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

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¹ Defined by the World Bank (1997, 17) and Transparency International.  
civil society actors and consult independent reports, increase the data of watchdog organizations to 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:

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<tr>
<th>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of anti-corruption would encompass the following:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>Parliament has made the necessary budgetary allocations for anti-corruption and oversight bodies and activities to effectively and independently carry out anti-corruption functions.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>Parliament has developed internal legal and procedural mechanisms to prevent, detect, and hold accountable MPs and staff engaged in corrupt practices.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- 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

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.

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

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 combating 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.

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading

- Political Declaration after UNGASS 2021.
Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

- 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.
**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”.  

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 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, 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.

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5 See Dimension 2.2.6 – Professionalism of parliamentary administration
The code of conduct has been developed and adopted in an inclusive, transparent and consultative manner, both by parliamentary majority and opposition.

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

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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.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**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.

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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.

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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.
Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

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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**
Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

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

Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

- 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.
### Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

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

Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading
- The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness (2012).
**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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<tr>
<th>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of lobbying would encompass the following:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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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</table>
**Assessment**

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific articles of the 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.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Register of lobbyists**

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.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Notification of illegal lobbying attempts**

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.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 6: Accountability**

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.
Indicator 2.1 – Parliamentary ethics

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources and further reading
- European Commission, Transparency Register.