Indicator 3.2: Parliamentary communication and outreach

About this indicator

This indicator concerns the approach that parliament takes to institutional communication and outreach. Communicating with the public about what parliament does is a basic condition for people to be able to understand and even participate in parliamentary work.

Parliaments use a range of channels to inform and communicate with the public, including broadcasting, websites, social media and educational materials. They seek to ensure that parliamentary information is accessible to all groups in society, including rural communities and people without access to the internet.

Outreach to the public involves a mix of in-person and online activities. It implies creating opportunities for people to interact with parliament on the parliamentary premises, as well as where they live, in their time, on issues which they care about.

See also *Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary environment for public participation*.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 3.2.1: Institutional communication

- Dimension 3.2.2: Parliamentary website

- Dimension 3.2.3: Outreach activities

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Dimension 3.2.1: Institutional communication

This dimension is part of:
- Indicator 3.2: Parliamentary communication and outreach
- Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the various means of communication that parliament uses to inform the public about parliament and its activities. Many parliaments have adopted an institutional communication policy or strategy and created specialized communications units to support this work.

Parliaments typically use a mix of channels as part of their efforts to reach all groups in society, including children and young people, people without access to the internet, and disadvantaged groups. This requires sufficient resources and tools to support the communication strategy.

Some of the most common channels of communication include written publications, print media, radio and television broadcasting, the internet, social media, and mobile platforms. Parliamentary proceedings are often broadcast live in formats that include public television, radio channels, dedicated parliamentary channels, and live-streaming on the parliamentary website.

Aspiring goal

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

Parliament has adopted an institutional communication policy or strategy that sets out how it aims to keep all groups in society informed about its work.

Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective communication and to enable all groups in society to access parliamentary information.

The public has access to live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings, particularly plenary sessions, as well as to archives of recordings of the proceedings.

Parliament uses social media to inform and interact with the public about the work of parliament.

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 media access to parliamentary proceedings
- Provisions of parliament's rules of procedure relating to the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings
- Strategies, procedures, reports or other documents describing parliamentary communication
- Staff structure, and financial and other documents describing parliamentary resources dedicated to communication
- Details and periodic updates of parliament's communication policy or strategy, including its outreach and social media strategies, if relevant

● Activity on parliamentary social media accounts and handles, as well as statistics on traffic and interaction with the content posted on these accounts

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

Assessment criterion 1: Communication policy or strategy

Parliament has adopted an institutional communication policy or strategy that sets out how parliament aims to inform all groups in society about its work using a range of means of communication.

Non-existent ☐	Rudimentary ☐	Basic ☐	Good ☐	Very good ☐	Excellent ☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Resources

Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective communication and to enable all groups in society to access parliamentary information.

Non-existent ☐	Rudimentary ☐	Basic ☐	Good ☐	Very good ☐	Excellent ☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Broadcasting

Parliamentary proceedings, particularly plenary sessions, are broadcast live other than in exceptional cases, which are limited and clearly defined. Live and archived broadcasts are widely accessible at no extra cost to the public.

Non-existent ☐	Rudimentary ☐	Basic ☐	Good ☐	Very good ☐	Excellent ☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 4: Social media

Parliament has accounts on the main social media channels, and actively posts content and interacts with the public on these channels.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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

- David Beetham, _Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice_ (2006).

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Dimension 3.2.2: Parliamentary website

This dimension is part of: • Indicator 3.2: Parliamentary communication and outreach • Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the parliamentary website, which should provide comprehensive, timely and accurate information about parliament. The parliamentary website should also enable citizens to participate in parliamentary processes, for example by submitting comments and questions, and contacting MPs, committees and parliamentary officials.

Website content typically includes the following:

- The agenda, calendars and records of plenary sessions and committee meetings
- The profiles of MPs and their activities and votes
- Internal rules, administrative procedures and workflows
- The text and status of proposals for laws, as well as documentation generated during the legislative process
- Live-streams and recordings of parliamentary proceedings, particularly plenary sessions
- Datasets in machine-readable formats
- Information about international parliamentary activities
- Any other relevant documentation generated in parliamentary processes

The parliamentary website should be easy to use and understand and should be accessible to all groups in society, including persons with disabilities. Website content should be made available in all applicable languages.

See also _Dimension 1.5.5: Digital technologies_, _Dimension 3.3.2: Access for persons with disabilities_ and _Dimension 5.2.4: Multilingual service delivery_.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "parliamentary website" is as follows: Parliament has established appropriate goals and governance structures for its website and allocated sufficient resources to ensure that the website is accurate and up to date. The parliamentary website provides comprehensive, timely and accurate information about the work of parliament. The parliamentary website is designed to meet the needs of target audiences and to be easy to use, and meets accessibility standards, including for people with disabilities. The parliamentary website includes datasets in open, machine-readable formats. Parliament uses its website to foster dialogue with the public and to facilitate contact between citizens and MPs, committees and parliamentary officials.

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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:

- Links to various sections of the parliamentary website
- Details of a dedicated budget and staff for the website
- Details of security infrastructure and related reports
- Strategic vision and planning
- Evidence that the parliamentary website is periodically reviewed/evaluated

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

Assessment criterion 1: Website governance

Governance structures exist that set the goals for the parliamentary website, allocate sufficient human and technical resources, and periodically evaluate progress towards these goals.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Website content

The parliamentary website provides comprehensive, timely and accurate information about parliament and parliamentary proceedings.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Usability

Information on the parliamentary website is well-organized, including for non-expert users, and is written in plain language. Datasets are available in open, machine-readable formats.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion 4: Accessibility

The parliamentary website meets recognized accessibility standards, including for persons with disabilities.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 5: Dialogue with the public

The parliamentary website provides a range of means for the public to participate in the work of parliament, and to contact MPs, committees and parliamentary officials.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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

- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "Centre for Innovation in Parliament".
- IPU, _Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites_ (2009).
- IPU, _World e-Parliament Report 2018_ (2018).
- IPU, _World e-Parliament Report 2020_ (2021).
- IPU, _World e-Parliament Report 2022_ (2022).
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and IPU, _Technological Options for Capturing and Reporting Parliamentary Proceedings_ (2014).

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Dimension 3.2.3: Outreach activities

> This dimension is part of:
> - Indicator 3.2: Parliamentary communication and outreach
> - Target 3: Transparent parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns parliamentary outreach, which typically focuses on creating direct contact between parliament and citizens through activities either on or off the parliamentary premises, such as school visits, open days, parliamentary weeks and mobile parliament events.

Many parliaments have adopted a dedicated outreach policy or strategy and annual plans, or have made outreach a part of their overall communication strategy. Effective outreach requires sufficient human and financial resources, including dedicated parliamentary staff to plan and organize activities.

Parliaments should seek to ensure that outreach activities are targeted at all groups in society. Participants in these events typically might include people from civil society organizations, universities, schools, think tanks, professional organizations and similar.

Parliaments support their outreach activities by producing explanatory and educational materials such as bulletins, guides, leaflets, videos, animations, journals and other publications that provide insights into the work of parliament.

Aspiring goal

> *Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "outreach activities" is as follows:*
>
> Parliament has an outreach policy or strategy or has made outreach a part of its overall communication strategy and has annual plans for outreach activities.
>
> Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective outreach to all groups in society.
>
> Parliament regularly opens its doors to the public and organizes outreach activities throughout the country.
>
> Parliament produces explanatory and educational materials to facilitate public understanding of its work and functions.

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:

- Strategies, policies, annual plans, procedures, reports or other documents describing parliamentary outreach
- Staff structure, and financial and other documents describing parliamentary resources dedicated to outreach

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● Statistics on the number of events held, the number of participants, the number of publications produced and distributed, and the number of visits to the parliamentary premises, as well as statistics on visitors, and similar

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

Assessment criterion 1: Outreach policy or strategy

Parliament has an outreach policy or strategy, as either a stand-alone document or a part of an overall communication strategy. Parliamentary staff create and implement an annual plan of activities based on this policy or strategy.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Outreach activities

Parliament organizes various outreach activities on and off the parliamentary premises, with the participation of the Speaker(s), MPs and a wide range of members of the public.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Explanatory and educational materials

Parliament produces explanatory and educational materials that support its outreach strategy.

Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 4: Resources

Parliament has sufficient human and financial resources to support effective outreach to all groups in society.

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Non-existent	Rudimentary	Basic	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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

- Global Partners Governance, *Parliaments and Public Engagement* (2017).