



# Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

## Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics

### About this indicator

This indicator concerns parliamentary ethics, i.e. the standards of conduct that parliament as a whole, and MPs individually, are expected to follow both within and outside the parliamentary chamber.

It addresses professional and ethical standards spanning aspects including anti-corruption, conflicts of interest, codes of conduct, lobbying, and the disclosure of parliamentary income and expenditure.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 2.1.1: Anti-corruption
- Dimension 2.1.2: Conflicts of interest
- Dimension 2.1.3: Code of conduct
- Dimension 2.1.4: Parliamentary income and use of parliamentary resources
- Dimension 2.1.5: Lobbying

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The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments are a multi-partner initiative coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Directorio Legislativo Foundation, Inter Pares / International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

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## Dimension 2.1.1: Anti-corruption

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics
- Target 2: Accountable parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns parliament's duty to combat corruption in public institutions, including parliament, and across society as a whole. For the purpose of this dimension, corruption is understood as any action that is intended to abuse public power for private benefit, or that leads to such abuse.

Corruption is a 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 democracy and hampering economic development.

Parliament has an essential role to play in addressing corruption and creating environments that minimize opportunities and space for corrupt acts. MPs are responsible for ensuring that the legal framework is in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The anti-corruption framework also applies to all elected officials, including MPs.

Through its oversight role, parliament systematically and effectively scrutinizes the work of the executive, the spending of public resources, the performance of ministerial portfolios and the overall implementation of national anti-corruption commitments.

Addressing corruption is a collective endeavour that requires parliament to cooperate with national anti-corruption bodies such as the independent supreme audit institution, the ombudsperson, inspectors-general and ethics commissions, as well as with other relevant bodies that report to parliament. The active participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) is also necessary in preventing and combating corruption.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "anti-corruption" is as follows:*

A comprehensive anti-corruption legal framework is in place and complies fully with all the mandatory and recommended legislative measures set out in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Parliamentary committees conduct regular, in-depth oversight of the implementation of national anti-corruption commitments, laws and policies.

Parliament ensures that national anti-corruption bodies are adequately funded and able to operate independently, and regularly interacts with them.

The anti-corruption legal framework contains provisions relating to all elected officials, including MPs. Parliament's rules of procedure include measures to prevent, detect and address corrupt practices within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.

Parliament engages constructively with efforts by the public and CSOs to raise awareness, and to prevent and address corruption at all levels.

## Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Laws and policies aimed at preventing and addressing corruption
- Parliamentary and committee reports on scrutiny of the implementation of anti-corruption laws, and on corruption cases
- Reports from national anti-corruption bodies and other independent bodies
- Provisions of parliament's rules of procedure addressing potential corrupt practices in parliament
- International and regional reports, such as Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*
- Reports by local CSOs and the media

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

### Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

A comprehensive anti-corruption legal framework is in place and complies fully with the mandatory and recommended legislative measures set out in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 2: Oversight by committees

Parliamentary committees conduct regular, in-depth oversight of the implementation of national anti-corruption commitments, laws and policies.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 3: National anti-corruption bodies

Parliament ensures that national anti-corruption bodies are adequately funded and able to operate independently, and regularly interacts with them.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion 4: Elected officials

The anti-corruption legal framework contains provisions relating to all elected officials, including MPs. Parliament's rules of procedure include measures to prevent, detect and address corrupt practices within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Assessment criterion 5: Raising awareness

Parliament engages constructively with efforts by the public and CSOs to raise awareness, and to prevent and address corruption at all levels.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

#### Recommendations for change

Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.

#### Sources and further reading

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#), revised edition (2018).
- Phil Mason, [Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption](#) (2021).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (2007).
- Transparency International, "[Publications](#)".
- United Nations, [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (2003).
- United Nations, [Report of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption on its preparatory work for the special session of the General Assembly on](#)

- [challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation: Note by the Secretary-General – Addendum](#)* (2021).
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *[Legislative guide for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption](#)*, second revised edition (2012).

## Dimension 2.1.2: Conflicts of interest

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics
- Target 2: Accountable parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns conflicts of interest, which are issues, matters or actions involving an MP or staff member whose private interests prevail over those of the public, and therefore come into direct conflict with that person's mandate as a public official.

Rules on conflicts of interest and measures for addressing them should be codified in parliament's rules of procedure or in the national legal framework. This dimension focuses primarily on conflicts of interest relating to the following aspects:

- The registration of private interests in parliamentary debates (known as "interest disclosure rules").
- The holding of multiple offices. Parliamentary rules may, for example, include time-bound 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.
- The declaration of assets. Parliament's rules of procedure often require MPs to declare their assets and, potentially, the assets of close family members, as well as their liabilities. MPs are required to make such declarations when they join and leave parliament, and to provide regular updates.
- The accepting of gifts and hospitality. Parliament's rules of procedure contain clear rules on the accepting of gifts by MPs and other public office holders, including protocol gifts. MPs are typically required to declare sponsored travel and accommodation, and such declarations are made publicly available.
- The advising of foreign governments.

Practices in this area vary significantly among countries: some 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 public office holders, including MPs, and for parliamentary staff.

Such rules should be supported by strategies and practices to promote an organizational culture that does not tolerate conflicts of interest. For example, non-partisan parliamentary ethics bodies, commissions and councils offer distinct mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest. It is also important that the process of identifying, resolving and managing conflict-of-interest situations is transparent.

See also *Dimension 1.2.3: Incompatibility of office*.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "conflicts of interest" is as follows:*

The legal framework codifies the rules on conflicts of interest and measures for addressing them. Any exemptions to these rules are limited and clearly defined.

Parliamentary mechanisms are in place to prevent, detect and address conflicts of interest within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.

Parliament's rules of procedure contain provisions regarding potential conflicts of interests, including the registration of MPs' private interests in parliamentary debates, the holding of multiple offices, the declaration of assets, the accepting of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments.

A non-partisan or independent body is tasked with monitoring compliance with these rules and procedures, and with initiating procedures in the event of non-compliance. The process of identifying, resolving and managing conflicts of interest is transparent.

Guidance is available to help MPs and staff ensure that they avoid conflicts of interest.

## Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework relating to conflicts of interest, particularly in a parliamentary context
- Provisions of parliament's rules of procedure addressing the registration of MPs' private interests in parliamentary debates, the holding of multiple offices, the declaration of assets, the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments
- Reports by the body tasked with monitoring compliance with conflict-of-interest rules and procedures
- Data on mandatory disclosures submitted by MPs
- Reports on compliance with conflict-of-interest rules and procedures

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

### Assessment criterion 1: Rules on conflict of interest

The legal framework codifies the rules on conflicts of interest and measures for addressing them. Any exemptions to these rules are limited and clearly defined.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

### Assessment criterion 2: Parliamentary mechanisms

Parliamentary mechanisms are in place to prevent, detect and address conflicts of interest within parliament and, where necessary, to hold MPs and staff to account.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion 3: Provisions regarding potential conflicts of interests**

Parliament's rules of procedure contain provisions regarding potential conflicts of interests, including the registration of MPs' private interests in parliamentary debates, the holding of multiple offices, the declaration of assets, the accepting of gifts and hospitality, and the advising of foreign governments.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 4: Compliance**

A non-partisan or independent body is tasked with monitoring compliance with these rules and procedures, and with initiating procedures in the event of non-compliance. The process of identifying, resolving and managing conflicts of interest is transparent.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 5: Guidance**

Guidance is available to help MPs and staff ensure that they avoid conflicts of interest.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

**Sources and further reading**

- Gerard Carney, [Conflict of interest: Legislators, ministers and public officials](#) (1999).



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- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#), revised edition (2018).
  - European Parliament, [The Effectiveness of Conflict of Interest Policies in the EU-Member States](#) (2020).
  - Phil Mason, [Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption](#) (2021).
  - Richard Messick, [Income and assets declarations: Issues to consider in developing a disclosure regime](#) (2009).
  - National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Legislative Ethics: A Comparative Analysis](#) (1999).
  - NDI, [Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (2007).
  - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service: OECD Guidelines and Country Experiences](#) (2003).
  - OECD, [“Managing conflict of interest”](#).
  - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians](#) (2012).
  - Transparency International, [“Publications”](#).
  - United Nations, [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (2003).
  - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), [Legislative guide for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption](#), second revised edition (2012).

### Dimension 2.1.3: Code of conduct

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics
- Target 2: Accountable parliament

#### About this dimension

This dimension concerns parliament's code of conduct, which may either be a standalone document or be combined with other codes such as a code of ethics.

In many parliaments, the conduct of MPs is partly regulated by the rules of procedure, which usually address the maintaining of order in the plenary. However, there is a growing trend towards the explicit codification of acceptable standards of parliamentary behaviour and conduct in general in the form of a code of conduct.

Parliament's code of conduct should be developed via an inclusive, transparent and consultative process, with the support of all political parties in parliament, and should be publicly available. All MPs should be required to accept the code of conduct upon taking office.

Depending on the jurisdiction, rules on the conduct of parliamentary staff, including senior officials such as the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, may be contained in the same code of conduct or in a separate code.

The code of conduct should establish clear, effective and fair rules of conduct, with mechanisms to ensure their enforcement in practice. It should clearly define the type of behaviour which constitutes an offence or misconduct and which may lead to a disciplinary process and sanctions. It should prohibit all forms of harassment – physical, sexual, economic, verbal, written and virtual – based on age, gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristics.

Procedures for monitoring breaches of the code of conduct, for investigating whether misconduct has occurred and for sanctioning offenders should be clear, consistent and transparent.

See also *Dimension 2.2.4: Professionalism of the parliamentary administration* and *Dimension 5.2.3: Combating sexism, harassment and violence*.

#### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "code of conduct" is as follows:*

Parliament has adopted a clear and enforceable code of conduct, which sets out the expected standards of conduct for MPs. Every MP must formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of their parliamentary mandate.

The code of conduct has been developed via an inclusive, transparent and consultative process, has the support of all political parties in parliament, and is publicly available.

A designated body is tasked with overseeing compliance with the code of conduct, including receiving complaints, enforcing standards of conduct in parliament, and carrying out regular reviews and updates.

Training is provided on the standards defined by the code, including induction training for new MPs. Guidance from the parliamentary administration is available to help MPs comply with the code.

## Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Parliament's code of conduct
- A decision on the establishment of a conduct committee or similar designated body
- Information and records relating to the work of such a committee or body

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

### Assessment criterion 1: Existence of a code of conduct

Parliament has adopted a clear and enforceable code of conduct, which sets out the expected standards of conduct for MPs. Every MP must formally accept the code of conduct at the beginning of their parliamentary mandate.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 2: Support of all political groups

The code of conduct has been developed via an inclusive, transparent and consultative process, has the support of all political groups, and is publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 3: Compliance

A designated body is tasked with overseeing compliance with the code of conduct, including receiving complaints, enforcing standards of conduct in parliament, and carrying out regular reviews and updates.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

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#### Assessment criterion 4: Training and guidance

Training is provided on the standards defined by the code, including induction training for new MPs. Guidance from the parliamentary administration is available to help MPs comply with the code.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

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#### Recommendations for change

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

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#### Sources and further reading

- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Codes of Conduct applying to Members of Parliament](#) (2016).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians](#) (2012).

## Dimension 2.1.4: Parliamentary income and use of parliamentary resources

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics
- Target 2: Accountable parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the responsibility for individual MPs, political groups and certain staff members to make disclosures as to their income and their use of parliamentary resources or funds allocated under the parliamentary budget. There is a legitimate public interest in how MPs and political groups use parliamentary resources or public funds, as well as a need for accountability.

Parliament should routinely publish information on MPs' salaries, allowances and other benefits, as well as the expenses they claim. In accordance with the legislative framework of each country, MPs might be required to disclose their non-parliamentary income, their assets, and the assets of their spouses and dependent children.

Information on the recruitment and remuneration of personal staff working for MPs – such as secretaries, assistants and researchers – should also be available to the public. In addition, some countries have rules and/or restrictions on the employment of family members.

Meanwhile, political groups usually have a legal obligation to provide information about their funding, and to regularly report on their expenditure, both to parliament and to the public.

It is important that the role of parliamentary staff is limited to the provision of legitimate support to MPs, and that parliamentary staff are not used 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.

See also *Dimension 2.2.1: Parliamentary expenditure*.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “parliamentary income and use of parliamentary resources” is as follows:*

Parliament routinely publishes information about MPs' salaries, allowances and other benefits, as well as the expenses they claim.

Political groups are required by law to report regularly on their funding and expenditure, and these reports are published on the parliamentary website.

Parliament's rules of procedure contain clear provisions on recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure for MPs' personal staff who are not part of the parliamentary administration. Information about such recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure is publicly available.

Parliament has rules and procedures in place to prevent the misuse of parliamentary resources, including parliamentary staff, for party-political or other purposes.

A parliamentary body is responsible for monitoring the compliance of MPs and political groups with disclosure requirements, and for holding them to account in the event of non-compliance.

## Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of parliament's rules of procedure or other regulations relating to the publication of information about MPs' salaries, allowances, other benefits and expenses
- Provisions of the legal framework requiring political groups to report on their funding and expenditure
- Reports by the parliamentary body tasked with monitoring the compliance of political groups with these requirements
- Provisions of parliament's rules of procedure relating to the employment of political staff of MPs or political groups
- Information about political staff and their salaries, allowances and other benefits
- Data on mandatory disclosures submitted by MPs

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

### Assessment criterion 1: MPs' salaries, allowances, benefits and expenses

Parliament regularly publishes information about MPs' salaries, allowances and other benefits, as well as the expenses they claim.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 2: Funding and expenditure of political groups

Political groups are required by law to report regularly on their funding and expenditure, and these reports are published on the parliamentary website.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 3: MPs' personal staff

Parliament's rules of procedure contain clear provisions on recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure for MPs' personal staff who are not part of the parliamentary administration. Information about such recruitment, funding, remuneration and expenditure is publicly available.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 4: Misuse of parliamentary resources**

Parliament has rules and procedures in place to prevent the misuse of parliamentary resources, including parliamentary staff, for party-political or other purposes.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 5: Compliance**

A parliamentary body is responsible for monitoring the compliance of MPs and political groups with these requirements, and for holding them to account in the event of non-compliance.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

**Sources and further reading**

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Guidelines and Report on the Financing of Political Parties](#) (2001).
- OpeningParliament.org, [Declaration on Parliamentary Openness](#) (2012).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service: OECD Guidelines and Country Experiences](#) (2003).

## Dimension 2.1.5: Lobbying

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 2.1: Parliamentary ethics
- Target 2: Accountable parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension concerns the regulation of lobbying in the parliamentary context and its implementation in practice, as well as the transparency of lobbying activities. For the purpose of this dimension, lobbying is understood as acts by individuals or groups, each with varying and specific interests, which attempt to influence decisions taken at the political level.

While lobbying can be a legitimate means to put forwards the interests of a specific group, it can also be a mechanism to influence laws and policies at the expense of the public interest. Sound and enforceable legal frameworks, and corresponding parliamentary rules on lobbying, are important to prevent undue influence on MPs 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 lobbyists. Potential categories of lobbyists could include professional consultancies and law firms, self-employed consultants, in-house lobbyists and trade/professional associations, civil society 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.

All lobbying activities, including so-called professional lobbying and lobbying by interest groups, should be recorded in a publicly available register with accurate and up-to-date information, including on lobbyists, their clients and finances.

Political activity between MPs with a view to obtaining support for their proposals does not fall within the scope of lobbying for the purpose of this dimension.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "lobbying" is as follows:*

The legal framework contains provisions on the lobbying of MPs and other public office-holders. It sets out clearly defined categories of lobbyists who are required to register.

There are clear rules on transparency, confidentiality and conflicts of interest for lobbyists, as well as for MPs and other public office-holders.

There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists, with complete information about lobbyists' clients and finances. Information in the register is updated in a timely manner.

MPs and other public office holders are obliged to report any suspicions of illegal lobbying activity to parliament and/or to other relevant authorities.

A non-partisan body is tasked with periodically reviewing compliance with disclosure requirements, and with holding lobbyists, MPs and other public office holders to account in the event of a breach of the rules.



## Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the legal framework relating to lobbying and lobbying activities
- Parliamentary rules of procedure relating to lobbying and lobbying activities
- Register of lobbyists (such as a statute or weblink)

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

### Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

The legal framework contains provisions on the lobbying of MPs and other public office holders. It sets out clearly defined categories of lobbyists who are required to register.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 2: Rules on transparency, confidentiality and conflicts of interest

There are clear rules on transparency, confidentiality and conflicts of interest for lobbyists, as well as for MPs and other public office holders.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

### Assessment criterion 3: Register of lobbyists

There is a publicly available statutory register of parliamentary lobbyists, with complete information about lobbyists' clients and finances. Information in the register is updated in a timely manner.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 4: Reporting of illegal lobbying activity**

MPs and other public office holders are obliged to report any suspicions of illegal lobbying activity to parliament and/or to other relevant authorities.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Assessment criterion 5: Compliance**

A non-partisan body is tasked with periodically reviewing compliance with disclosure requirements, and with holding lobbyists, MPs and other public office holders to account in the event of a breach of the rules.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

**Recommendations for change**

*Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.*

**Sources and further reading**

- European Commission, "[Transparency Register](#)".
- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Report on the legal framework for the regulation of lobbying in the Council of Europe member states](#) (2011).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying](#) (2010).
- OECD, [Lobbying in the 21st Century: Transparency, Integrity and Access](#) (2021).