Effective parliament

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Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

Effective parliament is one that:

➢ Delivers satisfactorily on its core functions of representation, legislation and oversight, having the legal, administrative and financial capacity to do so and making use of this capacity in practice

➢ Performs adequately as a state (public) institution, having a vision and strategy, managing well its resources (budget and staff) and monitoring its own performance

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

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

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

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

The separation of powers is one of the key concepts for a democratic system of government. This sub-target covers parliamentary relationships with the other two branches of government – the executive and the judiciary.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

It also covers the relationships with other levels of government in a nation – state, provincial, regional or local governments – which may be defined in a nation’s constitutional or other legal framework (indicator 1.10).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The assessment of parliamentary autonomy comprises the following dimensions:

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

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Dimension 1.1.1 Institutional autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.1.2 Procedural autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

- The legislature has full authority over the definition, adoption and amendment of its rules of procedure/standing orders. In contrast to the other laws, rules of procedure are not approved by the executive (they do not require signature by a head of State, for example), but are approved by the parliament (and are signed, for example, by the speaker or president of the parliament).
- The rules of procedure of the legislature should reflect a framework that gives the parliament the ability to determine its own procedures. The framework includes processes for the parliament alone to develop, consider, amend and approve the procedures of the parliament.
- The practice of the legislature reflects the autonomous position of the legislature in determining its own procedures, and the implementation of procedures is consistent and non-partisan.

Assessment

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

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Constitutional or legal provisions that establish the authority and framework granting the legislature the autonomy to determine its own procedures
- Practices of the legislature whereby standing orders or rules of procedure are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
- Information on the involvement of MPs in all aspects of the parliament’s proceedings
- Rulings by the speaker

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
**Assessment criterion No. 4: Consistency in the implementation of procedures**

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
- A financial office independent from the legislature that oversees finances related to the legislature alone, including its offices, resources, and staff
- Credible reports on sufficiency of the resources allocated to the parliament. This might include observations of MPs or assessments of independent non-State actors

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

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**
Assessment criterion No.4: Resource provisions

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy

Indicator: 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

The legislature’s administrative functions are overseen by a non-partisan, objective office, for example such as a secretary-general, who is appointed or elected solely by the parliament and is accountable to the parliament. This non-partisan administration, in conjunction with other structures put in place by the parliament, exercises effective control over the administrative offices of the legislature.
Assessment criterion No. 4 Non-partisan administration

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

Recommendations for change
**Indicator 1.2 – Members of parliament**

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

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

As noted in the IPU study of the concept of the parliamentary mandate, conferring special rights on MPs does not mean that they are above the law, “Rather, it is a recognition of the fact that, given the importance and magnitude of the mandate entrusted to them by the sovereign people, they require some minimum guarantees to be able to discharge this mandate in an independent and unhindered fashion”. For more sources on this subject, please see the footnote.

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

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

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Dimension 1.2.1 Status of MPs

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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4 In some of the literature, the term of office of an MP is referred to as the ‘duration of the parliamentary mandate’ of an MP. See Marc Van der Hulst, The Parliamentary Mandate: A Global Comparative Study (Geneva: IPU, 2000).

5 In some legislatures, members of parliament are appointed to, rather than elected, to their roles, and so this would include members of parliament who have been duly appointed.
Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Term of office

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Swearing-in of MPs

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

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

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Ownership of mandate

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

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.2.2 Inviolability and immunity**

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are clearly defined constitutional or other similar provisions to provide MPs with protection from arbitrary arrest or criminal charges, as well as with the immunity of freedom of speech (which also apply to former MPs) in the exercise, at a minimum, of their core responsibilities in the legislature.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Protection from arbitrary detention

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

Non-existent ☐ Poor ☐ Basic ☐ Good ☐ Very good ☐ Excellent ☐

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: ‘Freedom of speech’ protection

There is evidence of strongly entrenched provisions that enable ‘freedom of speech’ protection for MPs (and former MPs) in respect of participation in the core processes of the parliament. Only the legislature can withdraw an MP’s freedom of speech protection.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 4: Natural justice processes and procedures

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

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Incompatibility of office provisions

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Resolution of incompatibilities of office

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

While the occupation of private sector roles may be compatible with the role of an MP, there are regulations and parliamentary practices that protect against the possibility of conflict of interest or corruption arising from incompatibility of office or any unnecessary diversion of MPs from their duties.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

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

27
Dimension 1.2.4 Access to resources

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is an adequate level of remuneration and resources provided for MPs, in accordance with the capacity of the legislature. At a minimum, remuneration and benefits provide the basis for MPs to have a decent standard of living and enable them to focus on their responsibilities.
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

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

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

Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Adequacy of remuneration and benefits

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Fair and non-partisan provision of remuneration and benefits to MPs

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Access to staff and resources

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.2.5 Professional development**

Indicator: 1.2 Members of parliament  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns the provision of professional development to MPs to assist them in performing their core roles of law-making, oversight of the executive, and representation of their constituencies. It encompasses the programmes and resources offered at the institutional level and run by, or under the auspices of, the parliamentary administration. In some jurisdictions, this work is carried out with assistance from development partners or NGOs. It does not include programmes offered by the political parties or the development that may be provided informally by experienced MPs, although these programmes can play an important role in the professional development of MPs.6

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

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

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

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

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6 These elements of the professional development of MPs are not included, as they do not relate to the systematic work of the legislature, as undertaken by, or under the auspices of, the parliamentary administration, and would be difficult to measure since there may not be strong knowledge of what is done.
On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of professional development of MPs would encompass the following:

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

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

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

Assessment

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

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Induction programme for MPs

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
The existence of an ongoing professional development programme, which is developed in consultation with MPs to meet their needs and delivered regularly to all MPs, in the core areas of their responsibilities, and which is delivered under the auspices of the parliamentary administration.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

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

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

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

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

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legislative provisions relating to the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- Standing orders or rules of procedure that are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
- Documents or presentations that explain the framework
- Commitments made to abide by the framework
If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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

36
**Dimension 1.3.2 Rules of procedure**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

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

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

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

*There are clear and comprehensive rules of procedure (or standing orders) of parliament which are owned, adopted and amended by parliament alone, and which codify the rules and regulations of all aspects of parliamentary activity.*
The rules should be comprehensive of all the legislature’s activities and can define, among other matters, the individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including: the powers and privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. The rules also outline parameters on staffing and parliamentary administration, including the appointment of a secretary-general or other relevant head of the administration.

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

Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
majority and minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. Parliamentary rules of procedure also define parameters related to parliamentary staff and the administration, including the appointment of a head of parliamentary administration.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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

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Dimension 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis (or emergency)

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

Emergency procedures allow parliament to adjust the required composition of the membership or other operational procedures in order to adapt to the established emergency period. However, this depends largely on the type of crisis. For example, in some emergency situations the number of MPs required for a quorum may be reduced, whereas other provisions may include a virtual or hybrid operation in order to conduct business (such as some members appearing in person and others conducting business virtually). This has been a particular feature of the operation of many parliaments during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the presence of the full complement of MPs has been problematic. A combination of adapted procedures and the use of technology has enabled both the plenary and committees to continue to meet.7 Furthermore, emergency procedures may require business to be conducted in a truncated or exceptional format, such as debates being limited and votes being cast despite not all members being present.

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

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

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

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7 See Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), “World e-Parliament Report 2020” (IPU, 2021), 17-31 for a description of the procedural and technological innovations that many parliaments have implemented during the pandemic.
Emergency powers define modifications of the usual agenda-setting and debate procedures, and may allow for a truncated set of motions in order for debate to proceed quickly and effectively if it pertains to the crisis. Crisis procedures should also give members an opportunity to contribute by modifying normal procedures in the rules.

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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

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Dimension 1.3.4 Calendar/timetabling/planning

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

The calendar is made available for all members of the parliament and the general public. The calendar is regularly updated and maintained to ensure that relevant updates and changes are kept current for public view.
### Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.3.5. Convening sessions and agenda-setting

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Consistent follow-through on agenda-setting provisions**
Parliament consistently carries out provisions on agenda-setting, as outlined under the rules of procedure. In practice, this means that agenda-setting privileges (as allowed under the rules) are respected consistently by all members of parliament, regardless of partisan affiliation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.3.6 Quorum**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

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

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

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

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**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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8 To maintain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, some legislatures adopted rules allowing for hybrid or virtual presence in order to reach a quorum, where this was permitted by their constitutional and legal frameworks. Also, many parliaments adopted COVID-19 emergency procedures to reduce the number of members required for a quorum.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

- Quorum regulations defined in the constitution, legislation and/or chamber’s rules of procedure If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

Quorum rules are upheld consistently in parliamentary business.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

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

50
Dimension 1.3.7 Debate

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

51
The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Provisions on debate processes defined in a chamber’s rules of procedure
- Constitutional provisions that indicate the important role of legislators in debating legislative priorities
- Practice of the legislature in debate, such as rulings of presiding officers

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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

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

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**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.3.8 Voting

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.
**Assessment criterion No. 1: Voting is restricted to members of the legislature**

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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

55
**Assessment criterion No. 5: Voting is made public**

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

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.3.9 Records

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Hansard reporter, stenographer or official record keeper for all plenary and committee business
- Central recordkeeping repository within parliament
- Record-keeping provisions in all working languages, as outlined in a chamber’s rules.

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

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

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

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.3.10 Dissolution

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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9 For more information on possible circumstances of dissolution, please refer to this document: https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/dissolution-of-parliament-primer.pdf

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authorities

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

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

61
Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading
Indicator 1.4 – Parliamentary organization

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

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

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

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

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

**Indicator:** 1.4 Parliamentary organization  
**Sub-target:** 1 Effective parliament  
**Target 16.6** Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

### About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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10 See also dimension 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work, dimension 3.2.1 Parliamentary website, and indicator 3.3 Access to parliament.
On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of plenary setting would encompass the following:

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

All aspects related to parliamentary procedures in the plenary, including the quorum for holding plenary sessions, dates, the duration of ordinary plenary sessions, as well as the grounds and procedures for calling special or extraordinary sessions, are outlined in the law.¹¹

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions outlining the regulatory framework for the holding of plenary sessions, including the required quorum, calendar and duration of ordinary plenary sessions, as well as the grounds and procedures for calling special or extraordinary sessions. There is also evidence that all

¹¹ See also the indicator 1.3 Parliamentary procedures.
major decisions made on behalf of the parliament – including the enactment of legislation and the implementation of the most visible oversight actions, such as question time, interpellation and impeachment – are debated, voted and approved or rejected in the plenary.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer**

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

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

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

In some political systems, the speaker might have a casting vote to resolve a deadlock.

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

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

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

- There is a constitutional or legal provision defining the mandate, role, functions and duties of a speaker of the parliament or a presiding officer.
- There is a constitutional or legal provision setting the rule for electing a speaker/presiding officer and defining the term of office.

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

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

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

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

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
### Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the mandate of a speaker

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

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

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

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

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

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### Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources

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

69
There is evidence of sufficient resources available to a speaker or presiding officer for implementing mandates, including through the availability of personal apparatus with sufficient members of staff.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Practice**

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

**Dimension 1.4.3: Bureau/presidium**

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

A bureau/presidium is usually representative of the political configuration of the parliament, with the majority and minority parties represented. It meets under the chairmanship of the speaker and brings together deputy speakers, chairs of parliamentary committees and leaders of political groups. The secretary-general of the parliament, though not a formal member of the bureau, usually participates in bureau meetings. The number of participants can thus vary greatly and may not even be fixed in a particular assembly, as it depends on the number of political groups and committees.\(^\text{13}\)

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

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

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<th>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal in the domain of bureau/presidium of parliament would encompass the following:</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is a constitutional, legal or statutory provision defining the composition and mandate of a bureau/presidium as a collective governing body of parliament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The bureau/presidium is representative of the political configuration of the parliament, is chaired by the speaker and brings together deputy speakers, chairs of parliamentary committees and leaders of political groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The bureau is responsible for taking decisions on political issues before the parliament, organizing the work of the parliament, coordinating the work of committees, drafting the agenda for a plenary and deciding other issues of importance for the operation of the parliament.</td>
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\(^{13}\) Georges Bergougnous, *Presiding Officers of National Parliamentary Assemblies*, (Geneva, IPU, 1997)
The frequency and timing of bureau meetings, as well as the openness of its meetings are fixed in the rules of procedure of the parliament.

Assessment

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

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Composition of bureau/presidium

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Powers of a bureau/presidium

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.4.4. Committees

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The parliament has a clear constitutional or legal mandate to establish committees, define their powers, functions, composition, governance and procedures.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary committees are mandated to review draft legislation, obtain information from the executive, summon government officials and report to parliament on their findings, and make recommendations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parity of committee membership and governance across the parliamentary (party) groups represented in the legislature is ensured by the law or parliamentary resolutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The law provides clear rules and procedures with regard to committee meetings, such as the time of a meeting, notice of a meeting, preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, record keeping, voting and reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee meetings are open and accessible to the public and relevant stakeholders, unless there is sufficient justification to close a meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee meetings are held on the basis of a meeting agenda that is duly approved and published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committees are equipped with the administrative capacities necessary for their functioning.</td>
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</table>

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Openness of committee meetings

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Administrative capacity

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Consistency of implementation

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

76
There is evidence of consistent work carried out by the committees. The committees regularly conduct meetings with an agenda that has been duly approved and published, and in which relevant stakeholders are engaged, and in which the respective conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations, are produced and reported to the legislature.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 1.4.5 Parliamentary (party) groups

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

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The parliamentary (party) group is officially recognized in national legislation and is granted privileges and benefits through the use of a clear and transparent formula. The parliamentary (party) groups have access to additional financial and administrative resources from the parliamentary (or national) budget, and are provided with secretariat and research services. The parliamentary (party) groups have to account for these resources.\(^\text{17}\)

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

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

There is evidence of constitutional, legal or statutory provisions that authorize members of parliament to form a parliamentary (party) group and gain formal recognition in a legislative institution. No MP belongs to more

\(^{17}\) See dimension 2.1.4 on disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure
than one parliamentary (party) group. MPs who, at the time of elections, belong to the same parliamentary (party) group must remain with that political group.

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

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary (party) groups have a right to initiate actions such as proceedings, motions and interpellations, which is stipulated by the rules of procedures.
Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.4.6. Cross-party groups

Indicator: 1.4 Parliamentary organization
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Members of parliament are entitled to establish cross-party groups.
- The transparency of the group’s activities and the adherence of its members to the code of conduct for members of parliament are ensured by the parliament’s rules of procedure or the cross-party group’s statute.
- Cross-party groups meet regularly and engage with relevant stakeholders.
- Cross-party groups are provided with the administrative capacities necessary for their operation.

Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice

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

Non-existent ☐  Poor ☐  Basic ☐  Good ☐  Very good ☐  Excellent ☐

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Indicator 1.5 – Administrative capacity and independence

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

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

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

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

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please see other dimensions that are linked to human resources management and sources for further reading.

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18 Dimensions 1.1.4 Administrative autonomy; 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work; 2.2.5 Staff recruitment; and 2.2.6 Professionalism of the parliamentary administration.

19 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration" (IPU, 2020); Charles Lusthaus and others, Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance (Inter-American Development Bank and International Development Research Centre, 2002); United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "Organizational Capacity Assessment" (2016).
On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of staff (and human resources management) would encompass the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Independent governance structure

Human resources are structured and managed separately from and independently of the executive under the leadership of staff (for example, a secretary-general or equivalent) responsible directly to the parliament.
There is a body or other type of governance structure, with representation from members, which oversees decision-making on matters affecting human resource management. This body may approve the organizational structure, the delegation of powers within the administration, and may oversee policies and appointments of the most senior administrative officials, but without interference in the day-to-day management of the parliamentary administration.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
**Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament**

Assessment criterion No. 5: Policies for succession planning

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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Recommendations for change

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Dimension 1.5.2 Policy analysis, research and library services

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Digital access**

Digital access to research, library resources and policy analysis is available. This could include information from the public, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the executive unless subject to specific confidentiality requirements. Library resources, research and policy analysis are available externally.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

Assessment criterion No. 4: Adequate provision of research

All members of parliament, including those of the opposition, and parliamentary administration staff, have access to specific library, research and analytical services regardless of political affiliation. Within a bicameral parliament, there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of both houses and their committees. Where requested, members can embargo individual research undertaken for them, within the rules or requirements set by the parliament.

Assessment criterion No. 5: Staffing and oversight of services

Research, library and policy analysis services are delivered by staff who are part of an independent parliamentary service with oversight by a body involving MPs, which sets and monitors guidelines and standards of delivery.

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Guidelines for parliamentary research services (IPU and IFLA, 2015);
- Keith Cuninghame, Guidelines for legislative libraries (IFLA, 2nd ed., 2009);
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), United Nations (UN) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Handbook: Information and Communication Technologies in Parliamentary Libraries (IPU, UN and IFLA, 2012).
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

Dimension 1.5.3 Infrastructure

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension focuses on the infrastructure or facilities available to members of parliament, as well as political and parliamentary staff. Infrastructure or facilities can include office space, furniture and equipment required in the house(s) (chamber(s)), committees, or in constituencies. In some cases, facilities also comprise housing, transportation, parking and household services, including catering and cleaning services. Protection services may also be provided. Infrastructure should be available to all individual members, political parties, coalitions or groups, as well as other parliamentary governance structures. It is also important for support staff, whether attached to political offices or the parliamentary service, to have access to appropriate and adequate facilities. While the adequacy of infrastructure, such as the facilities and space available for the public and media to access the parliament, are relevant to this dimension, they are covered more extensively in indicator 3.3.

The extent, quality and suitability for the purpose of facilities are important factors in this dimension. Therefore, the dimension includes the consideration of whether facilities are ‘fit for purpose’ in terms of the needs of the parliament. There are adequate resources to maintain the facilities in a suitable condition and there is access to resources if facilities need to be enhanced. The facilities and the resources to support them should be under the control of the parliament.

However, this dimension also concerns the equitable provision of these facilities, in line with the budgetary constraints of each parliament. All members of parliament, regardless of political affiliation, whether ordinary members or a presiding officer, and irrespective of gender or disability, should have access to the facilities that they need. Poor quality facilities can affect the ability of staff to deliver the timely and quality services for which they are responsible, including research, procedural advice, and other key services. Inadequate facilities can also have an impact on public or media accessibility to the parliament.

In order to effectively deliver on the parliamentary mandate, facilities must be adequate and access to them must be equitable. Without adequate facilities, the parliamentary mandate can be jeopardized, and where access is not granted impartially, the effectiveness of legislatures and ultimately the legitimacy of parliamentary processes, can be compromised.

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

Infrastructure and facilities are ‘fit for purpose’ in terms of the needs of the parliament. There are adequate resources to maintain the facilities in a suitable condition, and there is access to resources if facilities need to be enhanced.

A transparent process or formula for determining access to adequate facilities by members of parliament and staff is in place. All members have access to facilities in a manner that enables them to carry out their parliamentary mandate.

20 In some of the literature, the terms ‘infrastructure’ and ‘facilities’ are used interchangeably to describe office space, furnishings and other equipment (including ICT infrastructure).
Assessment
d
The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Feedback on the adequacy of infrastructure and facilities, including any assessments of their adequacy
- Resources available to the parliamentary administration to support and develop infrastructure and facilities
- Guidelines outlining a clear formula for access to facilities
- The existence of a governance body overseeing facilities
- Reports on actual access to infrastructure and allocation of facilities

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Adequacy of infrastructure

The infrastructure available to the parliament is adequate and fit for the purposes for which the parliament needs to use it. The parliament also has access to the resources necessary to maintain existing infrastructure, enhance existing facilities or develop new facilities if required.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Clear guidelines

There are defined rules and guidelines with a clear, transparent and equitable formula for determining adequate facilities that must be available to MPs and staff. These rules and guidelines specify the type of facilities available, as well as when and how to access them.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Governance body

There is a multi-party body that oversees and advises on decisions regarding the allocation of resources, including access to facilities, for individual members of parliament or parties within parliament. The body ensures that not only the needs of members are taken into account when determining equitable access to facilities, but also the overall parliamentary mandate.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Equitable access to facilities

Office and other facilities are available for all members of parliament, in particular those of opposition parties, without disproportionately benefiting the majority party. Furthermore, members and staff with disabilities, members with families, female members, and the media and the public are taken into account when the adequacy of facilities is considered.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.5.4 Innovation and digital technologies

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension covers the innovation and digital technologies available to members of parliament and staff to support the conduct of their business, and those that ensure enhanced and transparent public access to information. Digital technologies include hardware and software and the automation of core activities and processes of parliament. It also includes broadcasting and audio-visual infrastructure, as well as systems and applications.

As digital technologies become more intertwined with daily activities, it is increasingly important for parliaments to adapt to new ways of using technology to conduct their business and to improve transparency and accessibility for the public. Tools of the trade, the right software, access to data, and awareness of a digitally fluent citizenry, are key ingredients to a successfully utilization of innovation and digital technologies to improve the work of parliament. As identified in the IPU’s World e-Parliament Report 2020, we are currently witnessing a unique period of dynamic change and often enforced innovation with regard to the use of digital technology, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been a catalyst for new and transformational digital practices.  \(^{21}\)

The key to ensuring successful ICT solutions is having a sense of the strategic direction for ICT and its innovation, the policies and plans for how to achieve this direction, and the leadership to support change. The latest IPU e-Parliament Report notes that the concept of an e-parliament is as much about governance and strategy as technology and communications.  \(^{22}\) It is also important to ensure that adequate training is provided for both MPs and staff, and that investment in ICT yields a return. Additionally, investment in technology must respond to the needs of citizens for access via mobile technology, the mandate of parliament, and the needs of MPs. The underlying implication is that the goal is not necessarily for parliaments to acquire the most sophisticated technology, but rather for the technology to be adequate and ‘user friendly’ in order to assist MPs in conducting their business in the houses, committees, or in communicating effectively with their constituencies. In view of security threats to parliamentary systems and information, it is also essential for there to be a robust approach to protect the systems and information.

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

- There are established policies or plans that provide strategic direction for and encourage innovation processes and the availability of digital technologies within parliaments. New ways of working resulting from innovation are being consolidated into day-to-day practices.
- Governance structures are in place to facilitate leadership and oversight of digital transformation and decision-making in the context of a rapidly changing environment.
- There are dedicated and adequate resources, both financial and human, for the deployment of various ICT tools (software and hardware).

\(^{21}\) Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *World e-Parliament Report 2020* (IPU, 2021), 15.
\(^{22}\) ibid.
Innovation and digital technologies are introduced in line with the needs and strategies of a particular parliament and are then further developed and consolidated.

Security measures are in place to facilitate the preservation of institutional memory, and to ensure that members and staff are able to conduct their work without unauthorized interference.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Policies or plans on digital transformation and innovation
- An established ICT governance structure, including parliamentary leadership and oversight (preferably involving MPs)
- Dedicated budget and staff for ICT and its management
- Evidence of alignment between ICT plans and the parliamentary mandate and/or strategies
- System security infrastructure and reports

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Policies and plans

There are policies that outline the strategy, scope, type, quality and timing for the provision of digital technology. These policies include details on the approach to digitization and innovation, members’ and staff entitlements to ICT tools, and ways to optimally engage and communicate transparently with the public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Governance structure

There is an established governance structure in place to ensure effective leadership within the parliamentary administration and oversight (preferably involving MPs) on ICT-related decision-making. This governance structure ensures that parliaments remain agile and adaptive enough to meet both the changing needs of members, committees, staff and citizens, and the demands of the ICT ecosystem.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Adequate resources

Adequate financial and human resources for innovation and digital technology are available. There is a dedicated ICT budget, and the required hardware and software, as determined by each parliament, are accessible to all MPs and staff.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Innovation for performance improvement

ICT tools are provided in line with the mandate and plans of parliament. Innovation are utilized to facilitate the improvement of performance. Once developed and adopted, such innovations are consolidated into day-to-day practice.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Secure access

There is sufficient security for all digital processes and applications, particularly those related to the core business of parliament. This should be sufficiently robust to prevent unauthorized access to parliamentary systems and information.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.5.5 Information management**

Indicator: 1.5 Administrative capacity and independence  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension focuses on the management of information, including the extent to which information management systems support the collection, categorization, analysis, and storage of data and information and their distribution and dissemination.

Information management is crucial to the work of parliaments, as it:

- Documents the work carried out by parliaments
- Provides information resources for parliaments and parliamentarians to conduct their business
- Provides the source material for parliaments to disseminate information to the public about their work, thus facilitating engagement and participation

It is useful to think about information management in the context of records management and knowledge management. Records management concerns data and information and the systems and processes used to manage them. Knowledge management is more about processed data and information, and the people who create and use it. Information management potentially covers elements of both records and knowledge management. Thus, knowledge creation and innovation can be enhanced through the establishment of an integrated and efficient information management system.

The information to be managed, as indicated in this dimension, is very broad ranging and includes all the information generated by the parliament, its staff and members. This includes both the formal information generated by the business of the parliament as well as the records of the parliamentary administration and those generated by members in their representative duties. In the Westminster parliamentary system, this usually does not include the records of MPs who perform executive government functions.

Records of the business of parliament, whether generated through oversight or the law-making process, are especially important, as they document the work and decisions of the parliament. Good information management also facilitates tracking and monitoring by the public and other stakeholders. Both these elements strengthen the accountability of parliament to the public in terms of both its outcomes and its processes, thus bolstering trust in the parliamentary institution. Furthermore, the storage, categorization and dissemination of information in an easy and reliable way, including research, policy analysis, procedural or legal advice, play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the parliamentary institution and members. The volume of information produced by parliaments makes a case for innovative and electronic approaches to information management.

Information management and the related matter of knowledge management also underpin the institutional memory of parliaments. As parliaments generate more data and information, they learn more about the legislation that they enact, the entities that they oversee, the citizens that they represent and their own processes and procedures for undertaking the work of the parliament.

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23 “Knowledge management is a process where people capture, share, and generate knowledge in various ways, whether through the use of technology or through social processes, to the benefit of the organization and the expertise of its people” [Implementing a records management strategy to complement Parliament’s knowledge management initiatives, IFLA Pre-Conference Paper, 2015, 4].
For all these reasons, sound information management systems and processes are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of a modern parliament. Consequently, the protection of this information and its supporting systems from unauthorized access or malicious attacks is essential.

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

Information management governance is well documented and implemented, and prescribes how, when and who can create, process, store, retrieve, delete and disseminate information.

There is a central repository (or repositories) where all information is stored and can be accessed when required. This can be through an intranet or document management system, whether internal or cloud-based.

Public access to parliamentary information through the parliamentary website, or on request to the parliament is in place.

Information is accessible but secure from unauthorized and/or malicious access.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- A governance document or guide on information management
- An existing central repository (or repositories) in place
- Availability of documents on the website, or via email, post or handout (hardcopy/physical copy)
- ICT security reports

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Documented governance of information management

The governance for information management is developed, well-documented and implemented. This can include, inter alia, rules, procedures and processes for creating, processing, categorizing, storing, retrieving, deleting and disseminating information.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Central repository (or repositories)
A central repository (or repositories) has been created where information is easily accessible to members of parliament and parliamentary staff.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Public access**

Information produced and kept by parliament is accessible through a website, on request, or through other convenient means for the public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Security and integrity**

Security protocols are in place to protect the information management system from breaches and unauthorized and/or malicious access and interference.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Indicator 1.6 – Law-making

Legislating is regarded in most jurisdictions as the legislature’s primary responsibility, and provides the source from which many of parliament’s functions and powers draw. The role of legislating as the core responsibility of parliament is usually reflected in constitutional (or equivalent) provisions. The overriding principle reflected throughout this indicator is that, even though other stakeholders play a role at various stages of the legislative process, parliament and its members remain paramount in law-making.

This indicator covers all aspects of the legislative function. It includes the processes by which legislation is prepared (legislative drafting) and the powers of the different participants in the legislature to initiate, amend and approve legislation. The routine procedure for the passage of legislation through all stages of the legislature, including passage through two houses in bicameral systems, is covered. The indicator also includes the processes for expedited consideration of legislation, and the necessary protection to ensure proper consideration even when the process is accelerated, for valid reasons. The circumstances for constitution-making and amendment are distinguished from those for the processing of ordinary laws.

Once legislation has properly passed through the house(s), there are processes for its final endorsement (assent and enactment) and publication, which are covered in this indicator.

Finally, many parliaments have recognized that their role does not end once legislation has been passed, and, consequently, they have adopted approaches to the post-legislative scrutiny of legislation that they enact, including processes to address delegated legislation.

The assessment of the indicator on law-making comprises the following dimensions:

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

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns the powers of various participants within the legislative process in relation to the initiation, passage and approval of legislation. It reflects the right of MPs, regardless of their status (parliamentary majority, minority or independent) to involvement at all stages of the passage of legislation. In some jurisdictions, other participants also have the right to initiate legislation.

All MPs, regardless of their status, should have the right to initiate and propose amendments to legislation as reflected in the constitution and/or rules of procedure of their legislatures. Reasonable restrictions can be placed on the authority of individual MPs or a house (in bicameral systems) to initiate or amend proposals that involve, for example, the spending of public money or the imposition of taxes. These powers may be reserved for a lower house in a bicameral system or for MPs from parliamentary majority groups or political parties that form the executive. There may also be limits on the opportunities to debate legislative initiatives or amendments (see dimension 1.6.3). If such restrictions are in place, they should not create unreasonable limits on the freedom of MPs to play a full role in the legislative process. Some jurisdictions also have wider rights regarding the initiation of legislation, which may include the executive or its agencies or groups of citizens.

All legislation, including budgetary legislation, presented for final assent to the head of state, must have been approved by the legislature, and in bicameral systems, where passage through both houses is required, it must have been approved in the same form by both houses of the legislature. In some legislatures, there can be different approval requirements for different forms of legislation. In some cases, only a simple majority of MPs’ votes is required, while in others, a majority of the total number of seats is necessary. In some jurisdictions, there may also be special circumstances where full passage through both houses is not required, with a lower house being able to bypass or override passage through the upper house, particularly where the upper house has been appointed and not elected.

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<th>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of powers in law-making would encompass the following:</th>
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<td><strong>There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to initiate legislation. Any restrictions on this right should be strictly limited and reasonable.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to propose amendments to legislation as it passes through the legislature. Any restrictions on this right should be strictly limited and reasonable.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>There are clearly defined constitutional or rule of procedure provisions for any legislation, including budgetary legislation, presented to the head of state for assent, to have been approved first by the legislature, in accordance with the rules of the legislature applying to that particular legislation (including both houses in the case of bicameral systems, unless particular restrictions on the upper house are in place).</strong></td>
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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
The practice of legislatures indicates that they follow their constitutional principles and rules of procedure relating to MPs’ powers throughout the legislative process, and MPs are reasonably empowered to participate in all stages of the legislative process. Particular attention is given to the opportunities for opposition and independent MPs.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning MPs’ rights to initiate legislation
- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the power of MPs to propose amendments to legislation
- Constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions relating to the approval of legislation by MPs
- Any practice relating to the initiation of bills or proposal of amendments to legislation by individual MPs

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Right to initiate legislation**

There is evidence of constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions that establish the right of all MPs, regardless of their status, to initiate legislation in their legislatures. In some legislatures, legislation can be initiated only by a set number of MPs. Any restrictions on this right (for example restrictions concerning financial proposals) are clearly defined and limited. In some jurisdictions, constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions also permit other participants, for example, the executive and its agencies or groups of citizens, to initiate legislation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Amending legislation**

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedures provisions that grant all MPs, regardless of their status, the authority to propose amendments to legislation as it proceeds through committees and the legislature. Any restrictions on this right (for example restrictions concerning financial proposals) are clearly defined and limited.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Approval of legislation

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions that require all legislation, including budgetary legislation, submitted to the head of state for assent to have been approved by the legislature in accordance with the rules of the legislature applying to the particular legislation (and both houses in the case of a bicameral parliament). Special circumstances may apply in some bicameral legislatures, whereby the upper house may be bypassed or overridden in the approval process.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Empowerment of MPs in practice

The practice of the legislature, as demonstrated by the bills initiated or amendments proposed by individual MPs or other participants, demonstrates powers to take the initiative at all stages of the legislative process. Particular consideration is given to parliamentary minority and independent MPs.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.6.2 Constitution-making and amendment**

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

Most countries have written constitutions that provide, at the highest level, for matters such as the separation of powers between the different branches of government, define the respective powers and responsibilities of the executive, parliament and the judiciary, and provide for other aspects of a democratic form of government. These constitutions have been adopted and are subject to amendment through processes that vary across jurisdictions. The making of a constitution, and its amendment, are special cases of law-making, and usually involves special or additional requirements, such as passage by a supermajority of the legislature or with public approval.

As the constitution protects the democratic system and can protect minority and other rights, it should not be possible to change it easily. If changes could be made easily, the protection that a constitution affords to the democratic system would be threatened. Amendment also should not be made so difficult that constitutional change is impossible to achieve. If the constitution is virtually impossible to change, sensible modifications that improve the operation of the democratic system may not be made.

The right to put forward proposals for constitutional change also is significant. In some jurisdictions, the right of initiative rests solely with the legislature (MPs or groups of MPs), while in other jurisdictions, other mechanisms, such as citizen-initiated proposals for constitutional change, are also permitted. Ideally, a range of mechanisms is available to ensure that the opportunity to initiate change is not restricted.

Where applicable, the legislature is involved in the approval of constitutional changes, in some cases by a special majority in the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

Not all legislatures permit change solely by approval of the legislature. In some jurisdictions, endorsement by the people through a referendum is required. In other cases, other approaches are adopted, such as approval by a majority of states or provinces in federal systems. In these cases, there is a demand for wider public consultation to obtain approval.

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

Constitutional and other legal provisions permit a range of mechanisms for the initiation of constitutional changes, from initiation by MPs to citizen-initiated proposals.

In some jurisdictions, constitutional and legal provisions ensure that the legislature approves constitution-making and amendment, preferably by a supermajority of the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

In jurisdictions where there are other processes for the approval of constitution-making or amendment, such as a public referendum or approval by states and provinces in a federal system, wider public consultation is required.
The legislature is able to demonstrate, through its practice, that amendments to the constitution can be made, but constitution-making or amendment does not threaten the fundamental democratic provisions of the constitution, including the protection of rights.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Constitutional and legal provisions relating to constitution-making and amendment
- Evidence of public consultation on proposals for constitution-making and amendment
- Any practice relating to constitution-making and amendment

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Initiation of proposals for constitution-making and amendment**

Constitutional and other legal provisions establish a range of mechanisms for the initiation of proposals for constitution-making and amendment.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legislature approval of constitution-making and amendment**

There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions establishing that constitution-making and/or amendment is approved by the legislature, preferably by a supermajority of the legislature (for example, a two-thirds majority).

In jurisdictions where there are other processes for the approval of constitution-making or amendment, such as public referenda or approval by states and provinces in a federal system, constitutional or legal provisions or practice demonstrate wide public consultation on the proposals.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Ease of constitution-making or amendment**

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

Practice demonstrates that, while amendments to the constitution can be made, constitution-making and amendment do not threaten the fundamental democratic provisions of the constitution, including the protection of rights.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.6.3 Legislative procedure**

**Indicator:** 1.6 Law-making  
**Sub-target:** 1 Effective parliament  
**Target:** 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns all aspects of the processes for the passage of legislation through the legislature (approval processes are covered in dimension 1.6.1). Such processes are reflected in constitutional or other legal provisions, but usually the rules of procedure of the legislature provide details of the processes and expand on constitutional and legislative provisions.

The procedures of the legislature for the passage of legislation should be clear, transparent and readily understood, and allow for the proper consideration and debate of legislation as it progresses through all stages. For bicameral legislatures, there should be clear, well-understood and accepted procedures set by each house for its own consideration of legislation. Each legislature has different approaches to resolving differences in the consideration of legislation between the houses in a bicameral system. These processes should be clear, accepted and manageable, to allow for the resolution of differences between the houses.

In general, for the routine consideration of legislation (see below for procedures for urgent consideration), legislators should have sufficient time and opportunity to be able to reflect on and debate bills that are under consideration before voting on them. Many legislatures have various stages for consideration of a bill (known as ‘readings’ in some legislatures). There are usually at least two major stages – one for debate on the general principles of a bill and another when the detail of a bill is considered and amendments can be proposed and voted on. It is presumed that an aspect of the process will be referred to a relevant committee for detailed consideration. Such committees should have the power either to recommend amendments or to amend the legislation during committee consideration. This stage allows for direct participation by the public in the legislative process, which should be provided for in the procedures of the legislature, and be reflected in the practice of the legislature with sufficient time allowed for public consultation.

It is recognized that there are circumstances in which bills need to be passed more quickly than the routine process for consideration. These circumstances could include the response to natural disasters, pandemics or acts of terrorism, or to adverse court judgments. Legislatures might be expected to have procedures for the urgent consideration of legislation, which is sometimes called ‘fast tracking’. The fast tracking of legislation essentially means that the legislation passes through all the usual stages, but with an expedited timetable. Sometimes an explanation is expected for the urgent consideration of legislation, as well as the provision of opportunities for MPs to debate and vote on the need for urgency. While the urgency may be justifiable, the procedures should still allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny to the extent possible. In some jurisdictions, emergency legislation also may provide for special approaches to the approval of matters that are usually considered by the legislature, for example, the making of delegated legislation or other laws. In cases of urgent or emergency legislation, the legislature should consider other mechanisms for scrutiny, such as post-legislative review or the use of sunset clauses.

This dimension also covers the consideration of delegated legislation. Delegated legislation is secondary legislation made by the executive under the authority of primary legislation. Delegated legislation needs to be made under the authority of and in full compliance with existing law. There parliament has the opportunity to scrutinize (see dimension 1.6.8), debate and approve (or reject) delegated legislation, and legislative or rules of procedures provisions should be in place to provide for such consideration.

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

109
On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of legislative procedure would encompass the following:

There are clear and transparent provisions in the constitution and/or rules of procedure for the passage of legislation through all stages in the legislature. These procedures include the conditions of passage through two houses in a bicameral system, including appropriate mechanisms for the resolution of differences between the houses.

Provisions of the legislature establishing the routine consideration of legislation ensure that the legislature is able to fully deliberate on and debate legislation, and provide the opportunity for MPs to propose and vote on amendments.

The routine process of consideration of legislation and proposals to the legislature for amendments require all legislation to be referred to committees for consideration. This process also includes expert and public consultations.

Legislature legitimately has provisions for the urgent (or fast-track) consideration of legislation where required. These provisions include an explanation for such urgent consideration, the opportunity for MPs to debate and vote on urgent legislation and for reasonable scrutiny of legislation even in urgent circumstances.

Delegated legislation is made in accordance with the powers delegated by law. Provisions of the legislature establish that delegated legislation is subject to scrutiny by the legislature, including debate and approval/rejection. The use of emergency powers to make delegated or other legislation prompts the legislature to use other scrutiny mechanisms such as post-legislative review or sunset clauses.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions concerning the passage of legislation through the legislature, including provisions in both houses in a bicameral system
- Statistics on the practice of the legislature in the passage of legislation, such as time spent considering legislation and the numbers of amendments proposed and voted on
- Any practice relating to the resolution of legislative differences between the houses in a bicameral system
- Practice of committees in the consideration of legislation, including the statistics for public participation (for example, the number of submissions or hearings) and the number of proposals for amendment
- Statistics on the use of urgent procedures by the legislature
- Practice relating to the legislature’s consideration of delegated legislation

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Clarity, transparency and comprehension of legislative procedure**
There is evidence of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions that clearly and transparently provide for the passage of legislation through the legislature, including in each chamber of legislatures with bicameral systems. The procedures are readily understood and accepted by MPs and the public and, in bicameral systems, enable the management and resolution of differences.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Routine consideration of legislation**

There are constitutional and/or rules of procedure provisions providing for the routine consideration of legislation. These procedures provide, at a minimum, for debate on the general principles of legislation, and for the opportunity to consider the detail of legislation and to propose and vote on amendments.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Reference to committees**

Provisions of the legislature require all legislation to be referred to committees for detailed consideration, public consultation and proposals for amendment.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Urgent consideration of legislation**

While legislatures have processes for the expedited consideration of legislation, rules of procedure provisions ensure that the circumstances are defined clearly and justified (usually by means of a statement to the legislature) and are subject to debate and amendment and vote by MPs. To the extent possible, the rules of procedure enable proper parliamentary scrutiny, even in the event of fast-tracked or urgent procedures.
Assessment criterion No. 5: Scrutiny of delegated legislation, including when made under emergency powers

There are constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions providing for the scrutiny of delegated legislation by the legislature, which ensure that the legislature can debate and approve/reject delegated legislation. Where emergency powers are used to make delegated or other legislation, legislative provisions enable other mechanisms, such as post-legislative review or sunset clauses, to be used.

Assessment criterion No. 6: Application of legislative procedures

The practice of the legislature shows that the majority of legislation is subject to routine processes and that there is no undue reliance on the fast-tracking of legislative procedures.

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.6.4 Legislative drafting

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the principles of legislative drafting (also known as legislative technique in some jurisdictions). Legislative drafting is the art of legislating with clarity and effectiveness. The aim of the legislative drafting is, on the one hand, to ensure the unity and coherence of an act with regard to the legal system, and, on the other hand, to enhance the clarity, quality and viability of legislation.

Citizens and those who might be impacted by a law must be able to know their mandates, rights and duties stipulated by law. Good legislative drafting therefore provides legal certainty and equality before the law while making clear the spirit and intent of the legislation, and avoiding any misinterpretation, loopholes or conflicting provisions. In contrast, unclear legislative drafting undermines the applicability and certainty of legislation and, hence the trust of citizens in legislation, and weakens the sense of equality under the law. Clear legislative drafting also aids the legislature in its consideration of legislation as it progresses through the legislature.

This dimension focuses on common elements required to ensure good legislative drafting and, thus, better quality legislation.

The dimension on legislative drafting applies to legislative proposals that are considered by the parliament, as well as amendments to pieces of legislation, subordinate legislation and other legislative instruments.

It is common for the executive to have a specialist legislative drafting office or service available to meet its drafting needs. Consideration needs to be given by the legislature to the availability of legislative drafting resources to MPs, and particularly to opposition, minority party and independent MPs, to assist them in preparing draft legislation for presentation to parliament.

Please see also other dimensions linked to indicator 1.6 on law-making, especially dimension 1.6.7 on publication.

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

There is evidence of a legislative drafting manual, guidance or similar that sets criteria for clear and effective drafting. This guidance is followed in the drafting of all legislative pieces to be tabled to the parliament. The aim of the guidelines is to assist drafters in their task, not by prescribing rigid rules, but by allowing them to apply the best option for each case according to their own knowledge and experience.

Before developing draft legislation, drafters analyse the proposal and design a solution accordingly. Elements that are considered by the drafter include the necessity of the proposal, its practical implications, the best solution to be found, the existing legislation that affects the subject, scope and content of the proposed draft legislation. This analysis is available in the form of explanatory notes accompanying the legislation and regulatory impact assessment (RIA).
A standard structure for draft legislation is in place, which ensures a high level of consistency within the same jurisdiction. The content of the draft legislation is homogeneous and arranged following a logical order, so that later provisions build upon earlier ones.

Clear, precise and plain language, with no unnecessary jargon or archaic expressions, is used to ensure equality before the law and legal certainty. The drafter considers the addressees of the draft legislation, with the aim of making it more comprehensible to the public.

Legislative drafts use gender-neutral language instead of gender-specific language.

Legislation is amended in a logical order and a coherent manner. Amendments are made in the form of text inserted into the amended legislation. Amending acts follow the structure and terminology of the legislation that is amended.

There are specialist legislative drafting resources available to all MPs, or parliamentary (party) groups, including opposition, minority parties and independent MPs.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Drafting manuals, guidelines and other documents that assist drafters in their task
- A preliminary rationale, reports and impact assessments of proposed legislation
- Evidence of the accessibility of legislative drafting resources, including specialists
- Existing legislation, legislative proposals, amending acts, subordinate legislation and other legislative instruments

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of legislative drafting guidelines

There is evidence of a legislative drafting manual, guidance or similar that sets criteria for clear and effective drafting and assists drafters in their task.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Planning for drafting

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24 Also known as ‘non-sexist’, ‘non-gender-specific’ and ‘inclusive’ language.
There is evidence of a plan for drafting which considers the need for a legislative proposal, its potential adverse implications, its effectiveness and the balance of cost and benefits, including respect for fundamental rights and public liberties. The plan is transparent and accessible, and is in the form of, for example, explanatory notes accompanying the legislation.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Structure and composition of the act**

The act follows a standard structure that makes it easy to follow and consistent with other acts.\(^{25}\) The content of the act is homogeneous\(^{26}\) and organized in a logical order. Definitions of terms are set out before these terms are used.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Clarity, consistency and unambiguity in drafting**

Acts are drafted clearly and in plain language. Ambiguity, vagueness, contradictions and over-generality within the text and with regard to other acts are avoided. All those whose rights and duties are stipulated by an act are able to identify them and understand without ambiguity. The drafting style specifies what type of act it is and whether it is binding.\(^{27}\) Gender-neutral language is used throughout the act.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Amending legislation**

\(^{25}\) An act usually comprises the following sections: title/heading; contents page; preamble/overview; enacting terms (articles/sections); final provisions; and annexes. Other ways to present the structure include the following: preliminary provisions; principal provisions; general and supplementary provisions; final provisions; and annexes.

\(^{26}\) Unrelated matters are not addressed under the same act.

\(^{27}\) This is reflected in the choice of verb and tense.
To the extent possible, amending acts amend a single act, and specify the act being amended and the purpose of the amendment. Amendments are made in a logical order and are inserted into the act to be amended, not as separate provisions. Amending acts maintain the structure and terminology of the act that is amended and do not contain substantive provisions autonomous to it.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Availability of legislative drafting resources

Individual MPs or parliamentary (party) groups have resources available for specialist legislative drafting and to assist with the drafting of legislation for presentation to the parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- New Zealand Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO), ‘*Principles of clear drafting*’, Drafting Manual.
- United Kingdom Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), ‘*Drafting Guidance*’ (OPC, 2020).
Dimension 1.6.5 Enactment

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which a piece of legislation that has been passed by the legislature and has been supported by the parliament at all stages, in compliance with the legislative process, but which has not yet been enacted, is signed and promulgated and finally becomes law. The proposed laws adopted by the parliament in most jurisdictions require the consent of or signature by the head of state in order to enter into force. Constitutions or equivalent rules provide heads of state with the constitutional power to refuse to give assent to, or to veto, a draft law. Where a head of state can veto legislation, parliament usually has the ability to override the veto. Different jurisdictions provide different grounds for applying veto powers as well as different levels of complexity for overriding them. The nature of the power to refuse to give assent to, or to veto, also varies. In some cases, assent by a head of state is just a formality, in others a head of state has the authority to prevent legislation from being enacted, and even to propose specific amendments to the bill.

Overriding a veto normally requires a super-majority decision in the legislature and the relevant procedure is prescribed in the constitution. In systems where the head of state has the authority to propose specific amendments to the law, as a rule, the legislature is allowed to pass the bill by an ordinary majority if proposed amendments are fully adopted.\(^\text{28}\)

Constitutions usually provide for a special procedure and timeline for the signing and promulgation of laws, which can include the number of days for submitting the adopted draft law to the head of state, the number of days for signing the draft or imposing a veto, and for proposing amendments to the parliament. The detailed procedures for overriding a veto are also outlined in legislation or the constitution itself.

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

There is a clear constitutional distinction between legislation being passed by the parliament and the enactment of law. Enacting a law is typically marked by the formal signing of a bill by the head of state. Constitutional provisions clearly define procedures for the signature and promulgation of a law, which gives the law final legitimacy.

Where constitutional provisions give the head of state the authority to refuse or withhold assent, or to propose amendments to a proposed law, parliament is also constitutionally authorized to override the veto by, for example, a supermajority, or through the acceptance or rejection of amendments proposed by the head of state.

After parliament overrides a veto, the head of state is obliged to sign and promulgate the law. This provides a mechanism to avoid dead-locks in the adoption of laws.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the enactment of laws, including signature and promulgation
- Specific articles of the rules of procedures that regulate the procedures and timelines for the submission of passed draft laws to a head of state for signature
- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committees’ acts that regulate the overriding of a veto by a head of state

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Clear constitutional framework**

The constitutional framework provides a clear procedure for enacting laws. The rules on the signature and promulgation of legislation that has been passed by the parliament as the final stage for giving assent to the law are defined in the constitution or legislation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Procedures for failure to assent**

Where a head of state is equipped with the power to veto (or not assent to) legislation passed by the parliament, there are clear grounds on which the veto power might be exercised, a clear definition of the scope of the veto power and a timeline for submitting suggested amendments where applicable.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Procedures to override a veto or agree to amendments**

The constitutional framework provides a clear mandate for parliament to accept amendments proposed by a head of state or to override a head of state’s veto with a pre-determined majority. It is within the powers of parliament to have the final say in the enactment of legislation, even if a larger-than-usual majority is required for passing the law.
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

## Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Recommendations for change**

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**Dimension 1.6.6 Publication**

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the provisions by which laws shall be duly and officially published and made accessible to any interested party. Open and effective access to laws is vital to understanding and applying the rule of law. Laws may only be properly implemented if they are accessible, predictable and clear. Citizens are more likely to comply with laws that they know and understand. If people have efficient, effective and free access to laws and regulations, they are better positioned to exercise their legal rights, plan their actions, and efficiently resolve any problems and disputes that may arise.29

A key standard for any democracy should be the provision of free and easy access to current laws, including the publication of laws in journals and official gazettes. In light of modern technological developments, this standard has evolved over past decades to include online access to updated, accessible and searchable information. Legislation shall be published proactively by the relevant state institution, and shall be accessible in a consolidated version including any amendments passed by the legislature. In the case of amending bills passing through the legislature, a consolidated version should be available, including amendments introduced to the legislation, to enable citizens to track the progress of the bill. Although clarity of the text is one of the requirements for any piece of good legislation, it is also reasonable to expect the publication of explanatory notes, the legislators' rationale for the amendment or adoption of certain pieces of legislation accompanying the bill, in order to fully grasp the intention and meaning of the legislation in question and to understand the need for its implementation.

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

| The law sets out the rules on the publication of legislation passed by the parliament, including the procedure and timeline between the passage and publication of the legislation. |

| The constitution and/or the law provides for full and effective access to an official collection of laws in a single place and requires legal databases to be kept up to date. Maintaining a comprehensive, accessible and free-of-charge unified website containing all applicable legislation is an obligation for any democratic state. |

| The legislation is searchable online, organized by category, such as laws and other legislative acts, and by type, date, geographic region, agency, legislative area and sector. |

| All regulatory and legal repositories are kept up to date. Amendments introduced to legislation are published in a consolidated version, allowing users to access full and up-to-date versions of laws. Best practice may suggest the publication of explanatory notes or rationale for the adoption of legislation together with the legal act. This practice may be particularly useful for ensuring the proper interpretation of laws by the judiciary and/or other entities applying relevant legal provisions in practice. |


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**Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7**
Ideally, laws are accessible to the public through publication in an official publishing space before they enter into force.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the publication of laws
- Specific articles of the rules of procedures or other laws that regulate the publication of laws
- Journals and gazettes and/or a unified website or registry where law is published
- Consolidated versions of the laws are accessible on an official website or in an official journal

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for publishing legislation

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitution, laws, rules of procedures/standing orders of parliament) that defines basic rules for the publication of legislation, including the procedure and timeline between the passage and publication of the legislation. Ideally, laws become effective only after being duly and officially published.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Established practice of publishing legislation

Legislation is available in a single place, such as a website or registry, which is regularly updated and which can be accessed by the public free of charge.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Publishing of consolidated versions of laws

In addition to the publication of the initial versions of laws, all amendments passed to existing laws are published in the same space, are integrated into the original text and are provided in a consolidated and user-
friendly format, so that users can easily access the latest complete versions of laws, and track amendments made to the legislation at different stages.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Dimension 1.6.7 Post-legislative scrutiny (PLS)

Indicator: 1.6 Law-making
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the parliament has the authority to carry out post-legislative scrutiny (PLS). PLS is an important tool for ensuring that laws are implemented effectively, carrying out rigorous scrutiny on the implementation of laws, and assessing the impact of legislation. It also helps to review the interpretation and application of a given piece of legislation by courts, and to understand how legal practitioners and citizens apply its provisions. PLS therefore contributes to the identification of legislative gaps and shortcomings in the application of legislation, and to the promotion of targeted and evidence-based law-making. Moreover, PLS enables legislators to review the secondary and delegated legislation associated with the primary laws from which they derive, thus ensuring more comprehensive scrutiny of the implementation of laws. Post-legislative scrutiny can be considered as both a legislative and oversight tool, and its assessment is also recommended as a part of indicator 1.7 on oversight.

PLS can be an inclusive process that ensures the engagement of all relevant actors, such as political parties, civil society, academia, experts and citizens. Stakeholder engagement enables parliaments to access additional sources of information, increases the credibility of parliamentary work and promotes public trust in legislative institutions.

To ensure effective PLS, it is important to establish procedures for the systematic monitoring of the implementation and consequences of legislation in the rules of procedures. Such procedures contribute to the clarity and predictability of the process. They guarantee transparency, define the relevant parliamentary bodies responsible for carrying out PLS, establish the optimal moment for conducting PLS, and enable parliament to allocate the necessary human, financial and administrative resources for PLS. However, even when there are no clear procedures for conducting PLS, parliament is still capable, within its general oversight mandate, of overseeing the implementation of legislation through the provision of timely access to governmental information, the conduct of hearings, the collection of information from relevant stakeholders and the issue of findings and recommendations. Such scrutiny is still of value.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework for PLS in the country’s legal system (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament). The legal framework specifies the parliamentary bodies (standing committee/s or other dedicated bodies) responsible for conducting PLS, and defines the mandate of the committee/dedicated bodies, transparent mechanisms for the selection of the legislation to be reviewed, and clear processes for conducting reviews and issuing recommendations.

Post-legislative scrutiny is an established oversight mechanism within the legislature and is part of parliamentary scrutiny, which is conducted regularly.

The committee/dedicated bodies are supported by relevant human, financial and administrative resources in order to conduct PLS. This entails regularly-trained and skilled staff authorized to cooperate with all relevant institutions and stakeholders, in order to collect information and draft preliminary and final PLS reports.
PLS is an inclusive process, in which all relevant stakeholders, such as political parties, civil society groups, academia, experts and citizens are able to participate. It includes an inclusive and non-partisan process for the identification and determination of the pieces of legislation to be reviewed in a PLS process.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- The legal framework defining the rules for PLS activities (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament)
- The availability of trained committee personnel, and administrative and financial resources to carry out PLS
- PLS reports and recommendations issued by committee/dedicated body/bodies
- Monitoring reports on the implementation of PLS recommendations

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for conducting PLS

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitution, laws, rules of procedure/standing orders of parliament) that defines basic rules for conducting post-legislative scrutiny.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Established practice for conducting PLS

There is a designated parliamentary body (or bodies) or committee which acts in accordance with the existing legal framework (or without it, if no formal framework exists), applies PLS as part of the general parliamentary oversight mandate and conducts PLS on a regular basis, and issues findings and recommendations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3 Availability of a supportive system to conduct PLS

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

Parliament is equipped with adequate human, financial and administrative resources to carry out PLS, including regularly-trained and skilled personnel.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Stakeholder engagement

Post-legislative scrutiny is an open, transparent and inclusive process. Established practice in parliaments ensures the participation of all relevant actors, such as political parties, civil society actors, academia, experts and citizens.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Defining terms of reference for PLS

Each PLS inquiry has clearly defined terms of reference, outlining the scope of the PLS inquiry, the legislation being analysed and the main questions relevant to assessing the implementation and impact of the legislation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Monitoring of implementation

Based on the findings and recommendations of the committees/bodies responsible for conducting PLS and/or the plenary, the relevant committees/bodies monitor the status of implementation of the PLS recommendations and regularly interact with representatives of the government department(s) and other stakeholders on their follow-up to the PLS findings and recommendations.

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading:
Indicator 1.7 – Oversight

Parliamentary oversight is one of the three core functions of parliament and an essential element of the exercise of democracy. Directly-elected houses of a legislature are mandated to hold governments accountable on behalf of the people, and to ensure that there are checks and balances on the executive. The fundamental objectives of parliamentary oversight are to promote the freedoms of the people, as well as to contribute to improving the quality of governance, law-making and representation.

Parliamentary oversight becomes increasingly relevant when public trust in representative democracy decreases. The people call for effective action by their elected representatives to ensure that governments perform at the best of their abilities. Societies wish to see their parliaments hold governments to account, identify legislative measures to remedy their concerns, make well-justified budget allocations and find effective policy solutions. The oversight process includes conducting enquiries, obtaining information from the executive, summoning officials, organizing hearings, holding debates and conducting inquiries.

Parliamentary oversight should be rigorous, systematic, constructive, and evidence-based. Legislatures are authorized to scrutinize policies of the executive, including military, security and intelligence services. Parliaments are mandated to monitor secondary, delegated or subordinate legislation, as well as scrutinize appointments to executive posts. Oversight is a transparent and open process that involves the participation of relevant stakeholders and the general public.

The assessment of the oversight indicator comprises the following dimensions:

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


Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
**Dimension 1.7.1 Election, confidence, no-confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministers**

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the provisions by which parliament has the power to elect a head of state/government, to vote for confidence or no confidence in the executive, to censure or impeach a head of state or government and/or ministers. As the system of checks and balances in democratic societies ensures that no one enjoys absolute power, parliaments have a constitutional mandate to hold governments to account and, in some systems, also to confirm executive appointments. While various constitutional systems provide for different mandates enabling parliaments to elect heads of states/governments, and to vote on confidence motions, all democratic legislatures have the power to remove heads of state or government through a constitutionally-established process of impeachment for the breach of constitutional duty or in the event of serious misconduct.

The parliamentary authority to hold a vote of confidence or no confidence in the executive is outlined in constitutional law. The vote of confidence represents the right of directly-elected parliamentarians to express their support for a person or a group. The notion of a vote of confidence in the executive varies across systems. For the purposes of this dimension, a ‘vote of confidence’ refers to parliament’s power to establish a cabinet, typically immediately after parliamentary elections. Parliament is authorized to withdraw confidence if it considers that the government or some of its members are failing to carry out their duties. A successful vote of no confidence has the potential to replace all or part of the government. In parliamentary systems, government tenure usually depends on the continued support of the legislature and, therefore, parliament has the power to dissolve the government by a vote of no confidence where necessary.

In presidential systems, where heads of state or government are directly elected, they are still accountable to citizens between presidential elections. Even in systems where a legislature has no power to exercise a vote of confidence in the executive, it still has mechanisms to impeach heads of state or government officials/ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or in cases of unlawful action. The removal of the highest executive officials from office is a drastic measure and, in some cases, may lead to the dissolution of parliament, triggering early elections.

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**On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of election, confidence, no confidence, censure or impeachment of the head of state or government and/or ministers would encompass the following:**

- There is a clear separation of powers established in a country's constitution or legal precedent that codifies the mandate of the parliament for the election of, vote of confidence or no confidence in, or censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers. The procedure for applying these powers is clearly established in legislation and in practice.

- Heads of state and government/ministers are accountable to the people through the parliament. Parliament has mechanisms to censure and/or impeach the head of state or leader of government or government officials/ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or in cases of unlawful action.

**Assessment**

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

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the processes of the election of, confidence or no confidence in, and censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate the procedures for the election of, confidence or no confidence in, and censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and/or ministers
- Examples of a decision of the parliament or its committees on confidence or no confidence in, censure or impeachment of a head of state or government and or minister

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Election of a head of state**

The constitution and law set clear criteria and rules for the election of a head of state. In systems where heads of state are elected by the parliament, the law clearly defines the methods for nominating and electing a candidate (secret or open ballot), as well as the minimal quorum for electing a head of state.

In systems where heads of state are elected through popular elections, there is evidence of the constitutional provisions and law regarding the election, mandate and roles of the head of state.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Vote of confidence/approval of ministers**

In systems where the government is established by a parliamentary vote of confidence, the constitution and the law provide for clear rules and criteria for such a vote. The constitution sets out rules on the nomination of the candidate for a head of government and members of cabinet, proceedings for the debate of a proposed governmental programme, deadlines and the minimum quorum necessary for gaining parliamentary confidence in the new cabinet.

In systems where the establishment of a government does not require a vote of confidence, parliament approves ministers and cabinet members individually. There is evidence of constitutional and legal provisions that set out clear rules for the submission of candidates for approval, hearing procedures and a minimal quorum for final decision.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Dissolving government (vote of no confidence and censure)

There are constitutional or legal provisions by which only a popularly elected house has the power to bring down a government. The law enables parliament to hold a vote of no confidence or to file a motion of censure as a procedure to remove the government from office (except in presidential and semi-presidential types of government). In order to succeed, such a procedure requires at least a majority of legislators. A vote of no confidence or a motion of censure is debated transparently and the public has an opportunity to observe the entire process.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Legal framework on impeachment

There is evidence of clear constitutional or legal provisions by which the legislature has mechanisms to address serious misconduct by a head of state and government/ministers, and to impeach a head of state or government or ministers for breaches of their constitutional mandate or for unlawful conduct. The constitution and law clearly establish the grounds and a clear procedure for an inquiry/investigation into the misconduct. The law sets the minimum votes needed for the initiation of the impeachment motion, as well as the number of votes necessary for the final decision on impeachment.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Implementation in practice

The application of the procedure for casting a vote of confidence/no confidence in, or impeaching or censuring a head of state or government or government officials in practice is clear and consistent. In cases where such mechanisms have been applied by parliament, their implementation was in strict compliance with the relevant constitutional or legal provisions.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.7.2 Parliamentary access to information from government

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the provisions by which parliament has the authority to exercise its oversight mandate by obtaining documents and information from the executive. This mandate is usually exercised by individual MPs, political groups and committees, depending on the oversight tool that parliament chooses to apply.

Many legislatures are legally empowered to access any information, including classified information, held by the executive. MPs have the right to submit questions to the government, prime minister and ministers, as well as the right to have their questions answered in a complete and timely manner either orally in plenaries or in writing. Parliamentary committees also have the right to visit government institutions and other sites to examine details of the implementation of various programmes.

In many systems, parliamentary committees are key units that have significant responsibility for oversight. In parallel to the rights of individual MPs, committees are granted additional powers to obtain any information from the executive either for the purpose of accountability or for law-making.

The rules of procedure of parliament establish clear and effective procedures for obtaining information from the executive and submitting questions or letters to the government, including specific timelines for responding to such questions/letters. The law may also prescribe rules that limit access to classified information, such as state secrets (requests for information from military, security and intelligence services). In these cases, requests for classified information may be limited to a special committee or to individual members of parliament having the necessary security clearances or authority to oversee these areas. Any limitation on access to classified information, such as state secrets (requesting information from military, security and intelligence services) should be precisely defined by law.

The process of obtaining information from the executive shall be rigorous and systematic. Parliament shall have effective procedures for the reception of timely responses from the executive and a designated parliamentary body (mostly a committee on rules and procedures) may be authorized to monitor compliance of the executive with relevant provisions of the law. Such a body or similar unit should keep records of the number of submissions, the number or timeliness of responses, the number of delayed responses, justifications for delays, and the percentage of questions answered within the statutory deadline. The collection of such data is useful for monitoring the overall accountability of the executive and individual ministries. In certain legal systems, the failure of a minister to provide requested information to the parliament might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of a minister or a government official or the determination of a breach of privilege.

In many countries, the authority and powers of the parliament to obtain access to information from the government is supported by provisions for citizens to make freedom of information (FOI) requests to the government. Such FOI arrangements should cover the information held by the government, any exceptions (for example, for national security) should be narrowly defined, and failure to provide information should be subject to appeal to an independent body.

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

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

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There is a clear constitutional or legal mandate of the parliament, parliamentary committees and of individual MPs to obtain information (including classified information, in line with the law) from the executive, and ministers/ministries are legally obliged to provide information in a full and timely manner.

The law or rules of procedure provide for a specific timeline and procedures obliging the executive to provide the parliament with information. These procedures could include question time in the plenary, and the provision of information to parliamentary committees or of written responses to individual MPs.

FOI provisions support access to information by the parliament.

A relevant parliamentary body is mandated to monitor governmental responses to parliamentary requests for information, and keeps track of matters such as delays, failures to submit information and justifications for delays.

Systematic failure of a minister or other government representative to submit requested information to the parliament might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of the minister or government representative, or the taking of other parliamentary action.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate parliamentary access to information from government
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate procedures for the submission of information requests to the executive, as well as timelines and procedures by which government agencies should respond to such requests
- Specific articles of law that regulate the legal or political responsibility of a minister or an official for systematically failing to provide information to parliament
- Parliamentary or committee reports on parliamentary access to information from government, which might include the number of requests submitted, the number of timely and full responses, the number of delayed responses and justifications for delays.

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework on the authority of the parliament to obtain information from the executive**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which parliament, its committees and individual MPs are authorized to obtain information from the executive through the submission of written requests. These include provisions on freedom of information that ensure open access to citizens (including MPs) to government information.
### Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework on the authority of the parliament to visit government institutions**

There are constitutional or legal provisions by which parliament, its committees and individual MPs are authorized to visit government institutions and other sites to examine in detail the implementation of various programmes or for other oversight purposes.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Obligation of the executive to provide information to parliament**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which the executive is obliged to provide requested information to parliament or to individual MPs in a full and timely manner, in writing or during the oral question time in the plenary.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Responsibility for limiting parliament’s access to information**

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which a minister or other government representative might be held responsible for systematically failing to provide information to the parliament or to MPs. Such a failure might serve as grounds for the censure or impeachment of a minister or other government representative, or for taking other parliamentary action established in legal provisions, in line with the type of political system in place.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 5: Consistency of implementation

There is evidence of a rigorous and systematic process for the collection of information from the executive by parliament, committees or individual MPs. Parliament keeps record of the percentage of timely and full responses, monitors justification for delays and follows up on failures to provide information.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.7.3 Summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees**

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the authority of parliament to summon government representatives, including members of cabinet in committees (the summoning of ministers and other government representatives in chamber or plenary, or ‘interpellation’, is covered in dimension 1.7.4.). Scrutinizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the executive, as well as verifying the compliance of its actions with relevant policies and laws is a core responsibility of the legislature. To assist the parliament in fulfilling this responsibility, it needs certain powers to obtain information from the executive. In addition to the authority to obtain information from the executive and to conduct inquiries and investigations, parliaments have the power to summon ministers and other representatives of the executive, including members of the cabinet and senior officials of the military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

Summoning powers rest with the legislature and are usually delegated by law to parliamentary committees. According to the National Democratic Institute, “committees shall have the power to summon persons, papers and records, and this power shall extend to witnesses and evidence from the executive branch, including officials.”

If this power is not enjoyed by permanent committees, it shall be enjoyed by temporary committees at a minimum.

The necessary procedures for summoning ministers or other government representatives should be defined in the rules of procedure. These rules should include detailed regulations ensuring transparency, stakeholder participation and the rights of the parliamentary minority. Committees should have available staff with the expertise necessary to provide quality support in the process of summoning government representatives.

It should be recognized that effective parliamentary oversight is the result of the joint efforts of MPs, civil society and other oversight institutions, with the support of the general public. The collection of a wide range of relevant evidence contributes to the effectiveness of oversight and the questioning of ministers or other government representatives when summoned. Therefore, the engagement of the audit/oversight institutions, civil society and other external actors constitutes added value for the overall process. The law may envisage different procedures for the summoning of military, law enforcement and intelligence officials or requests for classified information.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of summoning ministers and other government representatives in committees would encompass the following:

There is a clearly defined legal framework permitting parliament and its committees to summon government representatives, including cabinet members and those in charge of military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

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Parliamentary rules provide detailed regulations for summoning ministers or other government representatives, and for ensuring transparency, stakeholder engagement and the rights of the opposition.

Established practice entails the collection of a wide range of evidence and information from relevant sources/stakeholders prior to the summoning of ministers or other government representatives to ensure the high quality and effectiveness of oversight and questioning.

Committees are equipped with qualified staff to support the process of effectively summoning and questioning government representatives.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the mandate of parliament to summon government officials, including cabinet members
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate all aspects of the summoning of government officials
- Committee records/reports on the summoning of government officials
- Committee records on preparation materials for summoning government officials (information/evidence)
- The percentage of committee meetings that address the summoning of officials per year

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legislative framework

The law provides for a clearly defined framework mandating parliament and its committees to summon government representatives, including cabinet members and those in charge of military, law enforcement and intelligence services.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Summoning process

Parliamentary rules of procedure provide detailed regulations to ensure transparency, stakeholder participation and the rights of the opposition when exercising the process of summoning ministers or other government representatives. Access to a wide range of evidence and information from relevant stakeholders prior to summoning is guaranteed by the law.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Established practice for summoning government representatives

Parliament has an established and consistent practice for summoning ministers and other government representatives. Ministers and other officials appear before the parliamentary committees when invited. They are obliged to appear personally and cannot be substituted by staff members.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Established practice of collecting information/evidences

There is evidence of an established practice of collecting a wide range of evidence and information from relevant stakeholders prior to the summoning of government officials to ensure high quality of oversight and questioning.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources and qualified staff

The parliamentary committees are equipped with the resources and qualified staff necessary to support the effective process of summoning and questioning government representatives.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.7.4 Summoning officials in chamber (interpellations)**

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight

Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament

Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the provisions by which the legislature has the power to summon government officials, including the prime minister, ministers and other officials in the chamber. Different mechanisms are used in different systems for defining the mandate of parliament to summon officials in plenary.

Summoning officials in chamber (interpellation) is a valuable instrument to enable parliament and MPs to publicly express their opinions and conduct effective oversight. Interpellations are written requests for information from the executive by a group of MPs or a political group, with the intention of launching a debate. After submitting a motion on interpellation, government officials, including the prime minister and ministers, are required to respond to the request or question in person in the plenary. In contrast to ordinary questions, interpellations address matters of national rather than local importance. Interpellation is distinguished from ‘question time’ (see dimension 1.7.5) and a ‘no-confidence vote’ (see dimension 1.7.1), as it involves separate procedures. The number of MPs required to launch an interpellation procedure varies from one country to another. Some parliaments also have established regular periods for interpellation, for example, once a week or once a month, while others use other instruments, such as a ‘topical hour’ that can be placed on the agenda by any parliamentary (party) group.

As a result of interpellation or debate, parliament can issue a censure motion, or a resolution expressing parliament’s opinion on the subject of the debate. Such debates may even result in a no-confidence motion seeking a political sanction. Motions rarely result in the collapse of a government, nevertheless they are still an important tool for attracting public attention to issues of concern. Some legislatures do not have an interpellation procedure. It may be covered in other ways such as requests for written or oral questions of the government or motions of censure or no confidence of the government or individual ministers.

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

- There is a constitutional framework authorizing parliament to summon government representatives in chamber/the plenary. MPs, political groups or parliamentary committees are mandated to initiate debates on matters of concern and to question executive officials.

- Parliament can launch debates on issues of its own choice by using interpellation (or alternatives) or questions for a debate. Parliamentary rules define the procedure for holding such debates and the law obliges executive officials to respond to interpellation in person in the plenary.

- The law defines clear procedures for interpellation, including initiation, timeframe, guaranteed speaking time for the opposition and the possibility to resume a debate on a motion or a resolution. Debates can be held on issues or questions that the government failed to answer or to which it did not respond fully within the established deadline.

- The summoning of government officials in the plenary is a significant part of parliamentary work and takes place on a regular basis.
**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the summoning of officials in chamber (interpellations)
- The ratio of the time devoted in the parliamentary plenary to carrying out oversight through debate to that devoted to law-making
- Example of motions on the initiation of interpellation
- The number of appearances of cabinet members in parliamentary chamber for interpellation or summons during the year

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

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

There is a constitutional framework authorizing MPs, political groups and parliamentary committees to summon government representatives in chamber (interpellations) on matters of concern. Parliament can launch debates on issues of its own choice by using interpellation (or other instruments) or questions for a debate. Parliamentary rules define procedures for holding such debates and the law obliges executive officials to respond to interpellation in person in the plenary.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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

There is a legal framework secured in the parliamentary rules providing clear procedures for summoning officials in chamber, including initiation, timeframe, guaranteed speaking time for the opposition and the possibility to resume debate on a motion or a resolution. MPs can participate in debates as members of a political group or as independent MPs. Debates can be held on issues or questions that the government has failed to answer or to which it has failed to provide a full response within the established deadline.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Established practice

Parliament summons government officials in chamber regularly and consistently. The procedure for interpellation (or similar instruments) is rigorously used and members of the cabinet or the other government representative appear before the chamber upon the request of MPs.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

Dimension 1.7.5 Questions

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines provisions by which members of parliament are authorized to submit oral and written questions to officials of the executive, and to receive answers. Questions are fundamental tools for exercising oversight. The practice of submitting both oral and written questions is in place across parliaments.

Oral questions allow MPs to address the prime minister, ministers or officials publicly with regard to politically acute topics, while written questions are a useful tool to directly approach an official or minister and collect more detailed information, which is not otherwise available.

Oral questions, including ‘question time’ or ‘prime minister’s hour’ or ‘ministers’ hour’ regularly take place in many parliaments. Often the parliamentary agenda sets a specific period of time for ministers to respond to questions from members. The frequency and format of the question period varies across countries. Members are allowed to ask ‘supplementary’ questions, where the response does not provide full information. The presiding officer has a substantial role during oral questions, and oral question time is often a dynamic period. Maintaining the balance among political parties, managing the floor and setting a constructive tone of debate are the responsibility of the speaker, who should be given the necessary authority by the rules of procedure to exercise this responsibility (see dimension 1.4.2 Speaker/presiding officer).

Written questions are the most used oversight tool across parliaments. They enable MPs to collect more detailed information on matters of interest from any government representative and agency, ranging from national or policy issues to matters concerning a member’s constituency. Rules of procedure establish the guidance for submitting written questions, deadlines for providing answers and possible sanctions for breaching this obligation.

The meaning of the term ‘written question’ varies across countries. It usually refers to a category of questions posed in writing that require written answers, though some parliaments allow the authors of written questions to request either written or oral answers. Parliamentarians can request the government to provide oral answers to written questions that remain unanswered. In some cases, unanswered questions become the subject of interpellations.34

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

There is a constitutional or equivalent provision authorizing members of parliament to submit both oral and written questions to the government and officials of the executive. The executive is obliged to respond to these questions in a timely manner.

Rules of procedure provide clear regulations for question time, prime minister’s hour or other forms of oral question opportunities, which allow members to put questions to government and ministers on matters of political urgency. MPs can ask supplementary questions following the initial question, to seek clarification on points that the government may wish to keep vague or not address at all.

The rules of procedure provide the speaker or president of the chamber with the authority and obligation to fairly manage floor time in the plenary, allocate an adequate amount of speaking time to the opposition and maintain a constructive atmosphere during the procedure.

The constitution and rules of procedure authorize members to submit written questions to the executive. The addressee is obliged to respond fully and in a timely manner, in compliance with the requirements of the law. Breaching this requirement of the law might result in interpellation or a debate with the intention of sanctioning the executive authority.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate the authority of members of parliament to pose oral and written questions to government, and the obligation for the executive to respond to those questions
- Specific articles of the rules of procedure that regulate the details of the holding of ‘question time’, ‘prime minister’s hour’, the timeline for responding to written questions, and sanctions for breaching these responsibilities
- The percentage of time that parliament dedicates to oral questions in comparison with other oversight activities
- Reports on the percentage of full and timely responses by executive officials to MPs’ questions
- Evidence from the parliamentary records demonstrating that the speaker fairly manages floor time in the plenary, by allocating an adequate amount of speaking time to the opposition and maintaining a constructive atmosphere during the procedure

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal framework for the right to ask questions

A constitutional or legal framework provides for a clear right of members of parliament to pose oral or written questions to the government and ministers, who are then obliged to respond in a timely and full manner. Failure to provide answers to written questions sent by MPs can result in sanctions for ministers/executive representatives.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Detailed procedures for questions
A legal framework establishes detailed procedures for both oral and written questions to be posed to the government. The procedures include the frequency of holding ‘question time’ or ‘prime minister’s hour’ or ‘ministerial hour’, permission for members to ask questions on any policy issue and ‘supplementary questions’, and the authority to and obligation for the speaker to manage the floor fairly during question time.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice regarding procedures for questions**

Posing questions, both oral and written, to executive officials/ministers is a permanent part of parliamentary life. Practice demonstrates that the procedures for asking questions are applied consistently and the speaker manages the plenary floor fairly, by allocating a fair portion of time to the opposition and maintaining a constructive atmosphere during these periods. Members of the executive respond in a timely way to both written and oral questions.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.7.6 Hearings**

**Indicator:** 1.7 Oversight  
**Sub-target:** 1 Effective parliament  
**Target:** 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the provisions in parliamentary rules and practice for parliamentary hearings to be held as an important and powerful tool for a parliamentary committee to exchange information among parliamentarians, obtain data and opinions, seek evidence from a wide range of individuals, and thus oversee the policies and actions of the executive branch. Apart from the reception of written submissions, hearings are the most important way in which committees can inform themselves on a topic and exercise both legislative and oversight roles. The active participation of the parliamentary opposition in the hearings is vital for ensuring rigorous oversight. Hearings help parliament to make informed analyses/decisions and to supplement government-supplied reports with information obtained from other sources.  

Hearings allow for broad public engagement which is fundamental for participatory parliamentary processes and which ensures the development of evidence-based, sound and relevant recommendations. Committee hearings are held on parliamentary premises, as well as outside the parliament, where appropriate and justified. There is the presumption that committee hearings are open to the public, and any exceptions (such as a valid need to hear confidential evidence) shall be clearly defined and provided for in the rules of procedure.

In order to fully exercise their oversight powers, parliamentary committees need strong administrative capacities in addition to their legal mandate.

When planning a hearing, a committee needs to ensure that the purpose of the hearing is clearly defined, committee members are well-informed, transparency is provided, the format of the hearing is in line with its objectives, all stakeholders are invited, and that an adequate agenda is published in advance.

It is also important that the results of the committee hearing are properly documented (ideally, they are published as a transcript of the hearing) and committee conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations that result from the hearings, are made public.

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

- **The parliament and its committees have a distinct legal mandate to conduct hearings, invite a wide range of individuals and experts and collect evidence in addition to that provided by the executive, and thus effectively oversee the policies and actions of the government.**
- **The law or rules of procedure provide clear rules and procedures with regard to committee hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.**

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The law or rules of procedure provide for the openness of committee meetings to the public. Provisions allowing committees to close meetings when necessary, for example, to protect individual privacy or national security, are clearly defined.

Parliament regularly carries out hearings, and ensures that the meeting agenda is duly approved and published, the relevant stakeholders are engaged, and that the respective proceedings or conclusions are produced and published.

There are provisions for hearings to be held outside the parliamentary precinct, where appropriate and justified.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or laws that regulate committee hearings
- Specific articles of rules of procedure that regulate the details of hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.
- Committee reports of conducted hearings

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions by which a parliamentary committee carries out hearings. Parliaments thus have procedures for holding hearings and receiving submissions from the public, which are recorded as part of parliamentary proceedings.

Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules on organizing hearings

The law or rules of procedure provide clear rules and procedures with regard to committee hearings, such as the notice of meetings, the preparation, approval and distribution of the agenda, quorum, chairing, recording and voting.

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Assessment criterion No. 3: Rules on the selection of a venue for a hearing

The law or rules of procedure provide for hearings to be held on parliamentary premises, as well as outside the parliament, where appropriate and justified.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Consistency of implementation

There is evidence of a rigorous and regular process of conducting committee hearings with the participation of stakeholders, which ensures that hearings cover diverse perspectives. Committee hearings are open to the public, unless there is a legitimate reason to close the meeting. Committee conclusions, including decisions, findings and recommendations, are produced and published.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.7.7 Committees of inquiry

Indicator: 1.7 Oversight
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines provisions by which parliament has investigative powers enabling it to inquire into an issue independently and investigate possible maladministration or/and alleged misconduct by government officials through the establishment of a parliamentary committee of inquiry (PCI). Although parliamentary investigative powers often borrow tools from legal proceedings, they are political rather than legal processes. Parliamentary inquiries are fact-finding proceedings and seek to place an issue high on the political agenda. This dimension is related to dimension 1.4.4 which covers the role of committees more generally. A PCI is a specific committee process to address areas of particular government maladministration or failure.

The rules for conducting parliamentary committee inquiries vary considerably. Parliament can hold inquiries via permanent committees or establish ad hoc committees, specifically mandated to conduct a particular investigation within a pre-defined scope. Parliament shall be mandated to conduct in-depth investigations of possible misconduct by a government through PCIs. The PCIs can therefore summon officials/private individuals, obtain written and oral evidence, and assess all relevant information and documentation provided by governmental, judicial, administrative and private institutions.

A PCI is usually set up by the chamber, with the mandate to investigate a particular matter, and ceases to function upon submission of a final report. Committees of inquiry may conduct fairly intense investigations over a relatively short period of time. PCIs have the potential to reveal facts that may be uncomfortable for the government. The inquiry may result in findings regarding the responsibility of senior government officials, cabinet members, or even in impeachment. The law shall not contain excessive barriers to the launch of an inquiry, or unduly limit the mandate of parliament to investigate possible misconduct or a policy failure. Political participation in such inquiries should be proportional to political representation in the legislature, and the role of the opposition in the PCI shall be guaranteed by law.

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

There is a clearly defined legal framework to set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry (constitution, rules of procedure, laws). Parliament is thereby empowered to investigate possible misconduct and policy failures. A committee of inquiry is set up by the parliament with the mandate to investigate a particular matter, and ceases to function upon submission of a final report. PCIs ensure an inclusive process and proportional representation of political groups.

PCIs have the power to summon officials and witnesses, obtain necessary information/documentation from government and private institutions, conduct hearings and issue findings and recommendations.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedures of the parliament or laws that regulate the setting up of a committee of inquiry
- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedures of the parliament or laws that guarantee proportional participation of political groups
- Specific articles of laws that define responsibilities and sanctions for the unlawful refusal to appear before a PCI and provide information
- PCI reports and recommendations
- The availability of trained personnel, administrative and financial resources to carry out a parliamentary inquiry

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, laws) that defines basic rules for setting up a committee of inquiry. Parliament has powers to investigate possible misconduct and policy failures. The proportional participation of political groups in the inquiry is secured by law or rules of procedure.

Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers of PCIs

PCIs have the power to summon ministers and other government representatives and witnesses, obtain necessary information/documentation from government and private institutions, conduct hearings and issue findings and recommendations.
Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Transparency of inquiry

Parliamentary inquiry is a transparent process, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances (such as matters of national security, disclosure of confidential documents or private information). The general public can observe the process in person and/or through media or other means.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Outcome of an inquiry

An inquiry can result in findings of political responsibility for governance failings by ministers and cabinet members, or in impeachment.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources for conducting inquiries

Parliamentary committees of inquiry are equipped with the trained personnel, administrative and financial resources necessary to support a parliamentary inquiry process.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Indicator 1.8 – Budget

Annual budget legislation and any associated legislation concerned with government revenue raising and expenditure are among the most important pieces of legislation considered by the legislature. It is a central theme in democratic systems of government for control over the raising and spending of public funds to be overseen and approved by the legislature on behalf of the citizens. Whereas the raising of revenue is usually seen as part of the normal legislative process, the spending of funds constitutes a special function. A number of parliaments therefore have separate finance (raising) and budget (spending) committees.

This indicator concerns the role of the legislature in its engagement with the budget process at all stages of the budget cycle before, during and after the passage of the annual budget through the legislature. It is recognized that there are two broad phases to parliamentary consideration of the budget: consideration and approval of the government’s budget (ex-ante review) and monitoring of expenditure (ex-post).

This indicator therefore includes the full parliamentary process for consideration of the budget – its receipt, examination and scrutiny, possible amendment and final approval. The involvement of the legislature does not end once the budget has been approved. The legislature remains informed about, and plays a role in the scrutiny of and control over the budget after it has been passed. The bodies that assist the parliament in this role are the public accounts committee and the supreme audit institution (or however these are referred to in different jurisdictions). These bodies have very detailed roles with regard to budget scrutiny, which are covered in this indicator.

It is also recognized that budgetary knowledge and scrutiny are specialized areas. Parliament needs support in the form of expert assistance to undertake budget scrutiny. This indicator refers to how such expert support can be available to the legislature, and recognizes that this role can also assist civil society with understanding budgetary issues and the impact of such issues on them.

The assessment of the budget indicator comprises the following dimensions:

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

See also Dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy, which refers to the role of the legislature in approving its own budget, which may or may not be part of the national budget process.
**Dimension 1.8.1 Formulation, examination and approval**

Indicator: 1.8 Budget
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns all aspects of the process for legislative consideration and approval of budgetary legislation, and particularly of the annual budget. It reflects the principle that one of the most important oversight functions of parliament is to exercise control over the expenditure of the executive. The draft budget represents the executive’s statement of priorities and commitments, and can include both revenue and expenditure proposals (although this is not the case in all parliaments). However, only parliament can authorize its approval.

The process of legislative consideration of the budget commences with the formulation of the budget and its presentation to parliament. The budget is then examined and deliberated by the legislature, may be amended as a result of the examination, and is finally approved by the legislature. It should be noted that the parliamentary budget, subject to approval by the legislature, may or may not be part of the national budget process.

In some jurisdictions, the formulation of a budget is largely the responsibility of the executive, and the parliament is, in general, not extensively involved in this part of the process. However, in other jurisdictions, the parliament, as well as civil society actors, have a more substantial role in the process of formulating the budget. This is more desirable, as it enables parliament to influence the shape of the budget, including its impact on different social groups. It also can assist with the ultimate passage of the budget through the legislature. Sufficient time must be allocated for such consultations in the rules and respected in practice.

The primary responsibility for parliament in many jurisdictions commences when the budget is presented to the parliament by the executive. To assist parliament with its consideration of the budget, the budget should be accompanied by detailed information about its measures and its effect on the community (particularly disadvantaged and minority groups), and any long-term trends in the budgetary position of the country. The provision of such information is the responsibility of the executive and its agencies. Parliament is often assisted in its consideration of the budget through the work of its public accounts committee or another specialist committee (see dimension 1.8.3), expert support (dimension 1.8.4) and its supreme audit institution (dimension 1.8.5). The roles of these bodies are described in the aforementioned dimensions and they often constitute an important resource in the consideration of a budget.

A number of approaches are adopted by legislatures in the examination of the budget. These approaches include:

- Debates in the legislature on the budget proposals, both about the general principles and proposals and on the detail of the budget, including expenditure by individual ministries. This can include MPs expressing views about the budget in general, as well as detailed questioning about specific proposals for expenditure.
- Consideration of the budget proposals by committees (or a specialist committee). In some jurisdictions, this is referred to as the ‘estimates process’ where the estimated expenditure for each

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For more details see Dimension 5.1.4 Gender-responsive budgeting.

See also Dimension 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency.

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

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ministry or portfolio is subject to detailed scrutiny and the questioning of ministers and officials by parliamentary committees.

In many legislatures, elements of both approaches are adopted.

These approaches provide MPs with the opportunity to contribute and to be fully engaged in the process of budget examination. They are able to question the details of expenditure, and to ask ministries and officials about budgetary measures. These processes ensure that MPs are able to scrutinize and are fully informed about the budget before considering amendments or voting to approve it (it should be noted that in parliaments that operate in political or caucus groups, consideration and approval take place within and among the groups).

At the stage where detailed consideration is given to the budget, MPs should have the opportunity to propose, debate and vote on amendments. Within constraints that may exist in the laws or rules of procedure of the legislature to limit the rights of individual MPs to propose changes to expenditure (for example, in some jurisdictions, MPs other than those representing the executive cannot propose amendments that would increase taxation or expenditure), any MP should be able to propose amendments to be debated and voted on (it is important to note the different practices in parliaments that operate in political or caucus groups where amendments are proposed and considered at the group level).

Finally, parliament must approve the budget legislation. In bicameral systems, budget legislation is approved by both chambers. It is recognized that there may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role that an upper house may play in the amendment and approval of a budget.

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

There is a clearly defined legal framework (constitution, legislation, rules of procedure) for all aspects of the legislature’s consideration and approval of budgetary legislation including the annual budget. The legal framework should provide sufficient time and opportunity for scrutiny, particularly by the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs.

Parliaments and MPs, as well as community and civil society actors are substantively involved in the process of formulating the budget. Thus, parliament is able to influence the budget, including its effect on different social groups. When finalized, the executive presents the draft budget to the parliament along with detailed supporting information from the executive and its agencies to assist MPs with understanding the proposals of the budget.

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, with the opportunity to be engaged in and be informed about the budget, so that they can make decisions and scrutinize and debate the budget.

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide that an MP, whether individually or as part of a political group, can propose amendments to the budget to be debated and voted on. There may be reasonable limits in the rules on the form of the amendments that may be proposed by MPs.
Constitutional and legislative provisions establish that only the legislature can give final approval to budgetary legislation. In the case of bicameral systems, both chambers must approve it, although there may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role of an upper house in such approval. Communication about final budget outcomes should be clear and accessible.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, legislation and rules of procedure of the parliament relating to the legislature’s consideration and approval of budgetary legislation
- Information about the involvement of civil society actors, MPs and others in budget formulation
- Statistics on the time spent on budgetary consideration, and the involvement of different groups of MPs, such as opposition, minority-party and independent MPs
- Proposed amendments to budgetary legislation
- Approval of the budget

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for budget consideration by the legislature**

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, legislation, rules of procedure) for all aspects of the legislature’s consideration and approval of the annual budget and other budgetary legislation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Formulation and presentation of budget**

There are processes in place that enable the involvement of parliament in the process of budget formulation, regardless of the legally established roles and practices concerning budget formulation (which may vary in different jurisdictions), even if the executive is primarily responsible for the formulation of the budget. When finalized, the budget is presented to the parliament along with detailed supporting information from the executive and its agencies to assist MPs with understanding the budget proposals.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
**Assessment criterion No. 3: Examination of the budget**

Constitutional and legislative provisions or rules of procedure of the legislature provide MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, with the opportunity to scrutinize and debate the budget. While approaches to such scrutiny may vary, the rules ensure that all MPs are engaged with and informed about the budget so that they can make a decision about its approval.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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**Assessment criterion No. 4: Amendments to the budget**

Constitutional and legislative provisions or the rules of procedure of the legislature provide that MPs, whether as individuals or as part of a political group, can propose budget amendments to be debated and voted on. The rules may reasonably provide limits on the scope of amendments by MPs. Amendments should be expressed clearly and it should be explicit as to who has proposed them.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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**Assessment criterion No. 5: Approval of the budget**

In line with constitutional and legislative provisions, only the legislature can give final approval to budgetary legislation. In the case of bicameral systems, both chambers must approve the budget, although there may be constitutional or legislative limits on the role of an upper house in its approval.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

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**Assessment criterion No. 6: Budget consideration practices**
The practice of the legislature is to allow sufficient time for the proper development of, consultation with experts and civil society actors on, and the consideration, debate, amendment and approval of the budget, taking into account the volume of material and complexity of issues to consider. A deadline for the government to submit the draft budget to parliament is defined by the law, or other legal provisions.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

**Dimension 1.8.2 Ex-post control**

Indicator: 1.8 Budget
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

The legislature’s role does not end once the budget has been considered and approved by parliament. After the approval of the budget, it is important for parliament to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness with which the expenditure approved in the budget is implemented, including whether the funds have been spent on the purposes for which they were approved, and whether expenditure has been in line with the allocation of funds. This process of ex-post control is covered in this dimension. The process is important in itself for parliament to be able to monitor and assess budgetary outcomes, and also feeds into parliament’s consideration of the next budget. Dimensions 1.8.3 to 1.8.5 fully cover several important parts of the ex-post control framework exercised by parliament.

This dimension outlines the provisions and processes by which parliament can undertake its role of ex-post control over the budget. The ways in parliament can exercise ex-post control (other than by the means referred to in dimensions 1.8.3 – 1.8.5) include:

- Ensuring transparency from the agencies funded by the budget, by requiring them to report to parliament on the details and outcomes of their budget expenditure in a way that is accessible to the legislature. This reporting closes the loop on parliament’s scrutiny of the budget by ensuring that parliament is fully informed about the outcomes of the expenditure that it has approved. This reporting supports the other forms of scrutiny by parliament referred to below, and supplements the other resources available to parliament through its public accounts committee, expert advice and its supreme audit institution.
- Using the parliament’s committee system to examine the spending of the agencies that fall within each committee’s ambit. One of the specific tasks of committees (or a specialized committee) should be the ex-post scrutiny of agencies within their area of responsibilities. The general scrutiny and review work of committees also may include scrutiny of budgetary outcomes.
- Ensuring that there are rules of procedure provisions that allow for budgetary outcomes to be subject to discussion and debate in the legislature. Particular recognition is given to opportunities for opposition, minority-party and independent MPs.

Ex-post scrutiny becomes a mechanism for parliamentary control of the budget through the legislature’s scrutiny of the outcomes from the previous budget and the use of this information by the legislature in its consideration of the current budget.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal in the domain of ex-post control would encompass the following:

There are legislative provisions (supported by the rules of procedure of the legislature) requiring transparency of budget-funded agencies to account fully to parliament for their budgetary expenditure and outcomes. This is achieved by regular and comprehensive reporting to parliament.

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature for committees (or a specialized committee) to inquire systematically into the budgetary expenditure and outcomes of executive agencies for which they have responsibility. Such committees are provided with adequate and expert resources to undertake their work.
There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature to enable discussion and debate of budgetary expenditure and outcomes. These provisions give particular recognition to the role of the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs in this process of ex-post review. Civil society is involved, which ensures that information about the budget is readily accessible to the public.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Provisions of legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament requiring transparency and disclosure by publicly-funded agencies about budgetary outcomes through regular reporting to parliament
- Provisions of rules of procedure of the parliament relating to committee scrutiny of the budgetary outcomes of executive agencies
- Reports of committees on budgetary scrutiny of agencies
- Provisions of rules of procedure of the parliament providing for opportunities to debate budgetary outcomes
- Statistics on legislature debates on budgetary outcomes

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Transparency of budget outcomes**

There is evidence of legislative provisions (supported by the rules of procedure of the legislature) requiring transparency of budget-funded agencies to account to parliament for their budgetary expenditure and outcomes by reporting fully on both the details of funds expended and the outcomes of the expenditure. This is achieved by regular, comprehensive and accessible reporting to parliament.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Scrutiny by parliamentary committees**

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature for committees (or a specialized committee) to inquire systematically into the budgetary expenditure and outcomes of executive agencies for which they have responsibility. Any committee, parliamentary group or individual MP has a right to receive information that is needed for effective ex-post scrutiny if it is not publicly available. Such committees are provided with adequate and skilled human resources to carry out their scrutiny work.
Assessment criterion No. 3: Debate of budget outcomes

There are provisions in the rules of procedure of the legislature to enable discussion and debate of budgetary expenditure and outcomes. These provisions give particular recognition to the role of the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs, as well as the views of civil society.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Ex-post scrutiny in practice

The practices of the legislature reflect the involvement of committees in budget scrutiny and the debate of budgetary outcomes by the legislature, with wide participation by MPs.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

**Dimension 1.8.3 Public accounts committee**

**Indicator: 1.8 Budget**  
**Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament**  
**Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament**

**About the dimension**

Although other committees of the parliament may have roles in oversight and scrutiny of the budget (both before and after the passage of the budget through the legislature), there should be a specialized parliamentary committee with responsibility for budgetary oversight in the legislature. Thus, in a legislature’s oversight of budgetary matters, there is a particular role to be played by a public accounts committee (PAC) or, in some jurisdictions, a committee with an equivalent or similar role. A well-functioning PAC can act as an important check on the possibility of fraud and corruption in government. Every legislature is expected to have a PAC or a similar specialized committee. This can be a committee made up of MPs from one chamber or, in some jurisdictions with bicameral legislatures, can be a committee made up of MPs from both chambers. The role of such a committee even more important in times of emergency (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), as expenditure can be fast-tracked without the full scrutiny of the legislature.

The roles of a PAC include:
- Providing information to assist with formulating and debating the budget
- Post-hoc monitoring of government expenditure
- Examining the financial affairs or performance of any government entity
- Receipt of reports from the supreme audit institution for examination (see dimension 1.8.5)
- Promoting the efficient, effective and corruption-free expenditure of public funds

In undertaking its role, the PAC needs to have authority and powers derived from the constitution, specific legislation and/or the rules of procedure of the legislature, in order to perform its role in the scrutiny of the budget and public expenditure. Such authority and powers include the mandate of the PAC, its power to obtain records and information from government entities in relation to budgetary matters and its membership. The mandate of the PAC should be broad and enable it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight. The PAC should have the authority to require publicly-funded entities to provide it with records and information, so that it can effectively examine their performance. The membership of the PAC should reflect the important role played by the opposition in budget scrutiny. In some jurisdictions, it is stipulated that the chair of the PAC should be a member of the opposition.

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

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament) to establish a PAC (or similar committee) as the primary oversight body of the legislature in relation to budgetary matters and the financial management of publicly-funded entities.

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41 Note that some parliaments may not have a public accounts committee (PAC), but may have a committee that plays an equivalent or similar role to a PAC. In these cases, the reference to a PAC may be interpreted as a committee performing similar roles to a PAC.

42 Note that the PAC may not perform all these roles in some jurisdictions.
By means of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions, a PAC has a broad mandate which enables it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight and the assessment of the performance of budget-funded entities.

Rules of procedure or other provisions require proportional representation of opposition (or minority-party) membership in the PAC and preferably the PAC to be chaired by a member from the opposition or minority parties.

Constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions empower the PAC to require publicly-funded entities to provide records and information about their budgets and performance. Such information should be readily accessible to the legislature.

The PAC is funded and resourced adequately for it to undertake its mandate on behalf of the parliament.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament or laws that establish a PAC (or similar committee) and grant it authority and powers
- Provisions relating to the mandate and membership of the PAC
- Examples of PAC reports
- Availability of financial and human resources for the PAC to carry out its mandate

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for the PAC

There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament) to establish a PAC (or a similar committee) as the primary oversight body of the legislature in relation to budgetary matters and financial management oversight.

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Assessment criterion No. 2: Mandate of the PAC

By means of constitutional, legislative and/or rules of procedure provisions, the PAC has a broad mandate which enables it to fulfil its obligations for budgetary oversight and the assessment of the performance of budget-funded entities.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

Assessment criterion No. 3: Membership of the PAC

Rules of procedure or other provisions require proportional representation of opposition (or minority-party) membership in the PAC and preferably that the PAC is chaired by a member from the opposition or minority parties.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Powers of the PAC to obtain information

Constitutional, legislative or rules of procedure provisions empower the PAC to require publicly-funded entities to provide records and information about their budgets and performance. Such information should be readily accessible to the legislature.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources of PAC

The PAC has sufficient funds and resources to undertake its mandate on behalf of the parliament (for example, the necessary human resources and technical expertise).

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Practices of PAC
The practice of the PAC is to perform an active role in the legislature with regard to the scrutiny of the budget, and to support the scrutiny activities of the legislature.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

**Dimension 1.8.4 Expert support**

Indicator: 1.8 Budget  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliaments

**About the dimension**

The scrutiny of the budget and of the financial management and performance of the government is a specialist area in which MPs need expert assistance to enable them to perform their role of scrutiny effectively. If the parliament is to be able to hold the executive to account for the use of public resources, it will need information and expertise to enable it to do so.

There are a variety of ways in which such expert assistance can be provided to the parliament. Dimension 1.8.1 refers to the importance of detailed and transparent information provided by the executive to the parliament about the budget. However, parliament needs its own source of expertise, including for the evaluation of official information about the budget.

A number of parliaments have a well-resourced, independent parliamentary budget office with the expertise to provide parliament with independent commentary and information on the budget. This expertise should include the analysis of current budgets and long-term budgetary trends, and the evaluation of budgetary outcomes. An alternative to an independent budget office, is to have staff with expertise in budgetary analysis and scrutiny within the research support or research service available to the parliament, who will provide information about budgetary matters to MPs. Parliaments may have access to other sources of expertise. However, the important issue is that sufficient autonomous expertise is available to the parliament.

Parliament should also have access to expertise available in the community. Many individuals and community groups have significant expertise and interest in budgetary matters, including those impacted by budgetary decisions. Such expertise can include academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations. Parliament should consider the ways in which it can engage with such individuals and organizations as part of its consideration of the budget. This engagement could be through the work of parliamentary committees, including the PAC, with the political parties or with individual MPs who wish to pursue particular areas of interest. It can provide perspectives on how the budget impacts groups such as women, youth, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged and other marginalized groups.

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

- There is a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure) that establishes a parliamentary budget office or some other form of specialized expertise to provide expert support to the parliament in its role of scrutiny of the budget.

- The parliamentary budget office (or the equivalent form of expert support) has sufficient funding and expertise to advise the parliament on budgetary matters.

- Parliament establishes avenues to access external sources of expertise on budgetary matters, such as academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations, particularly in order to gain a perspective of the impact of the budget on marginalized groups.
**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of the parliament establishing a parliamentary budget office or specialized support service
- Resources of a parliamentary budget office or the parliamentary research service in relation to research on budgetary matters
- Reports of the parliamentary budget office or specialized research service
- Contact with external individuals and organizations about budgetary matters

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Independent parliamentary budget office or equivalent specialized expertise**

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution, legislation or rules of procedure of parliament, laws) that establishes a parliamentary budget office or some other form of specialized expertise to provide expert support to the parliament for scrutiny of the budget.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Resources and expertise**

The parliamentary budget office (or its equivalent form of expert support) has sufficient funding and expertise to advise the parliament on budgetary matters.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Access to external sources of expertise**

Parliament establishes avenues to access external sources of expertise on budgetary matters, such as academics, civil society actors, think tanks and professional associations.
Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice regarding expert support

In practice, the legislature demonstrates that expert assistance and advice is available to parliament to support its scrutiny of the budget.

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading
**Dimension 1.8.5 Supreme audit institution**

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

**Indicator: 1.8 Budget**  
**Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament**  
**Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament**

**About the dimension**

A supreme audit institution (SAI)\(^{43}\) is the body responsible for the auditing of public financial administration and the management of public funds. Thus, the SAI plays a central role in the efficient, effective, transparent and accountable use of the public resources approved by parliament through the annual budget process. The SAI is an important independent source of information about budget outcomes and performance for parliament.

Through its reporting to parliament and the public, the SAI provides information to the community about the use of public funds (that they are being used and managed well) and, consequently, act as a significant check on possible misuse of or corruption in relation to public funds. The SAI has a sufficiently broad mandate, and conducts audits both of the legality and regularity of the accounts of the entities audited, as well as performance audits which examine the efficiency and effectiveness of public entities and programmes. The SAI is therefore an essential body in a democratic system which provides reassurance on accountability, integrity and transparency in the budgetary process.

There are a number of key principles\(^{44}\) that are central to the operations of an SAI, namely:

- **The independence of an SAI.** It should be independent of the executive and the entities that it audits, and should have an independent source of funding (budgetary autonomy) and staffing so that it can perform its functions. Its independence should be recognized in the constitution or legislation.
- **The independence, integrity and qualifications of the members (and heads) of an SAI, which is linked to the overall independence of the SAI.** It is necessary to establish provisions that address such matters with respect to the appointment of members (and heads) of an SAI, as well as restrictions on their removal from office. Such provisions should be laid down in the constitution or legislation.
- **The relationship of an SAI to parliament.** While the SAI is independent from parliament, it should have a close relationship with parliament, which includes reporting to parliament and working closely with the parliamentary public accounts committee (or a similar committee), and having responsibility for the auditing of the parliament’s expenditures. This relationship should be provided for in the constitution, legislation and/or the rules of procedure of the legislature.
- **The powers of an SAI provides it with access to the entities that it audits, and to any records and documents, in an accessible format, to enable it to perform its audit function.** It should also have the power to require a response to its findings.
- **An SAI is required to report regularly and independently to parliament and the public.** It is the public nature of the findings of an SAI that provides the basis for its effectiveness in accountability.

Constitutional or legislative provisions should provide the basis for the existence, functions and powers of an SAI, enabling it to adhere the key principles referred to above.

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\(^{43}\) Note that different terms are used for ‘SAI’ in other jurisdictions, for example, ‘national audit office’, ‘court of auditors’, ‘audit bureau’ and ‘auditor-general’.

\(^{44}\) These principles are drawn from International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), ‘INTOSAI-P 10 Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence’ (Endorsed at the XIX INCOSAI in Mexico City, rev. ed. 2019).

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

The constitution or legislation provides the legal framework to establish, in the country, an SAI that is independent of the executive and the entities that it audits. Members of the SAI enjoy independence in terms of their appointment to and cessation of office, and are persons of integrity and competence.

There is a legal basis for the SAI to determine the scope of its mandate, and to have access to the funding and expert staff to perform its audit functions.

The SAI has a special relationship with the parliament and this is defined in law or the rules of procedure of the legislature. The SAI reports to the parliament and has a close relationship with the parliament and particularly the parliament’s public accounts committee (or a similar committee).

Legislation grants the SAI the authority to obtain access to the entities that it audits and their records and documents, available in an accessible format, to enable it to undertake its auditing responsibilities. The SAI also has the power to require a response to its findings.

There is a legal requirement for the SAI to report regularly and independently to the parliament and the public.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution or legislation which establish an independent SAI, its membership, powers, mandate, resources and reporting requirements
- Information relating to the mandate, resources and powers of the SAI
- Examples of reports of the SAI and its findings

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional and legal framework for the independence of the SAI

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (constitution and legislation) which establishes, in the country, an SAI that is independent of the executive, and which also defines the entities that it audits.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
**Assessment criterion No. 2: Independence of the members of the SAI**

There is evidence of the existence of a legal framework (legislation or rules of procedure) which establishes that SAI members are independent from the executive, including with regard to removal from office, and that they are persons of integrity and competence.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Independence of the resources and mandate of the SAI**

There is a legal basis for the SAI to determine the scope of its mandate, and to have access to the funding and expert staff to perform its audit functions.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Relationship to parliament**

Law and the rules of procedure of the legislature define the relationship of the SAI to parliament. They establish that the SAI reports to the parliament and has a close relationship with the parliament and particularly the parliament's public accounts committee (or a similar committee).

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Powers of the SAI**

Legislation grants the SAI the authority to obtain access to the entities that it audits and their records and documents, in an accessible format, to enable it to undertake its auditing responsibilities. It also grants the SAI the power to require responses to its findings.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Reporting of the SAI**

There is a legal requirement for the SAI to report regularly and independently to parliament and the public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Practices of the SAI**

The practices of the SAI demonstrate its independence and that of its members, and the thoroughness of its auditing work and reporting to parliament and the public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), *INTOSAI-P 10 Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence* (Endorsed in 2007 at the XIX INCOSAI in Mexico City, rev. ed. 2019).
Indicator 1.9 – Representational function

The representational function is one of the three key responsibilities of a legislature, in addition to legislating and oversight, and is of crucial significance for an effective parliament. This function involves the establishment of a close connection between MPs and their electorate or constituencies, in order to represent their concerns and interests in all the work undertaken by MPs in the legislature. Parliament should reflect the views of the electorate as represented by its MPs and the political parties to which they belong.

This indicator also takes into account the territorial aspects of representation in bicameral and, particularly, federal parliaments, where MPs in upper chambers also represent their subnational territories. MPs elected by the territorial principle (usually called senators) also ensure that the federal state does not adversely affect the interests of the subnational states.

The role of the opposition (minority party or parties in the parliament) is particularly important in the representativeness of the legislature, as the opposition and minority and independent MPs represent the views of a constituency that differ from that of the parliamentary majority party/parties. It is the responsibility of the opposition, in particular, to exercise oversight of the executive and to offer an alternative to government policies.

This indicator concerns the rights and resources of the opposition (minority party or parties in the parliament) and individual MPs, to enable them to be effective in their representational roles.

The assessment of the indicator on the representational function comprises the following dimensions:

- 1.9.1 Opposition
- 1.9.2 Constituent relations
**Dimension 1.9.1 Opposition**

Indicator: 1.9 Representational function  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

In democratic legislatures, the opposition (or parliamentary minority party/parties) plays a very important role. In parliamentary systems, the opposition represents the ‘government-in-waiting’ and hence plays a particularly important role in the accountability and scrutiny of the government and also in the proposal of an alternative policy agenda.

In presidential systems, the division between the ruling party in power and the opposition that is waiting its turn to be in power is sometimes less clear. Alliances, mostly circumstantial, and negotiations are much more volatile and allow both sides to promote an agenda if the numbers are sufficiently even. Parliamentary opposition parties in presidential systems, when there are no clear majorities, also have a key role and authority with regard to the promotion and passing of laws and the scrutiny of policies.

There are a number of considerations in this dimension to ensure that the opposition (minority party/parties) is able to effectively perform the functions required of it in a democratic legislature. Firstly, the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties) needs to have opportunities in the legislature (proportional to those of the government or majority party/parties) to raise or debate matters of concern. This includes the opportunity to initiate legislation or motions for debate, having reasonable debating opportunities, ask questions of the government (majority party/parties), propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to have equitable representation on committees and in other parliamentary bodies. Secondly, the opposition (minority party/parties), and particularly the opposition leader (minority party leader), need access to adequate resources so that the oversight function can be performed effectively and an alternative policy agenda can be developed. In systems where the opposition is represented by several parties, the allocation of resources should be proportional to their representation.

In addition to the opposition (minority party/parties), the dimension also covers independent MPs who may not be part of the official opposition or minority party/parties. These MPs also play an important role in the scrutiny of the executive and the majority party/parties in the parliament, and ensure that there is scrutiny of the agenda and policies of the opposition. They therefore need to be provided with opportunities in the legislature and with resources to support them.

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

There are clear legal provisions (constitution, rules of procedure, laws) that recognize the special role in the legislature of the opposition (minority party/parties) and, in particular, the leader(s) of the opposition (minority-party leader or, particularly in presidential systems, the leader(s) of parliamentary (party) groups).

This legal recognition is supported in the rules of procedure of the legislature, which provide the opposition (minority party/parties) with specific rights in the legislature, such as the ability to safely question the...
executive, initiate legislation or motions for debate, participate equally in debate and votes, propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to be equitably represented on committees and in other parliamentary bodies.

This legal recognition is supported by provisions and practice that ensure that the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties), and in particular the leader(s), have adequate facilities and resources to be able to perform their role effectively. In systems where multiple parties make up the opposition, resources are shared proportionately to representation.

There also is recognition in the law or the rules and practices of the legislature of the provision of independent MPs with opportunities to contribute in the legislature and with adequate resources to perform their roles.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedure of the parliament or laws which recognize the special role of the opposition (minority party/parties), or which guarantee equal treatment among all members of the legislative body, including the opposition and independent MPs
- Rules of procedure of the parliament that provide the opposition, minority parties and independent MPs (if applicable) with equitable opportunities
- Provisions relating to the resources of the opposition (minority party/parties) and other minority parties and independent MPs
- Information relating to the resources of the opposition (minority party/parties) and independent MPs
- Parliamentary records of debates in the plenary and committees
- Media reports and reports of civil society actors

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

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

Constitutional, legislative or other rules of the legislature recognize the special role of the opposition (or minority party/parties) in the legislative system. Particular recognition is given to the leader(s) of the opposition or leader(s) of parliamentary minority groups. (Please note that preferential treatment of opposition parliamentary parties and their leaders is not as relevant in some presidential systems as in parliamentary systems.)

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 2: Opportunities in the legislature

The parliament’s rules of procedure provide the opposition (minority party/parties) with specific rights in the legislature, such as the ability to openly question the executive, initiate legislation or motions for debate, participate equally in debate and votes, propose amendments to legislation or other proposals, and to be represented equitably on committees and in other parliamentary bodies.

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Assessment criterion No. 3: Resources

There is a legislative or other provision, and supporting practice, that ensure that the opposition (parliamentary minority party/parties groups) and, in particular its leader(s), have adequate facilities and resources to be able to perform their roles effectively. In systems where the opposition consists of multiple parties, resources are allocated proportionately to representation.

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Assessment criterion No. 4: Independent MPs

The law or the rules and practices of the legislature establish that all members of the legislative body, including independent MPs receive completely equal treatment, or that independent MPs are provided with opportunities to contribute in the legislature, as well as with adequate resources to perform their roles.

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Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice

There is evidence of the consistent and non-discriminatory implementation of provisions (indicated in the above criteria) in practice. There is a parliamentary environment that enables the full contribution of all MPs in parliamentary work, regardless of their political membership and aspirations.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 'Guidelines on the rights and duties of the opposition in parliament', Unanimously adopted by the participants at the Parliamentary Seminar on Relations Between Majority and Minority Parties in African Parliaments (Libreville, Gabon, 17–19 May 1999).
Dimension 1.9.2 Constituent relations

Indicator: 1.9 Representational function
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension⁴⁷

The legislature, as a representative institution, is dependent on MPs being able to reflect the perspectives of their constituencies in all matters that are pursued in the legislature. In order to properly represent the interests and views of their constituents in the legislature, MPs need to be able to interact and engage effectively with them. This is equally relevant and applicable to relations of MPs with their electorate in countries where there are no individual constituencies (due to size of the country or for any other reasons, such as multi-member constituencies), and to the engagement of MPs in upper chambers with their districts and subnational territories in bicameral and federal systems.

For MPs to be able to engage effectively with their constituents, electorate and districts, they need sufficient resources to travel and meet with their constituents. Such resources could include office accommodation in the constituency, communication resources, travel and accommodation expenses, and sufficient staff to organize meetings and to follow up on concerns.

Laws and rules of the legislature should recognize this responsibility of MPs and make clear provision for MPs to be given the resources necessary to support their engagement with their constituencies, electorate or districts, with a base level of resources available to all MPs. While legislatures will have differing capacities to meet the resource needs of MPs, it is important for the available resources to be distributed equitably and in a non-partisan manner among all members of parliament.

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

There is a clearly defined legal framework of the legislature (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, laws) which recognizes that MPs have the responsibility and right to engage with and represent the interests of their constituencies, electorate or districts and subnational territories, where applicable.

There are legal provisions that provide for a base level of support for all MPs, regardless of their status, to engage with their constituencies. Such support may include access to a constituency office, travel and accommodation expenses and support staff for constituency work.

Law and rules of the legislature provide that the distribution of resources to MPs, regardless of their status, is carried out in an equitable, non-partisan way, and that practice reflects this distribution. Any differences in the distribution of resources are based on legally-defined reasons.

Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent)

⁴⁷Note the relationship between this dimension and the size of constituencies, as the number of constituents that an MP represents is relevant to their ability to represent them effectively.
that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific articles of the constitution, rules of procedure of the parliament or other legal or statutory provisions that recognize the constituency rights and responsibilities of MPs
- Legal provisions that define the entitlements of MPs in relation to their constituency work
- Information relating to the resources of MPs for their constituency work
- Reports on meetings and other activities of MPs in constituencies or districts
- Administrative records of MPs’ visits to constituencies or districts

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for the recognition of MPs’ constituent responsibilities**

The legal framework of the legislature (constitution, rules of procedure of parliament, or other legal or statutory provisions) recognizes that MPs have the right to engage with and represent the interests of their constituencies. Practice in the legislature demonstrates MPs’ engagement with and advocacy on behalf of constituents.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2 Base level of resources**

There are legal provisions and supporting practice that provide for a base level of support for all MPs, regardless of their status, to engage with their constituencies, electorate or districts and subnational territories, where applicable. Such support may include access to a constituency office, travel and accommodation expenses and support staff for constituency work.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Proportional and non-partisan distribution of resources**

Law and rules of the legislature provide that the distribution of resources to MPs, regardless of their status, is carried out in a proportional and non-partisan manner, and that practice reflects this distribution.
### Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Recommendations for change


#### Sources and further reading

- NDI, *Building public trust through a responsive parliament - A quick guide to constituency outreach*
**Indicator 1.10 – Relations of parliament**

The indicator on relations of parliament outlines the constitutional separation of powers that exists between the legislature and other branches of government, including the executive, judiciary, and subnational governments. The indicator also outlines mechanisms for communication or coordination between the legislature and other branches with regard to parliamentary jurisdictional powers, such as legislative oversight of the executive, judicial appointments, and national-subnational shared resource implementation.

This indicator also reinforces the unique powers of parliament as a central branch of government that is responsible for oversight of the executive delivery of programmes and services, the appointment and confirmation of justices, and the ultimate authority of representing the interests of citizens at the national level.

The assessment of the indicator on relations of parliament covers the following dimensions:

- 1.10.1 Executive
- 1.10.2 Judiciary
- 1.10.3 Subnational parliaments and authorities and local councils and authorities
**Dimension 1.10.1 Executive**

Indicator: 1.10 Relations of parliament
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the nature of the relationship between parliament and the executive, and specifically, the mechanisms for that established relationship. In a democratic system, the executive and legislature have distinct and autonomous roles. As a result of these distinct and autonomous roles, there is considerable scope for tension in the relationship. However, parliament and the executive must maintain a satisfactory working relationship, if the country is to operate effectively. This relationship is built on a mutual understanding of and respect for the respective roles that each play.

One of the key roles of an effective legislature is its capacity to hold the executive to account. It is therefore critical that channels exist to allow parliament to access information, data and officials in order to report on public accounts, services and performance, and ensure the accountability of government expenditure and programmes.

The relationship between the legislative and executive branches requires established scrutiny mechanisms that allow parliament to maintain oversight and accountability of public accounts, services and performance. Such mechanisms may include oversight committees, audit offices, ombudspersons, auditors-general, anti-corruption commissions, and information commissioners. These offices should be non-partisan in nature, and may exist physically within parliament or externally. In some governments, executive offices may include dedicated legislative liaisons who are responsible for providing legislative actors with direct access to executive data and information on programmes and accounts. This helps to ensure fluid communication between the two branches at all times, and provides actors in the legislature (either members directly or their caseworkers) with the ability to directly enquire about public programmes and services on behalf of citizens in need (for example, veteran benefits). This is also important to help to maintain the executive-legislative relationship in law-making, such as when the executive proposes new legislation or makes changes to existing laws that the legislature must review. In these cases, it is normal for the executive to have a dedicated legislative liaison who maintains regular communication with members’ offices.

Depending on a nation’s laws, requirements may exist for periodic information-sharing between the executive and legislative branches through these mechanisms. For example, laws may require semi-annual or annual audits to be conducted on all public accounts to ensure the receipt of follow-on funding in the national budget. Other laws may require regular reporting to parliament on the performance of executive agencies, periodic public asset review, tracking and collection, especially during executive transitions. Some countries require semi-annual or bi-annual review of expenditure on national security, defence or international aid and defence assistance, especially if such expenditure constitutes the majority of a nation’s overall budget. It is critical that any laws that exist in this regard require the reports, reviews and audits conducted to be made available to the parliament and the public.

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

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48 For more details, see Indicator 1.1 Parliamentary autonomy, and Indicator 1.7 Oversight.

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

182
In order to support a clear constitutional basis for the executive-parliament relationship, there are established mechanisms that allow parliamentary checks, oversight, and periodic or fluid communication with (and access to) the executive in order to maintain awareness and the accountability of public expenditure, programmes and services.

National laws establish formal requirements for these mechanisms to report on executive activities, including regular reporting on performance and services, periodic audits, inspector-general reports, ombudsperson reports, and other relevant commission reports.

Although there is tension in the relationship between the executive and parliament, the framework and mechanisms put in place are effective in enabling both the parliament and the executive to perform their respective roles, and for there to be effective sharing of information between the executive and the legislative branches to facilitate their work.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions on the establishment of an independent legislative branch
- National laws outlining mechanisms for executive-legislative relations and timetables for reporting, audits and other reviews as applicable
- Established mechanisms under which the legislative-executive relationship exists as outlined under law, and which provide both branches with fluid and consistent access to information and communication with liaisons who can supply direct information on public expenditure, services, and programmes.

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authority

There is evidence of a constitutional provision that, by defining basic separations of power, including the existence of an independent legislative institution, establishes the framework for the relationship between the executive and the parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Legal framework

Within the context of the constitutional relationship between the executive and parliament, there is a legal framework established by national laws that defines a comprehensive approach to the parliament’s oversight and scrutiny role in relation to the executive. The framework includes systematic reporting to parliament about...
the executive’s activities and a systematic approach to the review and scrutiny of the activities of the executive.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Established legislative-executive relationship mechanisms**

There are established mechanisms that exist under parliament’s authority and framework that allow for periodic information-sharing, access and oversight of executive expenditure, programmes, services and performance. These mechanisms may include the following: an ombudsperson; auditors-general; inspectors-general; oversight and accountability committees, commissions and agencies; audit offices; anti-corruption commissions and information commissions; and legislative liaison offices. These offices are non-partisan in nature and exist to enable fluid communication and access to information between the branches, and provide methods for effective parliamentary oversight of executive expenditure, programmes, services and performance. The reports from these offices are publicly available.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practices in the executive/parliament relationship**

There is evidence, through the framework and mechanisms put in place, of a satisfactory working relationship between the executive and parliament, which is based on mutual understanding of and respect for their respective roles, and which is reflected in the capacity of the executive and parliament to perform their roles effectively. There is an effective exchange of information between the executive and legislative branches that facilitates their work.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.10.2 Judiciary**

**Indicator:** 1.10 Relations of parliament  
**Sub-target:** 1 Effective parliament  
**Target:** 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the primary forms of relations between parliament and the judiciary. Due to the political nature of the legislature and the political impartiality of the judicial system, relations between the legislative and judicial branches of government are strictly separated by the constitution or equivalent rules. These relations entail parliament's responsibility for law-making on one hand and the judiciary's responsibility for the interpretation and application of law on the other hand. The judiciary and parliaments fulfil their respective but critical roles in a complementary and constructive manner.\(^{50}\)

It is the responsibility of the parliament to establish clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, set unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges, and allocate adequate budget resources to the judicial system.

In many jurisdictions, the system of checks and balances requires the legislature's consent in confirmation of senior judges (such as supreme court justices, constitutional court justices and federal court judges) and parliament has the power to impeach high-ranking judges for serious crimes or misbehaviour. The relationship between parliament and the judiciary also implies that the interpretation and application of the law is the responsibility of the judiciary and not the legislature.\(^{51}\) In most legal systems, the judiciary has the mandate to rule on the constitutionality of the laws adopted by the parliament and, in some cases, even abolish them.

Where parliaments have responsibility for confirming and/or impeaching senior justices, they establish clear procedures for confirmation and impeachment, which usually include detailed criteria for selecting candidates, obtaining relevant information (background checks), and rules on holding hearings and making decisions. Procedures for conducting impeachment are prescribed by law.

In addition to these formal relationships between the parliament and the judiciary, the separation of powers also requires mutual respect and restraint with regard to their separate roles. In the case of the parliament, this can be reflected in rules of procedure to restrict adverse comments about judges or reflections in debate on matters before the courts. In the case of the judiciary, it involves a restriction on interference in matters that are solely within the jurisdiction of the parliament.

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

There is a clearly defined constitutional framework on the separation of powers between legislative and judicial branches of government. Any relations and interaction between the judiciary and parliament take place strictly in compliance with the constitution and law, and in recognition of mutual respect for their independence.

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\(^{50}\) The Commonwealth, *Commonwealth Principles of the Accountability of and the Relationship Between the Three Branches of Government* (the Commonwealth Secretariat and others, 2004).

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

There is a legal framework established by parliament to set clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges, and set unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges. Judges may only be suspended or removed for reasons of incapacity or misbehaviour that renders them unfit to carry out their duties.

Parliament allocates sufficient budgetary resources for the judicial system to operate effectively without any constraints.

Where applicable, a detailed procedure for confirming and impeaching senior justices (including supreme and constitutional court judges) is defined by the constitution or the law. Detailed criteria for selecting candidates and obtaining relevant information (background checks), rules on holding hearings and making decisions, and procedures for conducting impeachment, are prescribed by law. Decisions on appointments or impeachments are made by a majority or supermajority vote of the legislature.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions or equivalent rules on the separation of powers between the legislature and the judiciary, and procedures and practices reflecting mutual regard for their independence
- Constitutional or legal provisions on the setting of clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments, unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, and independence safeguards
- Budgetary allocations providing sufficient resources to the judiciary in order for it to operate effectively
- A legal framework defining explicit and detailed procedures for the appointment and impeachment of highest court justices
- Reports on judicial confirmations and impeachments issued by parliament

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional framework

There is a constitutional framework that clearly outlines a separation of powers between the legislature and the judiciary. The nature of the relationship between these two branches of government is defined by constitutional law. Mutual respect and restraint are reflected in the procedures and practices of the parliament and the judiciary.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment Criterion No. 2: Legal framework
There is a legal framework established by parliament to set clearly defined criteria for judicial appointments and to establish appropriate security of tenure and guarantees of independence for judges. The framework also sets unambiguous and fair rules on the suspension or removal of judges, which might be applied only for reasons of incapacity or misbehaviour that renders them unfit to discharge their duties.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment Criterion No. 3: Securing resources**

There is evidence of sufficient budgetary resources being allocated by the parliament for the judicial system to ensure the effective operation of courts without any constraints.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment Criterion No. 4: Confirmation and impeachment of senior judges**

This assessment criteria are only relevant to countries where the legislature confirms and/or impeaches senior justices. Parliament’s actions to confirm or impeach senior judges are consistent with its legal framework, and are conducted using clear and transparent procedures. Decisions on the confirmation or impeachment of a judge are made by a majority or supermajority vote of the legislature.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.10.3 Subnational (state, provincial, regional) parliaments and authorities and local councils and authorities**

Indicator: 1.10 Relations of parliament  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns the relationship between the national parliament and relevant subnational bodies of government (state, local, municipal). It is important to note that, depending on a nation's constitutional and legal framework, the nature of the relationship between a national parliament and subnational entities may differ significantly. The relationship may be affected by the representational status of the chamber, for example, a chamber made up of members representing individual constituencies will have a different focus to one representing whole states or provinces. As a result of these differences, the relationship in different legislatures can vary considerably and be very nuanced in its variations. This dimension seeks to distil the key relationship issues with subnational authorities that that are generally applicable to national parliaments.

First, there should be clear constitutional and legal provisions of the country that delineate the respective responsibilities and authority of the national and subnational entities. Both the national parliament and subnational authorities should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, so that they can better determine the nature of their interactions. This delineation of responsibility includes the recognition that the members of a national parliament, as the representatives of their electors, will comment or discuss matters of subnational concern, in order to underscore or elevate key issues to a national level. This does not subvert the proper authority and role of subnational entities in relation to these matters.

Second, as a country relies on successful cooperation among its respective authorities, parliaments should also ensure there are protocols and mechanisms in place for connectivity and information-sharing among authorities. Depending on the variation in the relationship between national parliaments and subnational authorities referred to earlier, there may be a wide variety of ways in which parliaments and MPs can maintain connectivity and information-sharing with subnational governments and authorities. These ways may include:

- Individual MP’s offices may have individual information-sharing channels, such as scheduled check-ins with subnational officials to remain informed of ongoing policy implementation, in addition to opportunities and challenges.
- Parliament may have a communications or policy office that assists it in tracking or sharing information on subnational affairs.
- At the subnational level, officials may use centralized hubs for sharing information with parliament, including through organized associations (such as a governors association or a municipality association).
- There may be a national ministry dedicated to subnational governance affairs to maintain overall connectivity between affairs at the state and local level and the national government. In this instance, the legislature can use this body to maintain communication and connectivity with subnational entities to improve communication on core policy implementation and resource-sharing. This is especially critical in the event of a disaster or crisis in a national MP’s locality (or jurisdiction), where assistance needs to be delivered, or in instances where government programmes and services are needed locally or for the individual constituents of MPs (for example, health care or veterans benefits).

Regardless of the mechanisms that are in place, effective communication, cooperation and connectivity are important.
On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of subnational authorities would encompass the following:

There is a clear delineation in constitutional or legal provisions of the respective roles and responsibilities of the national parliament and subnational authorities. The national parliament has the responsibility to represent all citizens by sharing examples from subnational jurisdictions to amplify the needs and priorities of citizens on a national stage without subverting the proper authority and role of the subnational bodies.

The legislature has established mechanisms and practices to maintain connectivity, communication, cooperation and awareness of subnational affairs. These mechanisms will vary depending on the nature of a national parliament’s relationship with subnational authorities.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on the existence of constitutional authorities
- Legal regulations requiring shared responsibility between national and subnational levels of government
- Information on a centralized parliamentary mechanism for tracking subnational affairs, individual office mechanisms for connectivity, or coordination efforts of the national ministry responsible for subnational affairs (if applicable)

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Clear delineation of authority and responsibilities

There is evidence of constitutional or legal provisions that provide a clear definition of the respective roles and responsibilities of the national parliament and subnational authorities. The national parliament is recognized as having the role of representing all citizens, and sharing examples from subnational jurisdictions to amplify the needs and priorities of citizens on a national stage.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliamentary mechanisms for communication and coordination

Parliament itself or individual MPs have established mechanisms and practices for communication between the national and subnational levels of government. Mechanisms and practices will vary according to the
defined relationship between the national parliament and subnational entities, but should enable effective communication and cooperation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
Indicator 1.11 – Specific state policies

Parliamentary effectiveness can be assessed by the way in which functions are aligned to make an impact across key state policies. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs provide a framework for assessing how parliament supports efforts to end poverty, build peaceful societies, promote prosperity and well-being, and protect the environment for current and future generations. SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This is both an outcome and an enabler of sustainable development. As the central institution of representative democracy, parliaments worldwide must examine their internal practices to ensure that they are responsive and inclusive and oversee action taken by government on the SDGs and across state policy areas, while guaranteeing transparency and accountability for public decision-making.

The 2030 Agenda represents a rights-based approach to development and this indicator assesses how parliament can play a central role within a national human rights framework.

It is also essential for security sector and defence policy issues to be subject to parliamentary scrutiny and control, reflecting that human rights, peace and security are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In assessing foreign affairs and parliament’s role in diplomacy and international cooperation, this indicator examines how parliaments play a key role in democratizing decisions made above the level of the nation state.

The assessment of the indicator on specific state policies comprises the following dimensions:

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

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the central role of parliament in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs represent a globally-agreed plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. An effective parliament is one that integrates this wide-ranging and transformative agenda across its core functions, including the debate and scrutiny of national plans for sustainable development, the incorporation of the SDGs into the legal framework, and the bridging of the gap between the international and national levels through the localization of the goals.

Parliament is key to helping to formulate and oversee the implementation of national SDG plans and policies. Sustainable human development requires specific strategies to combat discrimination, reduce inequality and uphold the rights of marginalized groups, ensuring that no one is left behind. Parliament’s duties include passing gender-sensitive and human rights-based legislation and ensuring that SDG priorities are sufficiently resourced and that funding reaches the most vulnerable and excluded in society. It is therefore necessary to ensure the means to assess diverse needs across geographic, social, sexual, ethnic, cultural or economic categories, and for MPs to continually engage with the public on the SDGs through their representational duties.

The SDGs are interconnected with all sectors that play a role in their delivery. A well-functioning and coordinated committee system, with opportunity for committee reports to be debated and responded to in the plenary, allows for holistic oversight of national progress towards sustainable development. Some parliaments have established dedicated structures such as sustainable development committees, caucuses and units to support SDG mainstreaming across parliamentary work. Such bodies can act as a focal point for the type of partnership building across society that is necessary to implement the SDGs, including with civil society, the media, the private sector, independent oversight bodies and academia.

At international level, all countries are required to monitor SDG implementation and encouraged to report progress and challenges through voluntary national reviews (VNRs). Parliaments should have space to contribute to, debate and make recommendations on national SDG plans and report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and international bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Financing for the SDGs is a key consideration and parliament has a role in scrutinizing the availability and use of international resource flows from development cooperation, international taxation, trade and other means.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of SDGs and the 2030 Agenda would encompass the following:

The SDGs are integrated into parliament’s core functions. Parliament debates and scrutinizes national development plans, strategies, sectoral plans, statements and government reports to ensure alignment with and the localization of the SDGs.

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*Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7*
Parliament has reviewed the legal framework to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of national SDG priorities and the wider 2030 Agenda. There are established practices for parliament to assess how legislation impacts SDG attainment. Parliament’s role at all stages of the budget cycle (formulation, consideration and approval, implementation and audit) allows for systematic oversight of SDG delivery.

Parliament’s commitment to mainstreaming the SDGs is indicated in a strategic plan, policies and/or SDG action plans. SDGs are included in the terms of reference of all portfolio committees. Reports are debated in the plenary to help scrutinize progress across all goals. Mechanisms, such as a sustainable development committee, exist to oversee SDG progress and support SDG mainstreaming in parliament.

Parliament supports a whole-of-society approach to SDG delivery. Parliament is represented in national SDG coordination mechanisms, such as inter-ministerial committees. Rules of procedure allow for systematic engagement with stakeholders from civil society, the media, the private sector, and scientific and academic communities in monitoring SDG progress. There are well-established relationships with government and independent oversight bodies such as the state audit office, anti-corruption commissions or national human rights institutions that help provide technical inputs and reporting on the SDGs.

Parliament has transparent and clear mechanisms to inform the public on the SDGs and to gather evidence on national SDG implementation. MPs use the plenary and other parliamentary mechanisms to reflect the diverse needs of their constituents in relation to SDG priorities.

There is space for MPs to contribute to reporting to international bodies and processes on national SDG implementation. Parliament is informed of international SDG financing instruments and can scrutinize development financing.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Resolutions or motions in Hansard or other records of parliament indicating parliamentary commitment to the delivery of the SDGs
- Media reporting of parliament includes statements by parliamentary leadership and MPs of commitment to SDG delivery
- Committee terms of reference reflecting the roles across portfolio committees with regard to SDG delivery
- Articles in parliament’s strategic plan related to the SDGs or the existence of an SDG parliamentary action plan
- Explanatory memoranda/introductory speeches to bills and enacted legislation outline how they address the SDGs
- Committee reports incorporating evidence from a range of stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups, on SDG delivery
- Availability of training or capacity development materials for MPs on the SDGs. Briefings and analysis from the parliamentary library.
- Communication materials and communication strategies indicating the role of parliament in SDG delivery
If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Expression of parliament’s commitment to SDG delivery**

Parliament has formally endorsed the SDGs or indicated its commitment to SDG delivery through motions, resolutions and debates of national plans, strategies or other SDG frameworks.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Practices in place to review legislation through an SDG lens**

Parliamentary review of legislation indicates contribution to SDG achievement. Bills are accompanied by an assessment of impact on SDGs, such as through ministerial statements, explanatory memoranda or regulatory impact assessments.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: National budget reflects national SDG priorities**

Parliament’s scrutiny of the budget indicates how funding is allocated to implement national SDG priorities and responds to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Plans and policies to mainstream SDGs across parliament**

Parliament’s strategic plan, policies and/or SDG action plans identify how the SDGs will be mainstreamed across parliament’s functions. Dedicated mechanisms may exist to support SDG mainstreaming, such as a sustainable development committee or sub-committee and/or a dedicated unit of the parliamentary secretariat.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: SDGs incorporated in the work of all parliamentary committees

The terms of reference of parliamentary committees reflect their role in SDG implementation. Committees have developed tools such as checklists to assess policy and legislation against SDG objectives.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Well-established relations with government regarding SDGs

There is evidence of parliament making recommendations on government planning, policy and programmes related to SDG attainment, and of parliamentary engagement in international reporting on national SDG achievement.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit*, (IPU, 2016)
- Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Islamic Development Bank (IDB), *Parliament’s role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*, (GOPAC, UNDP, IDB, 2017)
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), *Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, (UN DESA, 2018)
Dimension 1.11.2 Human rights

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension looks at the critical role of parliament in protecting and promoting human rights. The realization of human rights worldwide is essential to peace, democracy and sustainable development. Parliament is required to contribute to the application of international human rights obligations and ensure that government action is in compliance with international law. Parliament should be actively engaged with international and regional human rights mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Council, its universal periodic review (UPR) mechanism and human rights treaty bodies. In a number of countries, MPs are also included as members of national delegations at sessions of treaty bodies.

Parliaments are central to a national human rights framework. As representative bodies, they ensure the right to participation in the conduct of public affairs. In scrutinizing legislation and budgets, upholding the rule of law and overseeing state action across sectors, parliament is essential to realizing the entire spectrum of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Parliament's role includes ensuring that the judiciary is independent, effective and accessible, that a free, independent and pluralistic media exists to protect the civic space and investigate human rights violations, and that national human rights institutions (NHRI) operate effectively.

Parliamentary committees constitute an important means of human rights oversight. The establishment of a committee with an exclusive mandate on human rights, and on specific human rights issues such as gender equality or minority rights, can send a strong political message and help mainstream human rights across other committees. Other mechanisms that parliaments have used include caucuses or informal groups of MPs active in the area of human rights. As a guardian of human rights, parliament is responsible for ensuring that the needs and voices of minority, marginalized and vulnerable groups are incorporated throughout its work. Parliament plays a role in assessing the needs of groups such as asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons who may be left outside official statistics, and overseeing government policy and programmes to ensure responsiveness to those who may be left behind.

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

Parliament has ratified international treaties on human rights. Parliament has powers to receive answers from governments where treaties are not ratified or where there are specific reservations. Parliament has clear responsibilities in relation to reporting to human rights treaty bodies.

The national legal framework reflects human rights norms and obligations. The NHRI is established in law and has clearly defined relations with parliament. Parliament uses tools such as legislative impact.

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53 Enshrined in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR).

assessments, human rights audits of the budget and human rights indicators to assess the impact of policy, legislation and public spending.

Parliament has institutional mechanisms to address human rights, such as dedicated human rights committees with powers of inquiry and investigation and sufficient resources. Human rights are also included in the mandate of parliament’s portfolio committees, which have transparent and routine procedures to engage with the NHRI, civil society and other stakeholders.

Services from the parliamentary secretariat assist MPs in remaining well-informed about international human rights treaties, the work of treaty bodies and national human rights issues. MPs have access to the necessary data to assess the human rights needs of different groups in society. Parliament’s communications highlight the role of parliament in promoting and protecting human rights, and inform the public of mechanisms to report human rights violations.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles of the constitution mandating parliament to ratify human rights treaties and incorporate them into national law
- Articles in national law referencing international human rights obligations
- Terms of reference for a body responsible for human rights in parliament, such as human rights, gender equality or minority rights committees
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating their roles in human rights protection and promotion
- Parliamentary committee reports indicating the evidence from and routine engagement with national human rights bodies and civil society
- Memoranda of understanding between the NHRI and parliament
- Parliamentary website contains information on parliament’s role in promoting and protecting human rights and how the public can report human rights violations

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

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal powers to promote and protect human rights**

The constitution or laws mandate parliament to debate and ratify international human rights treaties and ensure that the national legal framework is consistent with international human rights obligations.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**
Assessment criterion No. 2: Engagement with international human rights bodies and processes

Parliament has a clear role in national consultation processes preceding the preparation of reports to treaty bodies, and in debating reports, overseeing recommendations, questioning government and establishing follow-up measures where needed. MPs participate as members of national delegations at sessions of treaty bodies.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Clearly defined engagement between parliament and the NHRI

Parliament ensures that the NHRI exists, functions independently and has sufficient resources. The composition of the NHRI is approved by parliament. There are strong working relationships, including the duty of the NHRI to report to parliament and that of parliament to monitor the implementation of NHRI recommendations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Existence of human rights infrastructure in parliament

A body such as a parliamentary committee with an exclusive human rights mandate exists, with powers to assess legislation, government policy and action, to ensure compatibility with human rights obligations. Its duties include supporting the mainstreaming of human rights across committees.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Human rights mainstreamed across parliamentary committees

Human rights are a cross-cutting issue for all portfolio committees which have established practices to assess policy, legislation and budgets through a human rights lens.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

Assessment criterion No. 6: Routine public engagement on human rights

Parliamentary proceedings, including debates and committee hearings, on human rights issues are communicated to the public and are open to public engagement. Proceedings include input from civil society, grass-roots organizations and individuals such as human rights defenders.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading
Dimension 1.11.3 Security sector

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension
This dimension examines the role of parliament in security sector policy and governance. The security sector comprises all bodies with the legitimate authority to use force, including defence services, law enforcement, police, armed forces, border guards, paramilitary units, intelligence services and private security organizations. The principle that security services should be subordinate and accountable to democratically elected political leadership has long been seen as a basic condition for the effective functioning and well-being of democratic societies.

Parliament plays an essential role in ensuring that the security sector operates in a manner that is rooted in respect for the rule of law and human rights. Parliament is required to determine the legal framework for security policy and to oversee and debate policy and practice in the plenary and committees. As security sector organizations often use a large proportion of the national budget, it is essential that parliament monitors the use of these resources. In its oversight role, parliament ensures that the actions of the security sector are mediated through participatory and transparent processes which take into account the needs of all members of society. This includes recognizing that women, sexual minorities and persons with a non-binary gender identity face specific security challenges, and that measures are required to ensure that their voices are brought to bear in security sector oversight.

Usually, the government is seen as dominant in security policy and the nature of the security sector can present challenges with regard to effective parliamentary oversight. Governments may frame security issues as matters of national importance and state survival and, therefore, outside the bounds of parliamentary involvement. The need to often act quickly and maintain secrecy may be seen as incompatible with transparent and deliberative democratic participation. Therefore, parliaments need to ensure that there is effective legislation on data secrecy, which defines strict limits on data that are not available to parliament. This legislation should strictly stipulate data confidentiality, including degrees of secrecy, the procedure of data classification and declassification, data access and protection. The size and complex organization of security personnel and the nature of evolving security threats add complexity to the challenge of democratic controls and oversight if MPs lack full access to expertise and information. Globalization and cross-border threats have also increased the need for international cooperation and decision-making, in which parliament should have a role. Parliament should have permanent mechanisms for oversight of the security sector, which should be included in the mandates of different committees, particularly specialized committees addressing defence, law enforcement and intelligence, as well as in the mandates of other committees where oversight would be required.

Effective oversight relies on MPs having the ability to obtain information from the government on security sector issues using all oversight mechanisms. In some countries, parliaments may also have powers to approve or veto appointments to senior posts within the security institutions.

57 Wolfgang Wagner, Parliaments and Foreign Policy, (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017).
58 Including cyber-warfare, vulnerability of energy supplies, climate change, pandemics, and mass migration, surveillance and disinformation, and technological advances in artificial intelligence and autonomous weaponry.
As security is essential to public well-being, parliament as the representative body must ensure transparency and public input into security policy. Parliament may also establish an ombudsman or commission to investigate public complaints which reports to a security sector committee.

To work effectively in a highly technical area, MPs require sufficient resources and expertise. Parliament can also provide opportunities for inter-parliamentary cooperation to exchange best practices and lessons learned from parliamentary assemblies addressing security issues. This can encourage dialogue, build confidence, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning, thus contributing to the improvement of parliamentary oversight.

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

There is a comprehensive legal framework for oversight of the security sector. The constitution establishes civilian control and powers to hold the government accountable for security policy. MPs have powers to scrutinize, amend or reject legislation related to the security sector, and ensure that it is in conformity with human rights standards and international obligations.

The legal framework includes freedom of information laws which provide for powers to obtain information from the executive. There exists in law an ombudsman or similar public body which addresses public concerns or complaints about security issues, and which reports to parliament.

Parliament has well-established practices for security sector oversight, including that of policies, practices, budgets and appointments. MPs have the opportunity to debate security sector policy and practice in the plenary and committees. There is comprehensive oversight of the security sector including specialized committees and a mandate to scrutinize across relevant parliamentary committees, which have broad-ranging powers to investigate security sector issues and gather evidence, including summoning ministers, government and security sector representatives, calling on experts, holding hearings and carrying out inquiries.

Parliament is transparent regarding security sector oversight, subject to legal limitations. There are established mechanisms for parliament to engage with stakeholders including civil society regarding security and security-related issues.

There is expertise on security sector issues available within parliament. Training is available for staff and members of committees, including on security sector issues, human rights and issues related to women, peace and security. MPs receive support for participation in international meetings related to the security sector.

**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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59 Including NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

60 See dimension 1.7.2. 

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

202
• Articles in the constitution and legal framework identifying parliament’s role in security sector governance
• Terms of reference of parliamentary committees identifying responsibility for issues related to the security sector
• Publications such as committee reports on parliamentary inquiries into security issues, which identify evidence taken from stakeholders including ministers and government officials, the public and civil society
• Annual parliamentary reports or reviews on the functioning of all security services
• Press releases or pages on the parliamentary website providing public information on parliament’s role in security sector policy

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional provisions and legal framework ensure parliament’s role in security sector policy

The constitution ensures civilian control and oversight of the security sector. Parliament is responsible for adopting or amending the legal framework for the security sector.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Addressing public concerns or complaints about the security sector

There is an ombudsperson or similar body responsible for addressing public concerns or complaints about the security sector, which is legally accountable and reports to parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No.3: Systematic oversight practice

There is evidence of a parliamentary committee (or committees) with responsibility for oversight of the security sector, law enforcement and intelligence. Security sector oversight is also included in the responsibilities of the different portfolio committees. Committees have the power to conduct investigations and inquiries, summon government and security sector representatives to give evidence, and examine security sector budgets. Parliamentary committees engage with stakeholders including civil society and the media on security-related issues.
**Assessment criterion No. 4: Public engagement on security sector policy**

Parliament issues information on its website or through press releases regarding debates, decisions, motions or laws related to the security sector. With the exception of closed hearings, and subject to legal limitations, the minutes of committee meetings and debates on security issues are made public.

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources and expertise are available**

The parliamentary secretariat provides support to MPs, including committee staff, specialized research capacity, access to data and supporting documentation on security sector issues.

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources for further reading**

- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), *Oversight and Guidance: Parliaments and Security Sector Governance*, (Geneva: DCAF, 2015)
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

- Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy*, (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Parliaments as partners supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda* (Norway: Oslo Governance Centre, 2019)
**Dimension 1.11.4 Defence policy**

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension examines parliament’s powers on issues of defence policy, covering declarations of war, states of emergency, deployment of armed forces, sales and exports of arms, and protection of civilians during conflict. Civilian control of defence policy is essential in a well-functioning democratic society. Parliament is mandated to represent the interests of all members of society and to uphold human rights, acting as a safeguard against the unjustified and disproportionate use of force and ensuring that decisions on defence policy are aligned with public needs.61

The constitution and national legal provisions outline the extent of parliamentary involvement in the declaration of war and deployment of troops and during states of emergency. Some parliaments have considerable war powers, and MPs are allowed to debate and question the decision to deploy armed forces.62 In others, the government must only notify parliament and keep MPs informed of operations, and in some cases, there is minimal consultation with parliament. Parliaments may also be able to refuse to provide funds or be required to give their consent to additional funds for war, troop deployments and for arms procurement. Parliamentary systems usually have a more limited influence than in presidential democracies. However, in practice, there may be widespread understanding that a government would not deploy troops without having majority support in parliament. This requires political will to keep parliament engaged and informed, and relations of trust between branches of power.63

As a guardian of human rights, parliament must ensure that defence policy remains subject to international law and under democratic control. This includes ensuring that, where arms are sold, their use is not in violation of international humanitarian law. It is also incumbent on parliament to ensure that defence policy reflects public needs, has public support and protects the rights of all, including minority groups. This includes understanding the gendered impact of conflict and taking measures to protect civilians, including women, girls and persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.64 Transparent deliberation in parliament opens up defence decisions to public scrutiny, helping the public to understand the rationale for and risks of military engagement and emergency powers and how they comply with societal norms and human rights.

To play a full role in defence policy, parliament also needs to have a strong role in security sector oversight and broad influence across foreign policy, which are covered in dimensions 1.11.3 and 1.11.5 respectively.

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

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61 Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy* (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: 2017).

62 Some parliaments may also exempt certain issues, such as foreign troops on national territory, minor deployments, and arrangements with international organizations, and exception is also usually made for situations of urgency such as when a state is under attack. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices* (Geneva, 2003).

63 Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy* (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: 2017).

64 As reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and related resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2272 and 2647; and SDGs 5 and 16.
The constitution and legal framework give parliament powers to approve the use of military force, including the declaration of war and deployment of troops. Parliament is consulted prior to troop deployments and can investigate and debate the use of military force, including powers to summon the government to testify before parliament. Parliament can effectively block the use of military force if there is a majority in favour.

Parliament also has the power to authorize the joining of international defence organizations.

Parliament has the legal authority to scrutinize, amend and approve the defence budget, including the authorization of funding for each deployment of troops, and for arms sales and weapons procurement. Parliamentary committees have broad mandates over defence issues, including the overseeing of arms sales to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. There exists a committee with the mandate to oversee gender mainstreaming in defence policy, including the composition of the armed forces and other defence bodies, the gendered impact of military and peacekeeping operations, and protection measures for women, girls and persons of different sexual orientation, gender identity and expression during conflict.65

Parliament has well-established communication practices and ensures that the public remains informed throughout situations of conflict and states of emergency. Parliament has access to support staff with independent expertise in defence policy.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Articles in the constitution or legal framework providing parliament with the power to authorize war and the deployment of troops, and to amend the defence budget
- Articles in the constitution or legal framework mandating parliament to play a role in the declaration, promulgation, prolongation and lifting of a state of emergency
- Hansard/parliamentary records on debates related to the declaration of war, deployment of troops or states of emergency
- Items on the parliamentary website or media articles related to parliament’s role in defence policy
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating their role in overseeing different aspects of defence policy
- Memoranda of understanding between defence sector complaint bodies and parliament

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal powers over the declaration of war and deployment of troops

The constitution and legal framework ensure that parliament is consulted prior to use of military force and has the power to authorize or block a declaration of war and the deployment of troops.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers over the defence sector budget

Parliament’s role in scrutinizing and approving the national budget includes defence expenditures, arms procurement and revenue from sales of arms and equipment.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Inclusion of defence policy in the mandate of parliamentary committees

Parliamentary committees have a mandate to oversee and investigate different aspects of defence policy, including arms procurement, arms sales, issues concerning women, peace and security, and the gendered impact of conflict and crises.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Existence of defence sector complaint bodies reporting to parliament

Complaint bodies related to the defence sector, including human rights commissions and ombudsperson, exist and report to parliament. Such bodies routinely engage with the public, civil society, media and other stakeholders, and there are clear mechanisms to submit evidence on instances of human rights violations including gender-based violence.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Expert resources and public engagement

Adequate resources and the necessary expertise are available to parliament to support its work in the scrutiny of defence legislation and policy. There is evidence that parliament engages with the community in relation to defence issues.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading

- Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), *Parliament’s role in defence procurement* (Geneva, 2006)
- Seppe Tiitinen, *Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations* (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Parliaments as partners supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda* (Norway: Oslo Governance Centre, 2019)
- Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy* (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)
**Dimension 1.11.5 Foreign affairs**

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension examines parliament’s role in foreign affairs and international cooperation. The 17 SDGs represent a transformative global roadmap requiring action at national and international levels. Foreign policy is critical to SDG implementation in fragile contexts, and the meeting of foreign policy objectives of security, stability and prosperity depends on global progress in achieving the SDGs. Parliament’s mandate to define foreign policy priorities is enshrined in constitutions worldwide, giving parliament a role in overseeing SDG integration across foreign policy areas.

International agreements (including treaties, instruments, conventions and bilateral agreements) on issues such as environmental policy, international trade and security have a direct impact on the public and affect the rights and obligations of all. In an increasingly globalized world, parliaments need to find new opportunities to influence foreign affairs to prevent a democratic deficit in decisions made above the state level. As such, it is important that international agreements are subject to transparent decision-making processes at the national level and the involvement of elected representatives to ensure that decisions have legitimacy and public acceptance.\(^{66}\)

Agreements that include significant national obligations usually require parliamentary approval or ratification, and powers differ according to whether parliament can accelerate the ratification process, change the text, express reservations, or refuse to ratify and return the matter for new negotiations.\(^{67}\) Parliament can also put pressure on the government for the passage of agreements that are not yet signed, using oversight mechanisms to receive answers and updates on progress. There is also increasing recognition of the importance of including elected representatives in the formulation of international agreements. In some countries the government is required to consult with foreign affairs committees before important decisions are taken on foreign policy issues.

Parliament and its portfolio committees are essential in overseeing the achievement of foreign policy priorities. Applying an SDG lens across sectors allows parliament to assess progress in key areas, including: supporting mutually-beneficial trade and investment policy, which can create trust between nations and help reduce inequality; overseeing accountability for and the impact of international financial agreements, including loans and development assistance;\(^{68}\) and ensuring that development support is gender- and conflict-sensitive.

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

The constitution mandates the parliament to have a role in determining foreign policy priorities. Parliament is legally responsible for the ratification of international agreements, loan agreements and in-country programmes by international organizations.

Parliament can help formulate and amend international agreements. There is consultation between parliament and government before negotiations take place, MPs are kept informed of negotiating positions.

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\(^{67}\) Seppe Tiitinen, *Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations* (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996).  
\(^{68}\) Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation* (IPU, 2020)
and parliamentary committees are engaged with negotiators. MPs can use oversight tools to question the government and have powers to submit private member bills and motions regarding the content of international agreements.

There is a legal basis for the government to report to parliament on the implementation of international agreements and activities of international organizations. Where a state is required to report to an international body, the report is debated in parliament first.

Committees across parliament play an active role in scrutinizing international financial agreements, including ensuring that development assistance has a lasting impact and is conflict- and gender-sensitive. Parliament has the power to amend loan agreements, in addition to accepting and rejecting them.

Parliament’s committee system reflects inter-linkages between foreign policy objectives and the SDGs. Committees addressing issues including health, education, gender equality and human rights have the remit to oversee how foreign policy in these areas supports sustainable human development.

The parliamentary secretariat provides MPs with support in terms of technical capacity and independent information about foreign affairs. Parliament communicates and engages with the public on foreign affairs issues, helping to ensure transparency and accountability of action taken at international level.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Articles in the constitution mandating parliament’s role in defining foreign policy priorities, and in ratifying international agreements
- Articles of international treaties, conventions or agreements mandating regular reporting by government to parliament
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating a role in oversight of international agreements
- Committee reports on foreign affairs issues
- Research briefings and informational material on foreign affairs produced by parliamentary research services or other bodies of the parliamentary secretariat

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal mandate for parliament’s role in foreign affairs

The constitution provides parliament with the mandate to define foreign policy priorities and monitor government compliance with parliamentary resolutions on foreign affairs issues.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Powers relating to international agreements
Parliament is responsible for ratifying international agreements. Parliament can propose amendments to international agreements, including financial agreements, in addition to accepting and rejecting such agreements.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Routine oversight of foreign affairs**

Committees across parliament are engaged in monitoring international agreements and ensuring that foreign policy contributes to achieving the SDGs in the areas of their mandate. Parliament can establish committees to monitor specific international issues and the work of international organizations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Transparency of information**

The executive provides parliament with information on foreign affairs, implementation of international agreements and the work of international organizations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Expert resources and public engagement**

The parliament is provided with adequate resources and the necessary expertise to support its work in the scrutiny of foreign affairs legislation and policy. There is evidence that parliament engages with the community in relation to foreign affairs issues.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation* (IPU, 2020)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and World Bank (WB), *Parliamentary Oversight of International Agreements and Related Processes* (IPU, 2013)
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Parliamentary Involvement in International Affairs* (Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, New York, 2005)
- Adelphi, *A Foreign Policy Perspective on the SDGs* (Berlin, 2018)
- Seppe Tiitinen, *Role of Parliament in the conduct of foreign relations* (Constitutional and Parliamentary Information, 1996)
- Wolfgang Wagner, *Parliaments and Foreign Policy* (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2017)
**Dimension 1.11.6 Parliamentary diplomacy**

Indicator: 1.11 Specific state policies  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension examines the role of parliament in diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy is an important part of international cooperation, which provides a parliamentary perspective on global governance. By supporting political dialogue and mediation, parliamentary diplomacy plays a constructive and effective role in conflict prevention and crisis management, and contributes to reducing tensions and finding solutions to political and other international, regional and national challenges. It helps to strengthen dialogue between countries and increase mutual understanding. Parliamentary diplomacy can be conducted through bilateral relations between parliaments or through multilateral, international and regional, organizations and channels.

Relations between states are usually conducted by government, but there are strong reasons why democratically-elected MPs can have an impact on international relations. Engaging MPs across countries promotes common interests and values, opens new channels for dialogue and for sharing experience and expertise. As they do not represent the government’s position, MPs can operate with increased flexibility in reflecting their own positions and the views of their constituents, thus helping to raise complex issues between countries, such as democracy and human rights. Their mandate can help to democratize international affairs and represent the pluralism of society in the international arena.

Bilateral parliamentary diplomacy can take the form of incoming and outgoing parliamentary visits, organized by parliament or with development support. MPs are also often included in official delegations with the government, or there is space for meetings with MPs on bilateral state visits. Parliamentary friendship groups are organized more formally and involve regular meetings between MPs from different countries. They can promote the exchange of views between MPs in areas of shared interest, and discuss and offer solutions to complex international issues. In this way, bilateral parliamentary engagement can be useful to build understanding and foster agreement in areas where the government may not have had success.

Various international bodies exist to support multilateral parliamentary diplomacy, including parliamentary assemblies at international and regional levels, organizations and networks.

Information gained through parliamentary diplomacy strengthens the work of MPs at the national level. It helps to connect decisions made at the international level with local realities and translate the concerns of the public into policy. Information gained through parliamentary diplomacy provides MPs with the means to play an active role in scrutinizing foreign policy and supporting the implementation of international agreements (reflected in dimension 1.11.5).

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

Parliamentary diplomacy activities have clear aims and objectives, determined through transparent, participatory and inclusive processes.

There are well-established channels of communication with and support from the government (the foreign affairs ministry or related ministries) for parliamentary diplomacy activities.

Delegations for bilateral visits and to multilateral parliamentary bodies are inclusive and reflect the composition of parliament and diversity of society. Political, gender and age quotas for delegations are mandated in parliament’s rules. If international bodies require such quotas for parliamentary delegations, parliament respects them. Continuity of delegates and support staff helps to ensure understanding of how

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

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multilateral bodies operate and how to make an impact. Delegations are required to submit reports and share the resolutions, reports and recommendations adopted, which are distributed across parliament.

A specialized body or unit exists to coordinate the preparation, communication and reporting on parliamentary diplomacy activities. Such bodies produce regular summaries of the work of international organizations and the results of meetings and events, including follow-up action and how parliament has addressed resolutions and decisions made in multilateral bodies, and help to set future priorities for international engagements.

Parliament’s budget includes funding for international engagements. The parliamentary secretariat offers expert and administrative support to MPs undertaking international engagements, including briefings on agenda items and on preparing and amending resolutions in multilateral bodies. The public is informed about activities and outcomes of international engagements through parliament’s communication channels.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Agendas of official bilateral engagements indicating parliamentary involvement
- Terms of reference of parliamentary committees indicating responsibility for international engagements
- Name lists for parliamentary delegations indicating a political, age and gender balance
- Service statements/organogram indicating that a department exists to support MPs with international engagements
- Reports from parliamentary committees/delegations/party groups on international engagements indicating the outcomes achieved
- Items in the parliament’s budget for parliamentary diplomacy activities

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Procedures for determining parliamentary diplomacy activities

Clear and transparent procedures are in place for deciding on parliamentary diplomacy activities and forming friendship groups. Procedures are participatory and inclusive in setting aims, objectives and agendas of activities and deciding on delegation members.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of specialized bodies of parliament

Dedicated bodies support parliamentary diplomacy, such as committees on international relations and on the work of regional and international parliamentary organizations. These bodies have the mandate to prepare, communicate and coordinate reporting on parliamentary diplomacy activities and ensure follow-up to decisions taken during activities.
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

Assessment criterion No. 3: Parliamentary diplomacy reflects the pluralism of parliament

There are opportunities for all MPs to participate in parliamentary diplomacy activities and join parliamentary friendship groups. Parliament respects the rules of parliamentary delegation composition stipulated by international and regional organizations, and has in place quotas or other measures to ensure a political, age and gender balance in delegations.

Assessment criterion No. 4: Reporting on outcomes of international and bilateral engagements

Reports following international engagements are produced and made available to all MPs. Parliament regularly reports on follow-up action taken as a result of parliamentary diplomacy, including how resolutions of multilateral bodies have been addressed. Parliament communicates all reports publicly.

Assessment criterion No. 5: Well-established engagement with government

Parliament receives support and information from the government prior to international engagements.

Assessment criterion No. 6: Specialized services from the parliamentary secretariat

An international relations or other department exists to provide support to MPs to conduct international engagements.
Sub-target 1 – Effective parliament

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Parliamentary Diplomacy: Seminar for Members of the Parliament of East Timor*, (IPU, 2003)