



# Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

## Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes

### About this indicator

This indicator concerns the practical application of policies on public participation in the core work of parliament. It recognizes that participation is an active process that provides members of the public with a genuine opportunity to influence parliamentary work, as well as to be consulted on and informed about it. Providing the public with feedback on the results of their participation contributes to the credibility of these mechanisms and processes.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 6.2.1: Participation in law-making
- Dimension 6.2.2: Participation in oversight
- Dimension 6.2.3: Participation in the budget cycle
- Dimension 6.2.4: Managing public input and providing feedback

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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 6.2.1: Participation in law-making

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension covers public participation in the law-making process. Public participation does not replace or diminish the role of MPs in law-making. On the contrary, it provides MPs with deeper insight into the potential impact of legislation on people's lives and contributes to more effective laws. Involving the public in law-making helps to build trust in parliament, MPs and the democratic system and strengthens the rule of law.

For this dimension, public participation can be defined as the formal process through which parliament consults the public, whether in groups or as individuals, in order to gather their views and opinions on an existing law, a proposal for a law or a policy decision.

Participation exercises of this type can be either general or targeted at a specific audience, giving both specific social groups affected by legislation, and the general public, an equal opportunity to participate in the law-making process.

### Aspiring goal

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

The legal framework establishes the right to participate in the law-making process and the obligation for parliament to consult with people directly affected by proposals for laws.

Mechanisms and processes are in place for public participation in the law-making process, including through public and committee hearings on or off the parliamentary premises, written submissions and the provision of comments on proposals for laws.

Proposals for laws are presented in easy-to-understand language to facilitate participation. Sufficient time is allocated to participation processes, especially when they deal with complex topics. Public input is taken into account during the law-making process.

### 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:

- Provision(s) from the legal framework covering public participation in the drafting of legislation
- Laws, rules or standing orders setting out the framework for public participation in the law-making process
- Record of processes or mechanisms for public participation, such as minutes of public hearings
- Samples of plain-language legislation, as well as digital copies of proposals for laws at each stage of the participation process

- Samples of proposals for laws in different languages, and the time allocations/considerations made for participation processes
- Minutes or reports of feedback sessions, or published updates

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

#### Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

The legal framework provides for public participation in the law-making process. There are clear standards on consulting the public, as well as on the criteria that constitute adequate 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 2: Mechanisms and processes

Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate both general and targeted participation in the law-making process. Parliament ensures that members of the public who are directly impacted by a proposal for a law have sufficient opportunity to provide input to the law-making process.

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

A wide range of groups can participate in the law-making process in a timely manner. Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to explain proposals for laws. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, taking into account the complexity of the legislation in question.

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: Practice

In practice, public participation is a regular feature of the law-making process. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliamentary consideration of proposals for laws.

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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 6.2.2: Participation in oversight

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension covers public participation in parliamentary oversight, the vital process by which parliament holds the executive to account on behalf of the public. Involving the public directly or indirectly in oversight can greatly enhance the quality of accountability. Oversight activities in the chamber(s), by committees and in electoral districts can provide a platform for informing, consulting and interacting with the public.

Much public participation is likely to occur in through work of parliamentary committees, since processes such as accepting submissions, holding public hearings and meetings, and operating on-the-ground inspections lend themselves to involvement by the public.

Parliaments should have robust procedures and well-developed processes for encouraging public participation in all aspects of committee work. MPs should also engage with, inform and consult their constituents on matters to be dealt with by parliament, including on their work on committees, on debates on matters of significance, and on their oversight responsibilities in relation to the executive.

### Aspiring goal

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

The legal framework provides for opportunities for members of the public participate in parliamentary oversight activities.

Mechanisms and processes are in place for public participation in oversight, with particular attention on participation in the work of parliamentary committees.

Parliament draws upon the evidence provided by the public in its oversight actions.

### 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:

- Provision(s) from the legal framework establishing parliament's obligation to ensure public participation in oversight
- Laws and/or rules of procedure setting out the framework for public participation in the full range of oversight activities
- Guidance documents detailing how the public can participate in parliamentary oversight processes, such as the work of parliament, committees and MPs
- Information about public participation in oversight activities published on the parliamentary website, in pamphlets (including distribution information) and/or in any other format

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

**Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework**

The legal framework establishes parliament's obligation to facilitate public participation in oversight processes 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"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion 2: Mechanisms and processes**

Mechanisms and processes are in place for the public to participate in oversight activities, including robust procedures to encourage public participation in all aspects of the work of parliamentary committees. Reference material explaining how the public can contribute to parliamentary oversight is made widely available by 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"/>
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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion 3: Accessibility**

Plain, easy-to-understand language is used to inform the public about parliamentary oversight activities, and relevant documents are made available to a wide range of groups in a timely manner. Members of the public are consulted at a time and in a place that allows for maximum participation by a wide range of groups, taking into account the complexity of the issue in question.

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: Practice**

In practice, public participation is a regular feature of parliamentary oversight. A wide range of members of the public regularly contribute to parliament's oversight 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"/>
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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 6.2.3: Participation in the budget cycle

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

#### About this dimension

This dimension covers public participation in the budget cycle. The annual State budget represents public interests and priorities, which makes its preparation, approval and oversight one of parliament's most important and critical responsibilities. While the mechanisms and processes for public participation in the budget cycle are similar to those for participation in law-making and oversight, budget transparency is especially significant because the allocation of public resources is a clear indication of government priorities.

Public participation in the budget cycle helps to increase the transparency of government programmes and can provide insights to help MPs hold the executive to account. It can also ensure better alignment between government priorities and the allocation of resources, thereby improving service delivery and instilling trust in parliament and other public institutions.

The public should be involved in all stages of the budget cycle:

- When parliamentary committees discuss the pre-budget statement from the executive
- When the draft budget is sent for parliamentary committee and plenary debate and approval
- During the in-year oversight of the government's monthly or quarterly budget execution reports, or during thematic reviews of certain budget appropriations
- During the *ex-post* budget oversight process (when parliament discusses the report by the supreme audit institution)

The annual State budget should be presented to the public in plain, easy-to-understand language, enabling citizens to participate and contribute effectively, and allowing parliament to bridge the gap between complex financial jargon and the general public's understanding. This approach promotes transparency, empowering individuals to actively participate in the decision-making process, offer meaningful insights and contribute to shaping the budget according to the needs and priorities of the community.

See also *Indicator 1.8 Budget* and *Dimension 3.1.3: Transparency of the budget cycle and the parliamentary budget*.

#### Aspiring goal

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

The legal framework provides for members of the public to participate in the budget cycle.

Mechanisms and processes are in place for public participation in all stages of the budget cycle (pre-budget statement, committee and plenary debate and approval, and in-year and *ex-post* budget oversight). There is guidance outlining how the public can participate in these mechanisms and processes.

Participation processes are accessible and inclusive, insofar as they are announced in advance, enough time is allocated for deliberations, and they are arranged at a time and in a place convenient for a wide range of groups.

The annual State budget is communicated to the public in plain, easy-to-understand language, enabling active engagement and effective contribution from citizens.



## 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:

- Provision(s) from the legal framework covering public participation in the budget cycle
- Laws, rules or standing orders supporting public participation in the budget cycle
- A guide, model or other document detailing mechanisms and processes for participation
- Programmes, schedules, information pamphlets and other supporting documents

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

### Assessment criterion 1: Legal framework

The legal framework provides for members of the public to participate in the budget cycle.

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 and processes

Mechanisms and processes are in place to facilitate public participation in all stages of the budget cycle (pre-budget statement, committee and plenary debate and approval, and in-year and *ex-post* budget oversight), with a particular emphasis on participation in parliamentary committees or other bodies responsible for the budget.

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 the process

Opportunities for public participation in the budget cycle are announced well in advance, sufficient time is allocated for effective participation, and participation takes place at a time and in a place convenient for a wide range of groups.

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: Accessibility of the text**

The annual State budget is communicated to the public in plain, easy-to-understand language, enabling active engagement and meaningful contribution from citizens.

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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<p style="color: #4F81BD;">Evidence for this assessment criterion:</p>
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**Assessment criterion 5: Practice**

Parliament regularly consults with the public about the budget, using a wide range of instruments and methods.

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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<p style="color: #4F81BD;">Evidence for this assessment criterion:</p>
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**Recommendations for change**

<p><i>Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.</i></p>
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## Dimension 6.2.4: Managing public input and providing feedback

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 6.2: Public participation in parliamentary processes
- Target 6: Participatory parliament

### About this dimension

This dimension covers parliament's responsibility to effectively make use of public input in its work. It is important for parliament to demonstrate that it has a functioning system in place for managing public input, i.e. for collecting and analysing proposals on legislative and/or oversight actions and for bringing these to the attention of MPs and parliamentary bodies. Having solicited public input, it is also important for parliament to provide members of the public with feedback on the results of their participation.

### Aspiring goal

*Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of "managing public input and providing feedback" is as follows:*

Parliament has a functioning system in place for processing public input and making it available to MPs in formats that allow them to see the main themes and to draw upon the public input in parliamentary work.

Parliament has a functioning system in place for providing feedback to the public on the results of their participation.

### 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 rules or procedures that provide for processing public input and making it available to MPs and parliamentary bodies
- Parliamentary records with data on public input
- Excerpts from parliamentary and committee reports containing information on the consideration of public input
- Specific rules or procedures that provide for regular feedback to the public on the results of their participation
- Parliamentary records on feedback provided to the public

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

#### Assessment criterion 1: Processing public input

MPs and parliamentary bodies receive information about the main themes emerging from public input in a timely manner and in formats that help them to incorporate this input into parliamentary 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: Providing feedback to the public**

Parliament has a functioning system for providing regular feedback to the public on the results of their participation. The effectiveness of this feedback system is regularly evaluated and improvements are made where necessary.

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: Resources**

Parliament has appropriate human and technical resources to process public input, to supply MPs with relevant findings and to provide feedback to members of the public who participate in the work of 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:					

**Recommendations for change**

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