

Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

A joint initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and partner organizations: Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), European Commission and INTER PARES, National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Directorio Legislativo

Overview of the Indicators

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The Inter-Parliamentary Union and several partner organizations are developing Indicators for democratic parliaments based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7 and on already existing knowledge and tools, aimed at supporting parliamentary development. The Preliminary version of the Indicators is currently open for feedback from parliaments and any interested stakeholders.

The following is a brief project overview.

- **What is the goal and objective of the Project on developing indicators for democratic parliaments?**

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen parliaments and enhance democracy. The project's specific objective is to develop a set of reliable, comprehensive and universally relevant indicators for assessing parliamentary capacity and performance that will cover all aspects of parliamentary activity.

- **What is the purpose of the indicators?**

The primary purpose of the indicators is to support parliament's ability to learn and improve. By assessing themselves using the indicators, parliaments will have the opportunity to benchmark their capacity and performance and find opportunities for learning and improvement. The indicators are primarily intended for parliaments, their members and staff. However, the indicators will be a public good available to anyone who wishes to use them.

- **What is the subject of the assessment?**

The indicators address both the capacity and performance of parliament in specific segments of its work. They include the assessment of formal powers, how those powers are used in practice, and of the administrative support provided in this context to parliament.

- **How many indicators are there?**

In total there are 25 indicators with 111 dimensions, structured around the aspirational targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically in SDG target 16.6 – effective, accountable and transparent parliaments (institutions), and SDG target 16.7 – responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, appropriately adapted to parliaments.

- **Who is working on the project?**

The development of indicators is a multi-partner project. It is led and coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in close cooperation with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), European Commission and INTER PARES, National Democratic Institute (NDI), UNDP, UN Women, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Directorio Legislativo.

- **When will the final version of indicators be published?**

Based on the feedback from parliaments and other stakeholders, the Preliminary version of indicators will be reviewed and adjusted during 2022. IPU and partners expects to publish the full version of the Indicators in 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions about the indicators

- **What is the indicators' framework?**

The indicators sit within a four-level framework based on specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as follows:

Targets

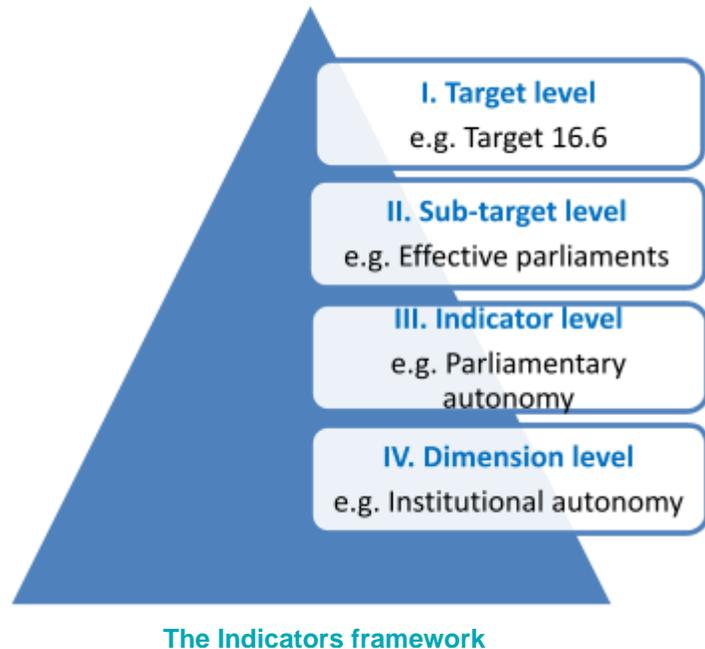
The first level consists of two targets:

1. Target 16.6 – effective, accountable and transparent parliaments
2. Target 16.7 – responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative parliaments

Sub-targets

The second level consists of seven sub-targets comprising the elements of the SDG targets referred to earlier:

1. Effective parliaments
2. Accountable parliaments
3. Transparent parliaments
4. Responsive parliaments
5. Inclusive parliaments
6. Participatory parliaments
7. Representative parliaments



Indicators: The third level consists of a total of 25 indicators. Each sub-target has several indicators for specific segments of the sub-target. Each indicator has an introduction describing the indicator as a whole.

Dimensions: The fourth level consists of dimensions. Each indicator has several dimensions for a specific facet of the indicator. There are 111 dimensions in total.

- **How are the indicators assessed?**

Each indicator has several *dimensions*. Each dimension has several *assessment criteria*. It is at the level of the assessment criteria that the specific parliamentary capacity and performance will be assessed. The assessment is carried out on the basis of clear, standard written descriptions to enable users to identify the most appropriate grade for their parliament.

- **What does a dimension include?**

Each dimension includes several sections:

About the dimension – an introductory part that provides an explanation/clarification of the given issue to ensure a clear common understanding on what is the subject of assessment.

Aspiring goal – a description of an aspiring goal that parliament may seek to attain; the goal is based on a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development.

Assessment criteria – each dimension has several assessment criteria that reflect different elements of parliament’s work. Each assessment criterion provides a description of the object against which parliament can assess its capacity or performance.

The scale – a scoring scale is included.

Evidence – a space for respondents to provide evidence that was the rationale of their assessment and on which their assessment was based, such as legal texts, parliamentary records, and any other relevant information.

Recommendations for change – the key objective of the indicators for democratic parliaments is to help parliaments improve their capacity and performance. As a further reflection on the assessment, respondents are invited to note down their ideas on how to improve a certain segment of parliamentary work.

- **How does the assessment work?**

Each assessment criterion contains several relevant statements. Respondents select the grade that most accurately reflects the situation in their parliament. The assessment should be supported by evidence.

The calculation of the grades for each assessment criterion provides the grade for the dimension. The calculation of the grades for each dimension provides the grade for the indicator.

- **What are the grades and criteria for assessment?**

There are six descriptive grades: “Non-existent”, “Poor”, “Basic”, “Good”, “Very good” and “Excellent”. “Non-existent” is the lowest assessment grade that corresponds to a “zero” grade, while “Excellent” is the highest assessment grade reserved for a criterion.