

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF CPA RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES PROGRAMME

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Terms of Reference

Job title:	Consultant(s) for an external review of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures Programme 2018-2022
Contract type:	Consultant(s)
Contract duration:	April/May 2023 - Reporting Deadline July 2023

1. About the CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) mission is to promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries 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.

Our primary focus is to deliver programmes and projects to our members which are consistently impact-oriented, effective, sustainable, cost-effective, innovative and of the highest standards. Our

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 our membership.

Our institutional parliamentary strengthening methodology centres around supporting parliamentary and associated national governance entities to perform at the highest standards. Key to this is our passionate promotion of the Separation of Powers Principles (namely the Latimer House Principles) and promoting key benchmarks (such as the CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures). This agenda remains firmly aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

2. Programme Background

Building on the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles on the separation of powers, the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures provide a framework for excellence in Commonwealth parliamentary and legislative practice.

The original CPA Benchmarks published in 2006 comprised of 87 indicators and were drafted by CPA Parliamentarians representing different Commonwealth regions. The CPA Benchmarks were the outcome of a Study Group in late 2006 hosted by the Legislature of Bermuda on behalf of the CPA and the World Bank Institute (World Bank Group) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Parliament and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

Reinforcing the belief that effective Parliaments are one of the principal institutions of any functioning democracy, the Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures provide a minimum standard and a guide on how a Parliament should be constituted and how it should function. The CPA Benchmarks are therefore fundamental to the wider values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter, adopted by Commonwealth Heads of Government on 14 December 2012, which expresses the commitment of member states to the development of free and democratic societies.

The CPA Benchmarks were revised and updated in June 2018 by a second Study Group of CPA Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff representing different Commonwealth regions, which met at Wilton Park, West Sussex, United Kingdom. The 2018 Study Group was organised by the CPA together with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) under the Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D) Project. The Project was funded by the UK Government whilst it held the Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth. As well as updating the Benchmarks, the project included assistance to support legislatures in undertaking assessments against the Benchmarks.

It is the CPA's belief that the Benchmarks play an important part in developing the effectiveness of parliamentary institutions across the 180 Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth. Thus in 2020, when the funded project came to an end, the CPA committed to continue to independently support legislatures who needed funding assistance to undertake Benchmark Assessments. Furthermore, in 2018, the CPA tied its offering of Technical Assistance Programme support to only those legislatures that have undertaken a Benchmark Assessment.

Since 2018, 20 legislatures spanning the Commonwealth have undertaken self-assessments. These are:

1. South Africa

2. Uganda
3. Tanzania
4. Kenya
5. The Gambia
6. Ghana
7. Malawi
8. Sierra Leone
9. KwaZulu-Natal
10. Western Cape
11. Australian Capital Territory
12. Isle of Man
13. Jersey
14. St Helena
15. Pakistan
16. Anguilla
17. Grenada
18. Montserrat
19. St Lucia
20. Malaysia

The CPA believe that the Benchmarks are highly effective, and impact orientated. To date, this programme of work has resulted in significant parliamentary reform, ranging from instituting new committees, to improved financial accountability and oversight procedures.

In 2020, the CP4D consortium partners took part in a final evaluation of the entire project (for the period covering 2018-2020), of which the Benchmarks element was a part. This review will build on that initial work.

3. Review Objectives

The main purpose of the review is to assess the overall achievements of the programme at the outcome level. The specific objectives of the review are:

- Determine the effectiveness of the programme in achieving results (inclusive of the 20 Benchmarks undertaken over the reporting period).
- Assess the relevance of the programme with regards to consistency, ownership, quality of the technical assistance and complementarity with other initiatives.
- Assess the sustainability approaches of the programme.
- Undertake a comparative analysis of conducting self-assessments with and without the assistance of the CPA.
- Undertake a comparative analysis of the degree of impact when a Benchmark Assessment is supported by a CPA Technical Assistance Programme versus when it isn't.
- Provide a light-touch review around the content and structure of the Benchmarks and the modality and methodology in how they are applied.
- Compare the Benchmarks with other mechanisms of assessing legislatures.
- Provide recommendations and identify good practices which may be used in future programming.
- Assess the reputational impact of the Benchmarks programme on the CPA.

4. Review Scope and Output

The consultant(s) will have the following responsibilities:

4.1 Inception phase

- Desk review of programme documentation
- Draft inception plan including questionnaire, proposed methodology, and work plan with timeline agreed for deliverables.
- Provide final inception plan incorporating relevant feedback.

4.2 Data collection and analysis

- Carry out interviews with internal and external stakeholders and programme beneficiaries.
- Conduct an analysis based on the objectives of the overall review (see review objectives section).

4.3 Report writing

- Develop and present the first draft of the review report with concrete findings and recommendations.
- Convene a debrief on preliminary findings, main recommendations and lessons learned.
- Finalise final review report and present to commissioning owner.

The final report will be published by the CPA and disseminated to external stakeholders. The report will also be used as a resource to support the CPA proving the efficacy of the programme when seeking donor funding support.

The consultant(s) may be required to present their findings to the CPA International Executive Committee when it meets between 1-2 October 2023, in Accra, Ghana as part of the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

Consultants will also be expected to write an article for the CPA's journal, *The Parliamentarian* summarising the review and outcomes.

4.4 Methodology

The review will be based on findings and factual statements from the review of relevant documents in addition to assessment reports produced by the programme and different publications. The consultant(s) are also expected to conduct interviews (digitally) to collect relevant data and ensure participatory methods are used to ensure the data quality, validity and reliability and responsiveness to gender equality and human rights. The following criteria should be considered:

- Effectiveness
- Cost efficiency
- Impact
- Relevance
- Sustainability

The consultant(s) will take every measure to safeguard the rights and confidentiality of key information providers in the collection of data in line with data protection regulations.

5. Fee Structure

A total of £5,000 is allocated for the contract to conduct this work.

50% of the fee is payable upon signature of contract and the remaining 50% is payable upon completion of review with the submission of invoices.

6. Submission of Applications

Cover letter, CV, a short outline of methodology and a previous evaluation should be submitted to CPA HQ by no later than Friday 24 March 2023. Please submit applications via this online form.

- To be considered for the post, applicants should have at least five years' experience working in either a parliamentary or related academic setting and have a good understanding of programme/project evaluation methodologies.
- It is expected that the successful candidate(s) will work remotely and regularly meet with Secretariat staff to update on progress. Applicants from any Commonwealth jurisdiction are welcomed.
- Applicants must be fluent in English.
- Applicants are expected to be available between April/May 2023, although some exceptions to this will be considered.

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