and the public.</p>
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Improve the transparency and thoroughness of the feedback system to ensure that public participants feel their input has been valued. Include more detailed explanations of how public input is used in the legislative process and provide regular updates on the status of public submissions. Strengthen the capacity of parliamentary offices to handle and process public input, particularly during busy legislative periods. This can include increasing staffing and investing in more advanced technical tools to help manage and analyse submissions. Continuously evaluate and adjust the public participation processes to ensure they remain effective and efficient. Solicit feedback from the public about how the process can be improved and make necessary adjustments to ensure citizens are fully engaged in the legislative process. Establish a more formalised and transparent system for tracking public input and the feedback process, making it easier for the public to see how their contributions have influenced the legislative process and ensuring that they remain informed.



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

This indicator focuses on ensuring the inclusion of diverse groups in parliamentary work, including marginalised communities, CSO and underrepresented groups. It assesses how parliament engages with these groups and ensures their participation in debates, committee work, and decision-making processes. A truly participatory parliament reflects the interests and needs of a broad spectrum of society, promoting diversity and inclusivity in the development of public policies and legislation.

#### 6.3.1. Engaging civil society organisations

This dimension focuses on the role of parliament in involving CSOs in its legislative and oversight processes. It ensures that parliament actively engages with CSOs, providing them with opportunities to influence decision-making and participate in consultations. By engaging with CSOs, parliament can ensure that a broad range of perspectives, especially those of marginalised or vulnerable groups, are considered in the legislative process.

#### The assessment:

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Legal framework	The legal framework sets out the procedures by which CSOs can participate in the work of parliament.	SA's parliament has a good legal framework that supports the participation of <a href="#">CSOs</a> in the parliamentary process. The <a href="#">Constitution</a> , along with various parliamentary rules, enables <a href="#">CSOs to engage with parliament</a> . Laws such as the PAIA also facilitate CSOs participation by granting access to	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the procedures for CSOs participation are clearly communicated and easily accessible to encourage broader engagement.</li> <li>Streamline access to parliamentary processes for CSOs, reducing bureaucratic obstacles that may delay or prevent their involvement.</li> </ul>

			<p>information necessary for meaningful engagement. The legal framework clearly outlines the participation rights of <a href="#">CSOs</a>, providing them with the legal foundation to contribute to parliamentary proceedings, submit opinions on legislative proposals, and participate in committee hearings and public consultations. The legal framework exists, the extent to which it is fully implemented and the ease of access for CSOs can vary. In some cases, CSOs may face bureaucratic hurdles or delays in gaining access to parliamentary processes or receiving the information needed to engage meaningfully.</p>		
2	Consultation	Parliament systematically consults with CSOs in its law-making and oversight activities. CSO representatives can	SA's parliament has established several mechanisms to consult with CSOs, including public hearings, parliamentary committee meetings, and online consultation platforms. CSOs are encouraged to submit opinions on	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more support for smaller or resource-limited CSOs, including guidance on how to effectively engage in parliamentary processes and access necessary resources.</li> </ul>

		<p>access parliamentary premises and attend relevant meetings. Parliament creates tools for engaging CSOs in consultation processes both in person and online.</p>	<p><a href="#">legislative proposals</a> and participate in the parliamentary process, with opportunities to attend and contribute to committee discussions and oversight activities. Parliament’s consultation processes are well-established, with CSOs regularly invited to provide input on proposed laws, particularly through public hearings and submissions. In addition, online consultation <a href="#">tools</a> have expanded the opportunities for CSOs involvement in <a href="#">parliamentary processes</a>. Although CSOs are consulted regularly, there can be instances where the consultation process is not as inclusive or accessible as it could be. Some CSOs, particularly smaller or less resourceful ones, may struggle to access parliamentary sessions or may not have the capacity to engage meaningfully in online platforms or complex parliamentary debates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to expand online consultation tools to ensure that CSOs can participate remotely, especially those unable to attend in person due to geographical or financial constraints.</li> </ul>
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3	Diversity	<p>Parliament facilitates participation from a broad range of CSOs representing diverse points of view, including those that work with hard-to-reach and historically marginalised groups. Parliament ensures a level playing field for all CSOs that engage with parliament.</p>	<p>SA's parliament has made efforts to include diverse CSOs, including those representing marginalised and vulnerable groups, in parliamentary consultations. <a href="#">Parliamentary committees</a> and public hearings are open to a wide range of CSOs, and efforts are made to ensure that CSOs from different sectors (e.g., youth, women, persons with disabilities, rural communities) are represented. Parliament actively engages CSOs from various sectors, ensuring that multiple voices, including those from marginalised groups, are included in the <a href="#">consultation process</a>. The public consultation process is designed to be inclusive and open to all types of organisations. Despite these efforts, some groups still face challenges in accessing parliamentary consultations, particularly CSOs working with hard-to-reach or marginalised populations. There</p>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen efforts to ensure that hard-to-reach and marginalised groups are given meaningful opportunities to participate in parliamentary consultations.</li> <li>• Provide additional support and capacity-building for smaller, grassroots CSOs to ensure that they can engage effectively in the parliamentary process and have their voices heard.</li> </ul>
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			may also be an uneven playing field where larger, more established CSOs have greater access to parliamentary processes than smaller or grassroots organisations.		
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Ensure that smaller, grassroots organisations, and those representing marginalised groups, have the support and resources needed to engage meaningfully in parliamentary consultations. This could include [training, funding assistance, or logistical support](#) for attending parliamentary sessions or submitting feedback. Continue to develop and improve online platforms for CSOs to engage with parliament. This will help to increase accessibility, especially for organisations in remote areas or with limited resources to attend in-person events. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and inclusivity of the consultation processes to ensure that all relevant CSOs, especially those from marginalised or hard-to-reach communities, are given a fair opportunity to participate in law-making and oversight activities. Work to ensure that all CSOs, regardless of size or resources, have equal opportunities to participate in the legislative process. This can include measures to support the involvement of less-established organisations in consultations and hearings, and providing clearer guidance on how to engage with parliament.



### 6.3.2. Reaching out to all communities

Reaching out to all communities ensures that parliament connects with and represents the diverse groups within society. This dimension assesses the effectiveness of parliament’s efforts to engage with various communities, particularly underrepresented or marginalised groups, ensuring that their concerns are heard and addressed. By reaching out to all communities, parliament promotes inclusivity and ensures that no group is left behind in the democratic process.

**The assessment:**

Criteria	Name	Description	SA Parliament	Grade	Recommendations
1	Policies	Parliament sets out strategies for engaging all groups within the community, especially those facing barriers to engagement with parliament, regardless of their age, gender, location, physical ability, or any other characteristic.	SA's parliament has developed policies aimed at promoting inclusive public participation, including strategies to engage groups that face barriers to participation, such as <a href="#">persons with disabilities, women, youth, and rural communities</a> . These policies are part of a broader effort to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to engage in parliamentary processes. Parliament has demonstrated a commitment to inclusive participation, with policies designed to facilitate engagement from <a href="#">diverse and marginalised groups</a> . There are clear efforts to address barriers and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens. While the policies exist, their implementation can sometimes be uneven. There are still	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to ensure that policies for inclusive engagement are fully implemented across all parliamentary activities, with clear actions to address any gaps.</li> <li>• Regularly review and update these policies to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of marginalised groups.</li> </ul>

			practical barriers for certain groups, particularly those in remote or rural areas or individuals with disabilities, who may not fully benefit from these strategies.		
2	Accessibility	Information about parliamentary consultations is made available in a timely manner and to a wide and diverse audience. Parliamentary buildings and infrastructure, as well as print and digital materials, are accessible and inclusive.	SA's parliament has made efforts to ensure that information about parliamentary consultations is widely disseminated, including through digital platforms and physical outreach. Parliamentary buildings and infrastructure are increasingly designed to be accessible, with accommodations for <a href="#">persons with disabilities</a> , and print and digital materials are made available to the public. Parliament provides accessible information through its website, social media, and traditional media channels. Accessibility improvements to the physical infrastructure have also been made, including accessible entrances and	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue improving physical and digital accessibility to ensure all citizens, especially those in remote or underserved areas, can access parliamentary information and engage with the process.</li> <li>• Simplify language and materials to make them more accessible to a broader range of people, particularly those with lower literacy levels or who may face barriers to understanding complex legal or parliamentary documents.</li> </ul>

			<p>facilities for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Despite these efforts, accessibility remains a challenge, especially in rural areas where internet access may be limited. The complexity of some materials can also make them less accessible to people with limited literacy or education, and some <a href="#">public engagement processes</a> may still be difficult to navigate for marginalised groups.</p>		
3	Engaging women	<p>The participation of women is institutionalised and mainstreamed throughout the work of parliament.</p> <p>Engagement is safe and accessible for women.</p> <p>Parliament ensures that both women and men are equally</p>	<p>SA's parliament has institutionalised the participation of <a href="#">women</a> in parliament through gender quotas and the creation of a <a href="#">Multi-party Women's Caucus</a>. Efforts are made to ensure that women are represented in leadership roles and that their perspectives are considered in parliamentary work. Committee hearings also strive to ensure gender balance among experts and witnesses. SA has made significant strides in promoting</p>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen efforts to ensure gender balance in leadership positions within parliament, including in committee chairs and other decision-making roles.</li> <li>• Implement stronger measures to address gender-based violence and harassment within parliamentary spaces, ensuring a safe environment for women to participate fully.</li> </ul>

		represented among experts and other witnesses at committee hearings.	gender equality in parliament, with a substantial number of women holding parliamentary seats and leadership positions. Efforts to mainstream gender in parliamentary work are evident. Despite these advances, women’s representation in some leadership roles, particularly in committee chairs or influential decision-making positions, remains limited. <a href="#">Gender-based violence</a> and harassment in parliament are still issues that need to be addressed to ensure safe and inclusive participation.		
4	Engaging youth	Parliament provides targeted engagement opportunities for youth and young people are systematically consulted on matters that are important to them.	SA’s parliament has a <a href="#">youth parliament</a> and <a href="#">several programs</a> aimed at engaging young people in the democratic process. These initiatives aim to increase youth participation in policy debates and ensure that <a href="#">young people’s voices</a> are heard in legislative discussions. SA’s parliament provides platforms for youth engagement, including dedicated	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the frequency and scope of youth engagement programs, ensuring that youth participation is mainstreamed throughout the legislative process.</li> <li>• Provide more opportunities for young people to be directly involved in policymaking, such as by involving them in committee reviews or offering internships and mentorship programs with MPs.</li> </ul>

			<p>sessions for young people to interact with MPs and discuss issues that affect them. These efforts help increase awareness of the legislative process among the younger population.</p> <p>Targeted opportunities for youth engagement do exist, youth participation in the broader legislative process remains limited. <a href="#">Young people</a> may face barriers to participating meaningfully in regular parliamentary activities, and their concerns are sometimes overlooked in broader debates.</p>		
5	Engaging remote communities	Parliament proactively offers engagement opportunities for communities that are geographically remote from parliament. These may include bringing people to parliament, organising committee	<p>SA's parliament has made efforts to <a href="#">engage remote communities</a> by holding some committee hearings outside parliament and offering educational programs about the legislative process.</p> <p><a href="#">Mobile units and outreach programs</a> have been used to reach citizens in rural or underserved areas. The proactive efforts to engage remote communities</p>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the frequency and reach of mobile consultations and outreach programs, ensuring that remote communities have regular access to opportunities for participation in parliamentary processes.</li> <li>• Explore digital and virtual methods for reaching remote communities, such as live-streaming committee sessions and</li> </ul>

		hearings outside the parliamentary premises, or offering educational programmes to people in remote areas.	through outreach programs and mobile consultations help bring parliament's work to those who might otherwise be excluded from the process. This ensures that even citizens in geographically isolated areas can participate in national decision-making. While these efforts are valuable, the scope of outreach is limited, and not all remote communities have regular access to parliamentary activities or opportunities for participation. There is still a need for more consistent and widespread efforts to engage these communities.		providing online platforms for submission of public opinions.
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Focus on improving access to information and participation for rural communities, persons with disabilities, and those with limited access to digital tools. This can include providing printed materials in various languages and formats, hosting more in-person consultations, and improving internet access in underserved areas. Continue efforts to increase gender and youth representation in key leadership roles within parliament and ensure that their voices are considered in decision-making processes. Increase the reach of mobile consultations and virtual engagement tools to ensure that remote communities can regularly participate in parliamentary activities, both online and in person.



## 7. Way forward & Conclusion

This assessment finds that SA's parliament has established a solid foundation for participatory democracy. Constitutional guarantees, enabling legislation, and NA [rules](#) provide a clear mandate for public participation across law-making, oversight, and the [budget cycle](#). Participation mechanisms are institutionalised, and engagement with CSOs are a notable strength. Public hearings and submissions are regular features of [parliamentary work](#), reflecting a broad commitment to openness and engagement.

At the same time, the effectiveness of [participation is constrained](#) by persistent structural and operational challenges. Implementation remains inconsistent across many committees, participation processes are not equally accessible to all groups, and feedback to the public is unequal and often lacks detail. As a result, [public participation](#) does not always translate into visible influence on parliamentary decisions, which risks reducing engagement to a procedural exercise rather than a substantive democratic practice.

Marginalised and under-represented groups continue to face barriers related to geography, digital access, language, technical complexity, and resource constraints. Participation in the [budget cycle](#) and oversight processes remains particularly limited for ordinary citizens, with engagement frequently concentrated among specialised civil society actors. These dynamics limit representativity and weaken the capacity of parliament to fully reflect the lived experiences and priorities of the broader population.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that parliament has made significant progress in establishing participation, but further work is required to deepen its quality, inclusivity, and impact. Addressing these gaps is essential to strengthening accountability, improving public confidence, and aligning parliamentary practice with the objectives of the IDP framework and the broader democratic governance agenda.

*The way forward is to enhance parliament's performance under IDP Target 6, the following priority actions are recommended:*

Parliament should standardise public participation practices across committees. Clear minimum standards for outreach, consultation, feedback, and reporting would reduce variability and ensure that participation is applied consistently across all parliamentary structures.

Feedback and accountability mechanisms must be strengthened. Parliament should establish a formal system for tracking public input and clearly communicating how submissions influence legislative,

oversight, and budgetary outcomes. Transparent feedback loops are critical for sustaining public trust and engagement.

Accessibility and inclusivity should be central to the design of participation tools. This includes expanding offline and low-tech options, simplifying language, providing multilingual materials, and ensuring full accessibility for persons with disabilities and digitally excluded communities.

Parliament should invest more strategically in public education and civic literacy. Long-term participation depends on public understanding of parliamentary processes, particularly in relation to oversight and the budget cycle. Education initiatives should prioritise rural and underserved communities and use a range of non-digital platforms.

Although engagement with CSOs remains important, parliament should broaden participation beyond organised actors. Greater effort is needed to reach individual citizens, grassroots organisations, and communities that are not traditionally represented in parliamentary processes.

Parliament should strengthen monitoring and evaluation of public participation. Regular, publicly available assessments of participation practices would support institutional learning and enable continuous improvement.

Moving forward, parliament has an opportunity to shift from participation that is largely procedural to participation that is genuinely influential and representative. By strengthening consistency, accessibility, and accountability, public participation can become a more effective driver of democratic legitimacy and responsive governance within SA's parliamentary system.

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## 9. Glossary

<b>Accessibility</b>	The extent to which parliamentary processes, information, and participation mechanisms are available and usable by all people, including marginalised and disabled groups.
<b>Civic Education</b>	Activities and programmes aimed at improving public understanding of parliament's role, processes, and opportunities for participation.
<b>Committee Hearings</b>	Formal parliamentary meetings where committees receive evidence, submissions, and oral input from the public and stakeholders.
<b>Constitutional Mandate</b>	Duties and powers assigned to parliament by the Constitution, including facilitating public involvement in legislative and oversight processes.
<b>Digital Participation</b>	Public engagement with parliamentary processes through online platforms, virtual hearings, and electronic submissions.
<b>Enabling Environment</b>	The legal, institutional, and procedural conditions that allow public participation to occur effectively.
<b>Executive Accountability</b>	Parliament's role in holding the executive branch accountable through oversight, inquiries, and scrutiny of government actions.
<b>Feedback Mechanisms</b>	Systems through which parliament communicates to the public how their input was considered or used in decision-making.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The intentional involvement of diverse social groups in parliamentary processes, particularly those historically marginalised.
<b>Institutional Capacity</b>	The availability of resources, staff, systems, and structures enabling parliament to fulfil its participatory functions.
<b>Law-Making Process</b>	The stages through which legislation is developed, debated, amended, and adopted by parliament.
<b>Marginalised Groups</b>	Communities or individuals who face social, economic, geographic, or structural barriers to participation.

<b>Parliamentary Committees</b>	Structures within parliament responsible for detailed legislative scrutiny, oversight, and public engagement.
<b>Parliamentary Environment</b>	The legal, procedural, and cultural context within which public participation takes place.
<b>Participatory Governance</b>	A governance approach that emphasises active citizen involvement in public decision-making.
<b>Participatory Parliament</b>	A parliament that actively enables and values public involvement in its legislative, oversight, and budgetary functions.
<b>Plain Language</b>	Communication that avoids technical jargon to ensure parliamentary information is understandable to the general public.
<b>Policy Influence</b>	The extent to which public input affects legislative or oversight outcomes.
<b>Public Hearings</b>	Structured forums allowing individuals and organisations to present views directly to parliament.
<b>Public Input</b>	Submissions, evidence, opinions, or feedback provided by the public during parliamentary processes.
<b>Public Participation</b>	The involvement of individuals and groups in parliamentary decision-making through formal engagement mechanisms.
<b>Public Participation Office</b>	A parliamentary unit responsible for coordinating and managing public engagement activities.
<b>Public Trust</b>	Confidence among citizens that parliament acts transparently, inclusively, and in the public interest.
<b>Representativity</b>	The extent to which parliamentary processes reflect the diversity of the population.
<b>Responsive Parliament</b>	A parliament that adapts its actions and decisions in response to public needs and input.

**Rural Communities**

Populations located outside urban centres that often face greater barriers to parliamentary participation.

**Virtual Hearings**

Committee meetings conducted online to enable remote public participation.