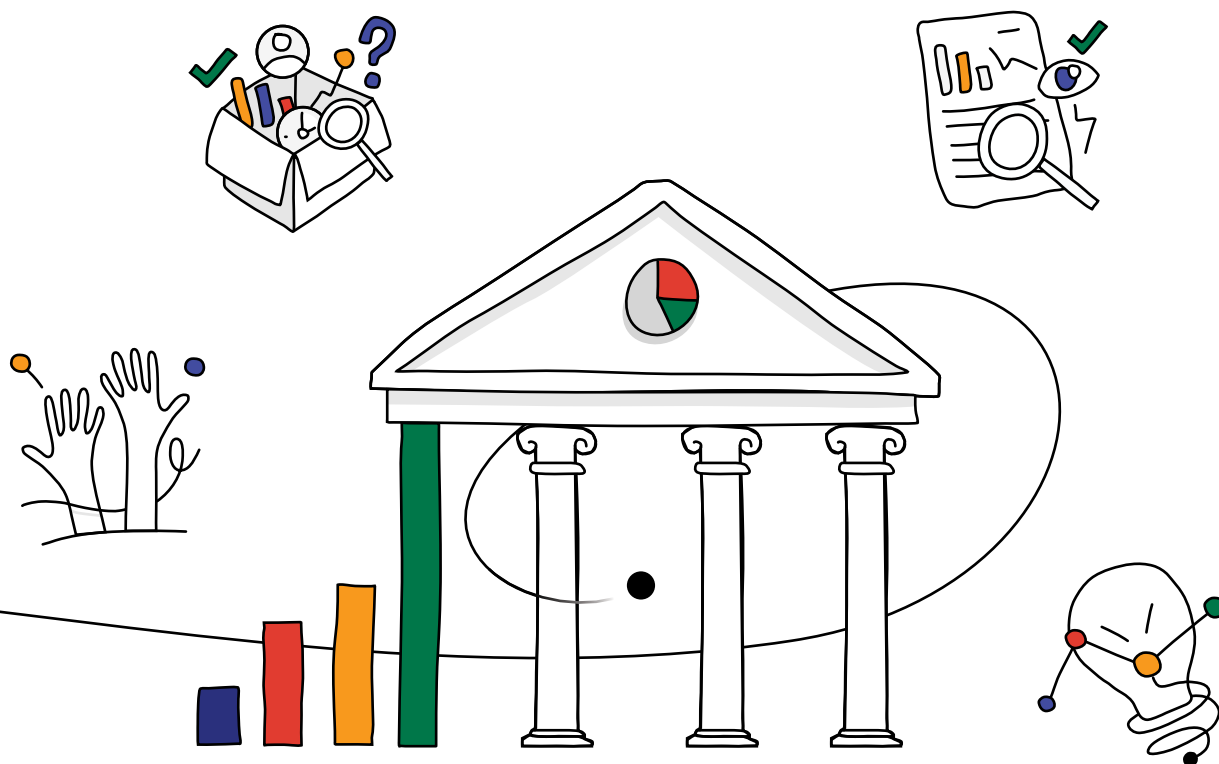




# EU Parliamentary Report

Summary of the Assessment Criteria for  
the Indicators for Democratic Parliament

Targets 1-7



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**PMG** PARLIAMENTARY  
MONITORING GROUP  
**OUTA** openup:  
ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

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## 1. Acronyms

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EU	European Union
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDPs	Indicators for Democratic Parliaments
IEC	Electoral Commission of South Africa
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MPs	Members of Parliament
NDP	National Development Plan
OUTA	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PR	Proportional Representation (electoral system)
SA	South African
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

## 2. Executive summary

This assessment applies the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPs) to the South African (SA) parliament across seven targets: effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative parliament. The assessment finds that parliament has strong constitutional, legal, and institutional foundations, but these strengths are not always matched by consistent implementation, visible follow-through, or meaningful public impact.

**For Target 1**, parliament has clear formal authority over law-making, oversight, committees, rules, and procedures. However, its practical effectiveness is weakened when agenda-setting, administrative capacity, research support, document management, and follow-up on executive undertakings are inconsistent. The priority is to strengthen parliament's operational independence, digital systems, committee support and tracking of recommendations.

**For Target 2**, SA has important accountability foundations, including anti-corruption legislation, ethics rules, public reporting mechanisms, and access-to-information laws. The main weakness is enforcement. Public confidence is reduced when lobbying remains under-regulated, political-party funding and expenditure are difficult to scrutinise, and ethics or accountability processes are not sufficiently visible, timely or independent.

**For Target 3**, parliament publishes a significant amount of information through formal records, committee documents, budget materials, and digital platforms. However, transparency is limited when information is difficult to search, late to publish, written in technical language or available mainly in PDF-based formats. Parliament should make its information easier to find, understand, compare, and use, specifically for ordinary citizens, rural communities, persons with disabilities and smaller media outlets.

**For Target 4**, parliament has mechanisms to receive and respond to public concerns through petitions, hearings, submissions, debates, and committee processes. The challenge is that responsiveness is often reactive rather than proactive. Delays, weak feedback loops, limited parliamentary time, political contestation and uneven integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reduce parliament's ability to show citizens how their concerns shape decisions.

**For Target 5**, parliament has a strong legal and policy basis for inclusive governance, supported by specialised committees, multilingual services, public participation mechanisms and internal policies on dignity and non-discrimination. The weakness is that inclusion is not yet fully mainstreamed across all committees, budgets, and oversight processes. Human-rights screening, gender-responsive budgeting,

youth inclusion, disability access, workplace monitoring, and impact assessments require stronger institutionalisation.

**For Target 6**, parliament has a robust constitutional and legal framework for public participation, including public hearings, written submissions, committee consultations, public education, and engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs). However, participation must move beyond procedure to influence. Feedback is often weak, practices vary across committees, and ordinary citizens, rural communities, youth, persons with disabilities and smaller CSO still face barriers to meaningful participation.

**For Target 7**, SA has a strong constitutional and electoral foundation for representative democracy, and the proportional representation (PR) system supports political pluralism. However, representation must be measured by influence, not only by the number of seats held. The assessment therefore highlights the need to strengthen inclusive leadership practices, improve reporting on the gender, age, and disability profile of parliamentary bodies, and ensure that women, young people, persons with disabilities, smaller parties and other underrepresented groups are visible in committees, leadership structures, agenda-setting and final parliamentary outcomes.

Across all seven targets, the central reform challenge is to move from formal democratic design to measurable democratic performance. Parliament should adopt a cross-target implementation plan, improve public tracking of recommendations and executive undertakings, standardise committee practices, strengthen institutional capacity, publish information in accessible formats, and make representation, participation, and accountability more visible to the public.

### 3. Introduction

This report provides a consolidated summary of the assessment of the South African (SA) parliament against the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (IDPS), focusing on Targets 1 to 7. These targets assess whether parliament is effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative. They provide a useful framework for understanding both the formal strengths of parliament and the practical gaps that affect how parliament performs its democratic role.

SA has a strong constitutional and legal foundation for parliamentary democracy. Parliament has clear authority to make laws, oversee the executive, represent the public, approve budgets, and provide platforms for public participation. It is supported by formal rules, committee structures, public reporting mechanisms and legal protections for openness, accountability, and inclusion. These foundations are important because they create the institutional basis for parliament to act independently, scrutinise government, involve citizens and reflect the diversity of society.

However, the assessment shows that the main challenge is not simply whether these frameworks exist. The bigger issue is whether they are implemented consistently, visibly and in ways that have practical impact. Across the seven targets, the report identifies a repeated pattern: parliament often has the necessary rules, procedures, and structures in place, but implementation is uneven. This affects public accessibility, committee follow-through, enforcement of accountability mechanisms, public feedback, digital access, inclusion, and the ability of underrepresented groups to influence parliamentary work.

The report therefore does not only assess parliament's formal powers, but it also considers how these powers work in practice. It looks at whether committees are properly supported, public participation is meaningful, oversight recommendations are followed up, information is easy for the public to find and understand, and that different political and social groups have real influence in parliamentary processes. Therefore, the assessment determines if parliament's democratic systems are producing visible, accountable, and inclusive outcomes.

#### **What the report covers:**

The report begins by setting out the background to the IDPs and explaining the seven targets used in the assessment, providing a summary of the key observations, and recommendations.

- **Target 1: Effective parliament** considers whether parliament has the autonomy, capacity, procedures, and institutional support needed to perform its core functions. This includes parliamentary independence, the role and support of members of parliament (MPs), committee structures, law-making, oversight, budget scrutiny, and relations with other branches of government.

- **Target 2: Accountable parliament** focuses on ethics, anti-corruption, conflicts of interest, codes of conduct, lobbying, expenditure, procurement, freedom of information and institutional integrity. It assesses whether parliament has credible systems to prevent abuse, enforce rules and make accountability information accessible to the public.
- **Target 3: Transparent parliament** examines whether parliament makes its work open and understandable. This includes access to records, legislative information, budget documents, committee proceedings, the parliamentary website, outreach activities, physical access, disability access, and media access.
- **Target 4: Responsive parliament** assesses whether parliament listens and responds to public concerns, emerging policy issues, and the principle of leaving no one behind. It looks at petitions, public concerns, urgent issues, oversight tools, and the extent to which the SDGs and the National Development Plan (NDP) are integrated into parliamentary work.
- **Target 5: Inclusive parliament** focuses on whether inclusion is embedded in parliament's law-making, oversight, budgeting, and institutional practices. It considers human rights, impact assessments, gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting, youth inclusion, workplace diversity, harassment prevention, and multilingual service delivery.
- **Target 6: Participatory parliament** assesses whether parliament creates meaningful opportunities for public participation. It looks at the legal framework for participation, institutional capacity, public education, participation in law-making, oversight and the budget cycle, feedback on public input, civil society engagement, and outreach to all communities.
- **Target 7: Representative parliament** examines whether parliament reflects the diversity of society and whether political groups, women, youth, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups can participate meaningfully in decision-making. It considers electoral integrity, political diversity, gender and youth representation, and the composition of parliamentary bodies and leadership structures.

The report concludes with cross-cutting recommendations aimed at strengthening parliament's democratic performance. These recommendations focus on improving implementation, public tracking, committee consistency, plain-language information, accessibility, accountability, inclusion, and representation. The report argues that parliament's next reform priority should be to move from formal democratic structures to measurable democratic impact. This summary is based on OUTA's broader assessment reports, which evaluate the current state of the SA's parliament. OUTA provided an evidence-based evaluation of parliament's performance and offered guidance for its continued development in line with the IDPs and the co-funded European Union (EU) project on Enhancing Accountability and Transparency in South Africa.

## 4. Background to the Assessment of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

The indicators, dimensions and assessments will be discussed.

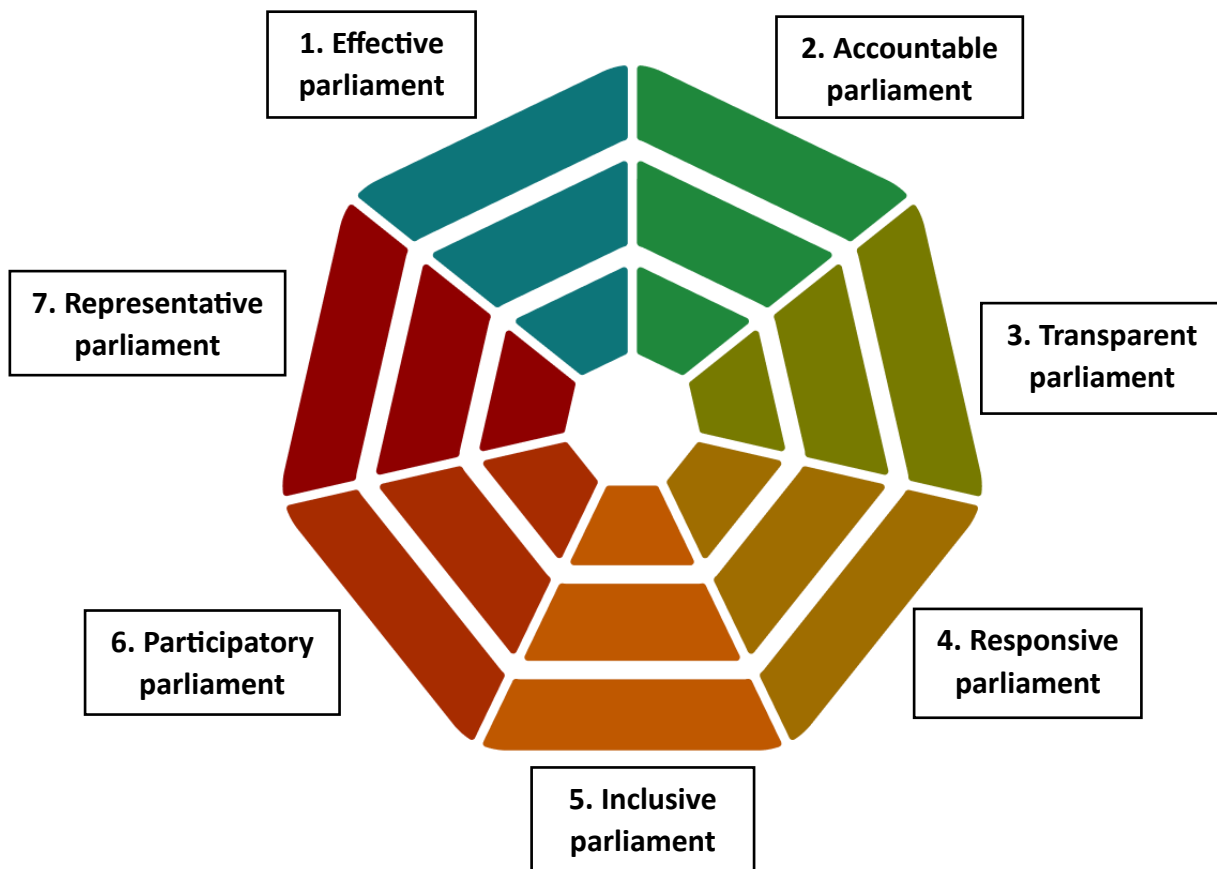


Figure 1 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

The IDPs are a framework developed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), with partners from the parliamentary community, to help assess how well parliaments meet democratic standards.

OUTA applied this framework as an independent civil society assessment of SA's parliament. The framework includes 108 dimensions and 500 assessment criteria, providing a detailed basis for evaluating parliament's performance, practice, and capacity. OUTA's assessment uses these indicators to examine whether parliament is fulfilling its constitutional mandate, serving the public interest, and strengthening democratic governance.

Full assessment reports can be found on [ParliMeter](#).

**Methodology used:**

The assessment was based on publicly available information, including parliamentary rules, committee reports, parliamentary records, legislation, oversight reports, budget-related documents, publicly accessible parliamentary platforms, [ParliMeter](#) analyses, relevant civil society monitoring and academic sources. The assessment considered both the formal existence of democratic structures and how these structures appear to function in practice.

Each target was assessed against the relevant indicators and dimensions. The scores reflect an overall judgement of parliament's performance against each target, based on the available evidence and from an external CSO perspective. The assessment does not claim to replace parliament's own internal self-assessment. It is an independent, public-facing evaluation that identifies areas where parliament's democratic systems are working, where implementation is uneven and where reforms could improve public trust and institutional performance.

A key limitation is that some assessment criteria are difficult to evaluate fully because parliament does not always publish information in accessible, comparable, or machine-readable formats. In several areas, information and processes exist internally but is not available to the public, for example HR-related items. This affects the ability of citizens, CSOs, researchers and oversight bodies to assess parliament's performance consistently over time.

The assessment therefore focuses on what can reasonably be observed from publicly available evidence. It assesses institutional systems and practices. It also recognises that some issues, particularly representation and inclusion, are shaped not only by parliament as an institution, but also by political parties, electoral rules, and broader social conditions.

## 5. Observations and Cross-cutting themes

Target						
Effective	Accountable	Transparent	Responsive	Inclusive	Participatory	Responsive
Parliament has extensive formal authority, but practical autonomy can be weakened by political dominance, resource constraints, and executive influence.	Anti-corruption laws and oversight institutions exist, but enforcement is inconsistent and vulnerable to political interference.	Parliamentary records and committee information are published, but timeliness and user-friendliness are inconsistent.	Many citizens, especially in rural and marginalised communities, struggle to access or navigate participation mechanisms.	Inclusivity is supported by strong legal and policy foundations but is not consistently embedded across all portfolio committees.	The constitutional and legal framework for public participation is robust.	SA has a strong constitutional and legislative framework for representative democracy, but implementation remains uneven across electoral and parliamentary processes.
Rules and procedures are established; however procedural consistency, emergency responsiveness and agenda-setting require stronger safeguards.	MP salaries and some financial information are public, but detailed expenses, party funding and smaller procurement contracts are difficult to scrutinise.	Bills and debates are generally accessible, but technical language and limited real-time updates reduce public understanding.	Parliament processes public submissions and petitions, but delays and weak tracking reduce confidence.	Impact assessments are uneven, especially in urgent or fast-tracked legislation.	Participation mechanisms such as hearings, submissions and consultations are established and routinely used.	The PR system supports political diversity, but it can also create fragmentation and coalition-management pressures.
Committees are central to oversight, but follow-through on executive undertakings and recommendations	Lobbying remains the weakest area because there is no comprehensive statutory framework, public	Budget information is available but often too complex, PDF-based, and difficult to interpret for non-specialist users.	Feedback to citizens and CSOs is often unclear, impersonal, or delayed.	Gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting exist in principle, but need	Implementation is inconsistent across committees, creating unequal engagement opportunities.	Representation should be measured by influence, not only presence, especially in leadership roles,

remains a recurring weakness.	lobbyist registers or dedicated compliance body.			clearer data, targets, and enforcement.		committees, and agenda-setting spaces.
Administrative capacity, research support, document systems, and digital tools require further strengthening to support MPs and committees.	Codes of conduct exist for MPs and staff, but enforcement, training, sanctions, and public reporting are inconsistent.	The website contains valuable information, but navigation, searchability and accessibility need improvement.	Urgent debates and oversight tools exist, but can be politicised or delayed during crises.	Youth participation remains largely consultative, with limited visible influence on decision-making.	Feedback mechanisms are uneven, limiting public understanding of how input influences outcomes.	Women, youth, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups require stronger pathways into meaningful parliamentary influence.
Budget oversight exists through committees and audit institutions, but technical complexity limits public usability and committee leverage.	Parliament's accountability information remains difficult for users to navigate. While PDFs are a common publication format, scanned PDFs are harder to search, analyse, and use. This limits accessibility and weakens scrutiny by researchers, civil society, and citizens.	Media and physical access are supported in law and practice, but infrastructure and disability-sensitive access remain uneven.	SDGs and the NDP are referenced, but not systematically mainstreamed into committee oversight and legislative review.	Multilingual services are a strength, but translation delays, digital accessibility and workplace monitoring remain gaps.	Participation is often dominated by organised or well-resourced actors, while marginalised communities face structural barriers.	The composition of committees, governing bodies and recognised leadership structures is central to whether parliament is representative in practice.

Table 1 Observations of Target 1-7

Across all seven targets the assessment identifies a repeated pattern that parliament has strong formal democratic structures, but these structures do not always translate into consistent democratic performance. The issue is therefore not only whether rules, committees, procedures, and participation mechanisms exist but rather whether they are implemented in ways that are visible, accessible, measurable, and meaningful to the public.

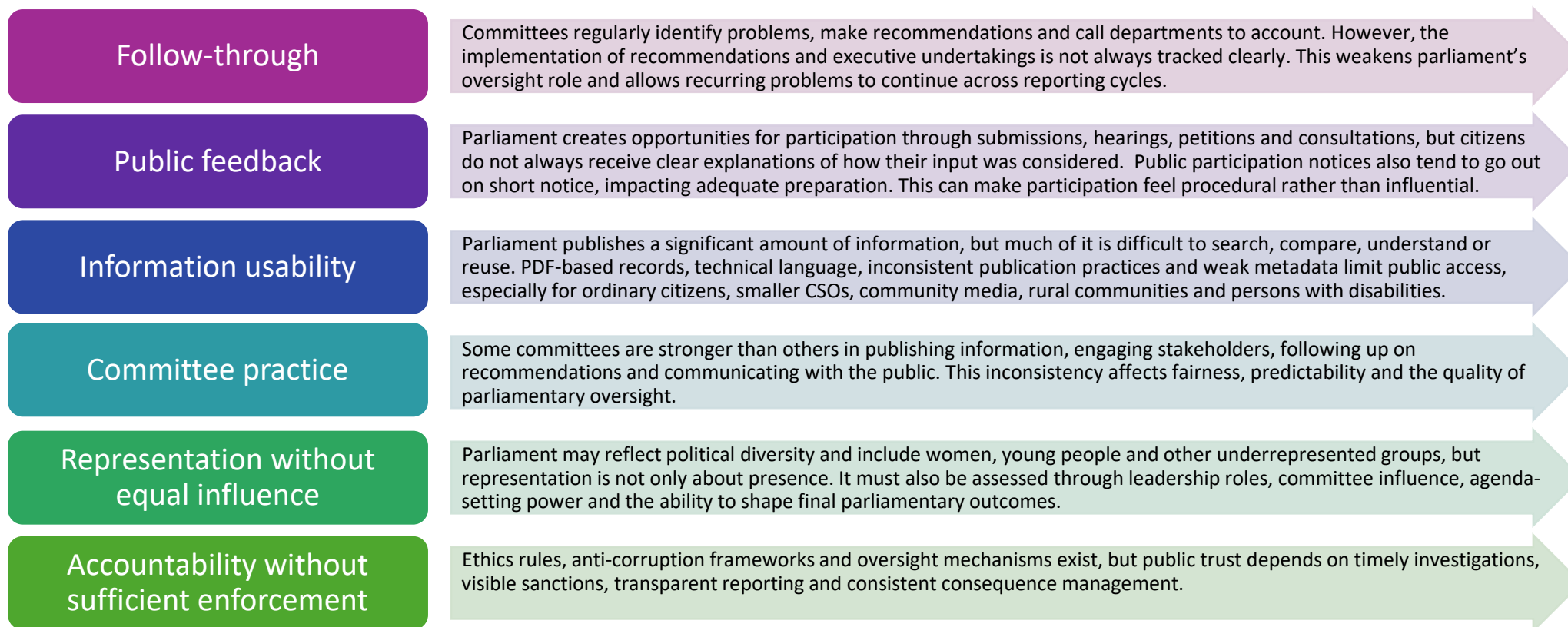


Figure 2 Cross-cutting themes across all targets

All these themes show that parliament's next reform priority should be to move from formal democratic design to measurable democratic performance.

## 6. Assessment of all Seven Targets

The following section summarises all seven targets.

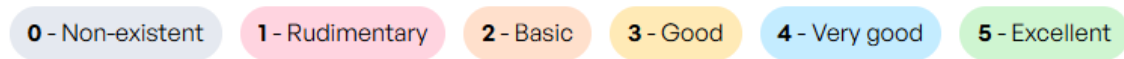


Figure 3 Rating Criteria



Figure 4 Total scoring of SA parliament for each IDP

The assessment results show that parliament performs moderately well, with most targets falling within the “Good” range. The results therefore suggest that SA’s parliament has important democratic foundations in place, but still has clear gaps in implementation, consistency, and public-facing accountability.

The strongest score is representation at 3.4/5, followed closely by participation at 3.3/5, effectiveness and transparency at 3.2/5, inclusiveness at 3.1/5, accountability at 3/5, and the weakest score was responsiveness at 2.6/5. These results suggest that parliament has reasonably strong formal structures for representation, public engagement, openness, and institutional functioning. In practice, this means that parliament has rules, committees, public hearings, published documents, oversight mechanisms, and avenues for citizen engagement. However, the scores remain closer to “Good” than “Very good”, which shows that these systems do not always translate into equal influence, easy access, or consistent accountability.

[Effectiveness scored a 3.2/5](#), showing that parliament has a solid institutional framework, including constitutional authority, rules, committees, and oversight powers. However, its effectiveness is still weakened by practical challenges such as limited resources, political dynamics, delays, and uneven follow-through on recommendations and executive undertakings.

[Accountability scored 3.0/5](#), showing that Parliament has the basic oversight tools needed to hold the executive to account. However, the score also points to weaknesses in follow-through, enforcement, and consequence management. Parliament often identifies problems and makes recommendations, but stronger tracking and clearer action are needed to ensure that departments respond and implement corrective measures.

[Transparency also scored a 3.2/5](#), showing that parliament publishes information and makes many proceedings accessible to the public. However, transparency remains limited by technical language, complex documents, delays in publishing information, and information that is not always easy for ordinary citizens to find, understand, or use.

[Responsiveness scored 2.6/5](#), which is a clear warning sign, that improvement is needed. It suggests that parliament does not always respond effectively, visibly, or quickly to public concerns, petitions, submissions, emerging policy issues, or service delivery crises. The assessment notes gaps such as delays in processing public input, weak feedback to citizens, limited visibility on how submissions are used, and inconsistent executive oversight during urgent national issues.

[Inclusiveness scored a 3.1/5](#) which suggests that parliament recognises the need to include diverse voices, but inclusion remains uneven in practice. The institution has participation tools and public education programmes, yet not all communities are reached equally. A parliament may be formally open to everyone, but still exclude people in practice if language, geography, disability access, digital access, or lack of civic knowledge prevent meaningful participation.

[Participation scored a 3.3/5](#) is also a positive result. It suggests that parliament has established mechanisms for public participation, including public hearings, written submissions, and committee engagement. However, the assessment also points to uneven access, especially for rural communities, digitally excluded groups, youth, persons with disabilities and citizens with limited technical knowledge. This means participation exists, but it is not always equally accessible or visibly influential in final parliamentary outcomes.

[Representation scored a 3.4/5](#) which indicates that parliament is relatively strong in reflecting political diversity and enabling different parties to be present in the institution. This is supported by SA's PR system and the presence of multiple political parties in parliament. However, representation is not only about who gets seats. It also depends on whether smaller parties, women, youth, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups have meaningful influence in committees, leadership positions, and decision-making spaces.

The scores show a parliament that is institutionally established but uneven in practice. The formal democratic architecture is present, but the real challenge lies in implementation. Parliament’s next stage of improvement should focus less on creating new structures and more on making existing mechanisms work better. This includes improving feedback to the public, tracking whether recommendations are implemented, making information easier to understand, strengthening committee follow-up, and ensuring that participation and representation lead to real influence.

## 6.1 Target 1: Effective parliament<sup>2</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 1 assesses](#) whether parliament has the autonomy, capacity, rules, and institutional machinery required to perform its core democratic functions effectively.

**Scope:** The summary covers parliamentary autonomy, members of parliament, procedures, organisation, administrative capacity, law-making, oversight, the budget, representative roles, relations with other branches of government and key parliamentary powers

### 6.1.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 1 – Effective parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
1.1 Parliamentary autonomy	1.1.1 Institutional autonomy; 1.1.2 Procedural autonomy; 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy; 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy
1.2 Members of parliament	1.2.1 Status of members of parliament; 1.2.2 Non-accountability and inviolability; 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office; 1.2.4 Access to resources; 1.2.5 Professional development
1.3 Parliamentary procedures	1.3.1 Rules of procedure; 1.3.2 Emergency or crisis procedures; 1.3.3 Parliamentary calendar; 1.3.4 Convening sessions and setting the agenda; 1.3.5 Quorum; 1.3.6 Debate; 1.3.7 Voting; 1.3.8 Record-keeping; 1.3.9 Dissolution
1.4 Parliamentary organisation	1.4.1 Plenary; 1.4.2 Speaker; 1.4.3 Presidium; 1.4.4 Parliamentary committees; 1.4.5 Political groups; 1.4.6 Cross-party groups

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

1.5 Administrative capacity and independence	1.5.1 Mandates of the parliamentary administration; 1.5.2 Human Resource management; 1.5.3 Expert support; 1.5.4 Facilities; 1.5.5 Digital technologies; 1.5.6 Document management
1.6 Law-making	1.6.1 Powers in law-making; 1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendments; 1.6.3 Legislative procedure; 1.6.4 Legislative drafting; 1.6.5 Enactment; 1.6.6 Official publication; 1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny
1.7 Oversight	1.7.1 Election and dismissal of the executive; 1.7.2 Access to information from the executive; 1.7.3 Summoning the executive in committee; 1.7.4 Summoning the executive in plenary; 1.7.5 Questions; 1.7.6 Hearings; 1.7.7 Parliamentary committees of inquiry
1.8 Budget	1.8.1 Formulation, examination, amendment, and approval; 1.8.2 In-year and ex-post oversight; 1.8.3 Public Accounts Committee; 1.8.4 Expert support; 1.8.5 Supreme audit institution
1.9 Representative role of members of parliament	1.9.1 Interaction with the electorate; 1.9.2 Opposition
1.10 Relations with other branches of government	1.10.1 Relations with the executive; 1.10.2 Relations with the judiciary; 1.10.3 Relations with subnational levels of government
1.11 Key parliamentary powers	1.11.1 Security; 1.11.2 Defence; 1.11.3 Foreign affairs and international agreements; 1.11.4 Parliamentary diplomacy

Table 2 Target 1 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.1.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 1 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
1.1 Parliamentary autonomy	All autonomy dimensions	Established legal autonomy, but operational independence is uneven.	Protect parliament's agenda-setting, strengthen budget independence, and publish clearer institutional performance information.
1.2 Members of parliament	Status, privileges, incompatibility, resources, development	MPs have formal status and resources, but support and training are uneven.	Standardise MP support, strengthen induction and continuous professional development, and review resource equity across parties.

1.3 Parliamentary procedures	Rules, calendar, sessions, quorum, debate, voting, records	Rules exist, but practical application can be inconsistent during political pressure or urgent matters.	Improve procedural predictability, strengthen emergency procedures, and publish records in accessible formats.
1.4 Parliamentary organisation	Plenary, Speaker, committees, groups	Structures are established, but effectiveness depends on impartial leadership and committee capacity.	Reinforce impartial presiding practices, resource committees and clarify cross-party cooperation mechanisms.
1.5 Administrative capacity	HR, expert support, facilities, digital/document systems	Administrative systems support parliament but face capacity, infrastructure, and digital-management gaps.	Invest in research capacity, staff development, ICT, document management, and facilities modernisation.
1.6 Law-making	Legislative powers and process	Parliament has clear law-making powers, but drafting support, public understanding and post-legislative scrutiny need improvement.	Strengthen legislative drafting support, standardise impact checks and institutionalise post-legislative scrutiny.
1.7 Oversight	Executive accountability mechanisms	Oversight tools exist, but executive responsiveness and follow-up remain inconsistent.	Track executive undertakings, strengthen question follow-up, and make committee recommendation implementation visible.
1.8 Budget	Budget approval and scrutiny	Budget scrutiny is institutionalised but highly technical and resource-intensive.	Expand technical support for committees, simplify budget information, and strengthen in-year and ex-post tracking.
1.9 Representative role	Electorate interaction and opposition	Representation exists through MPs and parties, but public feedback loops and opposition influence can be uneven.	Improve constituency communication, protect opposition rights, and make MP-public engagement more transparent.

1.10 Branch relations	Executive, judiciary, subnational government	Formal separation and cooperation mechanisms exist, but executive dominance can affect balance.	Improve intergovernmental coordination and protect parliament's independent scrutiny role.
1.11 Key powers	Security, defence, foreign affairs, diplomacy	Parliament has oversight roles in strategic areas, but scrutiny is often specialised and opaque.	Strengthen specialised committee capacity and improve public reporting on security, defence, and international commitments.

Table 3 Target 1 – Summary

### 6.1.3 Priority reform focus

- Strengthen parliament's practical autonomy by protecting its agenda-setting role, committee independence, and ability to scrutinise the executive without undue political or administrative constraint.
- Improve follow-up on executive undertakings by creating a formal tracking system for promises, responses and commitments made by departments and ministers during committee meetings and plenary sessions.
- Introduce unique reference numbers for committee recommendations so that recommendations can be tracked across years, departments, entities, and reporting cycles.
- Strengthen committee research and technical support by expanding access to legal, financial, policy and sector-specific expertise for MPs and committee staff.
- Institutionalise post-legislative scrutiny by requiring committees to review whether major laws are being implemented effectively after a set period.
- Improve emergency and crisis procedures so that parliament can respond more quickly and consistently during urgent national issues.
- Modernise document management systems to improve institutional memory, record-keeping, searchability and access to historical committee work.
- Strengthen budget scrutiny capacity by providing committees with more technical support to analyse departmental budgets, annual reports, and audit findings.
- Improve MP training and induction through continuous professional development on oversight, law-making, ethics, public finance, digital tools, and constituency engagement.
- Clarify cross-party cooperation mechanisms to strengthen committee work, reduce unnecessary politicisation, and improve the quality of parliamentary outcomes.

## 6.2 Target 2: Accountable parliament<sup>3</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 2 assesses](#) whether parliament demonstrates ethical conduct, prevents corruption, and holds parliamentarians and the institution to high standards of accountability.

**Scope:** The summary focuses on parliamentary ethics, institutional integrity, anti-corruption, conflicts of interest, codes of conduct, income and resources, lobbying, expenditure, procurement, freedom of information, professional administration, and institutional development.

### 6.2.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 2 – Accountable parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
2.1 Parliamentary ethics	2.1.1 Anti-corruption; 2.1.2 Conflicts of interest; 2.1.3 Code of conduct; 2.1.4 Parliamentary income and use of parliamentary resources; 2.1.5 Lobbying
2.2 Institutional integrity	2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure; 2.2.2 Public procurement; 2.2.3 Freedom of information; 2.2.4 Professionalism of parliamentary administration; 2.2.5 Institutional development of parliament

Table 4 Target 2 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.2.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 2 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
2.1 Parliamentary ethics	Anti-corruption	Strong legal basis and oversight institutions exist, but enforcement is weakened by political interference and weak follow-through.	Strengthen independent anti-corruption bodies, improve committee capacity, and speed up disciplinary processes.
	Conflicts of interest	Disclosure rules and guidance exist, but	Audit disclosures regularly, clarify exemptions, strengthen sanctions, and

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

		monitoring is slow and the Ethics Committee's visibility is limited.	make compliance processes more transparent.
	Code of conduct	The Code is established, but enforcement and amendment processes need stronger transparency and independence.	Resource the Ethics Committee, publish outcomes and provide continuous ethics training.
	Income and use of resources	Salary and benefit information is available, but detailed expenses and misuse monitoring are not sufficiently accessible.	Create searchable expense reports, audit political group funding, and tighten penalties for misuse.
	Lobbying	Lobbying regulation is underdeveloped and lacks a public register and disclosure rules.	Adopt a lobbying law, create a public lobbyist register, and require disclosure of lobbying contacts.
2.2 Institutional integrity	Parliamentary expenditure	Expenditure reporting exists, but public usability and detail are limited.	Publish simplified, machine-readable expenditure data with clear explanations.
	Public procurement	Procurement rules exist, but disclosure of smaller contracts and contract performance is limited.	Publish all procurement awards and performance information in a searchable format.
	Freedom of information	PAIA provides a legal framework, but responses and proactive disclosure remain uneven.	Improve proactive disclosure, response times, and public tracking of information requests.
	Professional administration	Professional standards exist, but capacity and independence require strengthening.	Strengthen merit-based appointments, training, performance management, and administrative independence.

	Institutional development	Reform planning exists, but monitoring and feedback loops are not sufficiently visible.	Adopt public implementation dashboards, regular progress reviews, and measurable reform targets.
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Table 5 Target 2 – Summary

### 6.2.3 Priority reform focus

- Strengthen ethics enforcement by ensuring that complaints, investigations, findings, and sanctions are handled transparently and within clear timelines.
- Improve conflict-of-interest monitoring through regular audits of disclosures and clearer public reporting on compliance.
- Introduce comprehensive lobbying regulation that includes a public lobbyist register, disclosure of lobbying meetings and rules on gifts or benefits.
- Publish more detailed MP expense information in a searchable and user-friendly format to improve public scrutiny of parliamentary spending.
- Improve public procurement transparency by publishing all procurement awards, contract values, supplier information, and contract performance updates.
- Strengthen protection for whistle-blowers and complainants who report misconduct, corruption, or abuse within parliamentary processes.
- Improve PAIA responsiveness by tracking information requests, response times and reasons for refusal or delay.
- Strengthen institutional integrity monitoring through public dashboards that track parliament’s reform commitments, audit outcomes, and implementation progress.
- Provide compulsory ethics training for MPs, staff, and political office-bearers, with refresher sessions after each parliamentary cycle.
- Make accountability information easier to understand by publishing plain-language summaries of ethics rules, disclosure obligations, and disciplinary outcomes.

### 6.3 Target 3: Transparent parliament<sup>4</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 3 assesses](#) whether parliament makes its work, legislative processes, budget information, communications, and access arrangements open and understandable to the public.

**Scope:** The summary covers transparency of parliamentary processes, parliamentary communication and outreach, and access to parliament, including physical access, disability access, and media access.

#### 6.3.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 3 – Transparent parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes	3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work; 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process; 3.1.3 Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget
3.2 Parliamentary communication and outreach	3.2.1 Institutional communication; 3.2.2 Parliamentary website; 3.2.3 Outreach activities
3.3 Access to parliament	3.3.1 Physical access to parliament; 3.3.2 Access for persons with disabilities; 3.3.3 Media access to parliament

Table 6 Target 3 – Indicators and dimensions

#### 6.3.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 3 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
3.1 Transparency of processes	Parliamentary work	Formal transparency exists, but publication practices are not consistently timely or user-friendly.	Publish records, minutes, amendments, and committee outputs promptly in searchable formats.
	Legislative process	Bills and debates are accessible, but plain-language and real-time	Provide bill explainers, real-time updates, amendment trackers, and public-facing legislative timelines.

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

		legislative information are limited.	
	Budget cycle and parliamentary budget	Budget documents are published, but technical complexity limits public understanding.	Use infographics, simplified summaries, line-item trackers, and machine-readable budget data.
3.2 Communication and outreach	Institutional communication	Parliament communicates through several channels, but engagement remains mostly one-way.	Develop audience-specific content, feedback tools, and multilingual communication products.
	Parliamentary website	The website hosts many documents, but search, navigation and accessibility require improvement.	Improve search functions, mobile design, metadata, and accessibility compliance.
	Outreach activities	Outreach exists, but rural, youth and underrepresented audiences are not reached consistently.	Scale rural outreach, youth-friendly explainers, community radio, and local-language engagement.
3.3 Access to parliament	Physical access	Physical access has improved, but logistical and security barriers remain.	Publish clear visitor guidance, improve accessible booking, and access arrangements.
	Access for persons with disabilities	Disability access is uneven, especially in digital and alternative formats.	Expand Braille, audio, sign-language, captioning, and accessible digital formats.
	Media access	Legal access exists, but practical constraints affect smaller or community media.	Streamline accreditation, expand media facilities, and support equitable access for smaller outlets.

Table 7 Target 3 – Summary

### **6.3.3 Priority reform focus**

- Publish committee documents more promptly, including minutes, reports, amendments, attendance records, and public submissions.
- Improve the parliamentary website by strengthening search functions, metadata, mobile access, navigation, and document organisation.
- Provide plain-language summaries of bills so that citizens can understand proposed laws without needing legal expertise.
- Create legislative tracking tools that show the status of bills, amendments, committee deliberations, and public participation deadlines.
- Publish budget information in accessible formats, including simplified summaries, infographics, data tables, and machine-readable files.
- Improve real-time communication by providing clearer updates on committee meetings, urgent debates, cancellations, and changes to parliamentary programmes.
- Expand accessibility formats such as audio, captioning, sign language interpretation, Braille-ready documents, and accessible PDFs.
- Support smaller and community media outlets by improving accreditation, media access, and access to parliamentary information.
- Improve physical access information by publishing clear guidance on how the public can attend meetings, visit parliament, or participate in hearings.
- Develop audience-specific communication products for youth, rural communities, civil society organisations, researchers, and the general public.

## 6.4 Target 4: Responsive parliament<sup>5</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 4 assesses](#) whether parliament listens to public concerns, responds to emerging policy issues, and aligns its work with the principle of leaving no one behind under the 2030 Agenda.

**Scope:** The summary focuses on valuing public concerns, including responding to public concerns, responding to emerging policy issues, and leaving no one behind and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 6.4.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 4 – Responsive parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
4.1 Valuing public concerns	4.1.1 Responding to public concerns; 4.1.2 Responding to emerging policy issues; 4.1.3 Leaving no one behind and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Table 8 Target 4 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.4.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 4 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
4.1 Valuing public concerns	Responding to public concerns	Mechanisms exist for petitions, public hearings, and committee input, but awareness, accessibility and feedback are weak.	Simplify petition and submission processes, run targeted awareness campaigns, and create public-facing tracking tools.
	Responding to emerging policy issues	Urgent debates, questions, and oversight mechanisms exist, but are vulnerable to politicisation and delays.	Streamline urgent procedures, strengthen committee capacity, and require clearer public updates during crises.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Indicators. 2023. *Parliamentary Indicators*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/> [Accessed 15 July 2024].

	Leaving no one behind and the 2030 Agenda	Parliament engages with SDGs and the NDP, but mainstreaming and reporting are inconsistent.	Formalise SDG review in committee work, train MPs, and staff, and strengthen parliament's role in national SDG reporting.
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Table 9 Target 4 – Summary

### 6.4.3 Priority reform focus

- Create a public petitions tracker so that citizens can see when a petition was received, which committee is handling it and what action has been taken.
- Strengthen feedback to citizens by requiring committees to explain how public concerns were considered and what decisions followed.
- Improve response times to urgent public issues by setting clearer criteria and timelines for urgent debates, inquiries, and committee interventions.
- Develop crisis-response protocols that guide parliament's response to major governance failures, service delivery crises, corruption scandals, or national emergencies.
- Mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals and National Development Plan into committee oversight, budget analysis, and legislative review.
- Improve public communication during crises by publishing short updates explaining what parliament is doing and what outcomes are expected.
- Strengthen committee capacity to identify emerging issues through research support, public complaints data, civil society inputs, and oversight visits.
- Require departments to respond formally to major public concerns raised in committee processes, especially where these concerns relate to service delivery, rights, or governance failures.
- Use constituency and public engagement data to identify recurring public concerns that should inform parliament's agenda.
- Improve oversight of implementation gaps by requiring committees to monitor whether government action responds to the concerns raised by communities.

## 6.5 Target 5: Inclusive parliament<sup>6</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 5 assesses](#) whether parliament embeds inclusion in law-making, oversight, budgeting, and its own institutional practices.

**Scope:** The summary covers inclusive law-making, oversight and budgeting, and inclusive institutional practices, including human rights, impact assessments, gender, youth, workplace diversity, safety, and multilingual service delivery.

### 6.5.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 5 – Inclusive parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
5.1 Inclusive law-making, oversight and budgeting	5.1.1 Human rights; 5.1.2 Impact assessments; 5.1.3 Gender mainstreaming; 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting; 5.1.5 Youth inclusion
5.2 Inclusive institutional practices	5.2.1 Workforce diversity; 5.2.2 Workplace environment; 5.2.3 Combating sexism, harassment, and violence; 5.2.4 Multilingual service delivery

Table 10 Target 5 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.5.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 5 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
5.1 Inclusive law-making, oversight and budgeting	Human rights	Parliament has a mandate and structures to address human rights, but mainstreaming across all committees is uneven.	Require human-rights screening in legislation, oversight, and budget reviews.
	Impact assessments	Assessment tools exist but are not consistently applied, particularly in urgent legislation.	Formalise social, human-rights, gender, and youth impact assessments for significant bills.

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

	Gender mainstreaming	Gender structures exist, but integration across law-making and oversight is inconsistent.	Use gender-disaggregated data, committee checklists, measurable targets, and regular training.
	Gender-responsive budgeting	Gender-responsive budgeting is partially institutionalised but uneven in budget scrutiny.	Strengthen PBO and committee capacity to analyse gendered budget impacts.
	Youth inclusion	Youth engagement exists, but often remains consultative rather than influential.	Create structured youth feedback mechanisms and show how youth input affects decisions.
5.2 Inclusive institutional practices	Workforce diversity	Progress exists, but leadership diversity, monitoring and reporting need strengthening.	Publish diversity indicators and link them to recruitment, promotion, and retention plans.
	Workplace environment	Policies support dignity and non-discrimination, but implementation and monitoring need improvement.	Improve internal reporting, training, staff support and accountability mechanisms.
	Combating sexism, harassment, and violence	Policies exist, but enforcement and trust in reporting channels require strengthening.	Ensure independent complaint handling, transparent outcomes, and regular workplace climate reviews.
	Multilingual service delivery	Interpretation and multilingual services are important strengths, but document translation is inconsistent.	Improve timely translation, accessible formats, and digital multilingual services.

Table 11 Target 5 – Summary

### **6.5.3 Priority reform focus**

- Mainstream inclusion across all committees so that human rights, gender, youth, disability, and rural-access concerns are considered in every major parliamentary process.
- Introduce inclusion checklists for committees to guide law-making, oversight visits, budget scrutiny, and committee reporting.
- Institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting by requiring committees to assess how budgets affect women, men, and gender equality outcomes.
- Strengthen youth inclusion by creating structured youth feedback mechanisms and showing how youth input affects parliamentary decisions.
- Require impact assessments for major bills covering human rights, gender, youth, disability, poverty, rural access, and other social impacts.
- Improve disability access in physical venues, online meetings, public hearings, documents, and parliamentary communication platforms.
- Publish diversity data on parliamentary staff, leadership structures, committees, and participation processes where appropriate.
- Strengthen internal mechanisms to combat sexism, harassment and workplace discrimination through independent complaint channels and transparent reporting.
- Improve multilingual services by reducing translation delays and expanding interpretation, local-language summaries, and multilingual digital content.
- Strengthen monitoring of inclusive outcomes by requiring committees to report on how inclusion concerns were addressed in their work.

## 6.6 Target 6: Participatory parliament<sup>7</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 6 assesses](#) whether parliament creates an enabling environment for public participation and ensures meaningful public involvement in law-making, oversight, budgeting, and engagement with diverse groups.

**Scope:** The summary covers the parliamentary environment for public participation, public participation in parliamentary processes, and participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament.

### 6.6.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 6 – Participatory parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
6.1 Parliamentary environment for public participation	6.1.1 Legal framework for public participation; 6.1.2 Institutional capacity for public participation; 6.1.3 Public education about the work of parliament
6.2 Public participation in parliamentary processes	6.2.1 Participation in law-making; 6.2.2 Participation in oversight; 6.2.3 Participation in the budget cycle; 6.2.4 Managing public input and providing feedback
6.3 Participation of diverse groups in the work of parliament	6.3.1 Engaging civil society organisations; 6.3.2 Reaching out to all communities

Table 12 Target 6 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.6.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 6 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
6.1 Environment for participation	Legal framework	The legal foundation is strong and supports participation across parliamentary functions.	Keep the framework updated and clarify minimum standards for participation.

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

	Institutional capacity	Public participation capacity exists, but resources and practices vary across committees.	Resource participation units, standardise committee practices and improve monitoring.
	Public education	Public education exists but is unevenly distributed and insufficiently scaled.	Expand civic education in rural areas, schools, community media, and digital platforms.
6.2 Participation in processes	Law-making	Participation in law-making is regular, but input is not always visibly reflected in final decisions.	Publish submission summaries, committee responses, and reasons for accepting or rejecting key inputs.
	Oversight	Public participation in oversight is weaker and often dominated by organised stakeholders.	Create public oversight hearings, complaint channels, and constituency-based feedback mechanisms.
	Budget cycle	Budget participation is more limited for ordinary citizens due to complexity and timing.	Provide plain-language budget guides, accessible hearing notices, and citizen-friendly budget tools.
	Managing input and feedback	Feedback loops are insufficiently transparent and inconsistent.	Develop a public submissions tracker and standard response templates for committees.
6.3 Diverse groups	Engaging CSOs	CSO engagement is a strength but tends to favour larger, better-resourced organisations.	Broaden CSO outreach and support smaller community organisations to participate.
	Reaching all communities	Rural, disabled, youth and digitally excluded groups face barriers.	Use mobile hearings, local languages, offline channels, and disability-accessible formats.

Table 13 Target 6 – Summary

### **6.6.3 Priority reform focus**

- Standardise public participation practices across committees so that all committees follow minimum standards for notices, hearings, submissions, and feedback.
- Create a public submissions tracker that shows submissions received, key themes raised, committee responses and final outcomes.
- Publish summaries of public submissions in plain language so that participants can see how their input fits into the broader process.
- Improve notice periods for public hearings and submissions to give citizens and civil society organisations enough time to participate meaningfully.
- Broaden participation beyond organised civil society by reaching rural communities, informal settlements, youth groups, persons with disabilities and smaller community organisations.
- Use multiple participation channels, including online platforms, community radio, local-language notices, mobile hearings, WhatsApp-style updates, and offline submission options.
- Improve public education about parliament by explaining how law-making, oversight, petitions, budget processes, and committee participation work.
- Make budget participation more accessible through citizen-friendly budget guides, simplified explanations, and earlier public engagement.
- Strengthen participation in oversight, not only law-making, by allowing communities to raise implementation failures and service delivery concerns directly with committees.
- Provide feedback after public hearings so participants know what happened after they made submissions or attended consultations.

## 6.7 Target 7: Representative parliament<sup>8</sup>

**Purpose:** [Target 7 assesses](#) whether parliament reflects the diversity of society and ensures that political groups, women, youth, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups are represented meaningfully in parliamentary decision-making.

**Scope:** The summary covers electoral integrity, the composition of parliament, and the composition of parliamentary bodies, including voting and candidacy rights, political diversity, gender and age representation, and the representation of underrepresented groups in committees and leadership structures.

### 6.7.1 Target, indicators and dimensions included

Target 7 – Representative parliament includes the following indicators and dimensions:

Indicator	Dimensions included
7.1 Electoral integrity	7.1.1 Voting and election rights; 7.1.2 Candidacy, party and campaign rights and responsibilities; 7.1.3 Role of public authorities in elections
7.2 Composition of parliament	7.2.1 Representation of political diversity; 7.2.2 Representation of women; 7.2.3 Representation of youth; 7.2.4 Representation of other underrepresented groups
7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies	7.3.1 Composition of governing bodies; 7.3.2 Composition of committees; 7.3.3 Gender and age balance in parliamentary bodies

Table 14 Target 7 – Indicators and dimensions

### 6.7.2 Summary of indicators and dimensions

The table below keeps the indicators and dimensions from Target 7 and condenses each assessment into its core finding and priority recommendations.

Indicator	Dimension	Condensed observation	Top recommendations
7.1 Electoral integrity	Voting and election rights	Electoral rights are constitutionally protected, and elections are regular and competitive, but turnout	Strengthen voter education, improve rural and disability access, counter misinformation, and make electoral information more accessible in multiple languages and formats.

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

		is declining and accessibility remains uneven for some voters.	
	Candidacy, party, and campaign rights	Citizens and parties have formal rights to contest elections, but smaller parties, independent candidates and marginalised groups face practical financial and logistical barriers.	Simplify registration and appeal processes, improve public guidance, support underrepresented candidates, and ensure fair visibility for smaller parties.
	Role of public authorities in elections	The IEC is independent and generally trusted, but resources, civic education reach and visible enforcement of neutrality can be strengthened.	Resource the IEC adequately, publish clear reports on complaints and resolutions, and strengthen monitoring of neutrality and electoral violations.
7.2 Composition of parliament	Representation of political diversity	The PR system enables broad political diversity, but fragmentation can complicate coalition-building and decision-making.	Preserve the inclusive benefits of PR while reviewing how fragmentation affects stable governance, oversight, and decision-making.
	Representation of women	Women are visibly represented in parliament, but representation is not always matched by equal influence in leadership and decision-making roles.	Track women’s representation in leadership, strengthen mentoring and leadership pipelines, and require more transparent reporting on gender balance across parliamentary structures.
	Representation of youth	Youth representation remains limited, especially in influential	Create youth leadership pathways, publish age-disaggregated data, and

		roles and formal leadership positions.	support younger MPs to participate meaningfully in committees and debates.
	Representation of other underrepresented groups	Persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups are recognised in principle, but barriers to meaningful participation and visibility persist.	Improve accessibility, collect better representation data, strengthen institutional support, and ensure underrepresented groups have real opportunities to shape parliamentary work.
7.3 Composition of parliamentary bodies	Composition of governing bodies	Rules support proportional representation in governing bodies, but larger parties often dominate key leadership and decision-making spaces.	Review the allocation of leadership roles, protect minority participation, and promote inclusive practices that give smaller parties meaningful visibility and influence.
	Composition of committees	Committee composition generally reflects party proportionality, but influence within committees can vary according to party size, leadership roles, and committee practices.	Monitor committee membership and chairing arrangements, strengthen cross-party participation, and publish clearer committee composition data.
	Gender and age balance in parliamentary bodies	Gender representation is visible in some leadership roles, but age balance and detailed leadership reporting remain weak.	Publish annual gender and age profiles of committee chairs, whips, presiding officers and other leadership roles, with targets and regular progress reviews.

Table 15 Target 7 – Summary

### **6.7.3 Priority reform focus**

- Publish annual representation reports covering the political, gender, age and disability profile of parliament, committees, and leadership structures.
- Measure representation by influence, not only presence, by tracking who chairs committees, who holds leadership roles, who participates in debates and whose proposals shape outcomes.
- Strengthen leadership pathways for women, youth and underrepresented groups through mentoring, training, and opportunities to serve in influential parliamentary roles.
- Improve representation data for parliamentary bodies, including committee membership, governing bodies, whips, presiding officers and delegation roles.
- Support smaller and opposition parties by ensuring fair access to speaking opportunities, research support, committee participation, and agenda-setting mechanisms.
- Improve accessibility for independent candidates and smaller parties in the electoral system through clearer public guidance, simplified processes, and better voter education.
- Strengthen voter education to address declining turnout, misinformation, and limited understanding of electoral processes.
- Improve electoral accessibility for rural voters, persons with disabilities, young voters, and citizens with limited digital access.
- Review how political fragmentation affects parliamentary stability and oversight while preserving the inclusive benefits of proportional representation.
- Encourage political parties to improve internal inclusion practices, because parliament's composition is shaped heavily by party candidate selection, party lists, campaign support, and leadership decisions.

## 7. Way Forward

The assessment across Targets 1 to 7 shows that parliament's democratic framework is strong, but that implementation remains uneven.

### 7.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations focus on strengthening parliament's practical performance, improving public trust and ensuring that its constitutional functions are visible, measurable, and meaningful.

1. **Develop a cross-target implementation plan:** Parliament should develop and publish a consolidated implementation plan linking the IDP targets to clear reforms, responsible units, timelines, measurable outcomes, and be updated regularly for public monitoring.
2. **Create a public parliamentary tracking dashboard:** Parliament should create a public dashboard where citizens, civil society, researchers, and MPs can track committee recommendations, executive undertakings, petitions, public submissions, procurement, expenditure, reform progress, and representation statistics.
3. **Strengthen follow-up on committee recommendations and executive undertakings:** Committees should use a standard tracking system for recommendations, with unique reference numbers, responsible departments, response deadlines, and implementation statuses. Departments should provide regular written updates, published in a searchable format, to reduce repeated and unresolved problems.
4. **Standardise committee practices across parliament:** Parliament should adopt minimum standards for committee operations, including meeting notices, document publication, public participation, stakeholder feedback, recommendation tracking, and departmental follow-up.
5. **Improve the accessibility and usability of parliamentary information:** Parliament should publish documents in searchable, machine-readable, and plain-language formats. It should also provide short public explainers on major bills, budgets, committee findings, and oversight outcomes to make parliamentary work easier to understand.
6. **Strengthen digital systems and document management:** Parliament should modernise its digital systems to improve record-keeping, searchability, public access, and institutional memory. Better metadata, centralised document storage, website navigation, and internal knowledge tools would support both public access and committee work.

7. **Improve public feedback mechanisms:** Parliament should show how public input is considered. Committees should publish summaries of submissions, key themes, responses to public concerns, and reasons for accepting or rejecting major proposals.
8. **Strengthen ethics enforcement and accountability mechanisms:** Parliament should strengthen enforcement of ethics rules, conflict-of-interest requirements, and codes of conduct. Clear sanctions, visible enforcement, and public reporting on complaints, investigations, outcomes, and sanctions would improve public confidence.
9. **Strengthen budget transparency and public budget literacy:** Parliament should make budget information easier to understand through simplified summaries, visual guides, line-item trackers, and explanations of committee budget recommendations.
10. **Mainstream inclusion across all committees including youth, women and persons with disabilities:** Every committee should consider human rights, gender, youth, disability, rural access, and socio-economic impact in its law-making, oversight, and budget work. Practical inclusion checklists should support consistent application across committees.
11. **Strengthen research, legal and budget support for MPs and committees:** Parliament should expand research, legal, budget, data analysis, and monitoring and evaluation support for MPs and committees. Stronger technical support would improve oversight, questioning, reporting, and follow-up.
12. **Improve monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary reforms:** Parliament should develop a stronger monitoring and evaluation system for institutional reforms, with measurable indicators, progress reports, and public review points.



# A STRONGER, MORE TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE PARLIAMENT

12 priority actions to strengthen oversight, accountability, participation and impact

## OUR GOALS



ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE



INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION



TRANSPARENCY & OPEN DATA



EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT



IMPACTFUL RESULTS

1

Develop a cross-target implementation plan



2

Create a public parliamentary tracking dashboard



3

Strengthen follow-up on committee recommendations and executive undertakings



4

Standardise committee practices across parliament



5

Improve the accessibility and usability of parliamentary information



6

Strengthen digital systems and document management



7

Improve public feedback mechanisms



8

Strengthen ethics enforcement and accountability mechanisms



9

Strengthen budget transparency and public budget literacy



10

Mainstream inclusion across all committees including youth, women and persons with disabilities



11

Strengthen research, legal and budget support for MPs and committees



12

Improve monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary reforms



Figure 5 Visualisation of recommendations

## 7.2 Infographic: IDPs for Parliamentary Oversight

The following infographic<sup>9</sup> illustrates the steps needed to strengthen parliamentary oversight.



Figure 6 Infographic of parliamentary oversight steps

<sup>9</sup> Note to reader: Created with AI

## 8. Conclusion

The assessment shows that SA's parliament has a strong democratic foundation, supported by constitutional authority, established rules, committee structures, oversight powers, public participation mechanisms, reporting requirements and legal commitments to openness, accountability, and inclusion. However, the strength of this foundation does not always translate into consistent practice. The real test is not only whether democratic structures exist, but whether they function effectively, visibly, and consistently.

A central finding is that parliament's challenges are largely implementation-related. Oversight mechanisms exist, but follow-through on committee recommendations and executive undertakings remains weak. Public participation is formally recognised, but citizens do not always receive clear feedback on how their input influenced decisions. Parliamentary information is available, but it is often difficult to navigate, highly technical, PDF-based, or inaccessible to ordinary users. Ethics and accountability frameworks are in place, but enforcement, sanctions and public reporting are not always strong enough to build public confidence.

The report also shows that democratic performance is about more than procedural compliance. Meetings, reports, hearings, and committees only strengthen democracy when they are accessible, understandable, and linked to real accountability. Reform should therefore focus on improving the systems that allow the public, civil society, researchers, and MPs to track what parliament does, what government commits to doing, whether recommendations are implemented and whether public participation changes outcomes.

Across all seven targets, the assessment points to the same core issue: parliament has many of the right democratic mechanisms in place, but their effectiveness depends on stronger implementation, clearer public communication, and more consistent accountability. This includes ensuring that oversight recommendations are followed up, participation processes are meaningful, information is accessible, and all represented groups have a fair opportunity to influence parliamentary work.

The report points to a clear reform direction. Parliament should improve committee consistency, public tracking, digital accessibility, plain-language communication, monitoring and evaluation, ethics enforcement, and feedback mechanisms. It should also publish clearer information on committee membership, leadership roles, gender and age balance, participation rates, and the inclusion of underrepresented groups.

ParliMeter can support this shift by making parliamentary information easier to search, compare and track over time. It helps convert complex parliamentary processes into usable public evidence, supporting stronger oversight by MPs, better analysis by CSOs and researchers, and greater public understanding of Parliament's work.

The assessment finds that SA's parliament has the foundations required for democratic performance, but must now focus on implementation, visibility, and impact. A stronger parliament will be one that follows up on its own recommendations, makes information easier to understand, shows how public input matters, enforces accountability consistently and ensures that democratic processes lead to meaningful outcomes.

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## 10. Glossary

<b>Anti-corruption</b>	Actions, laws and systems used to prevent, detect, and punish corruption.
<b>Budget scrutiny</b>	Parliament's examination of how government plans to raise, spend and manage public money.
<b>Candidacy rights</b>	The right of eligible people to stand as candidates in an election.
<b>Coalition-building</b>	When political parties work together to form a majority or cooperate on decisions.
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	A situation where someone's personal, financial, or political interests may affect their official duties.
<b>Constitutional authority</b>	Power given by the Constitution to perform certain duties, such as making laws or overseeing government.
<b>Cross-party cooperation</b>	When MPs from different political parties work together on parliamentary matters.
<b>Digital accessibility</b>	Making online information and platforms usable for everyone, including persons with disabilities and people with limited technology access.
<b>Electoral integrity</b>	The fairness, credibility, and trustworthiness of an election process.
<b>Electoral rights</b>	The rights people have to vote, stand for election, and participate in the electoral process.
<b>Executive undertaking</b>	A promise or commitment made by a minister, department, or government official to Parliament.
<b>Formal framework</b>	The official laws, rules, policies, or structures that guide how Parliament should work.
<b>Gender-disaggregated data</b>	Information separated by gender so that differences between women, men and other groups can be seen clearly.

<b>Gender mainstreaming</b>	Making sure gender equality is considered in all laws, policies, budgets, and decisions.
<b>Gender-responsive budgeting</b>	Looking at how budgets affect women, men, and gender equality differently.
<b>Human rights screening</b>	Checking whether a law, policy or decision protects people’s rights and does not unfairly harm certain groups.
<b>Institutional integrity</b>	The honesty, fairness and reliability of an institution’s systems, rules, and behaviour.
<b>Institutional memory</b>	The knowledge, records, and experience that an institution keeps over time so that lessons are not lost.
<b>Marginalised communities</b>	Groups that face barriers to power, resources, services, or participation, often because of poverty, location, disability, age, or discrimination.
<b>Multilingual service delivery</b>	Providing information and services in more than one language so that more people can understand and participate.
<b>Post-legislative scrutiny</b>	Reviewing a law after it has been passed to see whether it is working as intended.
<b>Proportional representation</b>	An electoral system where parties receive seats in Parliament according to the share of votes they received.
<b>Public accessibility</b>	How easy it is for ordinary people to access Parliament, its information, meetings, and participation opportunities.
<b>Public scrutiny</b>	The ability of citizens, media, and civil society to examine and question what Parliament or government is doing.
<b>Underrepresented groups</b>	Groups that are not adequately present or influential in decision-making spaces.
<b>Voter education</b>	Information that helps people understand elections, voting rights and how to participate.