



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

# 2023 EVALUATION OF THE CPA RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES PROGRAMME 2018-2022

## About the CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) connects, develops, promotes and supports parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA collaborates with parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its statement of purpose. It brings parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields, to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies.

## About the author

This review and accompanying report was produced by Frederike Engeland, Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Consultant on behalf of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat.

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# Foreword

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By Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary General

On behalf of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, I am delighted to present this final report on the **Evaluation of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures Programme 2018-2022**. This report and its associated review are timely. 2023 is both the 10th anniversary of the **Commonwealth Charter**<sup>1</sup> and the 20th anniversary of the **Latimer House Principles on the Separation of Powers**<sup>2</sup>, as well as the midway point of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Conceived in 2006 and updated in 2018, the Benchmarks were designed to provide a minimum set of standards to guide the functioning of Commonwealth legislatures. The updated version seeks to align the Benchmarks with SDG 16 to 'build effective, accountable and inclusive [parliamentary] institutions at all levels'. The Benchmarks remain an invaluable tool to support parliaments in identifying areas for reform, and coupled with the CPA's Technical Assistance Programmes, result in significant impact. For this reason, they are, and will remain, a flagship programme for the CPA.

As highlighted in this report, the CPA, through its Benchmarks programme has helped parliaments in a variety of impactful ways. For example, enabling legislatures to take forward updates of their Standing Orders, developing Codes of Conduct, undertaking administrative and organisational reforms, and enhancing their public education, outreach and engagement. Whereas the Benchmark assessments have only occurred in a small percentage of Commonwealth jurisdictions, the CPA's approach has been to focus on lasting sustainable impact as opposed to reach. Although a great deal has been achieved to date, we are not complacent around this work. Central to our Strategic Plan 2022-2025 is the importance of continuous improvement and self-reflection. As such, the undertaking of this review has been an essential step in identifying beneficial reforms to our Benchmark programme. This report provides invaluable insight and recommendations to strengthen our approach in supporting the implementation and use of the Benchmarks across the Commonwealth, and beyond.

Even before this review was commissioned, we set about reinvigorating our Benchmarks programme in several ways. We have sought to increase our capacity to provide assistance in delivering Benchmark assessments, especially to smaller jurisdictions. In mid-2023, we gained financial support via a grant from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to deliver seven additional assessments between 2023-2024. We have commenced work to enhance the Benchmarks via a set of 'Advanced Benchmarks' to complement the existing ones as developed in 2017/18. Establishing a set of more aspirational goals for legislatures to reach for, related to gender sensitisation, accessibility for persons with disabilities and innovation and technology. We have also increased our drive to promote the Benchmarks to a broader international audience and embed Benchmarks into our communications outputs. Alongside this, we have begun work in maintaining a more robust level of monitoring and evaluation. Finally, we have supported other organisations, like the IPU in the development of their Indicators for Democratic Parliaments. These activities form part of the CPA's annual Implementation Plan for 2023, which in turn will form a holistic Benchmarks strategy to work in tandem with the CPA Strategic Plan.

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1. With specific reference to Article VI, which states '*We recognise the importance of maintaining the integrity of roles of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. These are the guarantors in their respective spheres of the rule of law, the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and adherence to good governance.*'

2. With specific reference to Section III Independence of Parliamentarians, which states a. '*Parliamentarians must be able to carry out their legislative and constitutional functions in accordance with the constitution, free from unlawful interference.*'



In moving forward, the Secretariat will reflect on the observations and recommendations in the report to identify effective mechanisms for improving our approach. This will aim to ensure the Benchmarks are fit for purpose in the longer-term and are appropriately tailored for the needs and wants of our member-parliaments, whilst ensuring they remain a robust set of standards to strengthen parliamentary institutions.

In conclusion, I would like to extend to Frederike Engeland our thanks for leading on this review alongside the support of the Programmes Team. Most especially, I thank our friends and colleagues from across the Commonwealth for their ongoing support of the Benchmarks and inputting into this review. I recommend that this report is utilised by our partners and wider parliamentary strengthening experts as part of their complementary work on strengthening democracy and good governance across the globe.



# Executive Summary

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This is the final report on the findings of the 2023 evaluation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures programme provided to Commonwealth legislatures between 2018-2022.

The evaluation was commissioned by CPA Headquarters Secretariat (CPA HQ) in February 2023 to learn about the effectiveness of the CPA's work around the Benchmarks and its overall contribution to the programme's impact. To answer the review questions, the consultant spoke to current and former CPA HQ staff, experts/consultants working closely with the CPA around the Benchmarks and a representative sample of the legislatures assessed.

The CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures or 'Benchmarks' were originally developed in 2006 by a CPA study group of Commonwealth parliamentarians, as a minimum standard for parliaments across the Commonwealth. The Benchmarks were updated in 2018 to include new developments comprising relevant SDG 16 targets, the commitments of the Commonwealth Charter and input from CPA regional chapters. Since 2018, 22 out of the 180 CPA member legislatures (including subnational and Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies' legislatures) have taken the self-assessment against the CPA Benchmarks. Of these, 12 were funded through the FCDO Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D) programme and 6 were funded by the CPA themselves (4 were self-funded, internal exercises). Three legislatures that have completed CPA funded facilitated assessments have since signed an MoU with CPA to receive targeted technical assistance on some of the recommendations from the Benchmark assessments.<sup>3</sup>

Reasons for doing the review vary greatly between legislatures and their circumstances. This evaluation found that those legislatures that have entered the assessment exercise with a clear reform agenda, and in those cases where these assessments were driven by the speaker or clerk/secretary of legislatures, is where concrete outcomes in the form of changes to parliamentary procedures have occurred.

Of course, CPA can further drive this change by offering technical assistance on at least some of the recommendations of the assessment, as has been the case in Anguilla and Belize. Parliaments seeking development support to address shortcomings, often due to lack of resources, both in terms of internal staff capacity and time, as well as the necessary finances to hire external help, often agree to the assessment in order to get technical assistance via the CPA Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) or to put pressure on governmental stakeholders to increase funding support to the legislature. Uganda tailored their assessment methodology in a way that it could be used for their internal annual strategic review, which forms the basis of its annual report to the national Government, as well as for its SDG reporting on SDG 16. The Ugandan parliament already has an internal evaluation and review culture, with annual reviews supporting parliamentary strategy and planning for over a decade.

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3. Anguilla, Australian Capital Territory, Belize, Isle of Man, Jersey, KwaZulu-Natal, and Uganda were interviewed. Kenya, Malaysia, St Lucia and Tanzania were also selected, but could not be interviewed during the timespan of this evaluation.

Other best practices include some countries using the assessment reports to support their requests for development aid from foreign donors and implementing agencies, as has been the case following the assessment in Ghana. The report thus acts both as evidence as well as a baseline for parliament to revisit in a follow-up assessment to hold development agencies accountable in terms of progress made/development outcomes. Experience from both Ghana and Malawi also showed that framing the recommendations in a way that makes them more accessible, applying a RAG (red, amber and green) colour scheme by urgency, differentiating between short-term and longer-term change processes and assigning responsibilities for action points, might further facilitate engagement with the recommendations (at least feedback has been pointing in that direction to date).

The likelihood of the Benchmarks being continued to be used by legislatures in the future will broadly depend on the extent to which CPA HQ keeps a conversation about the Benchmarks going (keeps promoting them), keeps them up to date, responds to new developments and needs, and, importantly, how it engages with other parliamentary strengthening organisations and their standards.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

APF	L' Assemble Parlementaire de la Francophonie
CAA	Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic regions
COPA	Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPA HQ	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters
CPA UK	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association United Kingdom Branch
CP4D	Commonwealth Parliaments for Democracy
CPwD	Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities
CWP	Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDI	National Democratic Institute
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SADC PF	Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
TAP	CPA Technical Assistance Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy



# PART 1 - BACKGROUND

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The report is split up into three sections, including: the background to this evaluation, methodological approaches, and key findings around the agreed evaluation questions and recommendations for further CPA programming.

## ABOUT THIS REVIEW

This external evaluation of the work of the CPA HQ around the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures between 2018-22 was commissioned by the Programmes Team within CPA HQ. The review project started in February 2023, and sought to learn about the effectiveness of the CPA's work around the Benchmarks and its overall contribution to the programme's impact. It builds on the findings from the 2020 evaluation of the 2018-2020 Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D) project, which also covered the CPA HQ work on the Benchmarks to some extent. It did not identify any concrete outcomes in target countries following the assessments due to the short timeframe between implementation and evaluation.<sup>4</sup>

This evaluation is not a review of the individual CPA Recommended Benchmarks, which were last updated in 2018, nor of the progress made by the CPA's partners regarding the findings of their respective self-assessments. Through this evaluation, the CPA hoped to gather evidence and lessons learned to help further promote and improve their offering around the CPA Benchmarks. The evaluation findings will be distributed to parliamentary partners and will be reproduced in various forms to help donors, partners and other interested parties, such as researchers, better understand and reference the Benchmarks going forward.

The evaluation was conducted between April – June 2023 by Frederike Engeland, Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Consultant. In order to respond to the objectives of the review, the review questions followed the OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance, primarily focusing on effectiveness and impact and excluding questions around efficiency.<sup>5</sup> A detailed list of questions can be found in the Annex to this report, though they can be roughly summarised as follows:

1. **Relevance/Coherence: How were the Benchmarks used/taken up? By whom?**
2. **Effectiveness/Impact: How effective/outcomes to date? Under what circumstances was the support most effective? Best practices over the years?**
3. **Sustainability: How to increase the likelihood of sustained impact (=use/re-use) of the Benchmarks?**

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4. The report did note however, that these assessments in itself were worthwhile and well-received by the selected countries. CP4D Final Evaluation Report, May 2020.

5. [The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation \(EvalNet\) has defined six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.](#)

## REVIEW METHODOLOGY

In responding to these questions, the consultant employed the following methods of investigation:

- Desk review of over 50 programme documents shared by CPA HQ;
- Desk research of other benchmarks/standards;
- Stakeholder survey with legislatures who have used the Benchmarks (28 legislatures responded);
- Key informant interviews with representatives of a selected sample of 11 legislatures (7 interviews held with 14 staff, clerks and Speakers, 4 selected legislatures could not be interviewed);
- Key informant interviews with selected CPA HQ staff (6 staff interviewed); and
- Key informant interviews with further external stakeholders, including parliamentary strengthening partner organisations and evaluators (7 external experts interviewed).

The consultant spoke to current and former CPA HQ staff, experts/consultants working closely with the CPA around the Benchmarks and a representative sample of the legislatures assessed. In selecting the sample, the consultant considered location, type and size of each legislature and time and method of the review, as well as the reviewer and extent of follow-up/initial outcome reporting.

The following 11 legislatures were selected: **Anguilla, Australian Capital Territory, Belize, Isle of Man, Jersey, KwaZulu-Natal, and Uganda.** Kenya, Malaysia, St Lucia and Tanzania were also selected but could not be interviewed during the timespan of this evaluation. However, the survey generated a wider response rate, being sent to all CPA Branches, and an additional 26 Parliaments<sup>6</sup> could feed into the evaluation. Questions focused on their familiarity with the Benchmarks, if they had done the assessment – and if not, if they would do the assessment in the future – and outcomes/feedback on the assessment.

## ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

The CPA connects, develops, promotes and supports parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA collaborates with parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its statement of purpose. It brings parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies. The CPA comprises 180 legislatures (Branches) and is divided into nine regions: Africa, Asia, Australia, British Islands and Mediterranean, Canada, Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic, India, Pacific, and South-East Asia.

The CPA's primary focus is to deliver programmes and projects to its members which are consistently impact-oriented, effective, sustainable, cost-effective, innovative and of the highest standards. Its dual programmes strategy comprises of professional development and institutional strengthening. Both approaches are undertaken on a multilateral and bilateral basis to ensure a depth and breadth of learning across its membership.

The CPA's professional development approach centres on providing learning and development opportunities for its primary stakeholders, namely Commonwealth parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. This can take the shape of one-off learning activities like Post-Election Seminars or through online training courses, as provided by the CPA Parliamentary Academy.

Its institutional parliamentary strengthening methodology centres around supporting parliamentary and associated national governance entities to perform at the highest standards. Key to this is the CPA's passionate promotion of the Separation of Powers Principles (namely

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6. 9 national, 12 subnational, 5 British Overseas Territories legislatures.







64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Kampala, Uganda in 2019 where the updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks were approved by the assembled Commonwealth Parliamentarians attending the General Assembly.

the Latimer House Principles) and promoting key benchmarks (such as the CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures). This agenda remains firmly aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The CPA provides expert support to legislatures through its Technical Assistance Programmes, which offer a bespoke roadmap to meet the Benchmarks within a defined timeline while providing the CPA with an opportunity to demonstrate ‘added value’.

The organisation also produces toolkits, handbooks, and other resources. It publishes quarterly *The Parliamentarian*, the Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments. It also administers the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), a network across the Commonwealth which promotes greater representation for women in Parliament, the CPA Small Branches network, representing parliaments and legislatures with populations below 1 million people, the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network, and the Commonwealth Youth Parliament, an annual gathering of young people hosted by a Commonwealth parliament.

## ABOUT THE CPA RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES

The CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures or ‘Benchmarks’ were originally developed in 2006 by a CPA study group of Commonwealth parliamentarians, together with the World Bank Institute, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Parliament and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), as a minimum standard for parliaments across the Commonwealth.<sup>7</sup> They were explicitly developed as a guide for parliaments to help identify areas for improvement in their effectiveness as an institution. They were adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2007<sup>8</sup>. Some regional chapters of the CPA, including the Asia, India and South-East Asia region, as well as the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic (CAA) region, adapted the 2006 Benchmarks to better reflect their sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts<sup>9</sup>. Between 2009 and 2014, numerous regional workshops were undertaken by the CPA and partner organisations to enable Branches to undertake light-touch technical reviews against the Benchmarks.

7. [CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures. A Study Group Report 2006.](#)

8. [The Kampala Communique, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 2007](#)

9. This included the Pacific Region (2009), the Asia, India and South-East Asia regions (2010) and the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic region (2011) adaptations. The Benchmarks also formed the basis of adaptations by non-Commonwealth groups, including the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA).



Between 2010 and 2015, three inter-regional workshops were organised across the CPA on the Benchmarks and how they could be tailored for a regional approach. Top left: 2010 India, Asia and South-East Asia Workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Centre: 2015 second Workshop for India, Asia and South-East Asia in Perak, Malaysia. Bottom right: 2014 Workshop for Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region in Bridgetown, Barbados.



The original 87 Benchmarks, grouped around the themes of organisation, functions and values of democratic legislatures, were updated with the support of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) under the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office<sup>10</sup> (FCDO)-funded CP4D project. The Benchmarks were updated by a working group, which also included Commonwealth parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in 2018, to include new developments comprising relevant SDG 16 targets, the commitments of the Charter and the input from regional chapters referred to above. The updated 132 Benchmarks were noted by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2022<sup>11</sup>. Since 2018, 22 of the 180 Commonwealth parliaments and legislatures have conducted full Benchmark assessments – either led by their own parliamentary staff or with support from CPA HQ experts.<sup>12</sup>

10. At the time it was the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (prior to the Department’s merger with DFID).

11. 2022 Communique of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting [“Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming”](#)

12. These include Anguilla, Australian Capital Territory, Belize, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Isle of Man, Jersey, Kenya, KwaZulu-Natal, Malaysia, Malawi, Montserrat, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, St Lucia, St Helena, Tanzania, Uganda, and Western Cape. [Queensland](#) undertook their Assessment using the updated Benchmarks which were developed in 2017/18. Additionally, Seychelles has also used the Benchmarks, if not a complete assessment.



The below table lists the Benchmark Assessments (that are known of) taking place following the updating of the Benchmarks. Those with \* were conducted under the 2018-2020 CP4D Project.

Country	Region	Type of Leg	Self or CPA	Assessor	Timing	Assessment undertaken in person or via remote online means
Anguilla	CAA	Overseas Territory	CPA	Matthew Salik, Jack Hardcastle	2020	In person
Australian Capital Territory	Australia	Subnational	Self	N/A	2019	In person
Belize*	CAA	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon Meenakshi Dhar	2019	In person
The Gambia*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon	2020	In person
Ghana*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon	2020	In person
Grenada*	CAA	National	CPA	Meenakshi Dhar	2020	In person
Isle of Man	BIM	Crown Dependency	Self	N/A	2021	In person
Jersey	BIM	Crown Dependency	Self	N/A	2022	In person
Kenya*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon	2019	In person
KwaZulu-Natal	Africa	Subnational	CPA	Susie Latta	2020	Remote
Malaysia*	SEA	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon	2019	In person
Malawi	Africa	National	CPA	Susie Latta, Clive Barker	2023	In person
Montserrat	CAA	Overseas Territory	CPA	Matthew Salik	2022	In person
Pakistan*	Asia	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon Meenakshi Dhar	2019	In person
Queensland	Australia	Subnational	Self	N/A	2017	In person
Sierra Leone*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon, Anna Schuesterl	2020	In person
South Africa*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon, Meenakshi Dhar	2019	In person
St Lucia*	CAA	National	CPA	Meenakshi Dhar	2019	In person
St Helena	BIM	Overseas Territory	CPA	Susie Latta	2021	Remote
Tanzania*	Africa	National	CPA	Anthony Staddon	2021	In person
Uganda*	Africa	National	CPA	Meenakshi Dhar	2020	In person
Western Cape	Africa	Subnational	CPA	Susie Latta	2020	Remote







# PART 2 - FINDINGS

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## To what extent have the CPA Benchmark Assessments been consistent over time in approach and quality?

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS RELATED TO RELEVANCE/COHERENCE

Generally speaking, CPA HQ support to Commonwealth legislatures around the Benchmarks have gone through three phases (with some overlap):

1. Following the adoption of the initial set of Benchmarks in 2006, there was no dedicated bilateral programme established by the CPA to ensure individual legislatures would set about conducting self-assessments against the Benchmarks. Work was primarily conducted with the aid of UNDP, the World Bank Group and NDI. This was largely due to lack of funding (as well as the nature of the CPA HQ and the focus of its work at the time). However, work was directed on a regional basis with workshops being undertaken for Members and Clerks for Branches collectively doing desk-based technical reviews against the Benchmarks.<sup>13</sup> A Guidance Note was also developed to assist Branches. As the 2006 CPA Benchmarks were one of the first attempts to come up with a tool/criterion to assess the performance of parliaments, few legislatures undertook a holistic self-assessment<sup>14</sup>, and if they did, many did not share their experiences publicly. As such, the CPA has no definite number of how many parliaments have taken the self-assessment based on the 2006 Benchmarks, and there was no official feedback mechanism established.<sup>15</sup>
2. The CPA conducted a review of the Benchmarks between 2016 – 2017 (adopted in 2019 by the CPA's General Assembly). In 2018, the CPA, as part of the CP4D programme with the WFD and CPA UK, received funding from the FCDO (as part of a broader Commonwealth-related programme to mark the UK as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth in 2018). The project comprised of conducting several Benchmark Assessments in Commonwealth countries between 2018-2020 with the intention of contributing to longer-term democratic outcomes for the countries. Expert consultants who had been involved in the updating of the Benchmarks and the subsequent development of a Field Guide were sent to facilitate the assessments, on behalf of and in collaboration with parliaments in 12 countries.<sup>16</sup> While a byproduct of the CP4D project might have been to enable other parliamentary strengthening partners to apply the Benchmarks to other countries, the short timeline of the project made this virtually impossible. Still, it was the first attempt to support not only the take up of the Benchmark assessment, but also the use of its findings to generate deeper, longer-term outcomes. As the CP4D project has already been reviewed as part of a 2021 evaluation, this evaluation will focus less on the CP4D programme set up and outcomes, and more on the support provided by the CPA. As will be discussed in the section below, the motivations of the countries who took part in the 2018/2019 differed, and this was key as to how the assessment findings ended up being used. The updated Benchmarks were generally regarded as more challenging than its predecessor, even for established parliaments, in particular those Benchmarks related to SDG 16.

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13. Barbados, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago undertook assessments as part of the 2014 Caribbean workshop. Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as part of engagement in Asia and South-East Asia. Kiribati, Nauru, Niue and Tuvalu undertook their assessments as part of the Pacific Regional meeting in 2009.

14. [CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures Self-Assessment Guidance Note](#).

15. ACT, Burundi, Bangladesh, Bougainville, Canada, Mauritius, South Australia, Jersey, Isle of Man and Zambia did do self-assessments between 2016-2020.

16. Belize, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Kenya, Malaysia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, St Lucia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda

3. Next to CP4D, CPA HQ also started to directly fund and facilitate Benchmark Assessments to subnational and smaller parliaments, as they recognised the most need was emanating from these types of legislatures, usually due to a lack of resources. CPA HQ staff trained in facilitating the assessments, together with staff from the respective legislatures, have completed 9 such assessments to date, including a number of these remotely.<sup>17</sup> Some larger legislatures have also completed the Benchmarks assessment independently and have reported their findings to the CPA. The CPA recognised the need to support the implementation of the recommendations, tying the assessments to its Technical Assistance Programme (TAP),<sup>18</sup> which is now one of the CPA's core offers<sup>19</sup> with at least 3 legislatures to date following up their Assessments with a TAP. However, CPA HQ staff availability and financial resources to support these Assessments, outside of designated donor funding, is limited and as such, CPA is currently only able to support around 2-3 of these assessments per year. As these assessments were demand-led, outcomes have been much more significant as the parliaments that completed them anticipated the outcome report findings and acted to engage with the recommendations.

## How, if at all, have Commonwealth Parliaments' approach towards the Benchmark Assessment changed over time?

It is important to note that CPA HQ sees itself as a membership organisation and, following the adoption of the updated Benchmarks, believes that the Benchmarks should be fully embraced by its member-Branches/legislatures themselves, with the CPA mainly facilitating its use, but not “owning” the assessments or outcome reports. The rationale for this, is that the CPA does not wish legislatures to see it as an ‘inspection’ or ‘critique’ of the legislature from an outside entity. Or that any recommendations are being imposed upon the legislature without the political authority to do so. However, this approach and messaging is sometimes lost on external stakeholders who see the words “CPA” and “Benchmarks” as being a CPA-led endeavour to evaluate legislatures. One reason for this is the branding of the Benchmarks and the insufficient communication and marketing of the Benchmarks programme within the Association and externally. Furthermore, according to interviews conducted as part of this evaluation, stakeholders also seem confused about who is responsible for initiating changes to the Benchmarks, the assessment methodology and outcome reports. Again this is down to uncertainty as to who owns the Benchmarks. Something that could also be rectified by improved communication and messaging. (See concrete recommendations on how to better promote the Benchmarks - Part 3 of this report).

On a positive note, most CPA member legislatures that are actively engaged with the CPA, are aware of the existence of the CPA Benchmarks. Understanding has shifted from perceptions that the Benchmarks are used to compare and scrutinise parliaments, to an appreciation for the Benchmarks as a tool for internal review and learning/development. The CPA is largely recognised by members and external observers as one of the only parliamentary strengthening organisations that has the convening power to persuade parliaments to engage in these types of reviews. Publicly, having a donor such as the UK Government further pushed parliaments to at least consider undertaking the Benchmarks. This is illustrated by the survey responses opposite, where the majority (86%) of the CPA member parliaments surveyed responded that they are somewhat familiar with the Benchmarks, if not very familiar (see Figure 1 overleaf).<sup>20</sup> The available funding for doing the assessments, and not having to tap into in-house resources, further helped convince parliaments to do the assessments.

17. Anguilla, KwaZulu-Natal, Malawi, Montserrat, St Helena, Western Cape (CPA facilitated)- Australian Capital Territory, Isle of Man, Jersey (independently). KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and St Helena Assessments were conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

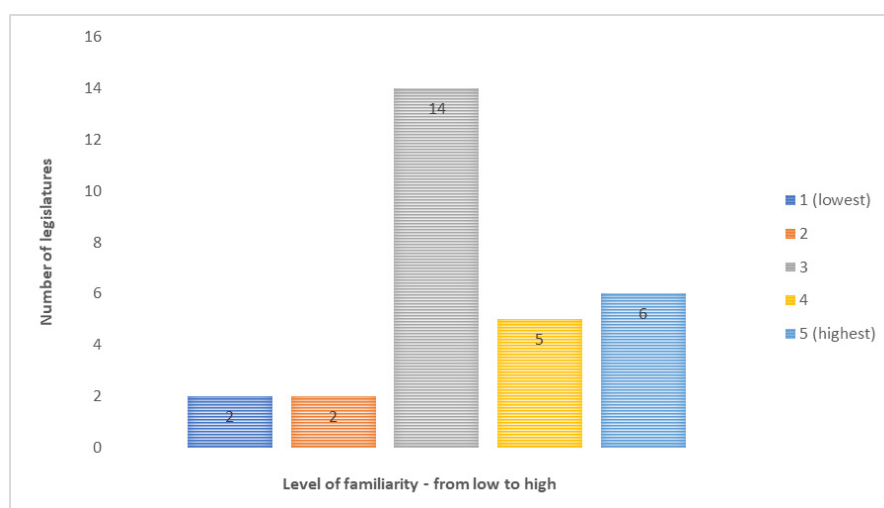
18. The process of linking TAPs to the completion of a Benchmark Assessment followed a decision of the CPA Executive Committee at their Mid-Year Executive Committee meeting in London, 2016.

19. Prior to this, targeted assistance was provided to legislatures mainly before election seminars.

20. Responding to the question “Please indicate your familiarity with the CPA Benchmarks”.



FIGURE 1: FAMILIARITY WITH THE BENCHMARKS



Despite initial hesitation from legislatures to do the assessments before the 2018 update, the evaluation found that those legislatures that have since completed an assessment have done so for one of the below reasons:

- **Legacy reporting/recording:** The Parliament of South Africa and National Assembly of Pakistan used the assessment as a tool to take a snapshot of parliament for its records.
- **Review/reporting:** The Uganda Parliament tailored the assessment so that it could be used for its annual parliamentary review retreat, that helped Parliament not only update its strategy, but also informed its mandatory annual report on its performance against SDG 16 indicators to the government.
- **Reform:** The Presiding Officers of the Parliaments of Belize, Malaysia and Anguilla went into the exercises with an expectation that the assessment would help them identify areas for improvement. Belize and Anguilla were hoping to get support from the CPA staff/consultants to implement at least some of the recommendations via their TAP offer. In these jurisdictions, some of the issues highlighted by the reports were already known before the assessment, but the CPA requires legislatures to complete an assessment to inform the focus of its technical assistance.
- **Comparison/validation:** Lastly, those legislatures that did the assessment independently, i.e., without the support of CPA HQ staff or CPA HQ- related consultants, did the exercise mostly as a desk review/through a mixed membership working group of staff and Members to assess whether they align with international democratic standards and to identify areas of best practice.

For most assessed jurisdictions, the focus of the assessments are based on it being an internal tool for understanding parliamentary performance against internationally agreed standards. They are also for identifying areas for improvement for parliaments to take forward. However, in the majority of cases, especially those assessments undertaken as part of the CP4D project, the outcome assessment reports were not shared publicly – and there is still no requirement for them to do so.<sup>21</sup> The rationale for this is that in some cases legislatures might be put off by sharing highly critical reports with the public, which in turn might disincentivise the legislature from doing the assessment in the first place. Nevertheless, the approach taken by CPA HQ is to encourage the publishing of the reports, but not to make it compulsory. When legislatures do not publish their reports it can prevent transparency, accountability and open responses and discussion. It also means that the promotion of the Benchmarks among legislatures can be limited as well as preventing CPA HQ from knowing when an assessment has been conducted and gaining valuable insight from the lessons and outcomes of the assessment reports.

21. In recent years, particularly those parliaments that have done the assessment independently, as well as some of the smaller subnational and overseas territories legislatures have made their reports publicly available.

One concern shared between subnational (and to an extent smaller) parliaments is whether all the Benchmarks apply to them. However, those subnational parliaments that have conducted the assessment have found it helpful nonetheless, leaving out those sections (bi-cameral Benchmarks/constitutional arrangements, security oversight, compliance with international treaties) that do not apply to them. The CPA advises subnational parliaments to substitute/complement with their own indicators as they see fit vis a vis their parliamentary contexts, and is planning to develop a tailored version of the 2018 Benchmarks for those legislatures in the near future.

In fact, feedback from smaller legislatures has been particularly positive on the CPA approach to supporting the Benchmark assessments (co-facilitation) as they commonly do not have the resources, both in terms of staffing and time, to do these types of reviews themselves, even if there is interest/demand for it.

## How do the 2018 CPA Benchmarks differ from other benchmarks/standards/criteria/ indicators for parliaments?

While the CPA Benchmarks are generally regarded as one of the first attempts at coming up with an internationally agreed set of standards for parliamentary practice, many other standards/indicators have been developed before 2006 and after. A notable example is the 2006 IPU parliamentary self-assessment toolkit<sup>22</sup> and the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments (which are due to be launched in late 2023).<sup>23</sup> Although there is no clear awareness as to the extent to which the original IPU self-assessment toolkit was used by national parliaments, they were highly regarded by parliamentary stakeholders. While the new Indicators developed by the IPU and partners are broadly in agreement with the CPA Benchmarks and the CPA methodology, they differ in the level of detail, as well as in the way that the IPU has developed and promotes its standards, as summarised in the table opposite.

Importantly, the IPU developed these indicators together with a consortium of parliamentary strengthening actors including the CPA<sup>24</sup>. The hope is that by doing so they will ensure the accuracy of these indicators, increase the weight and credibility of the indicators and encourage a greater degree of application by partners and member parliaments. Whilst a similar approach was adopted in developing the CPA Benchmarks in 2006 and again in 2018, there are few instances where other parliamentary strengthening partners, even CP4D partners themselves, used the Benchmarks for their own programming.

As well as the CPA Benchmarks and IPU self-assessment tool, a number of additional evaluation frameworks exist which are listed below. Many of them, namely the APF criteria focus primarily on parliaments, whilst others have a broader focus on the national democratic landscape.

- NDI's International Standards for Democratic Legislatures
- APF's Critères d'Évaluation
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Self-Evaluation
- SADAC-PF Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures of Southern Africa
- International IDEA's State of Democracy Assessment Methodology
- Transparency International's National Integrity System Assessment
- World Bank's Actionable Governance Indicators

Helpfully, a number of comparative studies have been undertaken to compare the different approaches taken<sup>25</sup>. However, such studies have not been undertaken in recent years.

22. [IPU Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A guide to good practice](#)

23. [Indicators for Democratic Parliaments Based on SDG Targets 16.6 and 16.7](#). These are due to be launched in October 2023.  
24. In addition to the IPU and CPA, the Consortium working on these Indicators include: Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Inter Pares, NDI, Directorio Legislativo, European Commission, UNDP and UN Women.





As with the CPA Benchmarks, it is difficult to ascertain the total extent to which parliaments have utilised these other frameworks to instigate internal reviews and reforms. As such a comparative analysis is challenging to undertake as part of this evaluation.

	IPU Indicators (2006 – now)	CPA Benchmarks (2006 – now)
<b>Use</b>	Promoted to IPU's 179 member legislatures (with some overlap with the CPA, which has 180 members, including subnational and Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies' legislatures).	Accepted by all Commonwealth Heads of State, but does not necessarily translate into real ownership of the Benchmarks by those countries.
<b>Promotion</b>	More resources for promotion = alliance building.	Limited promotion of the Benchmarks currently.
<b>Methodology</b>	Focus on quantifying parliamentary performance (scale) = easier to use than "prescriptive" technical statements, but could distract from actual content debates.	Technical language = sometimes hard to understand/translate, but at the same time: specific, detailed findings and recommendations = easier to use/take up.
<b>Indicators</b>	Too many indicators – need to pick and choose, but: detailed indicators on SDGs.	SDGs integrated, supports SDG reporting requirements of countries, but limited Benchmarks on gender and persons with disabilities (PWD), also needs updating re arising themes such as cyber security and climate sensitivity. <sup>26</sup>
<b>Guidance</b>	Extensive in content, containing complex materials.	Handbook less detailed – more flexibility, fit for purpose approach.
<b>Approach</b>	Less facilitated assessments, focus on internal learning and development (use mainly for strategic planning), building internal M&E capacity.	Facilitated assessments are the norm, and have a strong focus on reform.
<b>Link to programming</b>	Not directly tied to specific support offers, relies on take up from partners (often as a baseline) to be useful.	Links to other CPA HQ support offers, but only few instances of take up by other parliamentary support organisations.



Initial launch event for the updated Benchmarks in 2019 at the UK Parliament in the presence of the UK FCDO Minister for the Commonwealth, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon.

25. [2010 UNDP Benchmarks and Self Assessment Frameworks for Democratic Legislatures A Background Publication prepared for the International Conference on Benchmarking and Self-Assessment for Democratic Legislatures.](#)

26. Work has begun by the CPA to develop an 'Advanced' set of Benchmarks which will seek to integrate wider CPA standards around Gender, Persons with Disabilities, Technology and Innovation, etc. This is due for completion by 2023.

## To what extent has CPA HQ support on the Benchmarks been effective in providing legislatures with a tool for assessing their performance and identifying areas for improvement?

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS/IMPACT:

Since the updating of the Benchmarks in 2018, 22 CPA member legislatures have taken the self-assessment against the CPA Benchmarks. Of these, 12 were funded through the FCDO CP4D programme and 6 were funded by the CPA (4 were self-funded, internal exercises). It should be highlighted here that the funds required to conduct facilitated assessments, as with most parliamentary strengthening activities, are not very high and mainly relate to funding relevant staff and consultants' time and their travel. Three legislatures that have completed CPA funded facilitated assessments have since signed an MoU with CPA to receive targeted technical assistance on some of the recommendations from the Benchmark assessments.<sup>27</sup>

The responses to the survey of CPA Branches suggest that a higher number of Branches might have used the Benchmarks than CPA is currently aware of, for instance in the form of less formal assessments. As will be discussed below, several respondents to the survey said that, while they have not completed an assessment themselves, they have used the Benchmarks as a reference for training, technical guides and inductions.<sup>28</sup>

While the total number of self-assessments completed might not seem very high, it is important to note a few things regarding the effectiveness of Benchmarks Assessments:

- Assessments need to take place at the right moment in the political cycle to allow time to implement the changes, which is often at the beginning of a new parliamentary cycle.
- Parliaments will only do the assessment if they need information on their performance for a specific purpose - self-assessments are rarely standalone exercises. Most parliaments will do the assessment with reform/improvement in mind, so they need the will and resources to address the findings after the assessment has been completed.
- For that reason, parliamentary staff might need time to get buy-in from key stakeholders before an assessment (convincing, coalition-building between different factions).

As such, the process of conducting a self-assessment often takes much more time and resources than the “public” timeline suggests. This is also because the assessments are “self”-assessments for a reason – meaning at least key parts of the assessment itself should be led by representatives from the legislature, with the CPA staff or consultant taking an advisory function only. Usually, either someone from the legislature themselves will approach CPA, or the CPA will suggest the idea of doing an assessment during a bilateral engagement or communication. Both CPA and the legislature then need to reflect internally and agree on the right time to do the assessment in light of expected outcomes and use.

The methodology is then adapted considering what the legislature wants to get feedback on – CPA encourages legislatures to take a “pick and choose” approach to the Benchmarks, tailoring the assessments to their needs and specific arrangement. For instance, some of the Benchmarks on national security and international relations do not apply to subnational parliaments. At the same time, legislatures might want to supplement some of the Benchmarks on gender and inclusion with additional questions from the CPA Gender-Sensitive Parliaments' Self-Assessments. Once the approach has been agreed upon and a time for the data collection has been confirmed, the legislatures will go ahead and arrange interviews with

27. Namely Belize, Anguilla, and St Helena. Montserrat is currently receiving TAP support.

28. Jamaica and Tasmania.



key representatives of the legislature, including staff and members from all political groups, as well as representatives from ministries, civil society, and the media, to collect evidence on the assessment.

Assessments can happen in-person and remotely, with in-depth or minimal guidance from the CPA staff and/or a consultant. In some cases, the CPA assessor's role can be to provide feedback and suggestions on the assessment approach and findings, rather than leading the exercise on behalf of parliament. In terms of in-person vs remote assessments, there are certain drawbacks to conducting the exercise remotely. For example, the remote-based assessor might lose out on some information from informal conversations, and may miss out on additional ad hoc meetings and a sense of the local parliamentary culture. At the same time, remote assessments might be more cost-effective and require less of parliament's time and resources to be spent on the assessment and organising the visit.

Once data collection has wrapped up, a first draft of the assessment report is usually developed by the assessor and shared with parliamentary counterparts for their review and input. Pre-2020 reports did not articulate clear recommendations, but these have since become the norm as they help parliament address the findings from the assessment more easily. Once the report has been handed over to parliament, it is up to them to take it forward internally, first by formally adopting, i.e., accepting the report, and then to ideally start an internal process discussing and addressing the findings and recommendations from the assessment. This process might take years before changes are properly implemented, and some recommendations might also be rejected if parliament does not see them to be feasible or there is internal opposition to changing a certain process or structure.



Senior Commonwealth parliamentarians alongside the former CPA Secretary General promoting the Benchmarks at a panel event held in the margins of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in 2019, New York.



In early 2023 a CPA Small Branches in-country workshop with the parliamentary leadership of the Seychelles National Assembly took place to consider reforms to the parliamentary service. The Benchmarks were used to assist in guiding discussions around potential reforms.



## Are there any patterns or factors such as size, type of legislature, and type of support that could predict whether a legislature is more likely to benefit from the current Benchmarks programme?

The below case studies have been chosen to discuss common factors that aid the effectiveness of the Benchmarks support:

### ANGUILLA AND BELIZE: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OFFERED POST-ASSESSMENT IN SMALLER LEGISLATURES

**Anguilla:** When the House of Assembly of Anguilla approached the CPA in 2020, they already had an expectation that the assessment (and the CPA) would help them identify areas of parliamentary practice that needed reform to comply with international best practice. Parliamentary stakeholders had previously taken part in the McGill University course on parliamentary governance, where they had found out about the Benchmarks.

The assessment was conducted by CPA HQ staff, with Anguilla parliamentary staff involved throughout the process. As a primary outcome, the CPA and the House signed an MoU on a comprehensive support programme around six of the identified recommendations. To date, all of the action points in the MoU have been addressed, with the help of CPA HQ technical expert advice.

Most significantly, the House was able to establish a Code of Conduct and set up a Parliamentary Reform Committee (currently the Administration Committee) to continue pushing for parliamentary best practice. While the House had an idea of the reforms needed even ahead of the CPA assessment report being tabled, it recognised that it would not have been able to make these reforms so quickly without the CPA's support. In a small legislature like Anguilla, with only 13 Members, these types of changes can have a direct impact on the electorate, as improvements to parliamentary practice can quickly be felt in parliamentary performance and legislating/legislation.







2019 Benchmark Assessment in Belize. Consultants Anthony Staddon (far left), Meenakshi Dhar (far right) met with the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Laura Tucker-Longworth (centre right).

**Belize:** Similarly, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Belize approached the CPA about an assessment in 2019 with a clear reform agenda. According to internal stakeholders, the assessment report would help them drive the reforms needed for parliament to improve its practice. As in Anguilla, the Speaker, President of the Senate, Clerks and Deputy Presiding Officers were part of the entire process, including sitting in interviews. Belize also signed an MoU with the CPA on the recommendations from the assessment, following in Anguilla's footsteps as the second legislature to join the TAP.

While all areas of support have been delivered by the CPA, some of the products developed have not officially been launched since they still need internal approval. This includes the newly developed Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. A key issue here was that both Houses need their own individual documents and agreement from both Houses is needed before the documents can be laid on the table.

Importantly, the CPA findings and recommendations have helped Belize articulate to other donors and parliamentary strengthening organisations, including UNDP and ParlAmericas, its priority needs for development (they have shared the report with them). The Speaker and Clerk also said that they will continue to use a version of the assessment methodology for future parliamentary review and planning exercises.

Some countries might have already discussed the possibility for the CPA to offer technical support around the implementation of some of the recommendations from the Benchmark Assessment, even before the report is finalised – in fact, the CPA ties its technical support offer to the Benchmarks, requiring interested legislatures to have completed an assessment to identify priorities for the collaboration with the CPA. This offer seems highly effective, as it allows parliaments to be in the driving seat of its own parliamentary development and enables them to hold organisations accountable on concrete outcomes for parliament that are actually needed. As indicated above, the offer is also highly attractive to smaller and subnational legislatures, as they often lack the internal resource to do the review in-house. With additional funding, this model of programming could very well have significant impact in a larger number of legislatures.

Both Anguilla and Belize credit CPA HQ's collaborative approach and long-term commitment to parliamentary development as one of the key reasons for these outcomes. As we know, legislatures can take time to change, despite their relatively small membership (in these particular cases). This evaluation found that those legislatures that have entered the assessment exercise with a clear reform agenda and in those cases where these assessments were driven by the speaker or clerk is where concrete outcomes in the form of changes to parliamentary procedures have occurred.

## UGANDA: TAILORED METHODOLOGY TO A CLEAR PURPOSE/USE OF THE ASSESSMENT REPORT FINDINGS

**Uganda:** In 2019, as part of the CP4D programme, the CPA advised the Uganda Parliament on using the Benchmarks for their annual parliamentary strategy review and national SDG reporting to the government (this being an outcome in itself). It should be noted that Uganda has a well-established internal parliamentary evaluation culture, with its own M&E department and regular, annual reviews against its strategy. This was the first time Uganda had used the CPA Benchmarks. The recommendations in the report were reviewed by the parliamentary board (chaired by the Speaker). As a result of the 2019 review, regarding its public consultations and outreach, the Parliament has developed an app for citizens to be able to access parliamentary bill processes and submit public petitions. Further progress against the recommendations is tracked by the internal M&E department.

In 2019, the CPA supported a Benchmark Assessment with the Uganda Parliament as part of their 3rd Annual Legislature Review.



Uganda presents a good example of how the Benchmark assessment process could be tailored to parliamentary needs (in this case: parliamentary reporting on strategy and the SDGs to its national government) and internalised to fit existing practice – instead of interviews and focus groups, the Parliament of Uganda held a multi-day workshop with all of the key stakeholders involved. Throughout, they had clear ownership of the process, the findings and formulated their own recommendations (which the consultant later helped summarise). In this case, the Ugandan Parliament already had some significant experience of conducting internal reviews and knew what to expect – other legislatures might need more support before settling on a particular focus or approach for the review. As recommended below, future assessments should aim to develop or improve a parliamentary evaluative practice in all of the benchmarked legislatures, as this will help not only take up of the review findings and recommendations, but also increase the likelihood of parliaments continuing to engage with and use the Benchmarks.



## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY, ISLE OF MAN AND JERSEY: SMALLER LEGISLATURES THAT CHOSE TAILORED, APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY “IN-HOUSE” WITH MINIMAL RESOURCES

**Australian Capital Territory:** Through the leadership of its Clerk, who is himself experienced in evaluating parliamentary practice, the Legislative Assembly of the ACT has undertaken self-assessments using both the 2006 and 2018 Benchmarks, in addition to their reviews against the Latimer House Principles, with the latter taking place in 2019. Instead of seeking support from a CPA consultant, they requested the external review to validate the findings from a recognised scholar at the Australian National University.

The review report facilitated two key outcomes:

1. In the 2018 assessment it was noted that, whilst all reports of the Auditor-General were automatically referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the committee only reported on three of the 41 reports that had been referred to it. An Assembly committee, noting this shortfall, recommended that the resolution establishing the Standing Committee of Public Accounts in the next Assembly (i.e., 2020-2024) circumscribe its core role in inquiring and reporting on reports of the Auditor-General. In December 2020, the Assembly passed a resolution stipulating that the Public Accounts Committee’s only role is to examine Auditor-General reports. To enable the committee to focus on this, other elements of its terms of reference have now been removed.
2. Up until 2020, there was no requirement for legislation to be referred to a policy committee for inquiry and report, so this Benchmark had not been met. In December 2020, as a consequence of both a recommendation of an Assembly committee and an external review of the Latimer House Principles, drawing attention to the Benchmark’s shortfall, the Assembly amended its practice. The resolution establishing general purpose standing committees now sets out that when bills are introduced to the Assembly, they are automatically referred to the relevant committee for inquiry and report. In addition, the legislature reviews its standing orders every four years whilst keeping in mind those Benchmarks which were not met.



Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly (exterior).



**Isle of Man (IOM):** Tynwald, the legislature of the Isle of Man, conducted its own self-assessment in 2019 using the updated Benchmarks, following the same methodological approach it had employed on the old Benchmarks in 2011. The legislature set up an expert panel consisting of the Speaker, Former President, 2 serving members and 1 academic to discuss and review Tynwald's performance against the Benchmarks (in so far as they applied to the legislature, being a tricameral parliamentary system). The previous report had been successful in driving institutional reform, including creating the position of the Auditor General for the IOM, a post which had been vacant over the past 20 years (and was finally filled in 2023). It also started a helpful debate on the composition on the Upper Chamber of the Tynwald.



Tynwald, Isle of Man (exterior).

**Jersey:** Similarly, in 2022 the Privileges and Procedures Committee of the Jersey States Assembly decided to update its 2015 review following the introduction of the updated Benchmarks. A working group was set up comprised of five members to review the Benchmarks table, including the Chief Minister Kristin Moore, who featured some of the findings from the assessment in her 100 days strategy. Following the completion of the review, the legislature started looking into constituency case work more seriously, establishing a Committee for this purpose. The process will be completed by July 2023, when they will be setting up constituency offices, having secured dedicated funding for this. Representatives from the legislature said that they would consider re-doing the assessment as their established mode of reviewing the Benchmarks table with a working group works well for them and does not take up a lot of time.



Jersey States Assembly (interior).



The three cases illustrate how different the assessment approach can look like, as seen fit with the needs of parliament. The “light touch” approach of the above assessments was nevertheless able to facilitate tangible outcomes for the legislatures and even makes revisiting or re-doing the assessments in a couple of years’ time more likely. Importantly, some of these recommendations took up to 7 years to be fully implemented, highlighting how challenging parliamentary reform can be at times, depending on the political circumstances and will of key individuals.

## KWAZULU NATAL: IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL BUY-IN AND MOMENTUM FOR THE ASSESSMENT

**KwaZulu Natal (KZN):** Due to its existing relationship with the CPA, the Speaker of the KZN Provincial Legislature agreed to be assessed using the updated Benchmarks in 2020. The Assessment took place remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions at the time. While the report did produce some useful findings, it was generally felt that the recommendations made were not always considering the feasibility of reform. Some of the recommendations for reform were not within its control, and as such, the report has not been addressed by legislature (yet). For instance, the recommendation on allocating funding for the inclusion of women and PWDs in the legislature would require them to seek funding from the Treasury, which can be notoriously hard to influence. However, the review did help them understand the importance of evaluation, though they would prefer more focused assessments going forward, such as the CPA Gender Sensitive Parliament self-assessment which they undertook in mid-2023.



The case of the KZN Provincial Legislature illustrates how political momentum and buy-in are key to the success of an assessment. At the same time, having conducted the assessment remotely might have meant that the parliamentary stakeholders were less involved in the design and data collection of the assessment. Feedback from the assessor has reinforced this deficiency, in that not being there in person took away some of the informal sources of information. As the review took place before the report format progressed into something more accessible, the KZN Provincial Legislature might have needed a bit more support in translating these rather high-level recommendations into concrete actions – including a determination of what seems feasible and how to work with barriers/areas outside of the control of the legislature. It seems that the KZN Provincial Legislature was able to learn from the experience nevertheless, as they are now much clearer on the type of reviews and information they need.

While parliamentary counterparts in Kenya and Malaysia could not be interviewed as part of this evaluation, the CPA has collected M&E evidence of outcomes of both assessment processes:

**Kenya:** According to updates from the Parliament of Kenya to the CPA HQ Secretary-General in 2021 and mid-2023, Parliament has since reviewed and taken on board some of the recommendations from the 2019 assessment. These include the translation of the House Standing Orders into Kiswahili in November 2020 (national language of Kenya and spoken by the majority of the people). This was done to align not only with the Benchmarks assessment, but also follows Article 118 of the Constitution of Kenya, which requires Parliament to facilitate public participation and involvement in its legislative business.

The report also notes that “Parliament also has a key role to play in terms of supporting continuous civic education and improving public knowledge and support of the legislature.” As such, the National Assembly reported in 2021 that it was now publishing a regular e-newsletter on the activities of the House in a digestible, accessible format, targeted at the wider public. In addition, in 2023, Parliament has continued to increase its public outreach following the recommendations from the CPA assessment, including more livestreaming of House proceedings on Youtube (next to a live TV broadcast) and improvements to the parliamentary website.



2019 Benchmark Assessment in Kenya. Consultant Anthony Staddon (right) met with the then Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Justin Muturi EGH (centre).

**Malaysia:** Following the consideration of the CPA self-assessment by the Parliament of Malaysia in 2019, three areas of focus were identified, including special Select Committees and support to these newly instituted committees. In January 2021, Parliament reported that it had amended the 2018 Special Standing Committees in October 2019, following the assessment report recommendations. This included the establishment of a Select Committee on Elections, Human Rights and Constitutional Affairs, International Affairs and Trade, and Science, Innovation and the Environment. Following a change of government in November 2020, nine additional Select Committees were also established, including a Committee on Fundamental Liberty and Constitutional Rights, on Finance and Economy, on Security, on Agencies under the Prime Minister’s Department, on Agriculture and Domestic Trade, on Infrastructure Development, on Education, on Women and Children Affairs and Social Development, on Health, Science and Innovation. The Malaysian Parliament also reported that it had created an additional 13 new posts, including 7 officer posts and 6 supporting/entry level staff posts in January 2021, in line with the recommendation to establish support for the newly instituted committees.



14th Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians held in partnership with the IPU and the Centre for Legislative Studies at the University of Hull at Wroxton College, Oxfordshire, where Anthony Staddon gave a presentation on the Benchmarks in 2019.



## How likely are legislatures to follow up/act upon and/or repeat the assessment (with and without CPA HQ support)?

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the CPA Benchmarks programme should be measured by the extent to which legislatures say they have been able to use the findings and recommendations, as well as re-use the assessment approach, or just the principles behind the Benchmark assessments. As highlighted above, whether or not assessments lead to any concrete outcomes depends not only on the appropriateness and specificity of the recommendations, but on the political will of individuals/leadership and the “right” momentum within the political cycle. Under these circumstances, the CPA cannot be held accountable for legislatures not making changes directly after the assessment. As long as the assessment exercise has facilitated conversations on parliamentary performance and progress between different parts of legislatures (and beyond), then the assessment can be deemed a success. The CPA can, of course, advise parliaments on the right time to do the assessments and scope out whether key individuals demonstrate sufficient interest in reform. Most notably, the CPA can encourage further take-up of reforms by bringing key individuals along in conducting the assessment and/or at least in formulating the findings and recommendations.

By their very nature, the Benchmark assessments are owned and led by the legislatures that pursue them. Outside of the CP4D Project, CPA HQ has taken a light-touch approach to M&E in seeking to evaluate whether a Benchmark assessment has been deemed a ‘success’ or not. Specifically, as to whether the utilisation of the Benchmarks have resulted in the identification and desired implementation of valuable reforms for the legislature. This has mostly comprised of informal quantitative feedback following the conclusion of the supported assessment, usually at the closing meeting with the Presiding Officer and Clerk. Further follow-up feedback may also be sourced informally on an ad hoc basis, typically when CPA HQ engage with these legislatures as part of broader programmes. When a legislature has determined to continue their Benchmark reforms through a Technical Assistance Programme with the CPA, there is a far greater degree of monitoring progress and evaluating long-term results.

With the establishment of the CPA’s latest Strategic Plan and accompanying implementation plans there is a greater focus on M&E, but more time and resources are needed to be given to measuring and evaluating outcomes. Assessments have not been accompanied by formal qualitative M&E feedback survey/sessions and a progress tracking system. It is understood that the CPA is not fully aware of which legislatures have used the Benchmarks or assessment methodology, particularly before 2018, as these assessments were conducted internally, and the CPA was not always consulted. Concrete recommendations on what the CPA could do to improve its M&E efforts can be found in the box below.



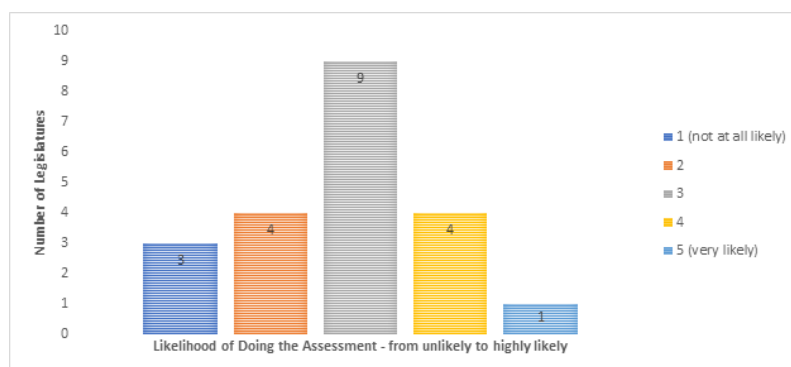
**Box 1: Recommendations for CPA HQ for M&E(L) on the Programme**

- Establish clear timelines and responsibilities for follow-up when designing the assessment/programme for a new legislature.
- Be clear on the purpose of collecting this information for the CPA – for reporting or communications?
  - ▶ Internal CPA HQ MEL framework to support strategic review/reporting?
  - ▶ Country specific M&E – baseline/endline?
- Ask for feedback on Benchmarking process and related matters almost immediately after (max. 1 month after report is finished), give parliaments the opportunity to feedback – also on Benchmarks themselves.
  - ▶ Use fewer forms and focus on emails/calls (less time investment needed, parliamentary staff are busy).
- Be consistent in undertaking internal wash-up meeting/debrief immediately after the assessment report has been accepted by the partner parliament = continuous learning and improvement of the approach.
- Build evaluation capacity of parliaments while doing the assessments.
- Ask parliaments to report on recommendations just once or twice at previously agreed timeframes – verbal reporting (follow-up call).
  - ▶ = less time intensive
- Set up Google Alert for parliaments assessed.
- Keep an internal global tracker of Benchmarks and recommendations (status).
- Undertake regular evaluations if needed/of interest – these can be internal if there is capacity.
  - ▶ Consideration is given to also outsourcing monitoring to technical experts
- Continue to invest in building MEL skills of staff.

Next to sustainable outcomes for parliaments, there are a few things to be said about the likelihood of the Benchmarks being continually used by legislatures in the future. This will broadly depend on the extent to which the CPA HQ keeps a conversation about the Benchmarks going (keeps promoting them), keeps them up to date, responding to new developments and needs, and, importantly, how it engages with other democratic strengthening organisations and their standards.

Currently, CPA HQ is doing relatively well in cross-referencing the Benchmarks in other aspects of its work, including bilateral communication and visits, conferences and workshops, training, including the online academy modules, and in its various communiques. However, the extent to which staff members will reference the Benchmark assessments or even make use of the assessment findings depends on the respective staff member’s familiarity with the Benchmarks, as well as the extent to which it overlaps with its work. Some CPA HQ staff members have received training on the Benchmarks, but as assessment reports are not living documents, there is a risk of them getting filed and forgotten, thus not being referenced as much as they could be. A more strategic and systematic approach to engaging with the findings from previous assessments might be needed here, see recommendations below.

According to survey findings, many of the surveyed legislatures are at least thinking of conducting (another) Benchmark assessment (Figure 3, 66% of responding legislatures). Most legislatures would agree that there is value in re-visiting the assessment after a change in political leadership (often acting as an enabler for reform) and/or re-doing the assessment after 5-10 years to assess what has changed and what is still outstanding.



**FIGURE 3: LIKELIHOOD OF DOING THE ASSESSMENT IN THE FUTURE**



As highlighted earlier, the CPA has a broad membership of 180 Branches, some of which it is in regular contact with through its other initiatives and offers, including CPA conferences, workshops, communication and visits. As such, it has the capacity to continue to remind members about the existence of the Benchmarks as a useful tool for Commonwealth parliaments. There is evidence that informal conversations and mentions on the side of other CPA activities has led to a raised appetite for doing the assessment. For example, as a result of a presentation on the Benchmarks given at the Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers Conference in Anguilla in 2023, the Speaker of the Cayman Islands Parliament requested support from the CPA to conduct an assessment, which is planned for October 2023. The CPA should continue to share some of the evidence around how the Benchmarks have been used with its membership to give them an idea of what is possible. Ideally, some of the assessed countries could step forward and share their experience with the rest of the CPA network. The ACT Legislative Assembly, has been a champion in this endeavour to the extent of promoting and delivering numerous presentations to counterparts across Australia and the Pacific. To keep the discussion going and to not lose their novelty, the CPA should also keep assessing, seeking feedback on and publicly discussing the need to update the Benchmarks or aspects of the Benchmarks further. Staff from legislatures interviewed for this evaluation mentioned interest in a stronger emphasis on inclusion, cybersecurity and climate sensitivity. Some recommendations from legislatures and the consultant on how to do so are reflected in the box below.

### Box 2: Work undertaken by CPA HQ on Communications/Marketing Strategy for the Benchmarks

- Develop a dedicated strategy for the Benchmarks programme, mainstream the Benchmarks in the new CPA HQ strategy.
- As per above, encourage more CPA members to promote their Benchmarks experience in *The Parliamentarian*/on the CPA website/at CPA organised side events/workshops.
- Consider adding more side events/workshops on the Benchmarks to any upcoming CPC.
- Consider adding more side events/workshops on the Benchmarks to regional conferences.
- Encourage larger, more established parliaments to conduct the assessment and share their experience.
- Have a dedicated Benchmarks microsite on the website, keep updating and provide audiovisual materials on experiences and ongoing discussions/developments.
- Consider a dedicated parliamentary evaluation module for the Online Academy.
- Participate in or organise more joint initiatives/events with other parliamentary strengthening organisations on standards/using standards to keep the Benchmarks on people's mind.
- Consider commissioning more academic reviews/discussions on the Benchmarks for learning and promotion.
- Come up with a certificate or official recognition/label for parliaments who have been assessed (=incentive).



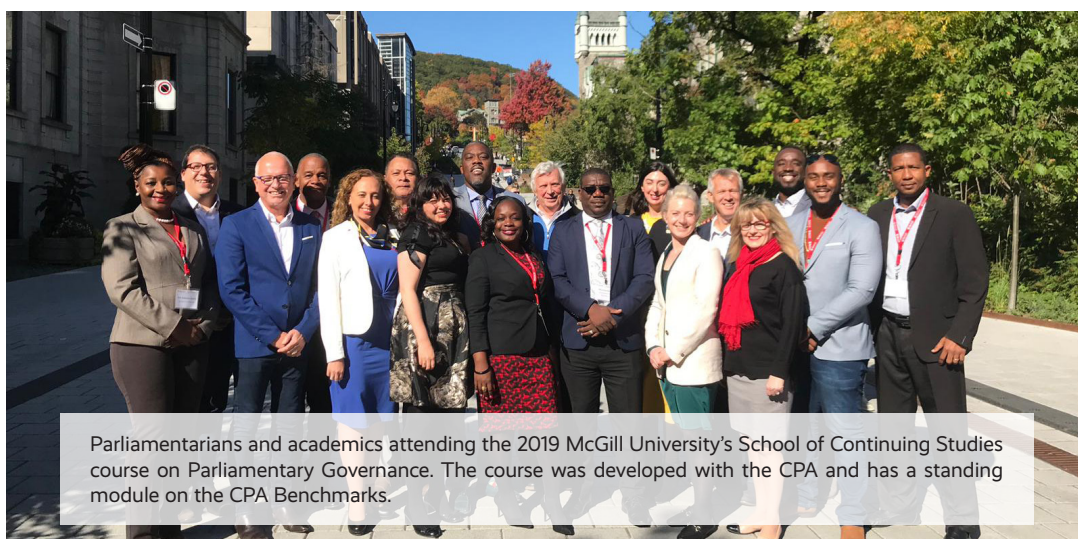
2020 Benchmark Assessment in Pakistan. Consultant Meenakshi Dhar (second left) met with key stakeholders within the National Assembly.



The CPA should seek to increase its collaborative approach in working with more partners in undertaking Benchmarking activities and assessments. It might also seek to communicate how it envisions other, more novel offers, such as the gender-sensitivity guidelines to align with the Benchmarks – describe them as an extension rather than having to choose either approach.

**Box 3. For CPA HQ on lessons learned/best practices for sustainable outcomes from the Benchmarks assessments<sup>29</sup>**

- Ensure there is enough time and political will to do the assessment.
  - ▶ Consider “light touch” version of the Benchmarks.
- Co-design assessment methodology, co-facilitate assessment, co-write the report with in-country teams if possible.
  - ▶ Ownership of the recommendations.
  - ▶ Reform committee.
  - ▶ Standing Orders.
- For larger legislatures, it may be better to have several reviewers to meet with more people, complement each other, four eyes principle (perhaps with longer periods in-country, to lessen the intensity/stress).
- Focus the assessment on key areas of interest, if possible (pick and choose, tailor as needed).
- Where possible, avoid jargon in the report, keep it short and focused.
- Let parliamentary staff write as much of the report themselves as possible.
  - ▶ = better take up/use.
- Celebrate positives as well, highlight good practices.
- Categorise recommendations (by urgency, feasibility), support take up through action plans (timeline and responsibilities) – annex to the report.
- Ensure Benchmarks are revisited with each CPA engagement (as part of CPA strategy and M&E – clear follow-up timelines and responsibilities).
- Plan for doing a re-assessment in the following political cycle to see what has changed (themselves).
- Encourage sharing ‘summary’ in writing (as opposed to the full report) about the assessment – can be used to promote the Benchmarks.
- CPA internal: Continue using the Benchmark reports consistently as a baseline for country engagement, for briefings, etc.



Parliamentarians and academics attending the 2019 McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies course on Parliamentary Governance. The course was developed with the CPA and has a standing module on the CPA Benchmarks.

29. Re question on “What lessons from feedback and evidence as part of this review can be learned and applied by CPA HQ and legislatures working with the Benchmarks going forward (recommendations)?”



# PART 3 - CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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Since the Benchmarks were updated it is positive to note that 22 legislatures across the Commonwealth have undertaken assessments.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this report highlights, legislatures which have chosen to undertake assessments have a variety of reasons for doing the review. These can vary greatly between legislatures and their circumstances. Overall, most reviews fall into either one of the following categories:

- **Legacy reporting/recording:** Taking a snapshot of parliament for its parliamentary records.
- **Review/reporting:** Used for its annual parliamentary review, strategy, annual reporting or SDG reporting.
- **Reform:** Assessment to identify areas for improvement (often linked to the TAP)
- **Comparison/validation:** Assess whether legislatures align with international democratic standards and to identify areas of best practice.

This evaluation found that those legislatures that have entered the assessment exercise with a clear reform agenda, and in those cases where these assessments were driven by the speaker or clerk, is where concrete outcomes in the form of changes to parliamentary procedures have occurred.

Of course, the CPA can further drive this change by offering technical assistance on at least some of the recommendations of the assessment, as has been the case in Anguilla, St Helena and Belize. As highlighted above, parliaments seeking development support to address shortcomings, often due to lack of resources, both in terms of internal staff capacity and time, as well as the necessary finances to hire external help, often agree to the assessment in order to get technical assistance via the CPA.

Uganda has tailored the assessment methodology in a way that it could be used for their internal annual strategic review, which forms the basis of its annual report to the national Government, as well as for its SDG reporting on SDG 16. The Parliament of Uganda already has an internal evaluation and review culture, with annual reviews supporting parliamentary strategy and planning for over a decade.

Other best practices include some countries using the assessment reports to support their requests for development aid from foreign donors and implementing agencies, as has been the case following the assessment in Ghana. Therefore the report acts as evidence as well as a baseline for parliament to revisit in a follow-up assessment, as well as holding development agencies accountable in achieving outcomes.

Experience from both Ghana and Malawi also showed that framing the recommendations in a way that makes them more accessible, applying a RAG colour scheme by urgency, differentiating between short-term and longer-term change processes and assigning responsibilities for action points, might further facilitate engagement with the recommendations (at least feedback has been pointing in that direction to date).

Next to the long-term effects of these outcomes, there are a few things to be said about the likelihood of the Benchmarks being continued to be used by legislatures in the future. This will broadly depend on the extent to which the CPA keeps a conversation about the Benchmarks going (keeps promoting them), keeps them up to date, responds to new developments and needs, and, importantly, how it engages with other parliamentary strengthening organisations and their standards.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The below recommendations are primarily for the CPA Headquarters Secretariat to take forward.

### 1. Recommendation for a stronger role for Benchmarks in the existing CPA HQ Strategy

At the same time as developing a dedicated programme strategy for the Benchmarks programme (what do we want for the Benchmarks/where do we want to go), it would be good to mainstream references to the Benchmarks across the existing CPA HQ strategy, as well as future plans, to ensure that all aspects of the CPA's work engage with what is arguably one of the CPA's core offers. This should link to or include a dedicated communication (marketing), M&E and funding strategy as well.

### 2. Recommendation to consider focusing on smaller, subnational Branches

As part of the newly developed Benchmarks strategy, it would be good to identify target legislatures to support, based on insights into which legislatures are most likely to use/need the Benchmarks. This might very well mean a temporary focus on smaller, subnational legislatures (however, not excluding the possibility of national-level assessments as well).

### 3. Recommendation to stay up to date with developments

As part of the strategy process, CPA HQ should think about how it wants to promote the Benchmarks vis a vis its gender-sensitivity, disability accessibility assessments (complementarity), as well as other ongoing discussions about parliamentary best practice (climate sensitivity, inclusion, cybersecurity) as well as the changing parliamentary development landscape.

### 4. Recommendations on promotion/marketing of the Benchmarks:

There should be a dedicated communications/marketing strategy on the Benchmarks, which should seek its own funding and might include one or more of the below suggestions:

- Develop a dedicated strategy for the Benchmarks programme, mainstream the Benchmarks in the new CPA HQ strategy.
- As per above, encourage more CPA members to promote their Benchmarks experience in *The Parliamentarian*/on the CPA website/at CPA organised side events/workshops.
- Consider adding more side events/workshops on the Benchmarks to any upcoming CPC.
- Consider adding more side events/workshops on the Benchmarks to regional conferences.
- Encourage established parliaments to conduct the assessment and share their experience.
- Have a dedicated Benchmarks microsite to the website, keep updating and provide audiovisual materials on experiences and ongoing discussions/developments.
- Consider a dedicated parliamentary evaluation module for the Online Academy.
- Participate in or organise more joint initiatives/events with other parliamentary strengthening organisations on standards/using standards to keep the Benchmarks to engage with stakeholders.
- Consider commissioning more academic reviews/discussions on the Benchmarks for learning and promotion.
- Come up with a certificate or official recognition/label for parliaments who have been assessed (=incentive).



## 5. Recommendations for doing M&E on the Benchmarks:

The following concrete suggestions might enable a light touch M&E approach on the Benchmarks:

- Establish clear timelines and responsibilities for follow-up when designing the assessment/ programme for a legislature.
- Be clear on the purpose of collecting this information for the CPA – for reporting or communications?
  - ▶ Internal CPA HQ MEL framework to support strategic review/reporting?
  - ▶ Country specific M&E – baseline/endline?
- Ask for feedback on Benchmarking process and related matters almost immediately after (max. 1 month after report is finished), give parliaments opportunity to feedback – also on Benchmarks themselves.
  - ▶ Use fewer forms and focus on emails/calls (less time investment needed, parliamentary staff are busy).
- Be consistent in undertaking internal wash up meeting/debrief immediately after the assessment report has been accepted by the partner parliament = continuous learning and improvement of the approach.
- Build evaluation capacity of parliaments while doing the assessments.
- Ask parliaments to report on recommendations just once or twice at previously agreed timeframes – verbal reporting (follow-up call).
  - ▶ = less time intensive
- Set up Google Alert for parliaments assessed.
- Keep an internal global tracker of Benchmarks and recommendations (status).
- Undertake regular evaluations if needed/of interest – these can be internal if there is capacity.
  - ▶ Consideration is given to also outsourcing monitoring to technical experts
- Continue to invest in building MEL skills of staff.

## 6. Recommendations on improving Benchmark assessments/support programme (best practices):

As per best practices mentioned above:

Ensure there is enough time and political will to do the assessment.

- ▶ Consider “light touch” version of the Benchmarks.
- Co-design assessment methodology, co-facilitate assessment, co-write with in-country teams the report if possible.
  - ▶ Ownership of the recommendations.
  - ▶ Reform committee.
  - ▶ Standing Orders.
- For larger legislatures, it may be better to have several reviewers to meet with more people, complement each other, four eyes principle (perhaps with longer periods in-country, to lessen the intensity/stress).
- Focus the assessment on key areas of interest, if possible (pick and choose, tailor as needed).
- Where possible, avoid jargon in the report, keep it short and focused.
- Let parliamentary staff write as much of the report themselves as possible.
  - ▶ = better take up/use.
- Celebrate positives as well, highlight good practices.
- Categorise recommendations (by urgency, feasibility), support take up through action plans (timeline and responsibilities) – annex to the report.
- Ensure Benchmarks are revisited with each CPA engagement (as part of CPA strategy and M&E – clear follow-up timelines and responsibilities).
- Plan for doing a re-assessment in the following political cycle to see what has changed (themselves).
- Encourage sharing ‘summary’ in writing (as opposed to the full report) about the assessment – can be used to promote the Benchmarks.
- CPA internal: Continue using the Benchmark reports consistently as a baseline for country engagement, for briefings, etc.



# ANNEXES

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## ANNEX 1: REVIEW QUESTIONS

### Relevance/Coherence:

- In how far have the CPA Benchmarks Assessments been consistent over time in approach and quality?
  - ▶ How has CPA HQ's support approach/offer on the Benchmarks changed over time?
- How, if at all, have Commonwealth Parliaments' approach towards the Benchmark Assessment changed over time?
  - ▶ Due to which factors has this changed?
  - ▶ What is currently absent/lacking in the 2018 Benchmarks (and the CPA's approach)?
- How do the 2018 CPA Benchmarks differ from other benchmarks/standards/criteria/indicators for parliament?
  - ▶ Can they be considered complementary/contradictory to other standards?
  - ▶ Are there similar support offers to CPA HQ around these standards?

### Effectiveness/Impact:

- In how far has CPA HQ support on the Benchmarks been effective in providing legislatures with a tool for assessing their performance and identifying areas for improvement?
  - ▶ Are there any differences in the outcomes of assessments that are facilitated by the CPA vs without the CPA's involvement (internal vs external)?
  - ▶ (Are there any differences in the outcomes between of assessments that were facilitated remotely vs in person?)
- In how far have those legislatures that received support by the CPA technical assistance programme (or comparable support offer) achieved higher levels of outcomes?
- Are there any patterns or factors such as size, type of legislature, and type of support that could predict whether a legislature is more likely to benefit from the current Benchmarks programme?
- In how far have the benchmarks contributed to strengthening CPA HQ's reputation among legislatures and other stakeholders in parliamentary strengthening, including donors?

### Sustainability:

- How likely are legislatures to follow up/act upon and/or repeat the assessment (with and without CPA HQ support)?
  - ▶ What factors might play a role in this?
  - ▶ What mechanisms has CPA HQ put in place to ensure this?
- What lessons from feedback and evidence as part of this review can be learned and applied by CPA HQ and legislatures working with the Benchmarks going forward (recommendations)?



## ANNEX 2: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

<b>Group</b>	<b>Branch/Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Matthew Salik	Head of Programmes
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Jarvis Matiya	Deputy Secretary-General
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Stephen Twigg	Secretary-General
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Lydia Buchanan	Deputy Head of Programmes - Bilateral Engagement
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Clive Barker	Programme Manager
Staff/Internal	CPA HQ	Tom Davies	Communications Officer
Staff/Internal	Independent	Meenakshi Dhar	Consultant
Staff/Internal	Independent	Anthony Staddon	Consultant
Staff/Internal	Independent	Susie Latta	Consultant
Legislature	Jersey	Kellie Boydens	Principal Committee and Panel Officer, States Assembly, Jersey
Legislature	Isle of Man	Jonathan King	Clerk of Tynwald
Legislature	Australian Capital Territory	Tom Duncan	Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislature	Anguilla	Lenox Proctor	Clerk of the House
Legislature	Belize	Valerie Woods, Eddie Webster	Speaker, House of Representatives, Belize
Legislature	Uganda	Josephine Watera	Asst. Director, Department of Research Services
Legislature	KwaZulu Natal	Nerusha Naidoo	Secretary of the Provincial Legislature
External Stakeholders/ Other	IPU	Andy Richardson	Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards
External Stakeholders/ Other	WFD	Anthony Smith	Executive Director
External Stakeholders/ Other	African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs	Dr Rasheed Draman	Executive Director
External Stakeholders/ Other	Independent	Jenna White	Evaluator(s) CP4D project

## ANNEX 3: SURVEY FORM

Question	Optional sub-questions	Response options
Name your legislature		Open text box
Please indicate your familiarity with the CPA benchmarks.		1-5 (highest)
Please name other parliamentary benchmarks or standards that you are familiar with.		(Open text box)
	If yes, have you made use of/referred to any of these standards?	Y/N
Has your legislature conducted a self-assessment on the benchmarks?		Y/N
	If yes, have you been supported by the CPA HQ in this?	Y/N
	If yes, how would you rate the process?	1-5 (highest)
	If yes, how helpful would you say the assessment and report have been for your parliamentary progress?	1 (not at all) – 5 (extremely helpful)
	Can you name an example of a positive outcome of the assessment for your legislature?	Open text box
	If yes, will you continue to engage with/update the assessment findings going forward?	Y/N
	If yes, have you engaged with the CPA HQ to support you in this?	Y/N
	If not, how likely are you to conduct a self-assessment in the future?	1 (not likely) – 5 (extremely likely)
	If yes/no: Elaborations on the above responses.	(Open text box)



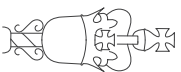
## ANNEX 4: EVALUATION TIMETABLE

Phase	Deliverables	Timeline
Inception	Kick off meeting with key review stakeholders from CPA HQ to clarify review objectives, review questions and discuss timeline and approach to data collection – start discussion on interview sample	30 March 2023
	Desk review of programme materials provided, including the different iterations of the benchmarks, benchmark tools, the 2020 evaluation report and an overview of evaluation stakeholders to determine sample – as well as consultant’s own research on other benchmarks, stakeholders etc.	Week of 3 April 2023
	Draft inception report, including complete list of review questions, final review methodology, including review sample, data collection tools, and a more definite timeline for the next phase of this review – for CPA HQ review and input before finalisation	17 April 2023
Data collection	Key informant interviews with external programme stakeholders (sample)	Between April 2023 – May 2023
	Interviews with (internal) CPA HQ review stakeholders	April 2023
	Key information interviews with programme beneficiaries (sample)	April 2023 – May 2023
	Further desk review of further evidence provided by key informants, as well as further in-depth research on the methodology, application and use of other benchmarks	April 2023 – May 2023
Analysis and reporting	Collate and analyse the evidence collected around the review questions sketched out above	Beginning of June 2023
	Present findings from initial analysis to the internal review stakeholder group – for discussion, to fill gaps and provide further explanation, as needed	21 June 2023
	Draft review report for peer review from internal review stakeholders – with feedback from debrief/ validation meeting already incorporated	26 June 2023
	Final review report presented to CPA HQ, including PowerPoint summarizing the review findings and recommendations and a template for a management response to the review	Latest July 2023
	Article for “The Parliamentarian” summarising the review findings	Edition 3 2023
	Presentation of review findings at the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana	October 2023





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