

# Transforming Parliaments webinar series: Introducing the AI Maturity Framework

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## Key takeaways

Resources:

- [Video of the webinar](#)
- [Maturity Framework AI in Parliaments](#)
- [Guidelines for AI in Parliaments](#)
- [Transforming Parliaments webinar series](#)

Many parliaments are adopting artificial intelligence (AI), but they are often doing so without a plan. Staff and members are using commercial AI tools informally, running ahead of the institutional rules and governance needed to manage the risks. The question for many parliaments, therefore, is how to move from reactive, ad hoc adoption to a deliberate, institution-wide approach to AI.

This webinar, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP) in February 2026, introduced the IPU's [Maturity Framework for AI in Parliaments](#), a new tool designed to help parliaments understand where they are in their AI journey and help them to chart a path forward.

Two parliamentary case studies brought the Framework to life: the Senate of Spain, which has actively applied the Framework to its AI strategy, and the Senate of the Netherlands, which is using it to structure its work as part of a cross-institutional project.

## The AI Maturity Framework: What it is and why it matters

The Framework is the first comprehensive, parliament-specific tool for navigating AI transformation. Developed by the CIP with input from parliamentary experts, it is designed to help legislatures understand their situation and plan their next steps, supporting all parliaments on their AI journey regardless of their size, resources or current AI capabilities.

The Framework is deliberately non-prescriptive. It does not tell parliaments what they must do; rather, it offers a flexible, evidence-based approach to self-assessment, helping institutions think clearly about where they are, where they want to go and how to get there.

The Framework does three things:

- It gives parliaments a common language to discuss AI readiness with stakeholders at all levels, from Secretary General to IT staff and MPs.
- It provides strategic clarity, identifying where resources will have the most impact and where the biggest risks lie.
- It creates an evidence base to support internal advocacy, project scoping and budget decisions.

## Four development areas

The Framework assesses maturity across four dimensions:

- **Governance:** How does parliament manage risk, oversight, ethics and accountability in its use of AI?
- **Technical capability:** What infrastructure, systems and data management practices are in place? Is data ready for AI in terms of quality and security?
- **Organizational capability:** What roles, skills, training and cultural conditions exist to support AI adoption?
- **Democratic impact:** What effect is AI having on core parliamentary functions, transparency, accountability and citizen engagement? This dimension is unique to the parliament-specific Framework.

## Six maturity levels

For each dimension, parliaments can assess themselves against six levels:

- **Level 0:** No formal governance; AI is used informally by a few individuals without controls or oversight.
- **Level 1:** Basic awareness of AI is emerging, but little systematic action has been taken.
- **Level 2:** Pilot projects are running, capacity-building is under way and initial governance structures are being developed.
- **Level 3:** Systemic deployment is under way with established governance practices and standardized processes.
- **Level 4:** AI is embedded across parliamentary functions at an operational level.
- **Level 5:** Advanced practice and global standard-setting: the institution is actively contributing to shaping how AI is used in parliaments worldwide.

During the webinar, a live poll of the more than 180 participants found that roughly one third of respondents placed their parliament at Level 0, another one third at Level 1 and a further one third at Level 2. This reflects what the IPU sees more broadly: even the most advanced parliaments are typically between Levels 2 and 3. The Framework is designed to help parliaments where they are, and to support them in developing an appropriate pathway to higher levels of maturity.

Importantly, different dimensions within a single parliament will often be at different levels. As the webinar illustrated, it is common for technical capability to be running ahead of governance, particularly when AI adoption has been driven by casual use or by the IT department rather than implemented strategically across the institution as a whole. Recognizing this unevenness is itself a valuable output of the assessment.

## Senate of Spain: From ad hoc adoption to structured strategy

Mr. Manuel Pereira, IT Director at the Senate of Spain, described a familiar starting point: “AI tools were already being used informally before any governance was in place. The challenge was not whether to adopt AI, but how to do so deliberately and safely.”

The Senate has taken a sequenced approach: before developing AI projects, it established the conditions for responsible adoption, developing internal AI guidelines, building a pre-approved contractual framework with a technology partner to accelerate delivery, and making a deliberate decision – primarily for security reasons – to deploy AI through on-premise infrastructure using dedicated hardware. The Senate also invested in AI tools for

legal research and has been automating the transcription of parliamentary sessions since 2020.

Work currently under way includes training MPs and staff, building usage indicators to monitor how AI is being used across the institution, setting up incident reporting channels and developing an inventory of AI systems for publication on the Senate's transparency portal. Projects in development include live subtitling of plenary sessions, natural language search on the Senate's website powered by retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and AI-assisted software development tools.

### What the Framework revealed

Applying the Framework helped the Senate of Spain identify something that was not visible from the inside: the unevenness of its progress across the four dimensions. Technical capability was relatively strong. But governance and democratic impact were lagging. The Framework also surfaced specific gaps the Senate's own guidelines had not yet addressed, including risk management processes and the need for measurable performance indicators.

Beyond diagnosis, Mr. Pereira highlighted several other benefits of the Framework. It helped the team ask questions they had not previously considered, drawing on the structured prompts embedded within the four development areas. It also provided a tool for internal advocacy, helping to make the case to senior management that AI adoption is not an IT project but a process of institutional transformation requiring culture and process change, as well as organization-wide involvement. Finally, it offered reassurance that the Senate was not alone: parliaments everywhere are navigating similar challenges.

*"Technology is nothing but a tool to transform the organization." — Mr. Manuel Pereira, Senate of Spain*

### Senate of the Netherlands: Mapping the journey, building partnerships

Ms. Marike van Santen, representing the Senate of the Netherlands, offered a complementary perspective. The Senate has an AI strategy, has run pilots, has established guidelines and has created a small cross-functional team that includes not only IT staff but also colleagues from organizational development and the Committee on Digital Affairs. This cross-institutional composition reflects early recognition that AI is more than a technical project.

The Senate is developing a two-year project plan and is using the Framework to structure that process. Notably, the team is applying the Framework not only to assess its own progress but also to map the maturity of a sister organization with which it is considering a partnership. The Framework serves as a shared reference point, enabling two institutions to understand where they align and where they differ before committing to collaboration.

Ms. van Santen also noted that the Framework had shifted her team's perspective in a useful way. When assessing against the detailed characteristics of each level, the team realized they had accomplished considerably more than they had assumed: the Framework helped them see their progress, not just the gaps. And while reaching Level 5 across all dimensions may not be a realistic ambition for a small parliament, specific Level 5 activities, such as contributing to research and good practice around parliamentary AI, are entirely within reach.

*"The Framework helps us identify the steps we have taken and the steps we want to take, and determine our level of maturity. Also, in our case, we are also trying to plot the maturity of our other chamber, because we want to start working together. We are a small Senate."*  
— Ms. Marieke van Santen, Senate of the Netherlands

## Key principles for successful AI adoption

Several consistent themes emerged across the presentations and the discussion with participants:

- **AI is more than another IT project:** Both speakers were emphatic on this point. AI adoption requires culture and process change, as well as engagement across the entire institution. The Framework helps make this case to senior leadership.
- **Governance must keep pace with technology:** The informal use of AI has rapidly outpaced governance in most institutions. Parliaments that have not yet established guidelines and oversight are, in effect, already behind. Putting governance in place – even basic measures – moves an institution from Level 0 to Level 1 and brings immediate benefits in terms of safety, risk management and institutional awareness.
- **Uncontrolled AI use creates real security risks:** Staff and MPs using free public AI tools with institutional data may inadvertently contribute that data to model training. Providing licensed, controlled access to AI tools, with clear guidance on what may and may not be shared, is both good governance and practical risk mitigation.
- **The Framework is adaptable to parliamentary contexts:** The Framework is designed to be adopted and adapted. Parliaments are encouraged to modify it to suit local needs, institutional culture and available resources. What matters is not strict adherence to a universal standard but rather using the Framework as a learning tool.
- **Maturity is not linear:** Institutions will find themselves at different levels across different dimensions, and even across different aspects of a single dimension. A parliament might have strong technical infrastructure but weak governance, or it might have advanced piloting capacity but limited AI literacy among MPs. The Framework surfaces this unevenness, which is itself a useful starting point.
- **The Framework should be used for learning, not scoring:** As one participant observed, “maturity frameworks can become rigid scoring exercises”. However, the Framework is intended as a diagnostic and planning tool – a way to prompt reflection, identify priorities and chart a path forward – not a league table.
- **Collaboration accelerates progress:** Parliaments are navigating similar challenges across very different contexts. The Framework provides a shared vocabulary and reference point that enables peer learning, benchmarking and partnership – as the example of the Senate of the Netherlands illustrates.

## Learn more

To learn more about the [IPU's Maturity Framework for AI in Parliaments](#) and other digital transformation resources, contact the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament at [innovation@ipu.org](mailto:innovation@ipu.org).

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*This document is based on the IPU [Transforming Parliaments webinar: Introducing the AI Maturity Framework](#), held on 4 February 2026. More information about the IPU's work on digital transformation and about the Transforming Parliaments series can be found on the [IPU website](#).*