



# ROAD MAP TOWARDS LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS 2.0



Canada 

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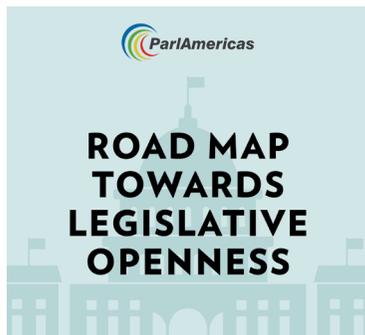
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## BACKGROUND



Following the adoption of the [Road Map towards Legislative Openness](#) in 2016, which was co-created by parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and representatives of civil society organizations in the Americas and the Caribbean, parliaments in the region have made progress in open parliament initiatives, commitments, and action plans to continue strengthening their work and engaging citizens in legislative processes. Taking these valuable experiences into account, ParlAmericas carried out an update and review process of the Road Map with the support of more than 100 stakeholders representing 29 countries. This new version integrates the contributions and perspectives of both parliaments and civil society organizations, ensuring its continued relevance and use as a reference for promoting and supporting legislative openness efforts throughout the hemisphere. For more information, see [Annex No. 1](#).

## OBJECTIVES

- ✦ Serve as a conceptual framework for open parliament;
- ✦ Provide examples of possible actions that can be carried out to strengthen legislative openness in the region;
- ✦ Promote open parliament commitments, action plans, or initiatives in legislative branches, and serve as a reference for their co-creation;
- ✦ Promote innovation within parliaments to continue strengthening their representation, legislation, and oversight functions;
- ✦ Guide and promote the institutionalization of legislative openness in line with international standards and global agreements, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- ✦ Serve as a reference for ongoing training in open parliament by parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and representatives of civil society organizations; and
- ✦ Facilitate synergies between parliaments in the region that are considering, developing, or implementing commitments and/or action plans to promote legislative openness.

## THE OPEN PARLIAMENT CONCEPT

Open parliament or legislative openness is a management and innovation model based on co-creation processes between legislators, parliamentary staff, civil society organizations, academia, and citizens that is aimed at strengthening parliamentary functions to ensure continued reinforcing of transparency and access to public information, accountability, inclusive citizen participation, and ethics and probity within the democratic system.

Through the methodology of co-creation, whereby different stakeholders work collectively to identify challenges, determine priorities, and develop and implement solutions, legislatures in the hemisphere, and around the world, have adopted commitments, action plans, and concrete initiatives in line with international standards and instruments on open government and open parliament.<sup>1</sup> Principal among these international standards and instruments have been those established by the [Open Government Partnership](#),<sup>2</sup> which positions citizens at the centre of this work.

New strategies and tools are being adopted in parliaments to bolster the citizen engagement aspects through technology. While these digital innovations

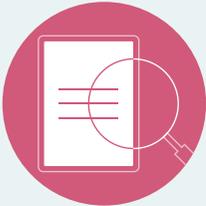
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1 Several countries are articulating progress on this agenda between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, including local or sub-national governments. This is called the Open State.

2 The Open Government Partnership is an international platform that brings together 78 national and 76 local governments and civil society organizations that seek to ensure inclusive, accountable, and responsive governance. For more information, please see Annex No. 2: Glossary of Concepts.

and social networks are undoubtedly critical to openness processes, it is also essential to take into consideration and work to overcome the digital divide in order to ensure the equitable participation of all segments of the population.

The four pillars of legislative openness are:



Transparency  
and access to  
information



Accountability



Public  
participation



Ethics and probity

These pillars are interrelated and, thus, should not be viewed as silos, but rather as constituent parts of an integrated management model intended to guide and strengthen legislative openness actions adopted through co-creation processes within the parliaments of the region. To this end, although certain activities undertaken outside of processes of co-creation or development of open

parliament action plans may contribute to parliamentary openness, such as public consultations and hearings, events and conferences, and public access to parliamentary facilities, these should not be considered open parliament initiatives on their own.

For more information on key concepts related to these pillars, as well as international open parliament standards and instruments, see Annexes No. [2](#) and [3](#). Links to complementary resources to explore each of the pillars in greater detail have been provided at the end of each section and can be accessed in the related toolkits on the [ParlAmericas Open Parliament Portal](#) at [www.parltools.org](http://www.parltools.org).



# 1 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

## Why is it important?

Transparency is a fundamental principle of a healthy democracy. Access to public information is recognized as a fundamental human right in international conventions and treaties, as it contributes to democratic governance. It is associated with the right to freedom of expression, as it also includes the right of any person to receive information related to public affairs managed by the State; as well, it addresses the State's obligation to guarantee the delivery of public information. Furthermore, transparency allows all citizens, civil society organizations, media and other stakeholders to participate in and monitor public affairs, thus strengthening the fight against corruption and the legitimacy of public institutions.

## Considerations for potential commitments and/or initiatives



### Regulatory Frameworks for Access to Public Information

- ✔ Adopt and/or update and make available to the public laws, standards and/or regulations on transparency and access to public information in compliance with international and regional standards, such as the [Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information](#). These efforts guarantee that the right to access public information can be exercised by all persons, organizations, private entities, and others in relation to information on the work and administration of all branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial), as well as political parties, among others.
- ✔ Adopt and/or update laws or provisions on personal data protection and privacy in order to protect information that may be stored in databases or files by parliaments, taking into account the [updated principles on privacy and personal data protection](#) of the Inter-American Juridical Committee of the Organization of American States (OAS).
- ✔ Establish and/or update document management policies for the availability, organization, and archiving of documents and files related to parliamentary work and administration, ensuring that they are reliable, complete, compliant, comprehensive, and systematic, according to the principles established by the International Organization for Standardization - ISO Standard 15489, using the [Records Management and Archives Administration Model](#) of the Transparency and Access to Public Information

Network (RTA) and the [Inter-American Model Law on Document Management](#) of the OAS as a reference.

- ✔ Create and/or update regulations, policies and/or protocols related to requests for access to public information, ensuring its delivery through simple, clear, free, accessible and timely procedures, as well as ensuring media access to information in compliance with the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism, and freedom of the press.
- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen protocols, policies, or guidelines regulating the transparency of parliamentary information, and establish and/or provide support to parliamentary offices and staff responsible for managing and delivering public information to citizens. Creating synergies with bodies or institutions that guarantee access to information in the country will strengthen the impact of these initiatives, as will the collection and review of statistics on information requests, information use and user experience, disaggregated by gender and other social variables.



### Active Transparency and Dissemination of Parliamentary Information

- ✔ Proactively publish information and data on parliamentary work and administration,<sup>3</sup> considering both what is required by law and what is in

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<sup>3</sup> Data published should include general information on the legislative branch (its history, functions, membership, etc.), administrative data (the parliament's organizational chart, staff, salaries, budget, procurement, etc.), information on legislative functions (bills, motions, parliamentary agenda, attendance, voting, committee and plenary sessions, etc.), the debate and approval of the national budget (debate status, supporting documents, budget proposal submitted by the executive branch, etc.), its oversight function (oversight actions, investigative committees, interpellation sessions,

the public interest. Ensure that information is timely, accessible, up-to-date, clear, complete, structured, and published within specified deadlines, and have a site map or guide to facilitate searches of the parliamentary websites.

- ✔ Use clear language to provide parliamentary information to citizens, allowing them to easily find the information they require and to understand and use what they find. This may be facilitated by creating synergies with professional associations or networks that promote clear language use.
- ✔ Foster and strengthen the use of different channels (radio, television, library, etc.), platforms (websites, blogs, social networks, podcasts, etc.), parliamentary public service areas (libraries, citizen services, etc.), and tools (mobile applications, computer games, etc.) to make parliamentary information available. These efforts also include programs, projects, and activities designed to reach different audiences, as well as formats for displaying information dynamically according to usability criteria. Where relevant, guidelines to ensure user security and to monitor and prevent occurrences of online violence or hate speech, as well as disinformation, should be adopted.
- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen plans, strategies and/or policies to communicate and disseminate parliamentary information in official and other regional languages (such as Indigenous languages) and in accessible formats (braille, sign language, etc.).

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etc.) and information on legislators. For a more exhaustive list, see Chapter 5.1 Active Transparency of the [Legislative Transparency Toolkit](#).

- ✔ Create and/or strengthen tools and initiatives to show the contributions made by parliaments on priority public policy issues, such as the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), the advancement of gender equality and parity, inclusive climate action, and the fight against corruption.



## Innovation and Digital Transformation

- ✔ Promote, adopt and/or update open data policies allowing parliamentary information to be used, reused, and redistributed by any person, in any format, in compliance with the principles of the [International Open Data Charter](#). Take citizen participation into account during the process of prioritizing, developing, and publishing databases, and utilize tools or mechanisms to consult citizens and civil society organizations to identify what parliamentary data should be incorporated into those databases.
- ✔ Promote activities and initiatives to encourage public use of parliamentary open data, such as hackathons, visualizations (data visualization competitions), and datathons, to establish spaces for collaboration between citizens and parliaments.
- ✔ Invest in and strengthen digital innovations that streamline parliamentary administration and processes. Emerging good practices include: technologies to simplify time-consuming paper-based tasks and to increase the efficiency of processes through automation, including with artificial intelligence; and the use of virtual or hybrid solutions for committee work, plenary sessions, and regional and international cooperation, capitalizing on resulting opportunities for broader stakeholder participation and reducing potential barriers to access, such as location

and travel costs. Where digital tools are used to reach and engage the public in the work of parliament, it is important to take into consideration and work to overcome the digital divide in order to facilitate equitable participation by all segments of the population. Digital transformation can also contribute to green and sustainable practices within parliament, in accordance with the [ParlAmericas Guide on Green Parliaments](#).

- ✔ Establish, promote and/or consolidate cybersecurity laws, regulations, and policies to safeguard parliamentary information and files, prevent identity theft and the misuse of platforms and data, and protect digital tools from attacks. Provide appropriate training for parliamentarians and staff on these matters.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Legislative Transparency Toolkit](#), ParlAmericas, RTA, and EUROsociAL+ (2020).

[A Guide for Plain Language for Legislative Information and Texts](#), National Democratic Institute (2020). (Spanish)

[Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals](#), ParlAmericas and the United Nations Development Programme (2019).

[Transparency and Access to Public Information Commitments](#), ParlAmericas Open Parliament Commitment Tool.



## 2 ACCOUNTABILITY

### **Why is it important?**

Accountability is a basic principle of the democratic system, as it makes it possible to establish continuous dialogues on the work and outcomes of the policies and actions adopted by authorities and public entities to ensure integrity and efficiency in the use of resources and the provision of public services. In this regard, the parliament plays an essential role, namely, to oversee the government's decisions and actions and ensure that it produces the expected outcomes for the common good. Similarly, within the legislative branch it is also important to continue establishing and/or strengthening mechanisms and initiatives to ensure that citizens can monitor and evaluate parliamentary performance.

## Considerations for potential commitments and/or initiatives



### Parliamentary Oversight

- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen regulations, guidelines, and training to facilitate parliamentary oversight, ensuring that the mechanisms used for this purpose (parliamentary committees, interpellation sessions, requests for reports, etc.) have clear objectives, are inclusive, and produce results that are useful for subsequent decision-making and maintaining the independence of parliament.
- ✔ Promote collaboration with independent oversight institutions and regulatory agencies, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, the media, and journalists, among others, to support evidence-based parliamentary oversight. Stakeholders involved in these collaborations should represent the diversity of the population.
- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen tools or initiatives for the monitoring and evaluation of government actions and public policies with regard to matters of general interest and commitments adopted both at the international and local level, such as those made through the [Open Government Partnership](#), the [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#), and the [Paris Agreement](#), including important inter-American mechanisms such as the OAS [Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption](#) and the [Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Para Convention \(MESECVI\)](#). The capacities of institutional staff and offices responsible for this provision of oversight

support likewise need to be strengthened.

- ✔ Establish and/or promote mechanisms and processes for evaluating the law according to the [Principles of Post-Legislative Scrutiny by Parliaments](#) of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in order to analyze the progress of legislative management itself more closely. This includes examining and determining if the legislation approved by parliament is being effectively implemented and achieves the expected results and outcomes according to the objectives established by the laws. Likewise, it is important to consider the impact on public spending of implementation of approved legislation.



### Open Budget

- ✔ Incorporate and/or strengthen legislation and policies to ensure proactive access to information during the budgeting process, including the publication of budget proposals from the executive branch and other supporting documents submitted to parliament like reports, presentations, gender-based analyses, and information on debates carried out in committee and plenary sessions.
- ✔ Establish and/or consolidate guidelines, procedures, and mechanisms to facilitate parliamentary oversight efforts throughout the budget cycle, including the phases of planning and presenting the budget proposal, allocations, and fiscal policy; budget analysis, debate, and approval; the budget's implementation and auditing according to the [Principles of Public Participation in Fiscal Policies](#) of the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT).

- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen technical support services for parliamentarians, including through parliamentary budget offices and gender budgeting technical units, to contribute to the work of committees responsible for reviewing the national budget. These services can provide parliamentarians with data and analysis for evidence-based deliberations during the debate of and the approval process for the national budget and other financial proposals or economic packages.
- ✔ Create and/or consolidate tools and applications for displaying the national budget and its implementation, using open data tables and graphs that follow the principles set forth in the [International Open Data Charter](#). Present information according to sector, office, and program, etc., to facilitate understanding and monitoring by citizens. Allow for public resources to be traced with tools and/or platforms such as public procurement portals.



### Institutional Accountability of Parliament and Legislators

- ✔ Publish the parliamentary budget for the current year and previous years, with a breakdown of the budgets of the offices of all parliamentarians, the parliament's departments and/or agencies, and parliamentary bodies. The salaries of parliamentarians, their staff, and parliamentary officials should be clearly detailed. Annual audited statements (including internal and external audit reports) and budget reports should also be promptly published, along with reports on unplanned expenditures made prior to general elections. Sources of revenue, the justification of expenses incurred, and any budget amendments should likewise be published on a periodic basis.

- ✔ Publish the parliament's policies on the procurement of goods and services, and provide full access to procurement information, from planning to implementation, in standardized formats in line with the [Open Contracting Data Standard](#) of the Open Contracting Partnership. Review procurement policies and data collection systems for their capacity to support gender-responsive procurement, recognizing the power of procurement processes to empower women and grow the economy. Good practices include diversifying suppliers and reducing barriers for women-owned businesses to compete for contracts.
- ✔ Facilitate and make available a registry of parliamentary staff, including advisers to parliamentary offices, committees, and decision-making bodies, with up-to-date contact details.
- ✔ Establish and/or consolidate official documents and accountability reporting to record legislative work both at the institutional level, including the offices of the presiding officers and parliamentary committees, caucus and parliamentary groups, and each individual parliamentarian. Suggested information includes bills sponsored, amendments put forward, laws and motions approved, records of public hearings held, oversight actions, representation activities, membership in associations and caucuses, trips and gifts received, the appointment of authorities to independent oversight institutions and regulatory agencies, outcomes and performance of services and programs provided to citizens, and parliamentary management and administration, including parliamentary office expenses. Establish mechanisms to receive citizen feedback on these accountability reports.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[The Importance of Parliamentary Oversight during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), ParlAmericas (2021).

[Strengthening Accountability through Fiscal Openness: A Toolkit for Parliamentarians in the Americas and the Caribbean](#), ParlAmericas, GIFT and the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (2020).

[Global Parliamentary Report 2017—Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account](#), Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017).

[Accountability Commitments](#), ParlAmericas Open Parliament Commitment Tool.



# 3 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## Why is it important?

Citizen participation<sup>4</sup> in decision-making processes beyond elections contributes to the democratic system and increases public trust. Early and timely citizen engagement facilitates collective intelligence, inclusion and representation, strengthened legitimacy of public institutions, and increased understanding of State administration and management, as well as parliamentary work and its importance to the political system. The participation of citizens from different segments of the population can help to ensure that no one's needs are left unaddressed in decision making.

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<sup>4</sup> The promotion of involvement, or ensuring that no one is left behind, is a premise recognized across all Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, references to “citizens” in this publication also extend to people who reside in the country, regardless of their nationality.

## Considerations for potential commitments and/or initiatives



### Institutionalization of Citizen Participation

- ✓ Adopt and/or update laws, guidelines, and regulations for citizen participation in parliamentary activities that ensure clear and transparent procedures and that identify the mechanisms and degrees of participation, in accordance with the [citizen participation ladder](#), as relevant. Promote the integration of co-creation concepts into parliamentary processes through inclusion in relevant regulatory frameworks, explicitly taking into account inclusion criteria to promote the equitable participation of women and all other segments of the population.
- ✓ Promote and raise awareness about the opportunities for citizens and civil society organizations to engage with parliament, highlighting the importance of citizen participation and the available mechanisms, opportunities, and initiatives appropriate to different audiences. This information should be posted publicly on the parliament's website and shared through institutional outreach channels, such as television, radio, newspapers and social networks.
- ✓ Establish and/or strengthen citizen participation offices and/or parliamentary staff assigned to support citizen participation efforts, providing them with resources, technical capabilities, and support for their work so that they can both guide citizen participation effectively and with an inclusive approach at an institutional level and provide support to legislators on these issues.

- ✔ Adopt and/or consolidate strategies, plans, agreements and/or initiatives that increasingly formalize and diversify the participation and contributions of civil society organizations, the media, journalists, specialists, academia, and the private sector, as well as public institutions in different sectors and levels of government, as appropriate.



### Effective and inclusive citizen participation

- ✔ Adopt and/or update guidelines and provisions to ensure the participation of all segments of the population, eliminating any barriers and difficulties in accessing information and opportunities for engaging in the legislative process, considering aspects such as language, access and security of venues or meeting places, schedules, internet connection and the differentiated needs of citizens based on gender, among other intersectional variables/factors. Diversify the demographic profile of people invited to sessions in which bills are analyzed and debated in committees, to the extent possible.
- ✔ Strengthen and/or consolidate civic education programs and initiatives in order to facilitate citizens' understanding of parliamentary work and its importance to the democratic system. Strengthen and/or consolidate programs designed to encourage the participation of women, children and young people (such as youth parliaments), groups in vulnerable situations,

rural and Indigenous populations, people with disabilities, and civil society organizations, among others.<sup>5</sup>

- ✓ Incorporate the use of tools in legislative procedures designed to promote inclusive citizen participation, especially during the drafting of bills and related debates in committees. These can include gender-sensitive impact evaluations that take [intersectionality](#) into account, thereby prompting consideration of factors that may exacerbate social inequalities.
- ✓ Apply and/or promote the use of innovative methodologies, such as the Design Thinking, for developing programs and initiatives in collaboration with civil society. Methodologies should consider the circumstances, needs, limitations, strengths, and preferences of the intended beneficiaries of the programs and initiatives and incorporate mechanisms that allow ongoing citizen feedback.



### Mechanisms for citizen participation and innovation

- ✓ Establish and/or strengthen spaces and mechanisms for citizen participation in parliamentary debate, decision making, and legislative processes. These can include deliberative and co-creation exercises, public consultations, contributions to the drafting, debate and assessment of laws, for example through a private member's bill or citizen legislative

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5 According to each context, other segments of the population could include traditionally marginalized and historically disadvantaged groups, such as those living in poverty, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, Afro-descendants, descendants of Indigenous people and other descendants, members of the LGBTI community, displaced people, and migrants.

initiative, as well as during discussion of the national budget and oversight actions, all of which promote collective intelligence.

- ✔ Promote the use of information and communication technologies and social networks to facilitate the engagement of broad sectors of society about the legislative agenda. Contributions made through these channels can be collected, systematized, and visualized with the support of artificial intelligence, and alert systems can be used to disseminate real-time information.
- ✔ Provide technical assistance and advice to citizens and civil society organizations throughout their interaction with parliament, including in the process of co-creating open parliament action plans and commitments.
- ✔ Ensure and strengthen the territorial reach of processes and mechanisms for citizen participation, both at the institutional level and in the work carried out by parliamentarians in their respective constituencies or electoral districts, in order to decentralize the debate and discussion of topics of interest in parliament to all regions, allowing broader participation and representation of citizens beyond the boundaries of city capitals.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[Crowdlaw for Congress: Strategies for 21st Century Lawmaking](#), GovLab (2020),

[Toolkit: Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process](#), ParlAmericas (2018).

[Mini guide: An introduction to Design Thinking](#), Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, Stanford University.

[Citizen Participation Commitments](#), ParlAmericas Open Parliament Commitment Tool.



# 4 ETHICS AND PROBITY

## **Why is it important?**

Ethics and probity are crucial principles in public service, as they help to ensure that actions and decisions undertaken by authorities and public officials promote the common good in an efficient and responsible manner, limiting opportunities for corruption. Acting with integrity generates trust, legitimacy, and credibility, all of which are fundamental for public entities, including the legislative branch.

## Considerations for potential commitments and/or initiatives



### Institutionalization of a Culture of Ethics and Probity

- ✔ Adopt and/or strengthen legislation, policies and/or codes of ethics and conduct that are binding on both parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, and that address the prevention of misconduct, create investigative processes and mechanisms, include consultation and complaint channels, and establish sanctions in accordance with international standards and principles, such as the [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#).
- ✔ Adopt and/or strengthen laws and provisions on lobbying to include a public registry of lobbyists listing individuals and organizations, both domestic and international, whether paid or unpaid. The registry should identify each lobbyists' intentions or interests.
- ✔ Incorporate and/or reinforce regulations, policies, and protocols, designed with a gender lens, to: prevent and sanction workplace and sexual harassment in parliament; and establish reporting, investigative, and protective mechanisms that are sensitive to inequalities and the potential vulnerability of those who report harassment. Provide confidential assistance and guidance to people involved in these cases and include harassment as a serious violation in the parliament's code of ethics and conduct.

- ✔ Establish and/or support an independent and non-partisan commissioner or multi-party parliamentary ethics committee to ensure compliance with probity standards and principles established in the code of ethics and conduct. Provide training and recommendations to parliamentarians for preventing potential violations of these provisions and develop investigative and sanctioning processes.
- ✔ Create and/or strengthen an ethics office that provides support to the body responsible for implementing the code of ethics and conduct in order to: ensure fair, transparent, and impartial processes; support prevention measures, including training and dissemination of ethics and probity principles; and in investigations, such as through the receipt of evidence and allegations, as well as requests for relevant information from public and private entities.



### Mechanisms for Strengthening Ethics and Probity

- ✔ Create and/or consolidate clear and public regulations, policies and/or protocols<sup>6</sup> for regulating, identifying, and addressing actual, potential, and apparent conflicts of interest and unlawful enrichment by the submission of affidavits<sup>7</sup> concerning parliamentarians' assets, including income (salaries, value of movable and immovable property, shares or other financial assets, corporate assets, etc.), liabilities, and interests in the country or abroad, including those of spouses, civil partners and relatives

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6 It is important that information collected follows data protection laws.

7 Where applicable, it is desirable for affidavits to be submitted to an independent body that can verify the information or that information declared be verified by the ethics committee or office.

up to the fourth degree of consanguinity. Furthermore, to avoid the “revolving door” phenomenon, these affidavits should be accompanied by a record of paid or unpaid business and commercial activities carried out during a period that is at least one year period prior to taking office.

- ✔ Establish and/or consolidate guidelines or policies for disclosure of meetings between legislators and/or parliamentary staff with private and public entities, organizations, citizens, or lobbyists. These guidelines or policies should require publication of the meeting’s date, participants, and issues addressed, and provide mechanisms for keeping this information up-to-date and public.
- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen policies, protocols and/or manuals for bribery prevention and anti-bribery management, especially in public procurement processes for goods and services provided to parliament. These should include analysis and control of bribery risks or risk situations.
- ✔ Establish and/or strengthen policies to protect whistleblowers and facilitate processes for receiving and addressing complaints and relevant information on actions that violate probity legislation and parliamentary codes of ethics and conduct.



## Compliance and Effective Implementation of Public Integrity

- ✔ Create and/or strengthen a public integrity system in parliament through, among others: establishing a set of practices that promote a culture of ethics and probity, including a code of ethics and conduct that is developed in collaboration with parliamentary staff and parliamentarians; creating a formal integrity structure and preventive mechanisms, such as an integrity office and/or public officers who support the implementation of these measures; implementing an anonymous or internal consultation platform to provide guidance on making decisions that apply the highest standards of ethics and probity; on an ongoing basis, sharing information on the public integrity system; and conducting training sessions on integrity themes. Corrective actions to address breaches of probity standards and the ethics and conduct code must also be considered. To ensure their effectiveness, public integrity systems should be updated regularly based on an analysis of infractions and queries received, with an established set of benchmarks and indicators that facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the systems' efficacy, as well as risk matrices on ethics and probity issues to contribute to prevention.
- ✔ Develop mandatory training programs for parliamentarians and parliamentary advisers and staff on the scope, principles, and mechanisms established in the code of ethics and conduct, provisions and policies related to these regulations, and other relevant laws and mechanisms on ethics, probity, and the public integrity system.
- ✔ Provide technical support for the submission of parliamentary declarations

of interest and establish information verification processes for the information included in these declarations. Integrate support from other public entities that can contribute information or that are carrying out this work under applicable laws.

- ✔ Ensure fair and transparent processes for the recruitment, hiring and promotion of all parliament and parliamentary staff members by creating rigorous, merit-based mechanisms to prevent bias. Good practices include transparent pay scales, clear terms of reference, the removal of personal identifiers, such as gender, age, family and marital status, and a commitment to inclusion through affirmative action and accommodation policies.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[OECD Public Integrity Handbook](#), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD (2020).

[International Standards for Lobbying Regulation: Towards Greater Transparency, Integrity and Participation](#), Access Info Europe, Open Knowledge, Sunlight Foundation and Transparency International (2015).

[Gender-Sensitive Parliaments](#), Inter-Parliamentary Union (2011).

[Anticorruption Portal of the Americas, Model Laws and Legislative Guidelines](#), OAS.

[Ethics and Probity Commitments](#), ParlAmericas Open Parliament Commitment Tool.



# OPEN PARLIAMENT ACTION PLANS

## Why is it important?

An Open Parliament Action Plan is a mechanism through which a parliament commits to advancing openness and strengthening parliamentary processes and the work of parliamentarians in collaboration with civil society.

Given that one of the fundamental goals of open parliament is to strengthen parliament's interaction with citizens, inviting various stakeholder groups and citizens more broadly to engage in the development process can increase the effectiveness and public legitimacy of the open parliament actions implemented. For this reason, co-creation processes are used to provide parliaments and civil society with a framework to jointly identify priorities and to monitor and evaluate progress towards established open parliament commitments.

Credibility is fundamental for public entities, including the legislative branch.

## Considerations for potential commitments and/or initiatives

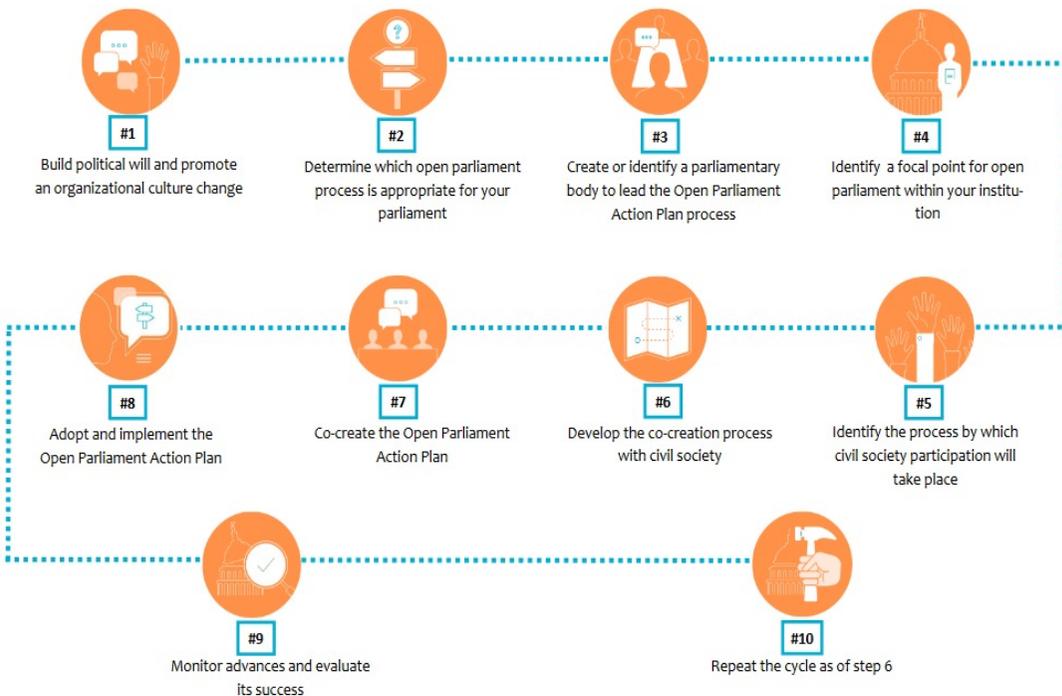
The [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP)<sup>8</sup> promotes the engagement of parliaments from OGP member countries in their respective action plan processes. While undertaking this process through the OGP brings benefits, parliaments whose countries do not currently participate in the OGP can also develop their own stand-alone Open Parliament Action Plan. These efforts to advance legislative openness, both in OGP participating countries as well as non-OGP participating countries, are supported by the [Open Parliament e-Network](#) (OPeN).<sup>9</sup>

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8 The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

9 OPeN is a consortium of international organizations composed of ParlAmericas, Directorio Legislativo, the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency, the National Democratic Institute, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. These organizations work together to support legislative openness worldwide.

The main steps for developing Open Parliament Action Plans are the following:



For more information, see the [Guide to Develop Open Parliament Action Plans](#), which includes the OGP's [Memorandum on Parliamentary Engagement](#).

## ANNEX NO. 1: TIMELINE OF THE REVISION PROCESS

December 2020	Online survey circulated with responses from 64 individuals, including parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and members of civil society organizations, representing 24 countries.
January 14, 2021	Meeting with parliamentary staff from the Caribbean organized by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in which participants reflected on and made general contributions to the Road Map towards Legislative Openness.
January 22, 2021	2nd Meeting of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament, which was attended by 96 representatives of legislative branches from 16 Latin American countries. Based on the results of the online survey, parliamentary staff formed working groups matching the pillars of open parliament, namely: transparency and access to information; accountability; citizen participation; and ethics and probity. A working group on strategic planning was also created.
April 19, 2021	The Working Meeting of Caribbean Presiding Officers on Open Parliament brought together representatives from 10 countries. This activity focused on highlighting common priorities and challenges among legislative branches to take steps forward in implementing the Road Map towards Legislative Openness.

May 17, 2021	Co-creation meeting: Revision and update of the Road Map towards Legislative Openness, with the participation of parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations that are members of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency.
October 2021	Online consultation integrating contributions from parliaments and civil society from across the Americas and the Caribbean.
November – December 2021	Approval of the final version of the Road Map towards Legislative Openness 2.0 by the OPN Executive Committee, design of the publication, and translation into the official languages of ParlAmericas.
March 2022	Official launch of the Road Map towards Legislative Openness 2.0. during the 6° Gathering of ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network.

## ANNEX NO. 2: GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS

### A

 **Accountability:** process through which a set of norms, procedures, methodologies, structures, practices, and outcomes are utilised by public administration entities and public servants to report, explain, and disclose the results of their work to citizens, civil society, other public entities, and oversight bodies.

Source: [Law 1757 of 2015](#), Colombia.

 **Action plans:** the core component of the OGP process. They are the product of a co-creation process in which governments and civil society establish ambitious commitments to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. Open parliament action plans are mechanisms for promoting openness and strengthening the functions of legislative branches through co-creation processes where parliaments and civil society identify priorities, establish commitments, jointly implement and monitor the established plan, and assess the progress made.

Source: *Open Government Partnership (OGP)*, [OGP National Handbook: Rules and Guidance for Participants, 2021](#); *ParlAmericas*, [Guide to Develop Open Parliament Action Plans, Executive Summary, 2019](#).

 **Active transparency:** consists of making available information that is considered relevant and of public interest regarding the organization in general, its staff, operations and the services it provides, among other information. This policy establishes that information must be provided actively, as opposed to reactively, in response to requests, and is legally mandated. This information is usually subject to permanent updating mechanisms and is defined as proactive when regulated bodies voluntarily adopt good practices on publishing and making the information available.

Source: *ParlAmericas*, *EUROSociAL+ and RTA*, [Legislative Transparency Toolkit, 2020](#).

 **Artificial Intelligence:** machine-based system that can make predictions, recommendations, or decisions that influence real or virtual environments, for a given set of human-defined targets. It: uses machine- and/or human-based inputs to perceive real and/or virtual environments; abstracts these insights into models (in an automated manner, for example, by machine learning

or manually); and uses model inference to formulate options for information or action. AI systems are designed to function with different levels of autonomy.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Artificial Intelligence in Society, 2019](#).

## C

 **Citizen participation (or public participation):** any process that engages citizens in problem solving or decision making and that uses citizens' contributions to make better decisions. There are different levels of citizen participation that range from informing, consulting and engaging to collaborating and empowering, where citizens have the opportunity to be actively and directly involved in decision-making processes.

Source: IAP2, [IAP2 Code of Ethics for Public Participation Practitioners](#); IAP2, [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, 2018](#); ParIAmericas, [Toolkit: Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process, 2018](#).

 **Civil Society Organizations (CSO):** all non-profit and non-state organizations where people organize to promote shared interests associated with the public sphere at the local, national or international level. It is a diverse and heterogeneous sector that includes foundations, community and neighbourhood organizations, environmental groups, women's rights groups, farmers' associations, religious organizations, unions, cooperatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes and non-profit media organizations. CSOs perform a series of humanitarian services and functions, convey the concerns of citizens to governments, share and disseminate specialized knowledge and analyses on various issues, supervise the implementation of public policies, and promote participation.

Source: [United Nations](#).

 **Clear or plain language:** communication in which the language, structure, and design are so clear that the target audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information provided. Clear language is about putting readers first: discovering what they want to know, what information they need, and helping them achieve their goals. The goal is for readers to understand a document written in plain language the first time they read it. Furthermore, the document lacks technicalities, legalisms, obscure vocabulary, or confusing wording that complicate its comprehension; it should be capable of being understood by a public that is not specialized in the subject matter in question, given that its content is explained by

concise wording and common, everyday language.

Source: INAI, [Diccionario de transparencia y acceso a la información pública, 2019](#); [International Plain Language Federation](#).

 **Co-Creation:** methodology promoted by the OGP that includes the early and direct participation of key stakeholders and interest groups in co-development, joint decision making, and monitoring of the impacts of decisions made in these processes. Co-creation can also include greater citizen participation beyond the interest groups that participated at the beginning of the process, through broader two-way consultations. According to the OGP, there are three essential elements: dissemination of information, whereby the public, civil society and other relevant stakeholders should receive timely information on all the processes carried out, including feedback on how their contributions are taken into account; spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation, which should facilitate an inclusive and continuous dialogue using a variety of spaces and platforms appropriate to the context of the country; and joint ownership and decision-making, whereby public authorities, civil society and other stakeholders should jointly own and develop the process.

Source: *ParlAmericas, Toolkit: [Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process, 2018](#); OGP, [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, 2017](#).*

 **Collective intelligence:** enhanced capacity that is created when two or more people work together, often with the help of technology, to mobilise a wider range of information, ideas and insights. Collective intelligence emerges when these contributions are combined to become more than the sum of their parts for purposes ranging from learning and innovation to decision making. Collective intelligence is generated from the collaboration between people, groups and sectors, and can arise in a planned way but also spontaneously and organically.

Source: [Laboratorio para la ciudad](#); [Nesta, The collective intelligence design playbook](#).

 **Conflict of interest:** situation in which a public servant has a private interest that may influence or appear to influence the impartial and objective performance of work duties. Private interests of public officials include any actual, potential, or perceived advantage (economic or otherwise) to them or to any person with whom they have a relationship. Related persons include spouses or civil partners, any person with whom the public officials have a family relationship (children, stepchildren, or parents), and friends or foes and people or organizations and institutions with

which they have or have had business, political, or social connections. Conflicts of interest can be classified as actual, apparent, and potential. Actual conflicts occur when public officials are in a conflict situation; that is, there is a connection between their function and their interest that affects their public decision. Apparent conflicts refer to situations where private interests are likely to inappropriately influence the performance of public officials' work duties and, consequently, other people could consider that such interests can influence their decisions. Lastly, potential conflicts occur when public officials have private interests of such a nature that, given a certain situation, an actual conflict may arise.

Source: *European Council, [Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on public ethics](#), 2020; OECD, [Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service](#), 2004.*

## D

 **Datathon:** event in which participants come together to solve practical problems by applying data science tools and techniques, working in teams to generate ideas and possible solutions. A datathon takes advantage of the benefits of data analysis and large volumes of information to, for example, improve public policies with the participation of citizens.

Source: *[Datacamp; Portal de transparencia de la provincia de Santa Fe](#).*

 **Data visualization:** using graphics and images to illustrate relationships within data that might not be otherwise obvious. Data visualization is useful for cleaning data, exploring data structure, detecting outliers and unusual groups, identifying trends and clusters, spotting local patterns, evaluating modeling output, and presenting results. Bar charts, pie graphs, tables, and infographics are examples of data visualization. Good data visualization tells a compelling story that is firmly grounded on facts because the story was constructed from patterns in the data, and not the other way around.

Source: *[Rochester Institute of Technology Library website](#); Antony Unwin, [Why is Data Visualization Important? What is Important in Data Visualization?](#), *Harvard Data Science Review*, 2020.*

 **Declaration of interests and assets:** tool for identifying and preventing conflicts of interest that includes information on paid or unpaid financial and business activities, family, political, business and institutional ties, and real and personal property acquired in the country or abroad by public officials who manage public assets and resources.

Source: *OECD, [OECD Factbook 2013: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics](#), 2013; [InfoProbidad; Declaración Jurada de Intereses](#), Government of Peru.*

 **Design Thinking:** explicit user-centred approach that leads to solutions that are gradually defined through a repetitive process that provides a voice to end users and engages them in decision-making (professional empathy and co-creation). The approach reflects on multiple causes and diversified perspectives on the problems in question (scaling), and experiments with initial ideas (prototyping and testing). Its goal is to equip governments with innovative approaches to address contemporary challenges, such as interconnected and diffuse economic and social patterns, more complex problems, diffuse boundaries of governance, and reduced trust in public action.

Source: United Nations Development Program (UNDP), [Design Thinking for Public Service Excellence](#), 2014.

## E

 **Enforcement body:** specialized and deliberative body responsible for coordinating and supervising the implementation of the access-to-information policy and compliance with the obligations arising from it. This body, which promotes and guarantees the right of access to information, is self-governing, independent and impartial and has the power to impose sanctions in the performance of its duties.

Source: Organization of American States (OAS), [Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information](#), 2020; INAI, [Diccionario de transparencia y acceso a la información pública](#), 2019.

 **Ethics and probity in parliament:** integrity standards to be observed by parliamentarians and parliamentary staff during the performance of their duties, considering democratic values and human rights, the public interest above all else, public integrity, professionalism in fulfilling their mandates, transparency and accountability, and political pluralism.

Source: National Democratic Institute (NDI), [Common Ethical Principles for Members of Parliament](#), 2015; World Bank Institute, [Legislative Ethics and Codes of Conduct](#), 2004.

## H

 **Hackathon:** an open innovation methodology that has the ability to include many other methodologies to articulate creative processes. In a hackathon (joining terms of hacker and marathon), the organizer defines a problem or challenge, and participants compete to create a solution by developing applications within a given time.

Source: Inter-American Development Bank, [Abierto al Público Blog](#); Nesta, [The collective intelligence design playbook](#).

## I

 **Intersectionality:** analytical tool that recognizes that systemic inequalities are shaped by the superposition of different social factors, such as gender, ethnicity and social class. Consequently, both the disadvantages and privileges that a person has at a given time and place cannot be understood by examining the various elements of that person's identity separately. Rather, attention should be paid to the set of power relations that affect them, including macro-level forces, such as: the colonial past and poverty; and micro-level forces, including a person's health status and their family or community structure.

Source: *ParlAmericas*, [Intersectionality](#).

## L

 **Lobbying:** the legitimate act of attempting to influence the design, implementation, execution and assessment of public policies and regulations administered by public officials of the executive, legislative or judicial branches at the local, regional or national level. In recent years, lobbying has evolved not only in relation to the actors and practices involved, but also concerning the context in which it takes place.

Source: *OECD*, [Lobbying in the 21st Century, Transparency, Integrity and Access](#), 2021.

## O

 **Open budget:** national budget data made available to the public (online) in an editable (machine-readable) and reusable format without any restrictions (free/open licence). On publishing open budget data, the necessary requirements for protecting the confidentiality of personal or classified information must be taken into account.

Source: *Min & Dener*, *World Bank*, [Financial Management Information Systems and Open Budget Data: Do Governments Report on Where the Money Goes](#), 2013.

 **Open data:** data that can be used, reused, and redistributed freely by any person, and that are subject, at most, to the requirement of attribution and to be shared in the same manner in which they appear. According to the International Open Data Charter, the principles of these data are the following: open by default, timely and comprehensive, accessible and usable, comparable and

interoperable, for improved governance and citizen engagement, and for inclusive development and innovation.

Source: *Open Knowledge Foundation, [Open Data Handbook](#); [International Open Data Charter](#), 2015.*

 **Open Government Partnership (OGP):** association that includes members at the national and local levels and thousands of civil society organizations. They work together to co-create two-year action plans that include concrete steps (commitments) with regard to a wide range of issues. Since it was founded in 2011, the OGP has grown to include 78 countries and 76 local jurisdictions working alongside thousands of civil society organizations. This partnership is based on the idea that an open government is more accessible, responsive and accountable to citizens, and that improving the relationship between people and their government provides exponential long-term benefits for everyone.

Source: *OGP, [Open Government Partnership](#).*

 **Open parliament:** management and innovation model based on co-creation processes between parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, civil society organizations, academia and citizens that is aimed at strengthening parliamentary functions to ensure continued reinforcing of transparency and access to public information, accountability, inclusive citizen participation, and ethics and probity within the democratic system.

Source: *ParlAmericas, 2022.*

## P

 **Passive transparency or request for access to information:** the right of every person to request and receive information from any State body. It is not necessary to state a cause or reason in order to exercise this right. This right means that State bodies are required to respond to requests for information made by individuals and to deliver the information requested, except in exceptional cases, as established in the respective laws or general transparency provisions of each country.

Source: *Consejo para la Transparencia de Chile (Chilean Transparency Council), [Glosario de Participación Ciudadana](#), 2018.*

 **Public integrity:** consistent alignment and compliance with shared ethical values, principles,

and standards to promote and prioritize public interests above private interests in the public sector. For its part, a public integrity system, as broadly understood, is comprised of the legislation and the institutions in place to define, support, control, and enforce public integrity. *Source: OECD, [OECD Public Integrity Handbook, 2020](#); OECD, [OECD Council Recommendation on Public Integrity, 2017](#).*

## R

 **Revolving door:** movement between positions in the public sector and the private sector where conflicts of interest and the risk of public policy capture can arise. When the new private functions encompass fields that are very similar or that were directly controlled by a former public official, this phenomenon can be perceived as granting an unfair advantage in terms of privileged information, relations, or any other type of advantage gained in the previous public functions.

*Source: OECD, [OECD Public Integrity Handbook, 2020](#).*

## T

 **Transparency and access to information:** a fundamental human right that establishes that every person can access the information generated and managed by and in the possession of States. This obligation applies to all levels of government, constitutional or legal branches or bodies owned or controlled by the government, and organizations that operate with public funds or that perform public functions. According to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, public bodies are required to disseminate information on their functions and activities—including their policies, opportunities for consultations, activities that affect the public, budgets, subsidies, benefits, and contracts—in a routine and proactive manner, even in the absence of a specific request, and in a way that ensures that the information is accessible and comprehensible.

*Source: INAI, [Diccionario de transparencia y acceso a la información pública, 2019](#).*

## ANNEX NO. 3: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND INSTRUMENTS

International standards and instruments that serve as a reference for legislative openness are the following:

Open parliament principles	Innovation and strengthening of parliamentary work	Monitoring and evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <a href="#">Santiago Declaration on Parliamentary Transparency and Integrity in Parliaments and Political Parties</a> (2012)</li><li> <a href="#">Declaration on Parliamentary Openness</a> (2012)</li><li> <a href="#">Participation and Co-Creation Standards</a> (Open Government Partnership, 2017)</li><li> <a href="#">Parliamentary Engagement Policy Guidance</a> (Open Government Partnership, 2017)</li><li> <a href="#">Guide to Develop Open Parliament Action Plans</a>, Executive Summary (ParAmericas, 2018)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <a href="#">Indicators for democratic parliaments</a>, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7 (Inter-Parliamentary Union)</li><li> <a href="#">Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures</a> (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 2018)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Latin-American <a href="#">Legislative Transparency Index</a> (Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency)</li><li> <a href="#">Open Parliament Commitment Tool</a> (ParAmericas)</li></ul>

# ORGANIZATIONS THAT CONTRIBUTED



Red Latinoamericana por la Transparencia **Legislativa** composed of the following member organizations:



Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana  
Capítulo Panameño de Transparencia Internacional



OBSERVATORIO LEGISLATIVO





Other organizations across the Americas and the Caribbean:



**Transparency Institute Guyana Inc**  
*Promoting Transparency and Accountability  
and eradicating corruption*





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