



WESTMINSTER
FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY

ASSESSMENT FOR CREATION OF E-PARLIAMENT ON-LINE PLATFORM IN UZBEKISTAN

3-4 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT



I. INTRODUCTION

The usage of information and communication technology by parliaments can enhance the transparency and accountability of institutions and legislative processes as well as provide an opportunity to engage citizens.

This report has been researched and produced by WFD at the request of the Oliy Majlis, the Parliament of Uzbekistan, to inform its work towards digitizing and opening parliamentary activities. WFD was specifically invited to assist the institution in creating an e-parliament online platform, for which this report makes a number of practical recommendations. This report does not seek to provide definitive, step-by-step instruction on the creation of an 'ideal' e-parliament platform, rather it provides holistic advice, tailored to the Uzbek context, on what digital interventions would be most engaging for citizens, useful for external policy stakeholders, and beneficial for parliamentarians.

Scope of the assessment and methodology

Based on the request received by the Parliamentary Committee for Innovations and ICT Development of the Oliy Majlis, the assessment was conducted within WFD programme 'Strengthening Parliamentary Effectiveness in Uzbekistan (UzParl-2)', financed by the British Embassy in Tashkent. The assessment focused on assessing two primary interests of the proposed e-parliament platform:

- (i) a database with contact details and information about the activities of all MPs at the provincial and district level; and
- (ii) a legislation tracker to make law-making and rulemaking processes more transparent.

In providing optimal advice on potential e-parliament platforms, WFD engaged two international experts in parliamentary transparency and digital democracy, one of them was WFD in house senior technical advisor. They met with stakeholders from the parliament and civil society in Tashkent on 3-4 October. The experts assessed, as far as possible within the parameters and limitations of the field visit, the opportunities, skills and technical capacity of the parliament, and the specific needs for parliamentary information and engagement amongst external policy actors (Civil Society Organisations – CSOs/Non-Governmental Organisations – NGOs/ media organisations). The efficacy and suitability of the existing parliamentary digital provisions were also considered, as well as whether other solutions may be more fit for purpose. In considering the possibilities for improving e-parliament provision, the consultants were informed by [the Inter-Parliamentary Union Centre for Innovation in Parliament Programme](#), [the Open Government Partnership](#) parliamentary engagement policy and planned initiatives in this field, and the previous publications by [WFD](#) on parliamentary practice in Uzbekistan. The experts were also mindful of the Parliament's desire to ensure that any proposed digital development is both informed by, and appropriate to, gendered needs.

The experts were unable to meet with essential staff of the Secretariat (apparat) of the Lower Chamber, who would have been able to provide more procedural detail and context to these recommendations. They also did not meet with the Senate and the assessment does therefore not include the Upper House. Meetings were also conducted through interpreters, and evidence has shown that such interactions often lose some intended nuance or context. As such, this should not be considered a definitive or exhaustive review of the Oliy Majlis e-parliament potential.



II. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE OLIY MAJLIS

The role and functions of Oliy Majlis are not easily understood by the general public. The Parliament is considered by civil society and the media to be a remote and not accessible institution. However, since 2000, the parliament has taken some steps to open up. In 2000, the parliament organised its first ever ‘citizen day’, during which citizens could approach parliament with specific requests. This was followed by the establishment of a more permanent ‘reception office’ in the parliament, which was mandated to receive citizens claims. However, it is not clear what is the procedure for reviewing these claims and the feedback to citizens has been limited. In 2016, the parliament organised its first hearings outside parliament. However, respondents were not too sure about their effectiveness and ownership.

Despite these more recent efforts of the parliament to increase communication and engagement with citizens, parliament would extremely benefit from having a clear communication strategy to communicate impact, such as how issues of interest to citizens have been integrated into legislation or policy¹.

The website of the parliament, which constitutes the main window to the outside, is not easily accessible to citizens who do not have a good understanding of parliamentary procedure. This is supported by the limited daily page views (400). Despite putting some efforts in updating its content, the parliamentary website is not user-friendly. All users of parliamentary information, such as journalists and CSOs prefer using social media as a way to access direct information. Facebook seems to be the most popular social media platform, followed by twitter and telegram.

While transparency is a core feature of any legitimate democratic organisation, it cannot be considered as an end in itself. It is an ethereal concept, and can be employed in theory, while failing to produce in fact. Transparency, can in fact, often be very opaque, for instance, where thousands of documents are published, but not searchable in any way, or where published information is written in extremely specialised language that is inaccessible to individuals without specific expertise. As such it is useful to consider how *meaningful* interventions to improve transparency truly are. Publication and digitization alone cannot satisfy the ambition to be truly transparent. Rational digital architecture, the packaging of information for specific audiences, and a closed feedback loop must be employed. While certain digital portals may appear to be ‘the answer’, it is prudent to examine whether these solutions actually address what is trying to be achieved.

The physical practical limited accessibility to the Oliy Majlis estate contributes in the citizen perception of parliament as a distant body. While there are, in principle, processes through which non-affiliated individuals are able to enter the parliamentary estate and observe plenary or committee sessions. In practice, it does not appear to be straightforward to achieve. Non parliamentary individuals consulted for this report universally confirmed that access to the physical building was difficult without accreditation, and the requirement of preventing electronics being brought onto the estate does not convey a commitment to digital openness.

School and educational visits of the parliamentary building exist but seem rather limited. The Oliy Majlis also organises an annual youth parliament. The ambition expressed by the parliament during our meetings was for the parliament to become so digitally open that visiting the parliament estate would not be required anymore. However, digital technology should

¹ <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WFD-Report-on-Parliamentary-Practices-in-Uzbekistan-2019-in-English.pdf>, pg. 41.



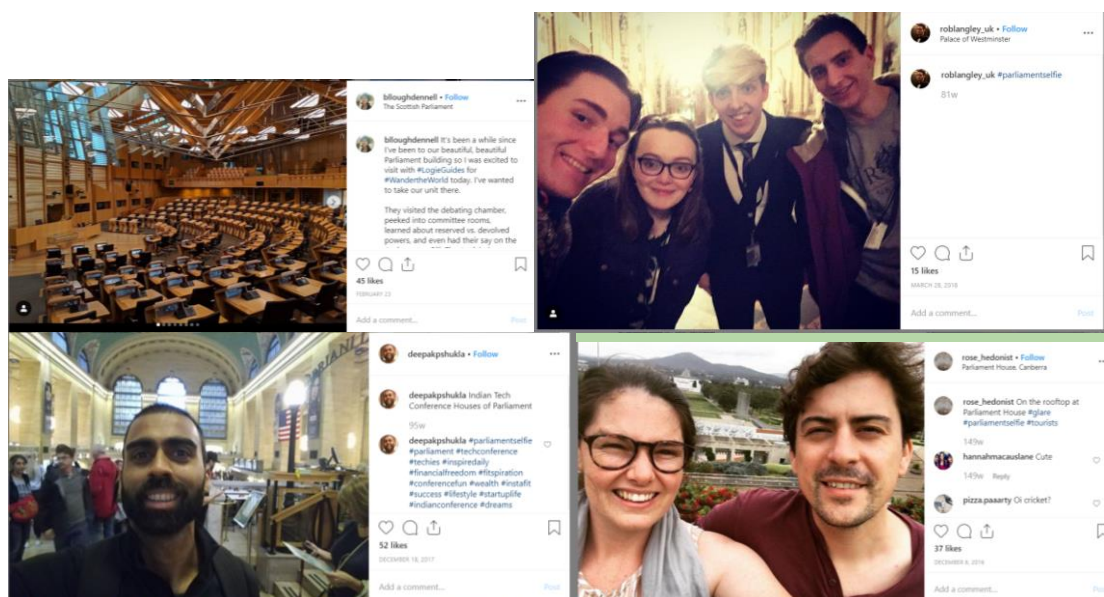
never be able to replace physical access to the building and physical participation in parliamentary debates. Therefore, in order to move towards a culture of parliamentary openness, the issue of easier access to the parliamentary estate, enabling citizen participation in parliamentary procedure, will need to be considered.

Civil society² engagement with parliament is limited to the participation in an “Expert Council”. Each committee has an “Expert Council”, which includes various governmental institutions and civil society. As noted in the WFD Report on Parliamentary Process in Uzbekistan³, there appears to be little consistency in composition, as members are appointed by their posts, rather than in a personal or individual capacity. There also seemed to be a lack of consistency as to when the “Expert Council” would be solicited for advice. The umbrella of civil society organisations NANNOUz is involved in the pre legislative stage by discussing government bills with their members at provincial and district levels and collecting their feedback. As per presidential decree of 2018, NANNOUz (Uzntntma) includes all comments and co-signs the draft bill before it reaches parliament.

Certain accredited media⁴ have access to plenary sessions of the Oliy Majlis but are not able to attend committee debates. They have the right to address particular questions to the parliament, which will receive a response within five days.

Enabling citizens to visit the parliament easily for tours, and allowing them to use their phones to document such activities on social media with selfies and photos of the beautiful building, may seem frivolous, but contributes enormously to a perception of openness and makes the parliament relevant to the younger generation.

Screenshots of #ParliamentSelfie and related hashtags from twitter:



² Independent civil society organisations are rare in Uzbekistan. Most civil society organisations are governmental non-governmental organisations that are established or sponsored by the government to further its political objectives. Many of GONGO representatives that were interviewed, have previously held various functions in the government or parliament. Civil society organisations that wish to operate in Uzbekistan need to go through a mandatory registration and until recently all activities organised by civil society had to receive prior permission by the Ministry of Justice. Civil society experiences various barriers to exercising activities, including burdensome and vague reporting requirements and an obligation to ensure governmental access to all activities. For a detailed analysis, see the NGO Law Monitor of the ICNL: <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/uzbekistan.html>.

³ <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WFD-Report-on-Parliamentary-Practices-in-Uzbekistan-2019-in-English.pdf>

⁴ Independent media outlets, especially online media, do not have the same privilege as they are not accredited by the government.



The parliamentarians consulted for this study expressed a clear desire for the parliament itself to be open and transparent, and for this to be operationalised digitally to enable greater citizen awareness, understanding and appreciation of the work of parliamentarians. Members of Parliament have historically felt distant by the public, who have been accustomed to a strong executive and judiciary exercising power. The recent and ongoing reforms, however, have both strengthened the role of parliament, and have devolved powers to more local levels. MPs now hope that their increasingly influential role in strengthening democracy and producing high quality and effective legislation will be recognized by citizens. They also understand that re-election is based on an understanding by citizens of what they have accomplished during the legislature and communication is therefore essential to them. In the next 2019 elections, it is anticipated that there will be approximately a 60% turnover of members of parliament. With this important turnover, there is also the hope that parliament will be more effective and open to the public.



III. EXISTING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Oliy Majlis has several existing online portals for citizens and stakeholders to engage with its work. These include an e-petition website⁵, a regulation website⁶, a parliament website for each chamber⁷, and a proposed new separate website for the Legislative and Parliamentary Research Institute (LRPI). Individual MPs also have various online sites and social media feeds. Together, these provide several ways in which parliamentary work is already, theoretically, digitally accessible. The LPRI is currently undertaking a study on the online presence of parliament and will provide recommendations to the parliament on how to maximize its communication.

The recent proliferation of parliamentary and linked websites in Uzbekistan has created a web of interlinked but standalone sites and portals that are admirable in their aims to increase transparency and engagement, but are in fact detrimental to a meaningful and satisfying user experience and, paradoxically, a barrier to increased parliamentary openness. If users have to trawl a number of different websites, all structured differently, and all with slightly different branding, to find what they are looking for, they will give up very quickly and claim that the parliament is, in fact, not open and transparent at all, because they cannot easily find what they are looking for. In the digital world, meaningful transparency declines as the number of clicks required to find desired information increases.

It is understandable that different departments within the parliamentary bureaucracy would wish to have control over their own digital projects and domains, however, the fragmented nature of the current provision already creates an incoherent user experience, and the creation of further standalone sites such as a legislation tracker or an MPs database would exacerbate this issue and frustrate users who are not familiar with the bureaucratic structures and silos within parliament. The unification of all parliamentary sites/portals onto one mother site would be the most useful change for citizens, and the development of digital infrastructure to host and rationalize content for the future would significantly benefit how new digital tools might be received.

The e-petitions platform '*My Opinion*' is a clear example of the government and parliament's desire to engage citizens. Any individual is able to create a petition online through this platform even if the process might add an additional burden⁸. Once the petition is vetted and moderated for its content, it can accumulate votes from anywhere in the country for 90 days. Once a petition has 10,000 votes, the parliament will commit to debating it in the chamber. This type of portal is in use in many parliaments around the world and can provide a valued entry into parliament for individuals outside of the political and policy making class. This portal in Uzbekistan is still relatively new, having only been implemented in 2018, and currently displays only a small number of petitions that have received political attention, such as a petition on the "permission for car tinted windows" and "installing traffic lights with time countdown", which are both relatively minor political issues. This is understandable for such a new platform, that according to individuals interviewed for this report, is relatively little known, even amongst journalists and especially amongst the wider public. A failure to reach a critical mass of usage in the future will convey the impression that the process is either ineffective or outdated, which in turn might deter citizens from further use. The effectiveness of the process, if it is indeed

⁵ <https://meningfikrim.uz/ru>

⁶ <https://regulation.gov.uz/oz>

⁷ <http://parliament.gov.uz/uz/> (Lower House) and <http://www.senat.uz/uz> (Upper House)

⁸ To create an appeal on the My Opinion web-portal, users need to log in through the Unified Identification System (id.gov.uz), after clicking a special button on the Home page, the user fills in the appropriate fields with the text



effective, must be clearly articulated. The individuals contributing should also be provided with updates and explanations on their contributions to encourage repeat use and the appearance of efficacy. Studies show that citizens that receive meaningful responses to their contributions online are more likely to look favourably upon the process (even in instances where they do not get the results they had hoped for), to have increased trust in the institution, and are more likely to engage again in future. Currently, the e-petition platform does not appear to be fully closing this feedback loop. It is not clear, for instance, why certain petitions with the requisite number of votes have not been taken forward for debate or action or why parliament has never used its power to initiate private member bills. There may be a very good reason, however if this is not clear on the platform, then the impression is given that parliament is ignoring issues it does not wish to engage with. Some of these highly popular petitions, such as a petition on the protection of trees from illegal logging, seem not to have received any follow up and feedback, which could tarnish the reputation of the e-petitions platform.

Small tweaks to the platform and the way in which it is administered may yield more positive interactions. For instance, the statistics at the foot of the page could be made more prominent to demonstrate meaningful progression of petitions. Most people arriving on the petition site will be there to sign a specific petition, and so making the search function more prominent would make it easier to navigate, in particular on mobile devices.

This is an example taken from the UK Parliament petitions site:

The screenshot shows the top of the UK Parliament Petitions website. It features a green header with the text 'Petitions' and 'UK Government and Parliament'. Below the header, there are two statistics: '435 petitions got a response from the Government' and '72 petitions were debated in the House of Commons'. A search bar is prominently displayed with the text 'Search petitions' and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there is a link to 'View all open petitions'. The 'Popular petitions' section lists three items: 'Hold a referendum on whether to leave with the deal offered or remain in the EU' with 1,794 signatures, 'No to a "People's Vote" !' with 441 signatures, and 'Remain should not be on a second referendum ballot paper' with 237 signatures.

The current displays of 'new' and 'most popular' petitions are very positive, as well as the display of those in progress. An additional display highlighting petitions closing soon may also be useful, as would the option to view petitions local to the user. As a monitoring tool, it may also be useful to create an algorithm tracking multiple contributions and content contribution.



IV. E-PARLIAMENT AMBITIONS

A legislative tracker and an open database of MP details have been proposed by the Parliament as potential tools to both become more open, and gain citizen support. This assignment did not only ask whether such tools would be useful, it considered whether they were in fact, the best methods of realising these parliamentary ambitions.

1. THE LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

The creation and implementation of a digital legislative tracker was one of the two key activities that the Oliy Majlis expressed a desire to explore and a recommendation (nr. 8) in the [WFD](#) analytical review of parliamentary practice in Uzbekistan. The idea that individuals would be able to track legislation as it proceeds through parliament and actively contribute to amending the language was considered a positive step towards parliamentary openness.

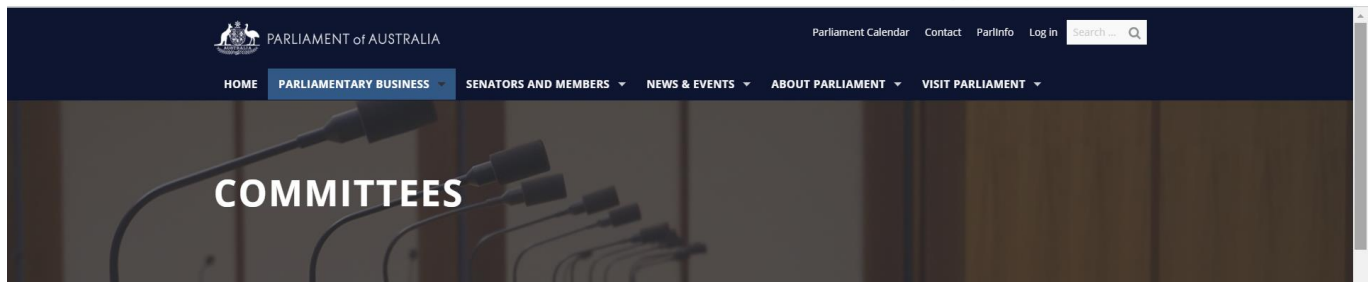
The need for a legislative tracker and its proposed functionality should be clearly defined and further articulated by the parliament and end users. The current provision of legislative process information was widely considered unfit for purpose, however the concept of a crowdsourced style tracking tool was not what stakeholders stated that they needed. Better, up to date information on the passage of each piece of legislation, where it is in the process, what its timetable is predicted to be, when it is discussed, and who has provided information/evidence in its drafting were key features that were requested by stakeholders. These features should be included in a clear and easy understandable language and a digestible format, for instance by providing a summary of the law and infographics.

External policymakers did not express a wish to assist in drafting legislation, rather, they wanted more opportunity to engage with Committees in the early stages to ensure their policy expertise was embedded in the legislation as it developed. A more effective and inclusive beginning to end consultative process for legislation was what was most strongly supported by stakeholders. They also expressed the need for the parliament to monitor the implementation of laws and regarded their contribution in this area as substantial.

The most common complaint from CSOs/NGOs concerning their involvement in legislation was that the current window for making contributions to the legislative stage was restricted to 30 days, which is a very short period of time in which to produce detailed and expert contributions, especially when CSOs/NGOs have multiple demands on their time. This short window also prevents many ordinary citizens from engaging, as they are not likely to know that the legislation is even open for contributions, or indeed, whether they are able to contribute their opinions. Many individuals have relevant and important experiences that should inform policy and legislation, and the government risks not only alienating these citizens, but producing less-informed legislation because they are not exposed to these experiences. A legislative tracker is unlikely to solve this issue.

Based upon the feedback from policymaking stakeholders, openness and engagement in the legislative process online could be achieved by making improvements to the current portal, in making both online and offline changes in the consultation process and linking it to the existing e-petitions platform.

The Australian Parliament website demonstrates a user-friendly layout of searchable current committee work on legislation, and provides easy routes to providing contributions:



HOME / PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS / COMMITTEES

Parliamentary committees investigate specific matters of policy or government administration or performance.

Committees provide an opportunity for organisations and individuals to participate in policy making and to have their views placed on the public record and considered as part of the decision-making process.

Search Committees and Inquiries

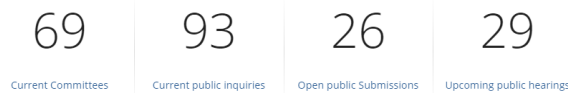
Keyword(s):

More options

SEARCH

Bills and Legislation
Chamber documents
Hansard
Senate estimates
Committees ▲
Lodge my submission
Senate Committees
House of Representatives Committees
Joint Committees
Getting Involved in Parliamentary

Current Parliament



Committees

Senate Committees ▼
House Committees ▼
Joint Committees ▼

Committees
Upcoming Public Hearings
Statistics
Petitions
Address in Reply
Records of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry

How to get involved in Committee inquiries

Senate

- Information on Senate Committees and getting involved
- Making a submission
- Attending a public hearing
- Procedures to be observed by Senate Committees for the protection of witnesses
- Witness guide

House of Representatives

- Making a submission to a Committee inquiry
- Appearing as a witness at a Committee public hearing

Through this portal, individuals and organisations can quickly examine current legislative business and decide how to contribute their expertise. Those individuals may then be called to provide oral evidence to further inform legislation.

2. THE MP DATABASE

The creation and implementation of a database of elected officials' details (local level up to MP/Senator) was one of the two key activities that the Oliy Majlis expressed a desire to explore. This concept has been variously implemented in numerous territories, with varying quality, content and usefulness.



The expert from mySociety demonstrated the content and functionality of [TheyWorkForYou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com), operating in the UK, which has a variety of features that the proposed database may benefit from, including voting records, aggregated voting records, links to social media, opportunity to contact directly, access to all debate speeches in plenary, and the option to receive updates on specific parliamentarians.

The screenshot displays the 'TheyWorkForYou' website interface. On the left, a green sidebar asks 'Does your MP represent you?' and provides a search box for a postcode (TF1 8GH) with a 'Find out' button. The main content area features a profile for Kevin Brennan, including his title as Shadow Minister and a 'Voting Record' section titled 'Kevin Brennan's voting in Parliament'. This section provides a summary of his voting patterns, such as generally voting against the Iraq war and for a transparent Parliament. The bottom left corner shows a news snippet for 'The Queen's Speech'.

Features, such as voting records could be easily integrated into a new database as the parliament plans to upgrade its electronic voting after the elections in January 2020. This upgrade will allow for automatisations of voting records.

MPs expressed significant interest in being able to customize individual pages to promote their achievements, and while this may be beneficial to a certain extent, standardised information *without* promotional polish makes it easier for citizens and journalists to compare MP performance equally and fairly. As such, a database might better refer users to an MP's external personal website or social media feed where their achievements can be promoted, and which will not contaminate/confuse standardized information on the official portal.

However, perceptions of digital openness by parliamentarians are not mirrored by external stakeholders or citizens. There is a gap between how parliamentarians understand open processes to work, and how they work in reality. There is a need for MPs to understand that this is an issue, and take steps to simplify or properly enforce how information is produced and disseminated.

The capacity and expertise in collecting and producing the necessary raw and open data to power potential digital tools was unclear. When considering the data required for an MP database, parliamentarians were concerned that the production of this data would fall to individual MPs. This should not be the case, as this would be inefficient and carry a high risk of overall failure. A central parliamentary digital service should be responsible for this function.



V. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In considering what the best options for the Oliy Majlis to move towards a more digital parliament, broad user needs amongst citizens and civil society will have to be considered. The digital engagement of parliament should not create further exclusion of certain groups of population. The way the parliament communicates with young people, using social media outlets does often not resonate with the older generation. Digitalisation can also create a divide between the urban population, which has access to the internet, and the rural population, which does not.

In moving towards a digital parliament, mobile costs need to be taken into account. There is a general decrease in the costs of data but data packages are still relatively expensive in comparison to the monthly salary. Therefore, most people would not pay for streaming on their phones. Options, that are currently considered by the parliament, such as creating possibilities for live streaming of parliamentary sessions might therefore not be a current priority in digitalisation.

Last but not least, the issue of gender should be a main consideration for the parliament in moving towards an e-parliament. Opening up parliament equally to all citizens digitally requires equality of access to the necessary hardware, software and connectivity. Research on the digital divide has shown that globally, women tend to have lower levels of access, due primarily to their lack of financial independence. This is more pronounced in rural areas, where the men of the family tend to be the primary wage earners and tend to hold primary ownership over technology such as mobile phones and computers. While this issue of access is not easily or quickly resolvable, demographics tracking on parliamentary websites is recommended to examine whether significant support for certain petitions/legislation is demographically representative of the population, and to flag items of significant popularity that are primarily supported by one narrow demographic (such as where a petition is signed almost exclusively by men).



VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a **unified communication and outreach strategy** for the parliament as a whole. This should encompass both online and offline goals, and detail how proposed activities will achieve those goals. Offline interventions could include relaxing physical access to the parliamentary estate to include more school visits, tours of the parliament open to citizens/tourists, the ability for citizens to observe plenary debate, and outreach to young people in schools. Online interventions could include unifying and updating the parliamentary websites regularly, engaging more broadly with civil society to contribute to legislation and inquiries, more broadly involving the media in parliamentary coverage (including the informal media such as bloggers), maintaining a Parliament social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and producing 'explainer' content such as short videos.
2. Agree in detail the **coordination between LPRI, Committee on Issues of Innovation Development, and Communications/ICT department** of the Secretariat (apparat) of the legislative chamber. Currently there is a risk that individual silos will develop that act independently of each other, which would create significant incoherence in the delivery of e-parliament platforms. Common linkages, clear lines of reporting and sign-off, unification of disparate platforms into one common site, and unified branding and messaging should be agreed and implemented.
3. **Developing a matrix of shared responsibilities** between LPRI, Committee on Issues of Innovation Development, and Communications/ICT department of the secretariat (apparat) of the legislative chamber with clear timelines will help all three institutions to effectively carry out their role and monitor the progress towards the intended outcome.
4. **Develop a legislative tracker on the existing parliament website** with the following features: up to date information on the passage of each piece of legislation, where it is in the process, what the timetable is predicted to be, when it is discussed, how to contribute suggestions/amendments, and who has provided information/evidence in its drafting (with copies of that evidence available electronically). These were the key features that were requested by stakeholders.
5. Legislative tracker on the existing parliament website could also **link with the e-petitions website** and invite citizens that voted for the legislation on the petition website to provide evidence to the legislative committee⁹.
6. E-petition platform should be able **to provide timely and effective feedback on petitions** initiated by the citizens. There should be clear information and explanation for why certain petitions with the requisite number of votes have not been taken forward for debate or action or why parliament has never used its power to initiate private member bills.
7. **Adding the statistics at the foot of the page** (e-petition platform) could be made more prominent to demonstrate meaningful progression of petitions. Most people arriving on the

^{9 11} The legislative tracker and MP database could be developed for USD 20,000- USD30,000 each using UK coders/developers. This might be significantly reduced if an Uzbek coder/developer is able to develop it depending on the market rate for these skills. There would also be ongoing maintenance cost with 1-2 developers required to structure and clean the data, maintain scrapers and tweak the algorithms.



petition site will be there to sign a specific petition, and so making the search function more prominent would make it easier to navigate, in particular on mobile devices.

8. An **additional display on e-petition platform highlighting petitions closing soon** may also be useful, as would the option to view petitions local to the user. As a monitoring tool, it may also be useful to create an algorithm tracking multiple contributions and content contribution.
9. Parliament **should widely and effectively promote a legislative tracker among citizens** by clearly articulating its functions and intended outcome. It is advisable to post up to date information on the passage of each piece of legislation, where it is in the process, what its timetable is predicted to be, when it is discussed, and who has provided information/evidence in its drafting. These features should be included in a clear and easy understandable language and a digestible format, for instance by providing a summary of the law and infographics.
10. It is suggested to **engage external policymakers with Committees in the early stages** to ensure their policy expertise was embedded in the legislation as it developed. Involving external experts into policy making and legislative processes will eventually increase their interest in monitor the implementation of those particular laws.
11. Current window for making contributions to the legislative stage **should be extended at least up to 60 days** to let the external stakeholders, including CSOs/NGOs to produce detailed and expert contributions. Moreover, the fact that the new draft bill is posted on the legislative platform should be widely and timely communicated to the citizens.
12. **Create an MPs database** that provides details of the MPs biography, voting record, aggregate voting record, speaking contributions in plenary, committee membership, and details on how to contact them/their personal websites or social media accounts. These basic features should be automated using parliamentary digital information, rather than be the responsibility of MPs to produce, to ensure standardised and comparable data. A basic portal such as this can be expanded with additional features in the fullness of time dependent upon user and parliamentary needs¹⁰. MPs database **should have a searching engine** to let the citizens quickly and easily find their representatives through adding their current home addresses. The UK experience of TheyWorkForYou.com platform developed by mySociety can be a good example to build on.
13. **Gender issues should be the main focus** for the parliament while creating an e-parliament platform. Such factors, as having unequal access to the necessary hardware, software and connectivity among men and women as well as among urban and rural population should be taken into consider. Thus, the demographics tracking on parliamentary websites should be added to analyse whether significant support for certain petitions/legislation is demographically representative of the population, and to flag items of significant popularity that are primarily supported by one narrow demographic (such as where a petition is signed almost exclusively by men).
14. New features and platforms should ensure that the information uses **open data standards**. This will ensure that civil society organisations are able to take advantage of the information.



APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

NAME	TITLE	ORGANISATION
Mr Ilkhom Abdullaev	MP, Chairman of the Committee on Issues of Innovation Development, Information Policy and Information Technology	Oliy Majlis
Ms Evelina Artikova	Head of Programmes	British Embassy in Tashkent
Mr Bobur Bekmurodov	Executive Director	Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish”
Mr Azat Irmanov	Project Manager	UNDP
Ms Lola Islamova	Deputy Director	Centre for Modern Journalism Development
Dr. Dildora Karimova	Deputy Director	“Oila” (Family) research centre under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan
Dr. Sayyora Khodjaeva	Director	Institute of Democracy and Human Rights
Mr Nasim Alimov	Director	National Association of NGOs in Uzbekistan (UzNNTMA)
Ms Elena Kudinova	Head of International Department	Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish”
Mr Askar Mamathanov	Expert	Institute for Social and Economic Initiatives
Mr John Mitchell	Deputy Head of Mission	British Embassy in Tashkent
Dr. Ulugbek Saidiev	Head of Department	Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish”
Ms Saida Suleymanova	Director	Centre for Modern Journalism Development and Legal Clinic for Journalists
Ms Gulmira Tleulova	Head of international department	“Oila” (Family) research centre under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan
Mr Doniyor Turaev	Deputy Director of the LPRI	Parliament of Uzbekistan