

STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS IN COMMITTEE WORK

The purpose of this document is to guide parliamentarians sitting on legislative committees, and the staff and technical teams that support them, in applying an open parliament approach in their committees' work. This tool was developed with reference to the following resources: the ParlAmericas [Road Map towards Legislative Openness 2.0](#) (2021), the ParlAmericas [Legislative Transparency Toolkit](#) (2020), the [Latin American Legislative Transparency Index - ILTL+](#) (2020) of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency, and the [Indicators for Democratic Parliaments](#) (2022) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) based on [SDGs 16.6 and 16.7](#). In addition, the methodology included consulting with Latin American parliamentarians who are members of the transparency, anti-corruption, and/or ethics committees in their legislatures and with the respective parliamentary staff.

The standards for committee work are classified by the four pillars of open parliament: transparency and access to public information, accountability, citizen participation, and ethics and probity. Additionally, considerations are proposed for incorporating a gender perspective as a cross-cutting theme.

This document is intended to act as a guide for committees seeking to conduct a self-assessment exercise to determine the state of progress of various possible actions and initiatives in order to approach their work from an open parliament perspective. To this end, it is suggested that the column entitled *Level of progress* be completed with the designation of the following categories: *Advanced, In process, Pending*. The category *Not applicable* may also be used where appropriate. In addition, at the end of the document there is a Notes/Comments section for those who wish to describe the level of progress in more detail or document ideas and/or challenges.

INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS

By completing the following general analysis, committees will be able to assess the context of their work by examining general standards of open parliament in their country and national legislature.

GENERAL STANDARDS	LEVEL OF PROGRESS
Criterion: Regulatory framework/institutional structure of parliament	
<p>There is a law on transparency and/or access to public information in the country, and consequently, the parliament implements regulations, policies, and/or protocols that regulate the process for receiving and responding to requests for access to information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>Parliament has an office, unit, or lead individual responsible for the institutional handling of requests for public information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>Parliament has a transparency, ethics, and/or probity committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>Parliament has a code of ethics and/or conduct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>Parliament has a regulation for managing private interests or lobbying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>Parliament has a policy and/or protocol to address, prevent, and sanction workplace and sexual harassment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
<p>There is a governing body in the country for the protection of personal data with which the parliamentary committee can consult</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i>

or generate synergies/partnerships to ensure compliance with its norms and/or regulations.

- Pending
- Not applicable

STANDARDS OF LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS IN COMMITTEE WORK BASED ON THE FOUR PILLARS OF OPEN PARLIAMENT

The following is a proposal of criteria and standards of legislative openness for the work of the committee based on the four pillars of open parliament, specifically considering the tasks and procedures it performs.



Transparency and access to public information

STANDARDS	LEVEL OF PROGRESS
Criterion: Passive transparency and records management	
The parliamentary committee provides data and/or responds to requests for access to information received in accordance with the law or institutional or voluntary policies of the committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced<input type="checkbox"/> In process<input type="checkbox"/> Pending<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
The parliamentary committee has and/or applies records management policies that facilitate the availability, organization, and maintenance of documents and files registering the committee's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced<input type="checkbox"/> In process<input type="checkbox"/> Pending<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Criterion: Active transparency and dissemination of parliamentary information	
The parliamentary committee guarantees and facilitates the media's access to its working meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced<input type="checkbox"/> In process<input type="checkbox"/> Pending<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
The parliamentary committee proactively publishes information and data on its work , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Minutes/reports of debates related to bills<input type="checkbox"/> List of committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced<input type="checkbox"/> In process<input type="checkbox"/> Pending<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

- Calendar/schedule of committee meetings/sessions published in advance, noting the topics to be discussed.
- Attendance list of committee members, advisors, and external participants in committee sessions, including with gender disaggregated data.
- Bills submitted to the committee
- Voting record for each topic/bill discussed.
- Opinions issued by the committee on bills reviewed
- Completed reports/studies
- Oversight activities performed

The parliamentary committee publishes information in plain language.

- Advanced
- In process
- Pending
- Not applicable

The parliamentary committee publishes information using **inclusive language**.

- Advanced
- In process
- Pending
- Not applicable

The parliamentary committee **disseminates information about its work through various channels, platforms, and tools**, taking into account the different audiences accessing this information:

- Committee web page or congressional website
- Social networks
- Live broadcasts of committee meetings/sessions via radio, television, and/or the internet
- Mobile applications, among other digital tools

- Advanced
- In process
- Pending
- Not applicable

The parliamentary committee promotes strategies and/or plans to communicate information and data about its work in official and regional languages (such as Indigenous languages) and in accessible formats (Braille, sign language, among others).

- Advanced
- In process
- Pending
- Not applicable

Criterion: Innovation and digital transformation

The parliamentary committee uses open formats to disseminate information about its work to the public.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

The parliamentary committee organizes innovative work forums with diverse sectors of civil society, academia, and the general public—seeking to promote inclusion—to foster collaborative and evidence-based legislative work.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*



Accountability

STANDARDS

LEVEL OF PROGRESS

Criterion: Oversight

The parliamentary committee exercises its **oversight responsibilities** through established mechanisms (meetings/sessions of joint parliamentary committees, interpellation, requests for reports, among others), proactively informing the public of its results.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

In order to contribute to **evidence-based oversight**, the parliamentary committee collaborates with independent watchdogs and regulatory agencies, representatives from academia, the private sector, journalists from various media outlets, and civil society organizations, including women's organizations, which are usually underrepresented.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

The parliamentary committee **carries out post-legislative oversight/scrutiny** of the laws it has passed in order to analyze the progress of its own procedure and impact, publicly reporting its findings.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

Criterion: Open budget

The parliamentary committee **generates and provides information on the analyses, debates, and studies of the budget** that they carry out within the framework of their thematic areas.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

<p>The parliamentary committee generates and provides information related to its responsibilities and thematic areas, including budgetary analyses with a gender perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>The parliamentary committee establishes procedures and mechanisms that promote openness in the performance of oversight in relation to the committee's areas of responsibility over the course of the budget cycle (e.g., through budget monitoring on specific topics, collaboration agreements with universities, working groups with experts, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>The parliamentary committee requests technical support from budget offices and/or technical units, parliamentary studies, legislative research, among others, and uses it to contribute to its oversight of the budget cycle within its areas of responsibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>The parliamentary committee requests the technical support of gender offices and/or technical gender units to contribute to its oversight of the budget cycle within its areas of responsibility from a gender perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>Criterion: Institutional accountability of parliament and parliamentarians</p>	
<p>The parliamentary committee publishes the specific budgets it has been allocated (e.g., budget for committee activities, petty cash, studies/consultancies/reports, among others).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>The parliamentary committee publishes information on the staff, advisors, and employees who support the committee's work with updated contact information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<p>The parliamentary committee publishes official accountability materials on its activities (periodic report, annual public account, etc.), including information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bills debated <input type="checkbox"/> Opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Public hearings <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> In process <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

- Committee activities
- List of individuals invited to committee sessions, including statistics disaggregated by gender



Citizen participation

STANDARDS	LEVEL OF PROGRESS
Criterion: Institutionalization of citizen participation	
The parliamentary committee has regulations or protocols that guarantee and encourage citizen participation in the process of debating bills or other issues under discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
Within its procedures, the parliamentary committee considers the equitable participation of women and various segments of the population.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee shares and disseminates information on opportunities for participation that the public has at their disposal.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee promotes periodic opportunities for consultation and for receiving suggestions from civil society organizations, specialists, academia, and/or the private sector, in order to incorporate them into the decision-making process of its work.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee requests technical support from citizen participation offices or departments within its institution to promote participation in its work.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
Criterion: Effective and inclusive participation	

The parliamentary committee puts in place provisions and/or guidelines to ensure that various segments of the population can participate **by eliminating possible barriers and difficulties** in accessing information and opportunities for involvement in the committee's debates and proceedings (considering aspects such as language, accessibility and security of meeting places or venues, schedules, internet connection, and gender-differentiated needs, among other intersectional factors).

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

With the support of parliamentary offices/technical units, the parliamentary committee implements **civic education** programs and initiatives to strengthen understanding of its work, especially directed towards children and young people, historically marginalised groups, rural and Indigenous populations, and persons with disabilities, among others.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

Criterion: Mechanisms for citizen participation and innovation

The parliamentary committee implements mechanisms for citizen participation that promote **collective intelligence** using agile, innovative, and/or technological methodologies.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

The parliamentary committee uses **information and communication technologies and social networks** to facilitate the involvement of citizens, as well as the inclusion of their contributions in the committee's agenda and topics of discussion, **promoting violence- and discrimination-free conditions**.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*

The parliamentary committee **decentralizes** some of **its meetings/working sessions** to allow for broader citizen participation by conducting activities outside of parliament in different states/provinces/districts so that historically underrepresented groups can be engaged.

- Advanced*
- In process*
- Pending*
- Not applicable*



Ethics and probity

STANDARDS

LEVEL OF PROGRESS

Criterion: Institutionalization of a culture of ethics and probity

The parliamentary committee promotes principles of ethics and probity amongst its members and work teams.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee requests periodic training for its members and work teams to effectively apply institutionally established codes of conduct , including those related to the prevention of sexual and workplace harassment and the promotion of respectful treatment among members, in addition to other issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
Criterion: Mechanisms to strengthen ethics and probity	
Parliamentarians who are members of the parliamentary committee comply with the proactive publication of their sworn statement of assets .	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee implements regulations, policies, and/or protocols developed by parliament to address actual, potential, and apparent conflicts of interest , taking into consideration the sworn statements of assets by its members.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee keeps records of meetings held with private and public entities and/or organizations, citizens, and lobbyists that include meeting dates, participant names, and the issues and positions/opinions that were presented.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee implements actions for the due process and protection of whistleblowers in the event that it receives relevant information on unethical behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>
The parliamentary committee takes integrity and transparency into account to ensure selection processes and the hiring of personnel to support its activities are appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advanced</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In process</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pending</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i>

CONSIDERATIONS ON INCLUSION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Committees using this section will be able to complement the analysis of their work on open parliament pillars with consideration of political participation from a gender and inclusion perspective, taking into account how this cross-cutting approach can strengthen legislative work.

Criteria with a gender perspective: Committee composition and decision-making	
Considerations	Comments
The parliamentary committee guarantees/provides for partisan diversity in its composition in order to promote multi-party debate in decision-making.	
The parliamentary committee guarantees/provides for gender considerations in its composition , consistent with the regulatory framework and composition of the chamber/parliament, in order to strengthen the representation and political participation of women parliamentarians and promote inclusive debate in the work it carries out.	
The parliamentary committee guarantees/provides for gender considerations in designating its leadership .	

NOTES/COMMENTS:

The committee may use this space to note considerations, ideas, questions, and other annotations when conducting a more detailed descriptive analysis, as needed.
