



Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary environment for public participation

About this indicator

This indicator assesses the legal framework for public participation, as well as parliament's institutional capacity to implement those provisions in practice.

This indicator also focuses on public education about the work of parliament, which aims to increase trust in parliament and broaden opportunities for citizens to communicate their interests. In order to maximize participation, the public should know not just where and when parliamentary processes take place, but also how they can participate in and influence decision-making.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 6.1.1: Legal framework for public participation
- Dimension 6.1.2: Institutional capacity for public participation
- Dimension 6.1.3: Public education about the work of parliament

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 6.1.1: Legal framework for public participation

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary environment for public participation
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

About this dimension

A sound legal framework is vital for enabling and encouraging public participation in the work of parliament. The constitution and laws, as well as parliament's own rules of procedure, should provide an enabling environment for civil society, academics, experts and the public in general to engage systematically in online and on-site parliamentary work. This framework is designed to encourage rather than hinder public participation.

This concept implies that parliament has a responsibility for shaping the enabling civic space necessary for effective public participation in all areas of public life, not only in parliamentary work. To this end, the instances and mechanisms through which citizens could contribute should be clearly established, and those responsible for managing participation processes should be identified.

The legal framework should also include appropriate protections for the personal information citizens may provide when engaging with parliament. Citizens need to have a clear idea of how their personal information will be used or re-used. The privacy-related rules and procedures should also prohibit the tracking of personal information without the individual's clear consent. At the same time, any requirement for citizens to provide information, such as completing a registration form, should not be an impediment to them engaging with parliament.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "legal framework for public participation" is as follows:

Parliament contributes to the protection of the enabling civic space necessary for effective participation in all areas of public life, including but not limited to parliamentary work.

A clear legal framework provides the right for members of the public to participate in parliamentary business, such as by bringing issues to the attention of parliament, contributing evidence to legislative and oversight processes, and commenting on proposals for laws.

The legal framework for public participation contains provisions that protect the privacy of people who engage with the 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:

- Specific articles of the constitution, legislation or rules of procedure that shape civic space and regulate public participation
- National, regional or international reports that rate the level of civic-space openness
- Other rules and procedures relating to public participation

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

Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework enabling civic space

A legal framework is in place, including laws, decrees or regulations, that enables and guarantees the civic space necessary for the functioning of civil society and for effective participation in all areas, including but not limited to parliamentary work. This framework includes laws and regulations relating to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of information, and ease of registration and funding of civil society organizations.

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 2: Legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament

Provisions in the constitution, laws or rules of procedure establish the right of people to participate in parliamentary business, such as by bringing issues to the attention of parliament, contributing evidence to legislative and oversight processes, and commenting on proposals for laws. The related rules and procedures cover all aspects of public participation, both online and on-site.

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 3: Protection of privacy

The legal framework for public participation in the work of parliament contains provisions that protect the privacy of members of the public, and includes clear rules and procedures to ensure that the right to privacy is implemented in 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"/>
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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

- David Beetham, [*Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*](#) (2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [*Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators*](#), revised edition (2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [*Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures*](#) (2007).

Dimension 6.1.2: Institutional capacity for public participation

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary environment for public participation
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

About this dimension

In addition to a sound legal framework for public participation, it is necessary for parliament to develop the practical mechanisms and tools that allow this participation to take place.

The “mechanisms” of public participation refer to systems that, together, provide ways to organize, coordinate and channel public inputs so that they can be taken into account in all aspects of parliamentary processes.

The “tools” of public participation, meanwhile, are specific instruments – online and on-site – that support parliament in successfully operating these mechanisms. They need to be user-friendly and adapted to the needs of different groups within the community.

Parliament is attentive to facilitating participation from all of society, including catering to groups that may face obstacles to engagement, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access.

Parliament can assess the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of these mechanisms and tools by monitoring public participation and tracking the impact of public input on the outputs of parliamentary work.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “institutional capacity for public participation” is as follows:

Parliament has a documented strategy or plan for developing public participation, as well as policies and practices for its implementation.

A comprehensive set of mechanisms is in place enabling parliament to organize, coordinate and channel public participation in all aspects of its processes and activities.

Parliament has easy-to-use tools to support public participation. These tools take account of different groups within the community, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access.

Parliament monitors the level and depth of public participation and seeks feedback from participants on their perception of the experience. It uses this information to evaluate and refine the mechanisms and tools for public participation.

Parliament dedicates sufficient resources to public participation activities.

Public participation processes and activities are widely used by members of the public and are taken into account in parliamentary work.

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 in parliament's rules, practices and policies describing the mechanisms of public participation
- Specific tools that help the public to participate
- Statistics and other information from the monitoring of public participation
- Changes to public participation mechanisms and tools over time
- Parliament's organization chart and budget

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

Assessment criterion 1: Strategic approach

Parliament has an agreed strategy or plan for the implementation and further development of public participation, as well as established policies and practices, with time-bound and measurable objectives.

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: Mechanisms

Parliament's rules, practices and policies contain a comprehensive set of mechanisms for the organization, coordination and channelling of public participation. Public participation processes and activities are widely advertised. There are mechanisms by which the public can both receive, and provide feedback on, the outcome of their participation.

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: Tools

Parliament has easy-to-use tools to support public participation, both online and on-site. These tools take account of different groups within the community, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and groups in remote areas or with limited digital access.

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: Monitoring and evaluation

Parliament monitors and evaluates the use of its public participation mechanisms and tools and reports on their use on its website. Parliament adapts and changes its engagement mechanisms and tools in light of the results of this evaluation work.

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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Assessment criterion 5: Dedicated resources and staff

Parliament dedicates sufficient resources to public participation activities. Parliament has a dedicated organizational unit for this purpose, such as a public participation office, or has staff members with duties related to public participation.

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

- David Beetham, [Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice](#) (2006).
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), [Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislators](#), revised edition (2018).
- National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures](#) (2007).

Dimension 6.1.3: Public education about the work of parliament

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.1: Parliamentary environment for public participation
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

About this dimension

This dimension focuses on parliament's efforts to increase public understanding of its role and work. In order to maximize participation, the public should know not just where and when parliamentary processes take place, but also how they can participate in and influence decision-making. These efforts, which aim to ensure an active citizenry, should be non-partisan and should promote the basic principles of democracy.

Public education can take many forms, including direct interaction by MPs with the public through their constituencies, or opportunities to engage or visit parliament and its offices. Different groups within the community can also be targeted.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "public education about the work of parliament" is as follows:

Parliament has infrastructure, policies, programmes and materials in place to educate the public about its work. Public education aims to improve the breadth and depth of public understanding of parliament and includes information about the role of parliament, as well as about the work that takes place in parliament and how to engage in it.

Public education programmes are provided nationwide and are designed to reach a broad range of stakeholders, including hard-to-reach communities. They are non-partisan and focus on promoting the basic principles of democracy.

Public education programmes provide opportunities to access parliamentary premises and observe the work of parliament in person. They are also available remotely.

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:

- Infrastructure, policies and materials for nationwide public education
- Public education programmes promoted by parliament
- The number of individuals taking part in parliamentary public education programmes per year

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

Assessment criterion 1: Education programmes

Parliament has developed policies and materials for nationwide programmes to educate the public about its role and working methods, as well as about how members of the public can engage in its work.

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: Infrastructure and resources

Parliament has developed infrastructure and has allocated budgetary and human resources to support a range of public education programmes. This infrastructure can accommodate members of the public with special needs, including persons with disabilities.

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

Public education programmes are easily accessible for all groups within the community. Various online and in-person tools are in place to ensure that education programmes reach all sections of society, including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural or remote communities.

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: Non-partisanship

Public education programmes are non-partisan and promote the basic principles of democracy.

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.