Accountable parliament

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Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

Accountable parliament is one that:
- Is ethical, with all MPS upholding standards related to anti-corruption, conflict of interest, lobbying and disclosure of information
- Serves the public interest and promotes accountability across public institutions and society as a whole through its legislative and oversight functions
- Is a model of institutional integrity, including with regard to finances, procurement, reporting, and recruitment and management of staff

This sub-target on accountable parliament is the second element of the Sustainable Development Goal target 16.6 on effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. In this case, it is adapted to apply to the institution of parliament. Parliament is often the premier institution in many democratic countries. Given this status, it is looked to for leadership and for setting high standards of institutional integrity and accountability. This sub-target covers both individual integrity and accountability (of MPs) and the institutional integrity of the parliament and its administration.

The sub-target includes the ethical framework and behaviour of MPs (and senior parliamentary staff). MPs are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards and conduct, as adverse perceptions of MPs can have a significant impact on the regard that the public has for the parliamentary institution in general. The indicator concerning parliamentary ethics covers both the regulatory framework for parliamentary ethics as well as the practices of MPs.

The indicator on institutional integrity covers a number of different aspects of the integrity and accountability of the parliamentary institution more broadly. This includes both the parliament and its administration, and relates to matters such as accounting for expenditure, procurement for the parliament, the provision of information to the public, and transparency and integrity in the recruitment, advancement, development and management of staff. Collectively, these aspects ensure that the parliament and its administration remain fully accountable to the public.

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

- 2.1 Parliamentary ethics
- 2.2 Institutional integrity

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

In order to increase and maintain public trust in parliament, it is essential that parliamentarians behave ethically, and that any apparent breach of ethical standards is investigated and, if necessary, sanctioned.

While principles of parliamentary ethics have been applied to MPs in the past, they were mostly limited to the arena of the parliamentary chamber and were not applied to the conduct of MPs more generally. Recurrent political scandals in many countries in recent decades have had an impact on citizens’ perception of parliamentary legitimacy and have pressured parliaments to renew and reform the regulation of parliamentary conduct.

The indicator on parliamentary ethics considers individual professional and ethical standards for MPs. Depending on the specific legal and political system, it might also include other elected parliamentary officials, such as secretaries-general and deputy secretaries-general.

The assessment of the parliamentary ethics of members of parliament, through a regulatory framework and implementation in practice, comprises the following dimensions:

- 2.1.1 Anti-corruption
- 2.1.2 Code of conduct
- 2.1.3 Conflict of interest
- 2.1.4 Disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure
- 2.1.5 Lobbying
**Dimension 2.1.1 Anti-corruption**

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics  
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the duties and responsibilities of the legislature to prevent and combat corruption in public institutions, including parliament, and across society as a whole.

Corruption has many definitions but can be described as actions that lead to or are intended to “abuse public power for private benefits”.¹ It is a growing global phenomenon that negatively affects the credibility of democratic institutions and their ability to deliver services and resources to citizens, thereby corroding human rights, threatening democratic discourse, and hampering economic development. Corruption can have detrimental long-term consequences for all segments of a society. In cases where corruption is used to illegally divert state funds, “corruption undercuts services, such as health, education, public transportation or local policing, that those with few resources are typically dependent upon. Petty corruption provides additional costs for citizens: not only is service provision inadequate, but “payment” is required for the delivery of even the most basic government activity, such as the issuing of official documentation.”² Corruption also denotes a variety of connected offences, which characterize the complexity of economic and political relationships, including trading in influence, money laundering or state capture.

Parliament has an essential role in curbing corruption and creating environments that minimize opportunities and space for corrupt acts. A legislator is responsible for ensuring effective and conducive legislative frameworks for anti-corruption in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption,³ which is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument signed by the vast majority of UN Member States.

There are also critical anti-corruption mechanisms that legislators and their institutions can use outside of legal frameworks. These mechanisms include offices to preserve institutional archives and records, portals that are public-facing and provide access to official data and records, administrative procedures that hold members and staff accountable for their compliance with ethical rules (see dimensions 2.1.2 on code of conduct, 2.1.3 on conflicts of interest and 2.1.4 on disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure) and procedures for the scrutiny of government policies and programmes through periodic audits and programme or policy reviews. In this respect, curbing corruption requires collective efforts between and among offices of parliament and government. Parliament should collaborate with independent supreme audit institutions, the ombudsperson, inspectors-general, ethics commissions, and other relevant bodies that report to parliament to enforce its oversight efforts and ensure the necessary funding and independence for anti-corruption agencies to conduct their activities.

Promoting transparency, accountability and raising the awareness of the public about the forms and effects of corruption also require strong involvement of civil society actors and the media. Parliament should seek to engage civil society actors and consult independent reports, increase the data of watchdog organizations to

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¹ Defined by the World Bank (1997, 17) and Transparency International.  
raise awareness about acts of corruption, and assist with the scrutiny of such acts. Furthermore, parliament can amplify the voices of whistle-blowers by raising awareness about actions of corruption and illegal acts.

Through its oversight role, parliament is in a position to systematically and effectively scrutinize the work of the executive, control spending of public resources, and monitor the performance of ministerial portfolios and the overall implementation of national anti-corruption commitments. (Note that the parliament’s oversight role in relation to the executive and the budget is covered more generally in indicators 1.7 and 1.8.)

Effective prevention and combating of corruption must start in parliament itself. Institutions of parliament, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff should serve as role models by setting standards for integrity.

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 anti-corruption would encompass the following:

Parliament has passed a comprehensive anti-corruption legislative framework which is in full compliance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and which includes both the mandatory and recommended legislative measures set by the Convention.

Parliament has made the necessary budgetary allocations for anti-corruption and oversight bodies and activities to effectively and independently carry out anti-corruption functions.

The implementation of the national anti-corruption commitments, laws and policies is a subject of a regular in-depth oversight by a specialized committee, public account committee and sectoral committees, in cooperation with independent anti-corruption agencies.

Parliament has developed internal legal and procedural mechanisms to prevent, detect, and hold accountable MPs and staff engaged in corrupt practices.

Parliament has the legal and procedural mechanisms to address executive corruption through constitutional tools such as inquiries, interpellations or subpoena, where this is part of the legal-constitutional set up. Participation of the public and specialized civil society actors in raising awareness, preventing and curbing corruption at all levels is proactively promoted and encouraged by 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:
- Laws and policies aimed at preventing and curbing corruption
- Parliamentary and committees’ reports on scrutiny of the implementation of anti-corruption legislative framework and corruption cases
- Reports of anti-corruption agencies and other independent bodies
- Parliamentary rules addressing potential corruptive practices in parliament
- International and regional reports, such as Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index
- Reports by local NGOs and media

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

Parliament has adopted and amended legislation that includes both mandatory and recommended measures by the United Nations Convention against Corruption and additional UN commitments, including preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Oversight role

There is effective, rigorous and regular scrutiny of the executive, including monitoring of the expenditure of public resources and performance of ministerial portfolios, with particular attention given to regulating the implementation of national anti-corruption commitments. Such oversight is exercised by a specialized committee, public account committees or sectoral committees.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Inter-institutional collaboration

Parliament closely cooperates with anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions, the ombudsperson and other relevant bodies to monitor and track public resources, and conducts consistent reviews of audit reports to parliament. In order to encourage the effectiveness of these bodies in fulfilling their anti-corruption roles, parliament also maintains regular legislative action (such as updating freedom of information requirements, extending audit mandates on specialized programmes and incorporating post-legislative scrutiny measures into funding bills).

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Prevention and sanctioning of corrupt practices in parliament

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Parliament has developed legal mechanisms to prevent, detect, sanction and bring to justice parliamentarians and staff engaged in corrupt practices. It ensures regular monitoring of official activities, and promotes the transparency of public resources.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Public engagement**

National and parliamentary anti-corruption policies and practices promote the active participation of civil society actors in preventing and combatting corruption, including through public information-sharing portals that foster public contribution to decision-making, and raise public awareness about the existence of corruption and its severe implications.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- *Political Declaration after UNGASS 2021*.
- Phil Mason, *Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption* (WFD, 2021).
- Transparency International’s reports on the state of corruption in different areas of the world, available at [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org).
**Dimension 2.1.2 Code of conduct**

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics  
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

Various regulatory models exist in parliamentary systems concerning the conduct of parliamentarians and introducing behavioural standards for them. In many parliaments, the behaviour of MPs is partly regulated by the rules of procedures, which usually address the maintaining of order in the plenary. However, there is an evident trend towards the explicit codification of acceptable standards of parliamentary behaviour and conduct in general, in the form of a code of conduct.

A code of conduct sets out guidelines for the behaviour of members of parliament, which is an important segment of parliamentary accountability. "Codes affecting the conduct of individual members of parliament encourage ethical conduct, reduce risks to the integrity of the Parliament as the paramount political institution, and enable it to perform its functions more effectively, enhance propriety and strengthening the community’s trust in Parliament".⁴

The code should establish clear, effective and fair rules of conduct, with mechanisms to ensure their enforcement in practice. Procedures for monitoring breaches of the rules, investigating whether misconduct has occurred and sanctions for offenders, must be also clear, consistent and transparent.

Adoption of a parliamentary code of conduct in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner can contribute to more effective implementation in practice.

A code of conduct for members of parliament applies to all office holders who are members of the parliament and, if applicable, to other appointed officials, such as secretaries-general and deputy secretaries-general.

A parliamentary code of conduct may also apply to parliamentary staff, or there may be a separate code of conduct for staff at the level of parliament or the entire public administration. Depending on parliamentary context, parliament can choose one of these options for codification of parliamentary staff behaviour,⁵ which thereby plays a very important role in enhancing the legitimacy of parliament in the public eye.

This dimension uses the term ‘code of conduct’, but other terms can be used by different parliaments or, in some cases, the code of conduct and code of ethics can be combined into one document.

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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 code of conduct would encompass the following:

- Parliament has a code of conduct that establishes clear, effective and fair rules of conduct, as well as rules and procedures to ensure their enforcement in practice. Types of conduct which are considered as offences or misconduct, and which may lead to a disciplinary process and sanctions, are precisely defined.

- The code of conduct has been developed and adopted in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner, both by parliamentary majority and opposition.

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⁴ CPA, Recommended Benchmarks for Codes of Conduct applying to Members of Parliament, 2016  
⁵ See Dimension 2.2.6 – Professionalism of parliamentary administration

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
There is a special committee or similar body responsible for enforcing professional standards in parliament, implementing the code of conduct and carrying out regular reviews and updates. Complaints about potential breaches of the code of conduct can be filed by anyone and are deliberated by the responsible body in a timely manner. Decisions of this body are publicly available.

Every member of parliament is obliged to formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of the parliamentary mandate. Guidance and training are provided to MPs and staff to promote standards defined by the code, including induction training for new members.

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 code of conduct
- A decision on the establishment of a conduct committee or similar body
- Information and records about the work of the ethics committee

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 code of conduct

There is a code of conduct in parliament or a similar act that establishes rules for the behaviour of members of parliament, both in parliament and in their public duties. The rules of conduct are clearly defined, effective and fair. Every member of parliament is obliged to formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of parliamentary mandate.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Adoption of the code of conduct

The code has been developed and adopted in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner, based on international recommendations and best practices. The members of the parliamentary minority have been involved in developing the code and have voted for the code.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Assessment criterion No. 3: Scope and content of the code of conduct

The code of conduct clearly defines the type of behaviour which constitutes an offence or misconduct and which may lead to a disciplinary process and sanctions. It also prohibits any type of harassment (verbal, written or virtual) based on gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristics, among other offences or misconduct. Sanctions for breaching the rules are clear and proportionate to the severity of the misconduct.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Enforcement of the code of conduct

There is a special committee or similar body responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and its regular review and update. Depending on the given parliamentary context, investigations may be entrusted to an external regulatory entity, such as an anti-corruption agency.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Complaints

Complaints about offences, misconduct or any other potential breach of the code of conduct can be filed by anyone, including members of parliament, staff members and individual citizens. The body responsible for the consideration of complaints under the code of conduct deliberates on complaints in a timely manner and undertakes action in line with the code. Decisions of this body are publicly available, while taking into account reasonable boundaries related to the personal lives of MPs.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Promotion of the code of conduct

There are programmes and activities available to MPs and staff to promote standards of conduct through guidance and training, including induction training for new members.
Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading
Dimension 2.1.3 Conflict of interest

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

A conflict of interest is an issue, matter or action involving a member of parliament or staff whose private interests prevail over those of the public, and therefore come into direct conflict with that person’s work and mandate as a public official. Examples of conflicts of interest include situations where a member of parliament (or staff): has a professional obligation to another company or organization (see dimension 1.2.3 Incompatibility of office); advises a foreign government; holds another public office; or engages in actions to benefit family members or friends. Conflicts of interest and ways to address them should be codified in a parliament’s rules of procedure or national regulations, in order to uphold the integrity of public institutions. If not managed appropriately, conflicts of interest can result in corruption.

This dimension focuses primarily on conflicts of interest that relate to the registration of private interests in parliamentary debates (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets, the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments.

Practices to address conflict of interest vary significantly among countries. Some countries have separate laws aimed at preventing and managing conflicts of interest, while others have general anti-corruption legislation to address the issue. Some countries have adopted different requirements for separate categories of holders of public office and staff, including for MPs and parliamentary staff, which take into account their different positions, powers and tasks. For example, codes of conduct are mechanisms often used to address conflicts of interest.

Whatever the approach adopted, it is important for the general characteristics of conflict-of-interest situations to be clearly defined and for the procedures for identifying, managing and resolving such situations to be established and include control and monitoring mechanisms. Conflict of interest regulations should be supported by strategies and practices to promote an organizational culture that does not tolerate conflict of interest. For example, non-partisan parliamentary ethics bodies, commissions, and councils offer distinct mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest among members and staff. Transparency in the process of identifying, resolving and managing conflict of interest situations, especially in partnerships with public stakeholders and watchdog organizations, can also be effective in addressing conflicts of interest and increasing public trust.

As conflict of interest is a complex issue and may differ along ethical, socio-cultural, political, economic lines, depending on the nation and its parliament, regulatory approaches should be adapted to meet specific country contexts. A country’s regulatory framework should also include global best practices for regulating conflicts of interest, which uphold common elements, such as prohibitions on holding multiple elected offices, counselling foreign governments, or accepting bribes, and ensuring that one’s private interests in parliamentary debate are registered.

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 conflict of interest would encompass the following:

Parliament has a comprehensive legislative framework, whether under its rules of procedure, ethics laws, or other national regulations, that codifies conflicts of interest, in addition to ways to prevent and manage conflicts of interest.
Parliament has internal legal and procedural mechanisms to prevent, detect, and hold accountable MPs and staff in cases of conflict of interest.

There are rules and established procedures for the registration of private interests in debates on specific topics (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. There is a body in parliament tasked with controlling and monitoring compliance with these rules and procedures by MPs (a body can be established instead at the level of public administration to monitor compliance with conflict-of-interest rules by holders of public office).

The process of identifying, resolving and managing conflict-of-interest situations in parliament is transparent. Participation of external stakeholders, such as civil society watchdogs, in raising awareness, preventing and managing conflicts of interest is acknowledged by 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:

- Constitutional, legislative or other provisions concerning conflict of interest, particularly in a parliamentary context
- Provisions addressing the registration of interest in debates on specific topics (interest disclosure rules), the declaration of assets and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality
- Reports of the parliamentary body tasked with controlling and monitoring the implementation of conflict-of-interest rules
- Data on required declarations submitted by MPs
- Reports on compliance with conflict-of-interest 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: National regulations**

Conflicts of interest, and their prevention and management, are legally codified for holders of public office, either under a separate law or as part of other anti-corruption legal frameworks.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliament-specific rules**

There are provisions in rules of procedures or other statutory provisions and procedural mechanisms that allow for the identification, prevention and management of conflict of interest situations in parliamentary context, applicable to MPs and other holders of public office in parliament. This includes procedural mechanisms to hold MPs and staff accountable in the case of conflict of interest.
Assessment criterion No. 3: Interest disclosure

Members of parliament are required to register their private interests in debates on specific topics, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: The holding of one public office at a time

Regulations exist that prevent MPs from being elected to multiple public offices at a time. These regulations may also include timed restrictions following an MP’s departure from office to prevent the MP from taking up elected office in a different government branch or level of government in the period immediately after an unsuccessful election or departure from office.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Foreign government guidance

There are regulations that prevent an MP from directly encouraging the affairs of foreign governments, such as by directing MPs or government officials of another country to make specific decisions that benefit the private interests of outside individuals or groups.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 6: Declaration of assets
Members of parliament are required to declare their assets, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament, which might include assets of close family members, as well as liabilities. Submission of asset declarations is required when MPs join and leave parliament, as well as regular updates.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 7: Acceptance of gifts**

Parliament has well-defined rules on the acceptance of gifts by MPs and other holders of public office. Receiving gifts may be completely banned, or the acceptance of gifts that do not exceed a certain value may be allowed. Requirements for the registration of gifts may also exist.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 8: Hospitality**

Members of parliament are required to declare sponsored travel and accommodation, in line with the rules and procedures established by parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 9: Control and monitoring**

There is a body in the parliament (or at the level of public administration) tasked with controlling the compliance of MPs with conflict-of-interest rules, and initiating procedures in the event of non-compliance.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 10: Practice**
Conflict of interest rules are fully respected in the parliament. There is a high percentage of MPs who regularly submit required declarations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- Transparency International’s reports on the state of corruption in different areas of the world, available at [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org).
Dimension 2.1.4 Disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the responsibilities of parliamentary (party) groups, individual members of parliament, and certain staff for disclosing and reporting their income and spending of public funds (specifically, funds allocated under the parliamentary budget) in their work (for more details about the accountability of parliament as an institution in the spending of its budget, see Dimension 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure). It is important to note that MP income disclosure for private income and sources is covered in dimension 2.1.3 Conflict of interest.

Public interest in parliamentary ethics often focuses on how MPs use (or misuse) parliamentary resources or public funds. Parliament should make available sufficient information to allow citizens to make informed judgments regarding the integrity and probity of individual members of parliament and parliamentary groups. This includes information on MPs’ income and allowances received under the parliamentary budget, and all other benefits and compensation in addition to expenditure.

Transparency of spending budgetary funds should also apply to parliamentary parties and groups. Political parties usually have a legal obligation to provide information on the funding of political campaigns, and parliamentary groups are required to regularly report on their expenditure, both to the parliament and to the public. Depending on the structure and system of parliament, some bodies regulate public income and expenditure through a commission, committee, or other relevant office within parliament. In some structures, these provisions are regulated by stakeholders at the national or subnational level, or by external agencies.

In accordance with the legislative framework of each country, MPs might be required to disclose their non-parliamentary income (including additional income from other activities or donations), their assets and the assets of their spouses and dependent children, as well as liabilities (see Dimension 2.1.4 Conflict of interest).

Recruitment of MPs’ personal staff, such as secretaries, assistants and researchers, is also often an issue that attracts public attention. Information on personal staff and their remunerations should therefore be available to the public. The employment of family members for these positions is not forbidden in many parliaments, but it does raise public concerns about the accountable use of public money. Some countries have started to regulate the employment of family members, so as to prevent nepotism and to respond to public concerns. Such allocations and expenditures are often regulated by parliamentary administration.

Accountability for the use of public funds also covers the use of parliamentary resources, including staff. It is important for parliament to make a clear separation between the provision of legitimate support to MPs by parliamentary staff and the use of such staff for party political purposes. Some parliaments have introduced provisions in their code of ethics that prohibit MPs from placing parliamentary staff in a position that could jeopardize their political impartiality or call into question the proper use of public funds.

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 disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure would encompass the following:

Parliament makes available information on MPs’ salaries and all other benefits and compensation that they receive from the parliamentary budget, as well as their expenditure.
Parliamentary (party) groups are legally required to regularly report on their financing and expenditure, both to the parliament and to the public. There is a parliamentary body that is responsible for monitoring the compliance of parliamentary groups with those requirements, and for holding them accountable in the event of non-compliance.

The recruitment of political staff who are not part of parliamentary administration, such as personal assistants, secretaries and researchers of MPs or parliamentary groups, is clearly regulated in parliamentary rules. Provisions on their funding, as well as their remuneration and expenditure, are made publicly available.

Parliament takes care to prevent the use of parliamentary resources, including staff, for party political purposes.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select 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 in rules of procedures or other regulations concerning the publication of information on income and other benefits and compensation of MPs and their expenditure
- Provisions that address the obligation of parliamentary groups to report on their funding and spending
- Reports of the parliamentary body tasked with controlling and monitoring compliance of parliamentary groups with reporting requirements
- Provisions that regulate the employment of political staff of MPs or parliamentary groups
- Information on political staff and their remuneration
- Data on the required declarations submitted by 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: Income and expenditure of MPs**

Information on MPs’ salaries and all other benefits and compensation that they receive from the parliamentary budget, as well as their expenditure, are publicly available.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Funding and expenditure of parliamentary (party) groups**

There are provisions in rules of procedures or other statutory provisions that require parliamentary (party) groups to regularly report on their financing and expenditure. These reports are publicly available.

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

Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Monitoring mechanisms**

There is a parliamentary body that is responsible for monitoring the compliance of parliamentary groups with these requirements. There is evidence of procedural mechanisms that can be introduced in the event of non-compliance.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Recruitment and expenditures of political staff**

The recruitment of political staff who are not part of parliamentary administration, such as personal assistants, secretaries, and researchers of MPs or parliamentary groups, is clearly regulated in parliamentary rules. Information on political staff and expenditure for their remuneration is made publicly available.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Practice**

There is evidence of respect for the rules and requirements regarding the reporting and public availability of information on expenditure from the parliamentary budget for MPs, parliamentary parties and political staff. The use of parliamentary resources, including staff, for political purposes is forbidden, which is respected in parliamentary practice.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

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19
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

Sources and further reading

**Dimension 2.1.5 Lobbying**

Indicator: 2.1 Parliamentary ethics
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension addresses the legislative regulation of lobbying in the parliamentary context and its implementation in practice, as a significant factor of parliamentary accountability. It also takes into account the transparency of lobbying activities.

For the purpose of this dimension, lobbying activities can be regarded as acts by individuals or groups, each with varying and specific interests, which attempt to influence decisions taken at the political level. It therefore does not apply to so-called ‘lobbying for votes’, which is a political activity that sometimes occurs between members of parliament with the purpose of obtaining support for their proposals.

Although lobbying can have a positive impact, it can also be a mechanism for groups with specific interests to influence laws and policies at the expense of the public interest. Sound and enforceable legislative frameworks and corresponding mechanisms on lobbying, including parliamentary rules of conduct, are important to prevent undue influence on parliamentarians and other public decision-makers. The law should provide a precise definition of what lobbying is, what constitutes lobbying activities and who must register as potential lobbyists. All lobbying activities, including so-called professional lobbying and lobbying by interest groups, should be recorded in a publicly available register with accurate and timely updated information, including on lobbyists, their clients and finances.

This dimension uses the term ‘lobbyists’ to mean the same as other terms that are often used in practice in various countries, such as ‘private individuals or groups’, ‘interest groups’ and ‘extra-institutional actors’.

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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 lobbying would encompass the following:**

- There is an effective regulatory framework on lobbying in place that applies to parliamentarians and other public officials. The regulatory framework clearly defines lobbying and stipulates the requirements for and the manner of conducting lobbying activities, the rules on lobbying and other issues of importance concerning lobbying.

- The framework comprises a wide range of clearly defined categories of lobbyists who are required to register. It also includes clear and enforceable rules on transparency (including financial disclosure), confidentiality and conflict of interest for both lobbyists and lobbied officials, including parliamentarians.

- There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists (or part of a register at the national or public administration level), with complete information about lobbyists’ clients and finances. Information in the register is updated in a timely manner, with the regular tracking of all changes related to the status of lobbyists, authorizations for conducting lobbying and removal from the register, etc.

- Parliamentarians and other public decision-makers are legally obliged to notify the parliament (or other relevant body) and to submit data on any person conducting illegal lobbying, when it occurs.

**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 law that regulate lobbying
- Other regulations, such as bylaws, rules and procedures that stipulate lobbying activities
- Register of lobbyists (for example, a statute or weblink)

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: Regulatory framework**

There is an effective legislative framework on lobbying, including a law that applies to parliamentarians and other public officials and staff. The framework clearly defines lobbying and stipulates the requirements and manner of conducting lobbying activities, the rules on lobbying and other issues of importance for lobbying. Legal regulations on lobbying also contain sanctions for non-compliance.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules on transparency, confidentiality and conflict of interest for lobbyists and lobbied officials**

The framework in place includes clear and enforceable rules on transparency (such as disclosure of information on what interests are being pursued, by whom and with what budgets), as well as on confidentiality and conflict of interest for both lobbyists and lobbied officials, including parliamentarians.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Defined categories of lobbyists**

The regulatory framework comprises a wide range of clearly defined categories of lobbyists required to register, including: professional consultancies and law-firms, self-employed consultants; in-house lobbyists and trade/professional associations; non-governmental organizations; think tanks, research and academic institutions; organizations representing churches and religious communities; organizations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, and other public or mixed entities. Exemptions to legal regulations on lobbying are clearly defined and justified.
**Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament**

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<th>Assessment criterion No. 4: Register of lobbyists</th>
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<td>There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists (or part of a register at the national or public administration level), with complete information about lobbyists’ clients and finances. A register of lobbyists is maintained by a public authority or other designated body. This body is responsible for the timely update of all information in the register, regular tracking of all changes related to the status of lobbyists, authorizations for conducting lobbying and removal from the register, etc.</td>
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<th>Assessment criterion No. 5: Notification of illegal lobbying attempts</th>
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<td>Parliamentarians and other public decision-makers are legally obliged to notify the parliament (or other relevant body) and to submit data on any person conducting illegal lobbying, when it occurs.</td>
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<th>Assessment criterion No. 6: Accountability</th>
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<td>Members of a non-partisan ethics committee or similar body are responsible for reviewing lobbying disclosures and requirements periodically. In the event of an infraction by a member, public official or staff member, the committee takes steps to hold the official accountable, and ensure that necessary actions are taken to address the situation at hand.</td>
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</table>
Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- European Commission, Transparency Register.
Indicator 2.2 – Institutional integrity

In democratic systems of government, parliament is often seen as the nation’s highest institution. As such, it is essential for parliament to act as a role model for the nation with regard to institutional integrity, and uphold the highest standards and values in its operations. This indicator concerns a number of different aspects of the institutional integrity that parliaments should aspire to achieve.

Parliament is responsible for approving the national budget, both for publicly funded agencies and for itself. Parliament needs to ensure complete accountability for the expenditure of funds which it has approved for itself. Like other publicly funded organizations, parliament has to procure goods and services to assist it in providing its services and performing its functions. It therefore needs to have well-developed procedures that ensure transparency and a proper process. The indicator also concerns the provision by parliament of full access to information about its administration and work, including full and regular reporting on its activities and performance, and its expenditure. Finally, the indicator includes the recruitment, career development and professionalism of parliamentary staff. The staff of the parliament are unique in that they operate in a highly political environment but must do so in a non-partisan way. This means the parliamentary administration needs to pay close attention to the recruitment of suitable staff and to their development and career advancement, without political interference. As parliamentary staff ensure the institutional continuity of a parliament, they play a pivotal role in institutional integrity.

The assessment of the Institutional integrity indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure
- 2.2.2 Public procurement
- 2.2.3 Access to information
- 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work
- 2.2.5 Staff recruitment
- 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration
**Dimension 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditure**

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity  
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

As was noted in dimension 1.1.3 Budgetary autonomy, parliament has independence over the setting of its own budget, and is not subject to approval by the executive. The legislature also has autonomy for the execution of its budgetary expenditure. With the autonomy of the parliament in relation to its budget comes the need for parliament to be transparent and accountable for how the funds are spent. Just as parliament requires accountability from publicly funded agencies for which it approves expenditure, a similar level of accountability is expected from the parliament and its administration. This dimension concerns how parliament ensures this accountability responsibility.

First, there should be clear and transparent requirements to be met by the legislature, which stipulate how its funds are spent. This is required for all expenditure. However, clear rules and procedures should be established in particular for the remuneration and allowances of individual MPs and their staff, parliamentary officeholders and parliamentary (political) parties and groups, as they are the subject of considerable sensitivity and scrutiny. It is important that the remuneration and allowances of MPs, both individually and collectively, are actually, and are seen to be, disbursed in line with clearly understood and transparent rules and processes, and within budget.

Secondly, an important way for parliament to fulfil its accountability responsibility is for it to, through its parliamentary administration, report openly to the parliament and the public on its spending of funds in all areas of the budget, including the total expenditure on the allowances and remuneration of MPs and their staff. (Note that individual reporting on MPs’ and staff remuneration and allowances is covered in dimension 2.1.4.) This includes reporting on activities, services, performance of the parliamentary administration, and the total remuneration and allowances of MPs and their staff.

Thirdly, the expenditure of funds by the parliament should be subject to various levels of oversight. The approaches to oversight would include regular, independent auditing of parliamentary expenditure, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of the funds on MPs’ and staff remuneration and allowances. These audits would be made public. Oversight also is often undertaken by a committee (or committees) of the parliament. Such a committee(s) assesses the reports of the parliamentary administration and the audits of expenditure and provides scrutiny and accountability for the expenditure under the parliamentary budget. The reports and findings of this committee(s) also should be made 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 parliamentary expenditure would encompass the following:

Parliament has, either by means of legislation or its own requirements, clear and transparent rules and procedures for the expenditure of parliamentary funds, including clear rules for the payment of remuneration and the various allowances of individual MPs and their staff, parliamentary officeholders and parliamentary (political) parties and groups.
There is a requirement for regular reporting by the parliamentary administration, on behalf of the parliament, on parliament’s expenditure of funds in all areas of the budget, including the total expenditure on MPs’ and staff allowances and remuneration. This includes reporting on the activities, services, performance of the parliamentary administration and on the total remuneration and allowances of MPs and staff.

The rules of procedure and practices of the legislature require the expenditure of funds by the parliament to be subject to regular, independent auditing, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of funds on MPs’ and staff remuneration and allowances. There is also oversight undertaken by a committee (committees) of the parliament. The reports from any audits and of the oversight committee(s) are made public.

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that the expenditure from the parliamentary budget is made in accordance with the law, rules and procedures set by the parliament, and that the accountability, responsibility and transparency requirements are fully met.

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, rules of procedures of the parliament or other requirements which relate to accountability for the expenditure of parliamentary funds
- Specific rules or procedures for the payment of remuneration and allowances to MPs and staff
- Parliamentary reports and information on expenditure available on the parliamentary website
- Audit reports on parliamentary expenditure or on MPs’ and staff remuneration and allowances
- Reports of oversight committee(s) on expenditure 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: Clear and transparent rules and procedures

Parliament has, either through legislation or its own requirements, clear and transparent rules and procedures for the expenditure of parliamentary funds, including clear rules for the payment of remuneration and the various allowances to individual MPs, parliamentary officeholders and political parties and groups.

Assessment criterion No. 2: Public reporting on budgetary expenditure

There is regular reporting by the parliamentary administration, on behalf of the parliament, on parliament’s expenditure of funds in all areas of the budget. These include the total budget allocated to parliament and its
chambers, administrative expenses in detail, total remuneration and allowances for MPs and staff (including parliamentary party groups) and all other expenditures that occur in the work of parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Independent audit**

There are legislative or similar requirements and supporting practices of the legislature for the expenditure of funds by the parliament to be subject to regular, independent auditing, including auditing of the administration and expenditure of the funds on the remuneration and allowances of MPs and their staff. Such audits are made publicly available.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Oversight**

There are rules of procedure and practices of the legislature that require oversight of all parliamentary expenditure to be undertaken by a committee (or committees) of the parliament. The reports of the committee(s) are made public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Expenditure in accordance with rules and procedures**

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that expenditure from the parliamentary budget is in accordance with the law, rules and procedures set by the parliament. Reports and information on parliamentary expenditures are publicly available and presented in a way that is understandable for the general public.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

**Dimension 2.2.2 Public procurement**

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity  
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

Parliament is not able to provide all its own goods and services and therefore needs to procure these items from the private sector at times, to enable MPs and the administration to carry out their function and responsibilities. In undertaking the task of public procurement, the parliament has to ensure that it follows a proper process that is transparent and open to competitive bids.

There should be a legislative provision for the procurement process. This framework could be one that covers all publicly funded agencies, in which case parliament must ensure that legal provisions meet parliamentary needs. Some parliaments have enacted a separate legal framework for parliament, which meets the specific needs of the legislature compared with those of executive bodies. These provisions should also require clear and comprehensive guidelines for procurement. The guidelines should encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken.

The key principles to be reflected in the guidelines should include:

- Value for money, that is, to maximize the use of public money
- Fairness
- Transparency, openness and clarity
- Ethical behaviour
- Competition and efficiency

The process of procurement itself, which would also be reflected in the guidelines, generally would include the following steps:

- Identify and then scope the procurement requirement
- Explore the options for sourcing the requirement
- Seek public tenders
- Evaluate tender submissions and make a decision. The decision-making process may require approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size
- Manage the contract once agreed

Procurement is a specialized task requiring particular knowledge and skills. The parliament should have staff with an understanding of the procurement process to undertake procurement on its behalf. In addition to specialist staff to undertake procurement, staff with skills in contract management also are needed by the parliament to manage contracts once agreed, so that the parliament obtains the best value from the contracts.

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The most critical requirement is for there to be complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process, from the provision of advice on a requirement and the seeking of tenders, to the provision of information about the tender and the announcement of the final decision. Transparency and openness encourage the achievement of the other objectives of procurement, namely value for money, fairness, competition and ethical behaviour.

Parliament’s public procurement process and decisions should be subject to an external audit or other review to provide assurance regarding compliance with the law and other regulations. In some countries, an independent body has been established for controlling public procurement implementation at the level of public administration.

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 procurement would encompass the following:

- There are legal provisions for the procurement process of the parliament. The framework could either be a national public procurement framework in which the parliament is included, or one specifically for the parliament.
- There are guidelines or regulations that provide clear and comprehensive guidance for public procurement by the parliament. These guidelines encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken. The process may involve a requirement for approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size.
- The parliament has expertise in all aspects of the public procurement process. In addition to expertise in procurement, the parliament also has expertise in managing contracts once they have been agreed, to obtain the best value for money in their management.
- The practices of the legislature support complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process. Transparency and openness encourage the achievement of the objectives of public procurement. Reviews or audits of the procurement process, both internally and externally, are used to provide assurance regarding compliance with procurement laws and guidelines.

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 that relate to public procurement by the parliament
- Guidelines and other regulations for the public procurement process in the parliament
- Public information on the all stages of the procurement process
- Audits or other reports of reviews of particular procurements or the procurement process, internal and external
- Data regarding possible non-compliance of the public procurement with the law

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
There is evidence of legislative provisions for the procurement process of the parliament. The framework could either be a national public procurement framework, which properly fits the needs of parliament, or a framework enacted specifically for the parliament. Provisions include accountability and possible sanctions for both the parliament and the successful bidder in the event of non-compliance.

Assessment criterion No. 2: Guidelines covering the principles and process for procurement

There is evidence of guidelines or regulations that provide clear and comprehensive guidance for public procurement by the parliament. These guidelines encompass both the key principles for procurement as well as the process by which procurement is undertaken. The process may involve a requirement for approval by a board or commission, including MPs, for procurements of a certain size.

Assessment criterion No. 3: External audit of public procurement by parliament

Parliament’s public procurement process is subject to external audits or other reviews by an independent body established at the level of public administration or in another manner.

Assessment criterion No. 4: Staff expertise and training

The parliament has expertise in all aspects of the public procurement process. In addition to expertise in procurement, the parliament also has expertise in managing contracts once they have been agreed, to obtain the best value for money in their management. Training for all staff, as well as MPs involved in the public procurement process, is provided regularly and attendance is mandatory.
Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Transparency and openness**

The practices of the legislature support complete transparency and openness throughout the procurement process. Transparency and openness encourage the achievement of the objectives of public procurement.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

Dimension 2.2.3 Access to information

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

Parliament usually enacts legislation that ensures access to information, and thereby freedom of information (FOI) for the disclosure of information on public sector agencies. FOI for public sector agencies recognizes that, as these agencies receive public funds, citizens and other organizations should expect to be able to request access to specific information on those agencies regarding their activities and operations. Just as public sector agencies should be subject to FOI, similarly the parliament and its administration should be open to providing information to enable FOI. This can be achieved either by making the parliament part of a general scheme for FOI for all publicly funded agencies, or by establishing specific provisions for parliament on FOI requirements which recognize that parliament is different and separate from executive government agencies.

The information that should be available to citizens from the parliament includes information on the parliamentary administration and the services that it provides. It also includes information relating to the procedures and processes of the legislature and its associated bodies, such as committees. Any FOI requirements concerning parliament should take account of the immunity of parliamentary privilege enjoyed by individual MPs, particularly in their relationship with constituents, which may limit access to information in very specific cases that are stipulated by law or other regulations.

The general principles that should be reflected in an FOI provision, including that for the parliament, include:

- Proactive publishing of predetermined categories of information
- Maximum disclosure
- Exceptions to disclosure are clearly and narrowly defined and are subject to a strict ‘public interest’ test. However, the limitations on providing information as a result of the existence of parliamentary privilege need to be recognized.
- Access to information should be facilitated and not made overly expensive.
- Refusals to disclose information should be subject to appeal to an independent body whose decisions are binding.

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 information would encompass the following:

There are legislative provisions for a parliamentary freedom of information regime. It can either be a general public sector regime that applies to the parliament and its administration or a specific scheme for the parliament. The scheme requires the disclosure of information on both the parliamentary administration and the parliament’s procedures and processes.
The FOI provisions covering the parliament require maximum disclosure of information with any exceptions being clearly and narrowly defined in the regime with a strong ‘public interest’ test for disclosure. The existence of parliamentary privilege may limit access to information in very specific circumstances.

The FOI provisions set standards for the proactive publishing of certain categories of information, including the budget, parliamentary action plans, implementation reports and audit reports.

The FOI provisions of the parliament ensure that access to information is facilitated, provided in a timely manner, and not overly expensive. Refusals to disclose are subject to independent external review with any decision being binding.

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 that relate to freedom of information to parliamentary information
- Guidelines covering FOI provisions of the parliament
- Categories of proactively published information
- Statistics about FOI requests, including number of requests received, approved, timeliness, cost and any appeals and their 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: Legislative framework

There is evidence of legislative provisions for a parliamentary freedom of information (FOI) system. They can either be a national public sector regulation that applies to the parliament and its administration, or a specific provision for the parliament. The provision requires the disclosure of information on both the parliamentary administration and the parliament’s procedures and processes.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Maximum disclosure

The FOI provisions covering the parliament require maximum disclosure of information with any exceptions being clearly and narrowly defined in the regime with a strong ‘public interest’ test for disclosure. Parliamentary privilege may limit access to some information in very specific circumstances that are legally defined. Any citizen or organization can request information without justifying reasons for access.
Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

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

Assessment criterion No. 3: Proactive publishing

The FOI provisions set standards for the proactive publishing of certain categories of information, including budget, parliamentary action plans, implementation reports and audit reports.

Assessment criterion No. 4: Guidelines for access

The FOI regulations of the parliament have detailed guidelines that ensure that access to information is facilitated and is not overly expensive. The guidelines include:

- Clear provisions on who can request access and how they can do so
- Deadlines for providing information
- The possibility to choose the format of information (hard copy, digital etc.) depending on cost
- Access free of charge as a default
- The right to complain if information is not provided, only partially provided or not provided in a timely manner (see next criterion)
- The storing of data on the requests received and responses provided

Assessment criterion No. 5: Independent appeal process

Refusals to disclose information or failure to disclose information within a set deadline are subject to independent external review by an enforcement authority, the decisions of which are binding.
**Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament**

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### Recommendations for change

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### Sources and further reading

Dimension 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

The legislature is responsible for systematically reporting on all aspects of the work of the parliament. This will include reporting on the administrative work and services provided by the parliamentary administration, as well as the work of the parliament and its committees.

Reporting is an important accountability mechanism and, just as parliament seeks to hold the executive accountable to it, the parliament itself must be accountable to the community for its activities. Consistent, systematic and thorough public reporting is a central part of fulfilling this accountability responsibility.

In relation to the administration of the parliament, reporting will include reporting on budgetary expenditure (see dimension 2.2.1) and reporting on services, performance and activities of the parliament and its administration. This often may be implemented by means of a requirement for annual reporting. Reporting will serve the purpose of advising MPs on the administration of the parliament, as well as informing the public. Reporting to MPs may facilitate the work of bodies or committees of MPs who oversee the work of the parliament. Such reporting arrangements will either be a legislative requirement of the parliament or be made in its rules of procedure.

In relation to the work of the parliament, its committees and other bodies, any records and the reports of such work should be available to the public (see dimension 1.3.9). There should be clear rules of the legislature requiring that the work of the parliament in all its aspects is made available to the public unless there is a specific and sound reason why it should not.

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 reporting on parliamentary work would encompass the following:

- There are laws and rules of procedure of the legislature that require the parliament to report publicly on the work and activities of the legislature, its committees and other bodies.
- There are laws and rules of procedure of the legislature that require regular public reporting by the parliamentary administration on its budgetary expenditure, services, activities, and performance.
- The practices of the legislature demonstrate that there is regular and systematic reporting to the public on the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration.

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 and rules of procedures of the parliament that relate to public reporting on the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration
- Reports of the parliament and parliamentary administration on their work and 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: Reporting on the work of the parliament

The laws and rules of procedure of the legislature require the parliament to report publicly on the work and activities of the legislature, its committees and other bodies.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Reporting on parliamentary administration

The laws, rules of procedure or other regulation of the legislature require regular public reporting by the parliamentary administration on its budgetary expenditure, services, activities and performance.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Practice of the legislature in public reporting

The practice of the legislature support that there is regular and systematic reporting to the public about the work and activities of the parliament and the parliamentary administration.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Sources and further reading

Dimension 2.2.5 Staff recruitment and advancement

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

Dimensions 1.1.4 and 1.5.1 recognize the autonomy of the parliament in its administrative responsibility and the significance of having adequate independent and unbiased staff to support the legislature. This dimension (and 2.2.6), like dimension 1.5.1, covers only non-partisan staff supporting the parliament and concerns the recruitment and advancement (promotion) of this staff.

In order to be effective, parliament is heavily dependent on the availability of capable, committed, independent and non-partisan staff to support its work. Parliamentary staff are like the staff of any organization in that they need to be well led and managed, but they also are unique in that they work in a highly political environment, where they are expected to work in an impartial way to support all MPs regardless of political persuasion. These factors mean that parliamentary staff have particular characteristics that need to be reflected in their recruitment, advancement, management and professional development (dimension 2.2.6 concerns the management and professional ethos and development of parliamentary staff).

Parliamentary staff can be drawn from the civil service, as many of the skills required for parliamentary work are shared with the work in the civil service. However, parliamentary staff have a different role and orientation from that of the staff in the civil service, and this should be reflected in their recruitment and advancement. As a result, parliament should be in control of its own recruitment and promotion, without input by the executive. The following principles can be applied to the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff:

- Staff should be recruited and promoted through fair, transparent and open competition, on merit.
- Appointment or advancement should not be based on personal or partisan political factors.
- As part of recruitment, candidates should be tested for their ability to behave with integrity and political impartiality.
- MPs or political staff are not involved in the recruitment or advancement of parliamentary staff, other than that of the most senior staff, such as the secretary-general or deputy secretary-general.
- Parliamentary staff should represent citizens more broadly (see dimension 5.2.1 on workforce diversity, which covers this principle).

In relation to the most senior positions (such as secretary-general or deputy secretary-general), some of these general principles do not apply (for example, the involvement of MPs in the appointment process). However, recognition is usually given to the principle of the administrative autonomy of the legislature and the secretary-general (and other senior posts) appointed by or on the recommendation of the speaker, a parliamentary service commission, board or plenary. Even in legislatures where the secretary-general may be appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the executive, the parliament (speaker or parliamentary commission) is usually involved in the process. In most parliaments, the secretary-general does not have a

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7 These principles are taken from the following document: Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) Principles for recruitment and career management of staff of the parliamentary administration (Adopted by the Association on 9 October 2013, Geneva: ASGP, 2014).

8 A useful discussion on the different approaches adopted by legislatures to the appointment of the secretary-general is contained in: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), ‘Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration’ (Switzerland: IPU, 2020), 4 and 7.
party affiliation, although this is not universally the case. Although secretaries-general may have a party affiliation, they are expected to serve the parliament with impartiality and integrity.

Recruitment and promotion are specialized tasks requiring particular skills. As this responsibility is exercised independently by the parliament, it requires sufficient, capable staff to carry out the function.

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 recruitment and advancement would encompass the following:

There are constitutional, legislative or equivalent provisions that provide for the autonomy of parliament in the recruitment and advancement of its staff, without input by the executive.

There are rules determined by the parliament for the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff. The rules reflect the following principles:

- Recruitment and advancement are conducted through transparent, open and competitive processes based on skills, experience, and merit.
- Appointment or advancement are not based on political affiliations or partisan politics.
- MPs are not included in the recruitment or advancement process.

Interchange between the civil service and the parliamentary service is permitted, but the unique nature of parliamentary service employment is recognized.

The parliament demonstrates, in the rules, that a careful balance between openness and accessibility is ensured, with only reasonably imposed restrictions.

The autonomy of the parliament institution is reflected in the appointment of secretary-general and senior parliamentary administration managers, whether or not they have a political affiliation.

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to independently perform the function of recruitment and advancement of parliamentary 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:

- Provisions of the constitution, legislation or equivalent relating to independent recruitment and advancement by the parliament
- Rules, procedures and guidelines relating to the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff
- Statistics relating to the recruitment and advancement of staff
- Any reviews or reports relating to recruitment and advancement processes

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: Parliamentary autonomy in recruitment and advancement**
Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

There is evidence of constitutional, legislative or equivalent provisions that provide for the autonomy of parliament in the recruitment and advancement of its staff, without input by the executive. National laws may establish that parliamentary staff are whole-of-government employees for the purpose of retirement and other related benefits.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Rules for recruitment and advancement

There is evidence of rules determined by the parliament for the recruitment and advancement of parliamentary staff. The rules reflect the following principles:

- Recruitment and advancement are conducted through transparent, open and competitive processes based on skills, experience, and merit.
- Appointment and advancement are not based on political affiliations or partisan politics.
- MPs are not included in the recruitment or advancement process.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Relationship to the civil service

Interchange between the civil service and the parliamentary service is permitted, but the unique nature of parliamentary service employment is recognized.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Practices of the legislature in recruitment and advancement

The practices of the legislature demonstrate that non-partisan parliamentary staff are appointed independently of the executive, on merit, and without influence by MPs or political considerations.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Recruitment of staff to senior roles such as secretary-general**

Although the practices of legislatures in recruiting and appointing for senior roles of the parliamentary administration (such as secretary-general) vary, the autonomy of the parliament institution is reflected in the appointment process for these roles. Secretary-general and senior managers, whether or not they have a political affiliation, are required to serve the parliament with impartiality and integrity.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Capacity of staff**

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to independently perform the function of recruitment and advancement.

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**

**Sources and further reading**

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), ‘*Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration*’ (IPU, 2020).
Dimension 2.2.6 Professionalism of parliamentary administration

Indicator: 2.2 Institutional integrity
Sub-target: 2 Accountable parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

The unique nature of parliamentary staff was described in dimension 2.2.5, and that description is relevant also to this dimension. Although parliamentary staff are unique, as is the case in any organization, they require capable leadership and management to ensure the proper management of their careers. This dimension addresses a number of different aspects of the career management of parliamentary staff, including the establishment of appropriate professional and ethical standards for staff, the provision of suitable professional development regarding the particular skills required in a parliamentary environment, and the development of a corporate culture and ethos that is adapted to the parliamentary environment.

The place of parliament in the national perception means that both MPs and parliamentary staff must act with the utmost professionalism and integrity to reflect parliament’s eminent status. In effect, members, and by extension, their staff, represent the institution itself. For staff, this means having an appropriate professional approach to their work, which is underpinned by clear statements of values, expectations and conduct. Staff would be expected to have a statement of values or standards with which they were required to comply, and to be subject to an associated code of conduct that would address any alleged breach of standards or instances of inappropriate conduct. A statement of values or standards might cover matters such as:

- Professionalism
- Ethical behaviour
- Respect for the parliament and the people it serves
- Integrity and accountability
- Impartiality

The code of conduct would be expected to include:

- Behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity
- Treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment. This particularly includes respectful behaviour towards women and minority groups.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain
- Upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country
- Having a process for the filing of complaints and the independent investigation of alleged breaches of the code or the standards, with sanctions to be applied in the case of proven breaches.

The statement or code of ethics, standards and conduct can be applied generally to the civil service and extended (with some modifications) to parliamentary staff or be developed specifically for parliamentary staff. There may be a single code or statement covering both ethics and conduct, or more than one statement or code, covering ethics (standards) and conduct separately.

As has been noted, parliamentary staff perform a unique role that differs from the role of the civil service in supporting the executive. The parliamentary administration therefore has an important responsibility for the training and professional development of its staff. While some of the skills required by parliamentary staff are general (such as leadership, people management and project management), many of the skills (for example, the application of procedural knowledge) are particular to the parliamentary service. The parliamentary administration should have a framework of human resources policies and practices for the professional development of its staff to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support the parliament into the future. In addition to professional development, the framework of human resources policies and practices
Sub-target 2 – Accountable parliament

should encourage the retention of staff (to assist with institutional continuity and for succession planning) so that parliament will have staff for senior roles into the future.

In addition to the professional development of its staff, it is incumbent on the parliamentary service (particularly its senior leadership) to develop an ethos of parliamentary service. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment, and that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. Human resources policies and practices should be developed to foster such an ethos.

The development and implementation of the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of staff is a specialized task. The parliament will need staff with the necessary skills and capacities to undertake this responsibility.

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 professionalism of parliamentary administration would encompass the following:

There is legislation or rules of the legislature that require the development of codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff. The requirement can be general, for example, for all civil service staff (and adapted for parliamentary staff), or specifically for parliamentary staff.

There are code(s) or statements of ethics and standards and of conduct covering all parliamentary staff. The code or statement of ethics and standards include matters such as professionalism, ethical behaviour, respect for the parliament, its staff and the people they serve, integrity and accountability and impartiality. The code of conduct covers matters such as: behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity; treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment, particularly women and minority groups; avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain; and upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country.

There is a clearly defined and robust process for complaints to be filed concerning alleged breaches of the code(s), for an independent investigation of alleged breaches to be carried out, as well as for sanctions to be applied in the case of a breach.

The parliamentary administration has a developed framework for the professional development of parliamentary staff that recognizes the unique skills and capabilities required by such staff. Human resources policies and practices are developed and implemented to support the framework.

The parliamentary service, through its human resources policies and practices, develops an ethos of parliamentary service among the parliamentary staff. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment, and the fact that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. The senior leadership of the parliamentary service play an important role in this.

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to develop and implement the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of parliamentary 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:

- Provisions of legislation or an equivalent relating to codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for the parliamentary staff
- Codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff
- Statistics relating to complaints filed about breaches of the code(s) and any outcomes
- A human resources framework and policies relating to professional staff development and parliamentary ethos

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**

There are legislation or rules of the legislature that require the development of codes or statements of ethics, standards and conduct for parliamentary staff. The requirement can be general, for example for all civil service staff (and adapted for parliamentary staff), or specifically for parliamentary staff.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Codes or statements of ethics and conduct for staff**

There is evidence of code(s) or statements of ethics and standards and of conduct covering all parliamentary staff. The code or statement of ethics and standards cover matters such as: professionalism, ethical behaviour, respect for the parliament, its staff and the people they serve, integrity and accountability and impartiality. The code of conduct addresses matters such as: behaving honestly, lawfully and with integrity; treating everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment, particularly women and minority groups; avoiding conflicts of interest, or improper use of a position for personal gain; and upholding the good reputation of the parliament and the country.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Breaches of the code(s)**

There is a clearly defined and robust process for complaints to be filed regarding alleged breaches of the code(s), for an independent investigation of alleged breaches to be carried out, and for sanctions to be applied in the case of a breach.

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Assessment criterion No. 4: Framework for professional development

The parliamentary administration has a developed framework for the professional development of parliamentary staff, including training in specific areas, which recognizes the unique skills and capabilities required by such staff. Human resources policies and practices are developed and implemented to support the framework.

Assessment criterion No. 5: Ethos of parliamentary service

The parliamentary service, through its human resources policies and practices, develops an ethos of parliamentary service among the parliamentary staff. This ethos recognizes the unique nature of parliamentary service employment and that staff can contribute significantly to the institutional continuity of the parliament. The senior leadership of the parliamentary service plays an important role in this.

Assessment criterion No. 6: Capacity of staff

Parliament has sufficient, capable staff to develop and implement the human resources policies and practices necessary for the professional development of parliamentary staff.

Recommendations for change
Sources and further reading

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration* (IPU, 2020).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament* (IPU, 2019).