Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

This indicator recognizes that the processes of the parliament need to be open and transparent to the public so that the public is able to understand and engage with the parliament in a way that it chooses, whether it is to be informed about, observe, follow or participate in parliamentary processes. In addition to being transparent, information about the work, decisions and procedures of the legislature needs to be provided in a timely manner, and in forms that can be accessed and understood by the public.

The indicator covers the full range of the work of the parliament, including the plenary, the work of committees, parliament’s international engagement and the work of MPs. It addresses in particular the major areas of the work of the parliament. It therefore examines the transparency of all aspects of the legislative process, which is the primary function of any legislature. It also covers the transparency of the budget process from the initiation of the process to the consideration and approval of the budget by the legislature, as well as ex-post reporting and review.

The assessment of the transparency of parliamentary processes indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work
- 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process
- 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency
**Dimension 3.1.1 Transparency of parliamentary work**

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes  
Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension concerns the transparency of all the work of the parliament. It therefore broadly covers the key principles, policies and practices of the legislature concerning transparency. (Note that dimensions 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 concern more specifically the transparency of crucial aspects of parliamentary roles, namely the legislative process and the process of budgetary consideration. Other dimensions also touch on the transparency of the work and administration of the legislature (2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5).

The work of the parliament is central to the lives of its citizens. For citizens to be fully informed about the work, decisions and activities of all aspects of the legislature, from the plenary and committees to international parliamentary relationships and the work of MPs, it is essential for the parliament to have clearly defined policies and practices for the transparency of all aspects of its work. In addition to transparency, information needs to be available in accessible and usable forms to all groups in the community, including minority or disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities.

As the parliament and its processes and practices are not always readily understood within the community, parliament also needs to provide explanations of parliamentary processes so that citizens can gain an understanding of how parliament works and, consequently, better understand how to use and put into context the detailed information that is made available.

It can be a resource-intensive task to make available detailed information about the work of the parliament. Parliament needs to ensure that it has sufficient and capable staff and other resources to assume its transparency responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<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 transparency of parliamentary work would encompass the following:</th>
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<tr>
<td>There are rules of the legislature that provide a clear framework requiring transparency of all aspects of the work of the legislature, such as the plenary, committees, international parliamentary cooperation, and the benefits and allowances of MPs. The framework includes statements concerning the principles and policies of the legislature to ensure transparency, and a clear indication of how the policies will be translated into practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information on all aspects of the work of the parliament is made available in a timely manner and can be widely accessed. Such information covers the work of the legislature and is packaged in a way that combines related areas of information to make it more easily available to the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information about the work of the parliament is readily accessible and usable by the general community. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.</td>
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Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain in detail the role of parliament, and various processes, procedures and activities of the legislature, its committees and its MPs, to enable the public to gain an understanding of parliamentary processes so that they can make full use of the detailed information provided by the parliament.

The parliament has adequate and capable human resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific provisions of the rules of the legislature that relate to the transparency of all aspects of parliamentary work
- Information available or accessible from the parliamentary website concerning all aspects of parliamentary work
- Statistics on the number of visits to the parliamentary website to access information on the work of the parliament
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of the information concerning the work of the parliament that is available on the website.

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: Framework for transparency

There are rules of the legislature that provide a clear framework requiring the transparency of all aspects of the work of the legislature, such as the plenary, committees, international parliamentary cooperation, and the benefits and allowances of MPs. The framework includes statements concerning the principles and policies of the legislature to ensure transparency, and a clear indication of how the policies are translated into practice.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Availability of information

Information on all aspects of the work of the parliament is made available in a timely manner and can be widely accessed. Such information covers the work of the legislature and is packaged in a way that combines related areas of information to make it more easily available to the community.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessibility and usability of information

Information about the work of the parliament is readily accessible and usable by the general community. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority groups, groups without access to the internet, disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Explanation of parliamentary processes

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain in detail the role, various processes, procedures and activities of the legislature, its committees and its MPs, to enable the public to gain an understanding of parliamentary processes so that they can make full use of the detailed information provided by the parliament.

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Resources

The parliament has adequate and capable resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities, including the periodic evaluation of parliamentary transparency and the introduction of new mechanisms and practices to further improve transparency.

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

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes
Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

Dimension 3.1.2 Transparency of the legislative process

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes
Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension addresses the issue of the transparency of the entire cycle of the legislative process, from the introduction of a piece of legislation to the adoption of a law by parliament. It also considers the scope, channels, forms and timing of the dissemination of legislative information to the public.

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

Parliament makes available to the public all relevant information and documents considered and generated throughout the legislative process. This includes the full text and status of a proposal for a new law, or a proposal to change an existing law that is presented for debate before parliament, as well as the texts of all amendments, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, and all other background information created for or by parliament that forms part of the record on a given piece of legislation.

Information is made available on the parliamentary website in a timely manner (in real time or as quickly as it is available internally), and in a format that can easily be searched for, downloaded and reused.

All documents related to a specific piece of legislation (amendments to the law, records and minutes of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and other reports and background information) are structured and presented in a way that ensure that citizens can easily follow and understand the entire legislative process.

Links are also provided to the text and final status of proposed and enacted legislation from previous years which relate to proposed pieces of legislation.

Parliament constantly monitors the new trends and experiences of other parliaments and periodically introduces innovations and improves its practices.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

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1 The term ‘proposal for a new law’, in this case, refers to a bill, a draft law, ‘law proposition’ or ‘law project’ (depending on the parliamentary system) that is introduced, tabled or submitted by any stakeholder with a legal right to legislative initiative (such as the executive, an MP, group of MPs, or any other legitimate stakeholder in the given parliament).
Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

- Specific articles of the rules of procedures that regulate transparency of legislative process
- Other rules, procedures and parliamentary and committee acts that regulate specific parliamentary obligations regarding legislative information
- Links to website pages with available information on the legislative process
- Parliamentary records with data such as the number of visits to legislation-related pages and the number of downloads

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: Public availability of information on bills and laws

Every bill (proposals for a law) and enacted law are made publicly available. This includes the full text and status of a proposal for a new law, or a proposal to change an existing law that is presented for debate before parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Public availability of information generated throughout the legislative procedure

All information generated throughout the legislative procedure is made publicly available, including the texts of all amendments, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, records of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and all other reports and background information created for or by parliament that form a part of the record on a given piece of legislation, including public and expert opinions submitted to or prepared for parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Usability of information provided on the parliamentary website

Information related to the legislative process is made available on the parliamentary website in a timely manner (in real time or as quickly as it is available internally), and in a format that can easily be searched for, downloaded and reused.

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**Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes**

**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 4: User friendliness of legislation tracking**

All documents related to a specific piece of legislation (amendments to the law, records and minutes of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and other reports and background information) are structured and presented in a way that citizens can easily follow and understand the entire legislative procedure. Links are also provided to the text and final status of proposed and enacted legislation from previous years which relate to a proposed piece of legislation.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Recommendations for change**
Dimension 3.1.3 Budgetary transparency

Indicator: 3.1 Transparency of parliamentary processes
Sub-target: 3 Transparent parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension concerns the transparency of the complete process of budgetary development, adoption and expenditure. This includes transparency and clarity regarding the role of parliament in the budget process (see indicator 1.8 Budget for a full description of the process of budgetary consideration by parliament, and dimension 6.2.4 on public participation in the budget cycle) and also transparency with respect to the parliament’s own budget (see dimensions 1.1.3 and 2.2.1).

The national annual budget has a significant impact on the lives of the nation’s citizens. For parliament, budget consideration is one of the most significant tasks that it undertakes. For these reasons, the transparency of all aspects of the budgetary process is vital for the community’s and parliament’s knowledge and scrutiny of the nation’s budget.

As the executive is usually responsible for developing and delivering the budget, it is also responsible, to a large extent, for ensuring transparency. Parliament can ensure that there is transparency by requiring, in legislation or other similar provisions, the executive to be transparent, and by monitoring its implementation of transparency, particularly as it facilitates parliament’s own consideration and ex-post review of the budget. Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that its own process of consideration and ex-post review of the budget, both in the plenary and committees, is transparent.

Transparency of the national budget encompasses transparency of the parliament’s own budget, which should be subject to the same level of transparency and scrutiny as the national budget (see also dimensions 2.2.1 Parliamentary expenditures and 2.2.4 Reporting on parliamentary work).

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

- There is a legal framework (constitutional, legislative or other provisions) for the transparency of the entire process of the development, consideration, approval and expenditure of the annual national budget.

- Information is made available, in a timely manner, on all stages of the budget as it undergoes development, consideration and approval by the legislature, and on the reporting of expenditure outcomes and ex-post evaluation.

- The information about the budget is readily accessible and usable by the general community and the parliament. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

- Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain the parliamentary process for budgetary consideration, approval and ex-post review, and how the parliamentary processes relate to the detailed information provided about the budget.
Indicator 3.1 – Transparency of parliamentary processes

Information about all aspects of the parliament’s budget is required by legislation or rules of the legislature, and comprehensive information on all aspects of the parliament’s budget is readily available and accessible from the parliament’s website.

Assessment

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

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Specific provisions of the constitution, legislation or rules of the legislature that relate to the transparency of all aspects of the annual national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Information available or accessible concerning all aspects of the national budget, the parliamentary budget and the process for parliamentary consideration of the budget
- Statistics on the number of visits to websites with information on the national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of the information that is available on these websites

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

Assessment criterion No. 1: Legal framework for budgetary transparency

There is evidence of a legal framework (constitutional, legislative or other provisions) for the transparency of the entire process of the development, consideration, approval and expenditure of the annual national budget.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Availability of information

Information is made available, in a timely manner, on all stages of the budget as it undergoes development, consideration and approval by the legislature, and on the reporting of expenditure outcomes and ex-post evaluation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:
**Assessment criterion No. 3: Accessibility and usability of information**

The information on the budget is readily accessible and usable by the general community and the parliament. The accessibility and usability of information includes consideration of the different needs of certain groups in the community, for example, minority or disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Explanation of parliamentary processes**

Explanatory material is made available by the parliament to explain the parliamentary process for budgetary consideration, approval and ex-post review, and how the parliamentary processes relate to the detailed information provided about the budget.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Parliamentary budget**

Information about all aspects of the parliament’s budget is required by legislation or rules of the legislature, and comprehensive information on all aspects of the parliament’s budget is readily available and accessible from the parliament’s website.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**