



Indicator 3.1: Transparency of parliamentary processes

About this indicator

This indicator, which concerns parliamentary transparency, is based on the premise that the public should be able to understand and engage with parliament, and be informed about, observe or participate in parliamentary processes. Parliament should therefore provide information about its decisions and procedures in a timely manner, and in a form that can be accessed and understood by the public.

This indicator covers transparency in the full range of parliamentary processes, including plenary and committee work, MPs and political groups, as well as international parliamentary cooperation. It also covers the legislative process, as well as all aspects of the budget cycle.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 3.1.1: Transparency of parliamentary work
- Dimension 3.1.2: Transparency of the legislative process
- Dimension 3.1.3: Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget

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 3.1.1: Transparency of parliamentary work

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 3.1: Transparency of parliamentary processes
- Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the general principles, policies and practices relating to the transparency of parliamentary work.

In order for citizens to be able to be fully informed about its decisions and activities, parliament needs to have clearly defined policies and practices on transparency in relation to all aspects of its work. This includes plenary and committee work, international parliamentary cooperation, and information about MPs' work, remuneration and allowances. The information provided should be comprehensive, timely, and available in formats that are accessible and usable for all groups in society.

Transparency also involves explaining parliamentary processes, so that citizens can learn about, and better understand, how parliament works and, consequently, how to use and put into context the information available to them.

In order to achieve desirable levels of transparency, parliament requires a sufficient number of capable staff, digital systems for storing and providing access to information, as well as other resources.

See also *Indicator 2.2: Institutional integrity* and *Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes*.

Aspiring goal

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

Parliament's rules of procedure establish principles and policies on transparency in all aspects of parliamentary work, and set out how these are translated into practice.

Information about all aspects of parliamentary work is made available in a timely manner, in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.

Parliament regularly publishes explanatory and educational materials on the role of parliament, committees and MPs, and on parliamentary processes, procedures and activities.

Parliament has a sufficient number of staff, digital systems and other resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities.

Parliament constantly monitors trends and experiences in other parliaments, gathers feedback from the public and seeks to improve its practices on transparency.

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 relating to the transparency of parliamentary work
- Information made available or accessible from parliamentary website concerning parliamentary work
- Statistics on the number of visits to the parliamentary website
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of information about parliamentary work made available on the website

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

Assessment criterion 1: Principles, policies and practices

Parliament's rules of procedure establish principles and policies on transparency in all aspects of parliamentary work. The rules of procedure also set out how these principles and policies are translated into practice.

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: Information about parliamentary work

Comprehensive information about all aspects of parliamentary work is made available in a timely manner, and in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.

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: Explanatory and educational materials

Parliament regularly publishes explanatory and educational materials on the role of parliament, committees and MPs, and on parliamentary processes, procedures and activities.

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: Resources

Parliament has a sufficient number of staff, digital systems and other resources to fulfil its transparency responsibilities.

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: Continual improvement

Parliament regularly evaluates its level of transparency, solicits feedback from the public and looks for ways to further improve transparency.

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.

Dimension 3.1.2: Transparency of the legislative process

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 3.1: Transparency of parliamentary processes
- Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the transparency of the legislative process, from the introduction of a proposal for a law to its adoption law by parliament. It also relates to how information about legislation is made available to the public, including the scope, channels, forms and timing of such information.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “transparency of the legislative process” is as follows:

Parliament makes available to the public all relevant information and documents generated throughout the legislative process. This includes:

- the full text and status of proposals for laws and revisions to existing legislation
- all proposed amendments
- the parliamentary agenda and schedule
- records and minutes of plenary and committee discussions and votes
- public and expert opinions submitted to or prepared for parliament
- other reports and background information that form part of the record on a given piece of legislation.

Information on draft legislation is made available on the parliamentary website in real time or as soon as it is available internally, and in formats that can easily be searched, downloaded, used and shared.

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 relating to the transparency of the legislative process
- Other parliamentary and/or committee rules of procedure establishing obligations relating to legislative information
- Links to website pages containing information about the legislative process
- Parliamentary records including data such as the number of visits to legislation-related pages and the number of downloads

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

Assessment criterion 1: Information about proposals for laws

Parliament publishes information about all proposals for laws in a timely manner, including the full text and status of proposals for laws or revisions to existing legislation.

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: Information generated during the legislative process

Parliament publishes all information generated during the legislative process in a timely manner. This includes the parliamentary agenda and schedules, the texts of all amendments, records of plenary and committee discussions and votes, and all other reports and background information created for or by parliament that form part of the record on a given piece of legislation, including public and expert opinions submitted to or prepared for parliament.

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: Accessibility of information

Information generated during the legislative process is made available on the parliamentary website in real time or as soon as it is available internally, in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.

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.

Dimension 3.1.3: Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 3.1: Transparency of parliamentary processes
- Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the transparency of the budget cycle, including budget development, adoption and execution. This includes transparency and clarity over parliament's role in the budget cycle, as well as transparency over parliament's own budget.

The national budget is the most important piece of legislation parliament considers on an annual basis. For this reason, the transparency of the budget cycle is vital for public understanding and parliamentary scrutiny of the executive's spending priorities, planned revenues, capital investments and public debt.

Since the executive usually develops the draft budget, it is also responsible, to a large extent, for the transparency of the budget. Parliament can play its part by ensuring that the draft budget is published in accordance with the budget calendar, by ensuring full transparency of parliamentary proceedings related to the approval of the budget, oversight of in-year budget execution and *ex-post* review of the budget.

Similar standards should be extended to parliament's own budget, which should be subject to the same level of transparency and scrutiny as the national budget.

See also *Dimension 1.1.3: Budgetary autonomy*, *Indicator 1.8: Budget*, *Dimension 2.2.1: Parliamentary expenditure*, and *Dimension 6.2.3: Participation in the budget cycle*.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget" is as follows:

The legal framework provides for the transparency of the entire budget cycle, including the development, consideration, approval and execution of the national budget, as well as *ex-post* review.

Information is made available, in a timely manner, about parliamentary actions at all stages of the budget cycle. This information is accessible and usable by all groups in society.

Parliament publishes explanatory materials outlining the parliamentary process related to the entire budget cycle.

Parliament is required to publish comprehensive information about all aspects of the parliamentary budget, including on the parliamentary website.

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 and/or parliament's rules of procedure relating to the transparency of all aspects of the national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Available or accessible information about 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 containing information about the national budget and the parliamentary budget
- Any commentary on the accessibility or usability of the information available on these websites

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

Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

The legal framework provides for the transparency of the budget cycle, including the development, consideration, approval and execution of the national budget, as well as *ex post* review.

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: Information about parliamentary actions

Information is made available about parliamentary actions at all stages of the budget cycle, in a timely manner and in formats that can be easily accessed and understood by all groups in society.

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: Explanatory materials

Parliament makes available explanatory materials outlining the parliamentary process related to budget consideration and approval, oversight of budget execution, and *ex-post* review.

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: Parliamentary budget

The legal framework and/or parliament's rules of procedure require the publication of comprehensive information about all aspects of the parliamentary budget, including 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"/>
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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.