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Mind the Gap: Lessons Learnt and Remaining Challenges in Parliamentary Development Assistance – A Sida Pre-Study

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAPPG	Africa All Party Parliamentary Group on Africa
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
APNAC	African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption
ARD	Association for Rural Development
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWEPA	Association of Western European Parliamentarians for Africa
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Development Cooperation
BSI	Budget Strengthening Initiative
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLD	Centre for Legislative Development International
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
COPA	Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FIPA	Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GOPAC	Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption
GOVNET	Network on Governance (OECD)
GPA	Global Partners and Associates
GPPS	Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (UN)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
IBP	International Budget Project
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRI	International Republican Institute

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
NAO	National Audit Office
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIBR	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PGA	Parliamentarians for Global Action
PD	Parliamentary Development
PMO	Parliamentary Monitoring Organisation
RBM	Results-Based Management
SADC-PF	Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SADEV	Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SUNY	State University of New York
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNU-WIDER	UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WBI	World Bank Institute
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Evaluation Pre-Study on Parliamentary Development Assistance was commissioned by Sida to review the state of knowledge on donor approaches and their effectiveness since 2005, identify key gaps in knowledge, and assess the need for a multi-stakeholder thematic evaluation. This last question has become ever more salient as the demand for results and cost efficiency has grown in donor countries.

To this end, the objectives of this Pre-Study were:

- To review the post-2005 academic and policy literature to analyse existing knowledge about donors' current approaches to parliamentary development (PD), understand the factors that contribute or constrain the effectiveness of interventions, and identify gaps in knowledge;
- To carry out consultations with a variety of stakeholders (including parliamentarians, donors, implementing organisations, parliamentary associations, watchdog organisations and experts) to assess the validity of the findings emerging from the literature and supplement them as needed;
- To identify stakeholders who may want to spearhead or participate in a possible future evaluation; and, if necessary
- To identify areas where an evaluation would be useful in addressing gaps in existing knowledge and catering to emerging issues.

This report, which is the main output of the Pre-Study, brings together the key findings, lessons and conclusions derived from the different project activities, and it provides recommendations on possible next steps.

Evolution of parliamentary development support

Parliamentary support has been a growing area of assistance since the 'third wave' of democratisation in 1980s (though it remains relatively small compared to other components of democracy support).

The PD universe is diverse and complex, involving a plethora of organisations ranging from bilateral and multilateral agencies to parliamentary associations and political party foundations. There are differences both within and across these different PD actors in terms of what they seek to achieve, how and why. In practice, however five main models for strengthening parliaments have emerged since the 1990s:

- **Discrete PD projects:** Short-term, *ad hoc* activities to develop the capacity of parliament, MPs and parliamentary staff in generic parliamentary functions, procedure and duties.
- **Direct funding for parliamentary organisations:** Core funding or grants to support parliamentary associations or political foundations, or groups operating within parliaments (e.g. parties).
- **Longer-term PD programmes:** Multi-year programmes of linked activities to develop the capacity of parliament to perform its core functions, often focused on institutional and organisational reform.
- **Issue-based programmes and projects:** Long- or short-term interventions that work with/through parliaments/parliamentarians to achieve other, more targeted, policy objectives, either as a discrete project or as part of a broader sectoral programme.

- ***Integrated democracy programmes:*** Single donor or basket-funded multiyear programmes integrating activities targeting different elements of democratic governance simultaneously.
- ***Politically aware programming:*** Less a modality than a cross-cutting approach that seeks to understand and influence the informal politics, rules and relationships, based on political economy analysis, local buy-in and an adaptable programming.

Lessons learnt

As with democracy promotion more generally, PD assistance remains an under-evaluated area of donor support. At the same time, a clear and remarkably consistent set of lessons and recommendations about how external PD actors can improve their assistance has emerged over the past two decades. These include the need to:

- Develop a deep understanding of the political economy of the parliaments they work with and use in-depth political economy analysis to ensure that programmes are appropriate to context;
- Ensure PD efforts are driven from within and interventions are tailored accordingly;
- Develop an approach that provides needed technical support but is also politically savvy;
- Treat parliaments as part of the broader political system and integrate support with other areas of assistance;
- Build assistance around specific policy issues rather than generic activities;
- Encourage South-South learning;
- Base assistance on long-term commitments to partners;
- Remain realistic about what can be achieved;
- Improve programme management (including better coordination, programme design and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), more tolerance of risk and more appropriate staff skills and incentives).

Towards more innovative PD practice

Over the past decade, many donors and other organisations involved in parliamentary assistance have tried to incorporate these lessons and insights into their policy and practice – with varying success.

The most striking changes within PD have occurred at the international and strategic level. There is now a strategic consensus among donors about the key features of more effective parliamentary programmes. Over the past five years, many donors have also made more consistent efforts to improve the coordination of their PD activities and to share knowledge and experience. One of the most significant initiatives to emerge from these efforts is the Agora web portal and online community, which was set up in 2010 to make expertise more accessible and to facilitate cooperation and learning amongst the variety of stakeholders active in PD. Other efforts include the development of global and regional benchmarks to monitor the performance of parliaments, as well as principles for PD engagement. Individual agencies, notably the EC and USAID, have also taken some strides to improve their own programme management and evaluation

There has also been some progress, albeit limited and uneven, at the operational level, especially in terms of providing more issue-based support and engaging more explicitly with the political elements of parliamentary business. Many donors are also undertaking political economy analysis as part of their

country strategy development. However, it has remained much more difficult to translate such analysis into more strategic, realistic, and effective programming.

There have also been some attempts to develop more comprehensive and longer-term programmes of democracy assistance (e.g. USAID Political Governance programmes and the basket-funded Deepening Democracy programmes). In addition, some organisations, notably the UNDP and the Commonwealth Secretariat, are experimenting with more intensive and hands-on efforts to develop capacity in a more sustainable manner. Finally, our research also suggests that some organisations (e.g. NIMD, WBI, Global Partners and Associations) have been better at doing demand-led work more systematically – that is where beneficiaries/partners request support and are fully involved in the development and implementation of programmes.

Constraints to uptake of lessons

Despite such efforts, progress remains limited. The Report identifies four key constraints that help explain why the uptake of lessons has been a persistent challenge.

Constraint one: Gaps in knowledge

Knowledge gaps which emerged from the research for this project include:

- Unsystematic, inconsistent, and under-resourced efforts to collect evidence about what works in PD assistance and why. Many of the recommendations are still relatively untried and untested and, where innovative practice does exist, it is not being sufficiently researched.
- Lack of information on whether and how different international PD actors have adapted different programmes or approaches to specific contexts.
- Insufficient understanding of the motivations and preferences of MPs in emerging democracies.
- Insufficient understanding of how internet and communication technologies may be altering accountability relationships and helping to reshape incentives – and whether and how international actors can engage with these incentive structures.
- Insufficient understanding of the incentives, capabilities and relationships of those providing PD assistance – including donors and the various types of implementing agencies.
- Poor efforts to synthesise and share existing evaluative knowledge.

Constraint two: Tensions between different lessons and objectives

The various lessons and recommendations that have emerged in the PD field are often presented as coherent and mutually reinforcing. However, there are some clear tensions or trade-offs between different parts of the PD improvement agenda. For instance, there seems to be an assumption that large-scale integrated, basket-funded democracy promotion programmes are compatible with increased ownership or demand-led programming, but this may not always be the case. Moreover, there may also be tensions between PD objectives and broader donor objectives – notably between working more politically and demonstrating results in ways that satisfies bureaucratic and political demands. Such tensions help to explain in part why there is actually more dissension within the PD field about the way forward than the literature might suggest.

Constraint three: Perverse incentives in the aid system

Our research suggests that PD specialists are painfully aware of what the problems, challenges and shortcomings of parliamentary strengthening efforts are, and what *should* be done to address them. Rather than a lack of knowledge, an important obstacle to improved practice are the underlying constraints on the ability of organisations to absorb and act on known lessons. There is thus a need for

greater openness and reflection about the political economy of the aid architecture and incentives structures that govern the funding, commissioning, design and implementation of PD assistance.

Constraint four: Insufficient attention to variation within the PD sector

The PD field may appear to be largely homogenous. However, it is an extremely diverse universe, and while in general PD organisations share characteristics and ways of working, there are some important differences between, and even within, different categories of PD actors. Recognising this variation is needed to improve practice because:

- It can help identify potential activities that can be researched to understand what has worked well and less well to improve the functioning of parliaments.
- Such disaggregation is the basis for more targeted evaluations that compare like with like.
- Specific recommendations on how to improve practice and more detailed guidance on programme design can be targeted at the organisations that they apply to.
- It facilitates understanding of the objectives and constraints of specific types of organisations – which makes assessment of realistic objectives and any remedial action possible.

Recommendations on evaluation options to improve practice

The main purpose of the Evaluation Pre-Study was to assess the need and appetite for a multi-stakeholder evaluation of parliamentary development assistance and explore other options for addressing gaps in knowledge. The main recommendations that emerge from the report are outlined below.

Recommendation 1: Do not proceed with a single, large-scale evaluation of assistance; instead use targeted exercises to fill knowledge gaps

A single, large-scale evaluation of the PD field is not needed and should not be undertaken. There are several reasons for this. One is the sheer diversity of the international actors involved in PD and the activities they carry out, which means that a single evaluation is unlikely to capture all of what is going in the field in a manner that does it justice and compares like with like. Perhaps most importantly, there is a very strong feeling among PD specialists that a large-scale, retrospective evaluation of PD assistance is unlikely to generate new knowledge and will instead reinforce lessons, recommendations and principles that are already widely accepted.

Recommendation 2: Address knowledge gaps by undertaking targeted evaluation exercises

Donors should engage in concerted efforts to move the PD field forward by conducting or commissioning evaluation work that can address identified knowledge and build the evidence base in a more systematic and rigorous manner. This could include some of the following.

- Undertaking a systematic review of already existing evaluations and the body of evidence in the PD field.
- Commissioning focused evaluations.
- Tracking new/innovative approaches in real time.
- Commissioning comparative case studies.

Recommendation 3: Address knowledge gaps by undertaking further research

Not all knowledge gaps can be solved by evaluation. Further research can also include some of the following.

- Undertaking in-depth research on what MPs and parliamentary staff need and want and on whether ongoing programmes are the right ones.
- Undertaking a study on the impact of social media and mobile technologies on parliaments and their role in promoting oversight and accountability.

- Carrying out and/or synthesising existing knowledge about whether and how ongoing donor practices in other areas have undermined parliaments.

Recommendation 4: Promote greater coordination and dialogue among diverse PD actors

Such coordination should build on initiatives that have been ongoing since 2007. There should be greater efforts to encourage linkages with non-OECD DAC donors and creditors such as Brazil, South Africa, and China, while donors could also play a more proactive role in encouraging the sharing of lessons among CSOs involved in parliamentary work.

Recommendation 5: Redefine the results-based agenda

Rather than being on the defensive about the results-based agenda, the PD community should seek to redefine it so it can become more appropriate to the types of support most likely to help transform parliaments, better attuned to risk and better able to focus on qualitative dimensions of parliamentary effectiveness. A more fundamental issue is that donors and other PD actors may need new approaches to managing and communicating results if they are to become brokers of meaningful change and if they are to design programmes that help parliaments address the root causes of their dysfunction (rather than simply their symptoms). Programme managers are unlikely to design transformative programmes if they are held to fixed, *ex ante* logframes and/or put under pressure to undertake activities that produce quick and easily measurable outputs (which can be presented as ‘results’). To move forward, an honest debate is needed about these issues.

Recommendation 6: Invest in better understanding of the political economy of donors

There is an urgent need to develop a better understanding of the internal constraints that have made it so difficult for donors and implementing agencies to act on lessons learnt in the PD field. If the PD field really is to move forward, it is essential for donors to understand the constraints and opportunities different PD actors face in order to adapt to new ways of working and to ask how the development assistance architecture can be better aligned with the need for PD assistance to be more politically attuned, focused on the long term, and less risk-averse.

Recommendation 7: Give substance to PD Principles and Parliamentary Benchmarks

The OECD DAC has been working with different stakeholders on developing principles for more effective engagement with parliaments, alongside other principles for engagement with electoral processes, political parties and the media. It is now crucial for the DAC and the donor community more broadly to think about what these principles will be for and how they can be given substance and traction. The same holds true for the different benchmarks of PD that have been developed, especially at the regional level.

Recommendation 8: In acting on the above recommendations, adhere to some basic principles

In addressing the above and other knowledge gaps, donors, implementing agencies and partners should keep in mind a few key principles:

- Appoint a leading organisation that can oversee all these different initiatives.
- Coordinate and identify shared priorities about the kind of knowledge needed to avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucratic complications.
- Build on the comparative advantage of different organisations/PD actors.
- Be more targeted and specific.
- Disaggregate so as to better understand variations within the PD field.
- Know your audience.
- Don’t reinvent the wheel.
- Adequately invest in disseminating findings and lessons learnt.

1 Pre-Study Purpose and Approach

1.1 Introduction: why support parliamentary development?

Parliaments are essential in democratic political systems: a parliament is not sufficient to ensure democracy but democracy cannot exist without it (IPU and UNDP, 2012). Indeed, some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the strength of the national legislature may be *the* institutional key to successful democratisation and the eventual consolidation of nascent and incipient democracies across the developing world (Fish, 2006).

At least in principle, parliaments have three key functions: holding the executive to account; making and approving laws; and representing citizens and mediating between competing or conflicting interests in the policymaking process. Parliaments, or, perhaps more accurately, elected members of parliament (MPs) acting individually rather than as a collective decision-making body, also perform a fourth function, which is constituency service. This is an area that is receiving increasing attention in both academic and policymaking circles (Barkan, 2009).

On the basis of these different functions, parliaments and parliamentarians sit at the centre of a web of domestic accountability (OECD DAC, 2012a): they play a crucial role in promoting both horizontal (that is, across different arms and components of government) and vertical (between government and the people) accountability. As such, they are essential institutions in building the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the population and resolving conflict through peaceful channels (see, among others, Barkan, 2009 and Power and Coleman, 2011). In many settings, elected MPs are also party representatives, and consideration of the nature of the linkages between political parties and parliament is often essential to understanding how effectively MPs can meet their different roles and responsibilities.

While parliaments across much of the developing world vary hugely in terms of power, influence, function and size, public pressure and expectations about what they can and should deliver are greater than ever (IPU and UNDP, 2012). Demands from different quarters for openness and transparency in governance processes are growing, and elections are increasingly considered insufficient mechanisms for domestic accountability. Thus, expectations that parliament should scrutinise the government and call it to account have risen apace. Among other things, the development of communications technology and the proliferation of media coverage and outlets have increased the visibility of parliaments and politicians. Yet, in many developing settings, especially in fragile/post-conflict states, parliaments remain weak and ineffective, and in the eyes of the population they are among the least trusted and legitimate institutions (Carothers, 2006; Power and Coleman, 2011). In short, parliaments are now perceived as a key part of the both the cause of and solution to poor democratic governance.

In order to become more effective and responsive, parliaments across the developing world need, among other things, better and more strategic assistance from the international community. They have received increasing attention from the international development community (see Section 2 for more information on main players and activities), with the principal objective to ‘achieve an institution that plays its constitutional role effectively and exercises its powers appropriately’ (EC, 2010: 12). The international community has several reasons for thinking a well-functioning parliament is important. In emerging democracies, parliaments are potential allies for donors in improving domestic accountability. They are seen as a critical institution to provide checks and balances, prevent undue concentration of power in the executive and tackle issues related to financial/budget oversight and corruption in government. Moreover, effective parliaments are important forums for the aggregation of citizen preferences into public policies; how they function is thus crucial to the quality of citizen influence on decision-making processes (Mandelbaum, 2011). In addition, there is a widespread perception that a well-func-

tioning parliament should contribute not only to the strengthening of democratic governance but also to the promotion of development and poverty reduction. Increasingly, parliaments are also seen as key institutions that can contribute to other objectives, such as peace and reconciliation processes.¹

1.2 Objectives of the pre-study

In 2005, the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Sida) commissioned an evaluation of its approach to parliamentary strengthening between 1996 and 2005. The final evaluation report (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005) surveyed Sida's strategy and methods in this area, reviewed lessons from existing donor evaluations and made recommendations as to how Sida might improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of its parliamentary development (PD) assistance (although it was not intended to assess the impact of actual interventions). These recommendations were taken forward as management guidelines in Sida's 2006 'Position Paper on Parliamentary Strengthening' (Sida, 2006), including commitments to reorient Sida's approach and to undertake a follow-up (multi-stakeholder) evaluation in 2010.

The purpose of this Pre-Study on Parliamentary Development Assistance, which Sida has commissioned from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), is to assess and make recommendations regarding the need for and potential purpose and objectives of a future, multi-stakeholder evaluation (see also the Terms of Reference (ToRs) in Annex 1). This question has become even more salient over the past few years as the demand for (measurable and quantifiable) results and cost efficiency has grown in donor countries.

To this end, the objectives of this Pre-Study are:

- To review the post-2005 literature (both scholarly and that produced by the international development community) to gather and analyse existing knowledge about donors' current approaches to PD, the factors known to contribute to and constrain the relevance and effectiveness of interventions and any gaps in this knowledge;
- To carry out consultations with a select number of stakeholders (including parliamentarians, donor agencies, implementing organisations, global and regional organisations for parliaments, relevant watchdog organisations and experts with solid and diverse experience) to assess the validity of the findings emerging from the literature and supplement them as needed;
- To identify stakeholders who may want to spearhead or participate in a possible future evaluation; and, if necessary;²
- To identify areas where an evaluation would be useful in addressing gaps in existing knowledge and catering to emerging issues.

1.3 Structure of the approach

This report is organised around seven sections. This introductory section (**Section 1**) explains why the international community has become increasingly interested in providing support to parliaments across the developing world. It then lays out the key questions this Pre-Study seeks to address and the methodology we have followed. **Section 2** provides an overview of the main trends, approaches and actors in the field of PD. **Section 3** analyses some of the key lessons that have emerged over the past 20 years to make international support to parliaments more effective. In **Section 4**, the discussion turns to innovative practices that have emerged in the field of PD as donors have sought to incorporate lessons learnt

¹ See, for example, the Parliamentary Centre and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), among others.

² These have been provided to Sida separately.

into their programmes and practice, and **Section 5** explains why uptake has remained challenging. In **Section 6**, by way of conclusion, we outline key gaps in knowledge in assistance to parliamentary strengthening. **Section 7** then lays out key recommendations for Sida and other donors on how to take the work laid out in this report further.

Several different annexes are appended at the end of the report. These include the following:

1. The terms of reference for the study;
2. A list of key informants interviewed;
3. The questions for interviewees by category;
4. References (both key literature commissioned/produced by donor and a full list of references cited in the report);
5. A typology of parliamentary strengthening actors;
6. A note on the typology of approaches;
7. Implementation modes for parliamentary strengthening activities/projects;
8. Available evidence on the effectiveness of parliamentary development assistance; and
9. Power and Coleman's findings on challenges and recommendations of political programming within party and parliamentary support.

1.4 Key research questions and methodology

1.4.1 Overarching Framing Questions

To assess whether there is a need for a future (multi-stakeholder) evaluation of parliamentary strengthening, a set of key research questions have framed our enquiry to guide this Pre-Study. These questions have included:

- What is known about the approaches (different) donors take to PD? (To include issues related to theories of change, main objectives, mapping of activities and how these have changed over time, how it relates to broader democracy support efforts, etc.)
- What is known about the impact of different approaches on broader outcomes/donor objectives? (To include consideration of what has worked/worked less well and why, how much evaluation work has been done so far, etc.)
- To what degree do evolving thinking and approaches of different donors reflect academic findings about the central dynamics that influence the quality and effectiveness of parliaments and reflect lessons learnt and recommendations about how to improve PD support?
- What factors might support or constrain the success of a future multi-stakeholder evaluation? (To include issues such as appetite and buy-in for an evaluation among the various stakeholder groups, importance and relevance of an evaluation in the context of concern with results-based agenda and cost efficiency, difference/impact an evaluation might make/have etc.)
- What type of evaluation, if any, would be most suitable/appropriate? If not a multi-stakeholder evaluation, are there other types of joint exercise that could fill gaps in knowledge and contribute to future effectiveness?

1.4.2 Scope

This Pre-Study is a qualitative exercise based on a review of both the academic literature and that produced by the international development community on PD and on the views and perspectives of a select set of well-placed stakeholders/observers/actors in this field (see more on this in Section 1.4.3 on the methodology). However, it is also important to highlight that, given time and resource constraints, the Pre-Study has some limitations. For example, as per the ToRs, the focus of the study is on support to parliaments at the national, not the subnational level, while also including a few global and regional parliaments. In addition, we had to be selective and pragmatic in identifying and choosing people to consult as part of this exercise from the extensive list of categories of stakeholders outlined in the ToRs. Interviews with informants from all of our stakeholder categories, including representatives from all the main PD funding agencies and several leading experts, enabled us to triangulate views and validate the findings from the literature. However, our final sample (more of this below) is not fully representative (e.g. geographically, gender) and it is small for some categories (e.g. watchdogs, parliamentarians, implementing agencies), which means our findings are not scientifically rigorous.

The Pre-Study also seeks to analyse parliamentary support within a broader framework of democracy assistance, but it has used the literature on parliamentary strengthening as the main entry point (that is, it does not look at evaluations or reviews of other parts of democracy assistance, such as electoral systems), and in this respect it is not intended to be exhaustive. In addition, in terms of evaluation material, we focus mainly on high-level literature (that is, recent thematic and/organisation evaluations and reviews of PD in the public domain); we were not mandated as part of this exercise to look at programme- or country-level evaluations.³ Finally, this Pre-Study is intended to assess whether an evaluation of PD assistance is needed, and as such is not concerned with providing all answers but rather with identifying some of the key gaps and the questions that need to be put forward and why.

1.4.3 Methodology

This Pre-Study has involved the following key activities, which are distinct but have also overlapped:

i. Inception Report

The first output of this pre-study, the inception report, drew on the first few weeks of desk-based research (see below) and laid the foundation for subsequent research activities as described in the ToRs for this Pre-Study. The inception report was shared and discussed with Sida and was used to establish a common basis for the Pre-Study.

ii. Analysis of Existing Knowledge

This consisted of a desk-based review of available documentation on parliaments, PD assistance and, more selectively, broader democracy assistance efforts. This included a mapping of key donor reports and evaluations, and existing reviews, as well as relevant academic and grey literature. To the extent possible, we tried to identify and incorporate literature and views emanating from the global South, although it is fair to say that Northern-based experts and policymakers continue to dominate the field. As per the ToRs, the review focused on post-2005 literature, but it also incorporated earlier material when we deemed it relevant/important.

Key materials were identified through an iterative process that included thorough internet searches; a scanning of the references cited in different reports and other publications, with a special focus on those that seemed to come up time and again or that addressed important aspects of how parliaments function and/or innovative parliamentary assistance efforts; and ongoing conversations with experts in the field who provided key suggestions for further reading. A list of references is provided in Annex 4.

³ As is discussed in the Recommendations (Section 7), this remains a worthwhile endeavour, but it lies outside the scope of this Pre-Study.

iii. Mapping of Key Stakeholders in the Parliamentary Field

Alongside the literature review process, we also conducted a mapping of actors, institutions and other key stakeholders involved in the field (see Annex 5), following to the extent possible the list of categories outlined in the ToRs. We then narrowed down the list of identified interlocutors to approximately 45 people for interview as part of this exercise. We selected these interlocutors based on different criteria, including prominence in the field and knowledge of/first-hand experience with the issues at hand, the need for an even mix of stakeholders across the different categories provided in the ToRs,⁴ geographic diversity, national/regional/cross-regional relevance, representation of politically underrepresented groups (for example women, indigenous minorities, youth) and feedback from Sida.

It is important to note that this mapping did not include representatives from different parliaments. This is because we sought to reach out to parliamentarians in a different way – one that would enable us to speak with them face-to-face rather than by contacting them through email and then interviewing them over the phone (see below).

iv. Consultations with Key Stakeholders Identified through the Mapping Exercise

This phase consisted of interviews and conversations with the different stakeholders identified through the mapping exercise. We interviewed most of these individuals by phone or via Skype, while making every effort to meet interviewees in person if possible (for example in London or Paris). In total, we spoke to approximately 50 people (see Annex 2 for a full list). Our interviews were semi-structured and tailored to the different stakeholders (see Annex 3 for examples of the range of questions we prepared for different categories of informants). Our interviewees included representatives from:

- The expert community (academics and other researchers in think-tanks, etc.);
- Donors (bilateral and multilateral development agencies that fund activities);
- Implementing partners (organisations that coordinate and implement activities, for example multi-lateral agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political foundations, parliamentary associations, private companies);
- Global and regional organisations for parliaments;
- Watchdog organisations.

v. Consultations with Parliamentarians

We conducted face-to-face conversations with parliamentarians, including both MPs and parliamentary staff (secretaries, clerks and assistant clerks) by taking advantage of two large gatherings of parliamentarians. The first was a Westminster Workshop on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), organised jointly by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK and the National Audit Office (NAO) on 12–15 March 2012, which brought together a broad and diverse group of parliamentarians from across Commonwealth countries involved in PACs as chairs, members and staff, as well as members of supreme audit institutions (SAIs). The second was the 126th Annual Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held in Kampala from 31 March to 5 April 2012.

In both instances, we sought support from the organising institutions to identify what parliamentarians would be attending and what delegates would be particularly worth interviewing. We also sought to use similar criteria as with the mapping (see above) to select our parliamentary interlocutors, while thinking

⁴ The categories included representatives of a select number of parliaments; relevant watchdog organisations; global and regional organisations for parliaments/parliamentarians; implementing partners; and donors.

about including parliamentarians from countries/regions where there have been ongoing efforts to assist parliaments and/or who have earned a reputation for championing parliamentary reform processes. However, we also had to remain flexible and take advantage of openings and opportunities to speak to different parliamentarians as these became available, so it is important to keep in mind that our selection process was by no means rigorous and systematic. In the end, though, we spoke with 20 parliamentarians in total, and these interviews proved very useful in identifying their views and concerns regarding (current) PD programmes (including forms, content, modalities, relevance, etc.) and what ideas they may have for more effective donor engagement in this area.

vi. Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development

Finally, we also attended the Fourth Annual Donor Coordination Meeting on Parliamentary Development, led by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and UNDP leadership at the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC) in Paris on 23 April 2012. The meeting (which was part of the broader DAC Network on Governance/Govnet meeting) was again very useful in providing an overview of some of the emerging issues on which leading actors in the PD field have been focusing. Sida also introduced/discussed the Pre-Study it had commissioned from ODI with the group, and we shared some of the findings emerging from the literature and interviews. The meeting also offered an important opportunity for donors to share thoughts and feedback on the Pre-Study and, crucially, to gauge what kind of interest there may be from different donors to engage in an evaluation exercise (and of what nature).

vii. Pre-Study Report

This report, which is the main output of this Pre-Study on PD assistance, seeks to bring together the insights and lessons derived from all of the different activities outlined above, and to identify key gaps in knowledge. As such, it draws on key findings from the literature review and a synthesis of the different experiences of parliamentary support, as well as the ideas, concerns, ideas and lessons shared by those interviewed as part of this project. Based on this information and analysis, as well as the overarching questions framing this Pre-Study, the report provides recommendations, focusing in particular on whether a single multi-stakeholder evaluation of PD is needed, or whether other research and evaluation exercises that may be narrower and more targeted offer a better way forward. A Briefing Note highlighting key messages from this report has also been commissioned, and the Report will be presented in a series of meetings organised by Sida in conjunction with other interested partners and stakeholders, including the OECD/DAC/Govnet and its sequel International Governance for Development Platform, in late 2012/early 2013.

2 Overview of Main Trends, Approaches and Actors

2.1 Trends in parliamentary development assistance

PD assistance is by no means a new field of donor engagement. It goes back several decades, with, for example, US support to parliament in Korea starting in the 1960s. However, since the advent of the so-called ‘third wave’ of democratisation from the 1980s onwards and the fall of the Berlin Wall, parliamentary support has been a growing area of democratic governance assistance, in terms of both funding and the number and geographic coverage of parliaments being supported (Mandelbaum, 2011; Power, 2008; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). Support has expanded from priority regions like Latin America and Eastern Europe in the early stages of the democratic wave towards Africa, Asia and other parts of the developing world.

In addition, a growing concern with state fragility and the need to build more effective and legitimate states that emerged in the new millennium against the backdrop of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 has led to the concentration of considerable PD resources and activities in fragile and conflict-afflicted states, especially in strategic countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan (see Cammack et al., 2006 and World Bank, 2011, among others). Most recently, the uprisings that have swept the Arab world since January 2011 – where the role of parliaments has been at the centre of discussions and debates about future democratic states in the region – has given renewed impetus to parliament as a premier element and symbol of a representative state (IPU and UNDP, 2012). This has generated a flurry of international PD activity in the Arab region, including Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.

Yet, despite this steady growth in interest in and engagement with parliaments, support to parliaments (along with political parties) has remained a relatively small component of international democracy assistance. Most of the donor focus has been on work to support civil society, elections and decentralisation (see Figure 1 for a breakdown of different areas of democracy support in sub-Saharan Africa).⁵

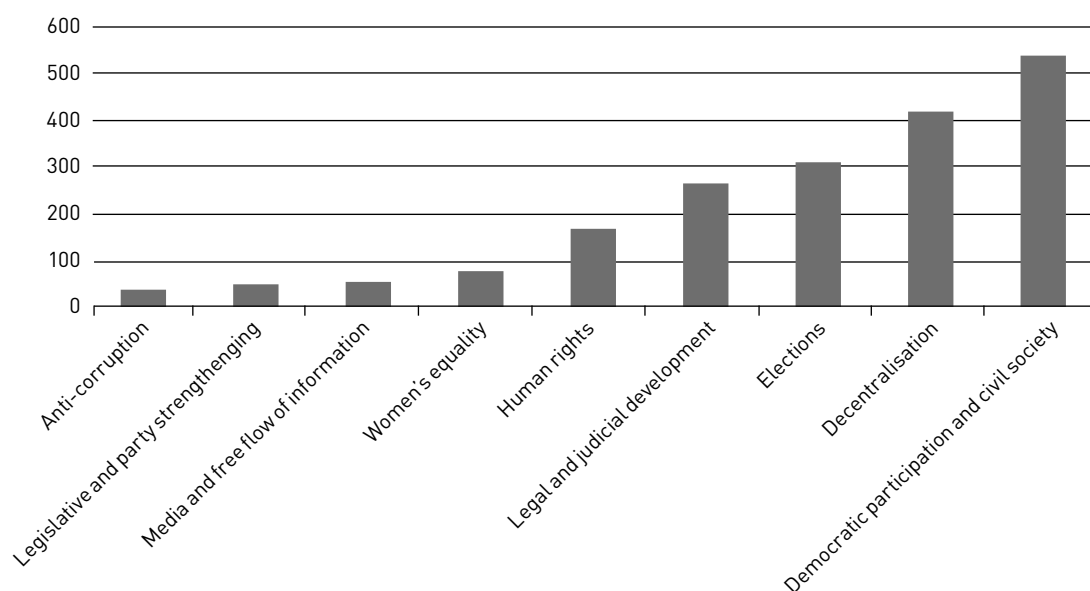


Figure 1: Democracy Assistance by Area in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2010 (2009 Constant US\$)

Source: Resnick and van de Walle (forthcoming).

⁵ These figures are illustrative only. In particular, there is likely to be over-reporting of some categories and under-reporting of others because projects entered in the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) are given one purpose code, which means that ‘democratic participation and civil society’ tends to become a catch-all category for programmes with several different elements (which may include parliamentary development or media activities that are not reported, for example).

According to many of our interviewees, an important reason for this has been that, in general, parliaments (as well as political parties) are considered too politically sensitive to engage with: donors have preferred to concentrate in areas that seem less controversial and intrusive.⁶

Developments in the international aid system have also shaped dominant ideas about how best to support parliaments, influencing thinking about not only *what* the purpose of support should be but also *how* it should be provided. Three trends have been particularly important since 2005. First, the aid effectiveness agenda has had a significant impact on discourse about appropriate/effective aid modalities. Already in the 1990s there had been some movement from fully donor-driven and managed projects towards encouraging involvement of national partners/parliaments in the design and management of parliamentary programmes (IPU and UNDP, 2003). But the 2005 Paris Declaration, and in particular its principles of ownership, alignment and harmonisation, greatly reinforced calls for more coordination of donor activities and funding, greater use of country systems to channel aid and more demand-led and recipient-managed programmes. Among other things, the financial/budget oversight function of parliament has become of greater interest to donors in the context of general and sectoral budget support and the desire to ensure aid is well spent.⁷ Tellingly, however, parliaments were perceived to have widely been excluded from the Paris process to develop a more effective aid system, just as they were left at the margins of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework. In an attempt to correct this oversight, the Accra Agenda highlighted the principle that all donor activity should seek to strengthen domestic institutions and forms of accountability rather than working exclusively with the executive branch in partner countries (OECD DAC, 2012b). This reinforced the role of parliaments as institutions sitting at the centre of a web of domestic accountability mechanisms, while also emphasising the importance of civil society as key levers of change from the bottom up. The importance of parliaments was rearticulated at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 – though to a lesser extent.⁸

Second, the results-based agenda, also enshrined in the Paris Declaration but extending beyond it, has increased the pressure to demonstrate the relevance and impact of aid across all areas of development. This focus on results and cost efficiency has become even more pronounced in the context of the current global economic downturn, and is being translated into a drive for better monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of parliamentary strengthening efforts, including the search for suitable benchmarks of parliamentary performance and indicators of programme success (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005).

Finally, over the past decade, there has also been increasing recognition that development is not only a technocratic exercise but also deeply political in nature, and that development efforts will remain inadequate and inappropriate (and may even cause harm) if they are not grounded in a sound understanding of context. This has led to an increasing use of political economy analysis among many in the international community (pioneered by organisations like DFID, Sida, the Netherlands and, more recently, the World Bank), so as to develop a more profound appreciation of the factors that shape the nature and quality of governance processes. This has also highlighted the need for donors to engage more actively with political actors like parliaments and political parties. However, as Power (2008) has noted, while there is a degree of consensus at the strategic level, donors continue to struggle to opera-

⁶ This point was also highlighted at a joint ODI/UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) seminar on Foreign Aid and Democracy in Africa held in London on 17 May 2012, which focused on UNU-WIDER research into the linkages between democracy assistance and development assistance and whether and how foreign aid had contributed to the democratisation of the region. See www.wider.unu.edu/events/ReCom-events/en_GB/17-05-2012/

⁷ One challenge regarding the Paris Declaration is that the US, the main actor in parliamentary strengthening, has been slower to respond to its principles than other donors. However, the USAID (US Agency for International Development) Forward agenda may see this changing in future (for example via more pooled funding and working more directly with governments).

⁸ The Accra Agenda for Action mentions parliaments considerably more times than the Busan Outcome document, where they are mentioned only twice.

tionalise insights from political economy analysis into their programmes and projects on the ground – and, as is discussed below, the international community still confronts multiple challenges to engaging more effectively with political organisations and institutions.

Moreover, there are potential tensions between these different developments. In particular, the focus on results as currently practised and conceived may not be amenable to the kinds of approaches that more politically aware programming may call for (Wild and Foresti, 2011a; Power, 2008; Rocha Menocal, 2011a). We return to these issues in more detail in later sections.

The remainder of this section provides an overview of some of the key approaches and activities in PD, as well as of the main actors involved in this field and some of the similarities and differences between them. This lays the foundation for the discussion in the remainder of the report.

2.2 Main approaches and activities to strengthen parliaments

2.2.1 Typology of Parliamentary Development Support

There are many ways of providing support to parliaments, in terms of both the objective of assistance and the modality for delivering it. Figure 2 provides a schematic overview of the PD intervention universe,⁹ summarising the five main components of any parliamentary activity, project or programme (see Annex 6 for more detailed explanatory notes).

The typology serves to illustrate four points:

- The PD universe is complex, involving a wide range of objectives, beneficiaries, modalities and activities.
- Funders, implementers and the parliaments and other stakeholders they work with have diverse tools at their disposal to achieve their PD objectives.
- The effectiveness of a particular project is influenced both by what the project is seeking to achieve (that is, what outcomes are intended in service of what high-level objective and for whom) and by how it goes about achieving them (that is, using what methods: modality plus activities). The appropriate combination of elements from within each component cannot be determined in a vacuum, but instead depends on the specific objectives and concrete circumstances of a project, as well as the specific context of the parliament in question. A good fit between elements, and between project and implementation context, will increase the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes.
- In principle, programmers are free to adopt a modular approach to PD programme design, mixing and matching elements of the five components outlined in Figure 2 in ways that are most likely to achieve their objectives.

⁹ This typology draws on categorisation developed by Tostensen and Amundsen (2010), as well as other typologies and descriptions of parliamentary development assistance found in the literature (for example EC, 2010; Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; IPU and UNDP, 2003).

Figure 2: The Universe of PD Interventions: A Typology of Approaches

AIM OF SUPPORT		HOW IT IS TO BE ACHIEVED		
Policy focus	Desired outcome	Beneficiary	Modality	Activity
1. Democracy strengthening: objective is to strengthen several related institutions 2. Parliament focused: increasing parliament capacity is primary objective – Administration – Legislation – Oversight – Representation 3. Issue based (i.e. indirect): support to parliament to further other policy objectives – Financial/budget monitoring – Corruption – Human rights/gender equality – Poverty reduction – Health – Social accountability/civil society advocacy – Peace and reconciliation – Elections – Political parties – Party system	1. Secure/untied funding for core activities 2. Improved physical infrastructure 3. Improved central/support services e.g. library, research, admin. 4. Improved institutional capacity e.g. legal and regulatory reform 5. Improved organisational capacity e.g. reform of structures, management systems and procedures 6. Improved individual competency e.g. develop knowledge, skills and values	1. Parliament, as whole – Regional – National – Sub-national 2. Parliament, specific part – Speakers/political leaders – MPs – Caucuses – Committees – Secretariat 3. Related institution (in recipient country) – Media – Churches – NGOs – Interest groups – Parties 4. International NGOs – Associations/networks – Foundations – Research institutes/think-tanks	1. Funding arrangement – Bilateral – Basket 2. Project type – Core funding – Project – Programme (set of linked projects) 3. Duration – Short term – Long term 4. Design – Demand led/supply driven – Flexible/rigid activities – Context specific/generic – Strategic/ad hoc, reactive 5. Implementation* – Direct implementation – parliament-parliament – funder-beneficiary – Via a third-party intermediary – UNDP, association, foundation, NGO, consultancy, etc.	1. Provide funds – Core funding – Grant making – Sector/budget support 2. Provide physical goods – Buildings/furniture – Equipment/software 3. Develop/transfer knowledge – Training/seminars – Peer support/South-South cooperation – Exchanges/study visits – Twinning – Secondment – Mentoring – Technical assistance – Drafting laws, procedures, systems – Advisory support – Long-term posting 4. Generate and share information – Conferences – Networks 5. Brokerage – Influencing – Mediating/convening

Notes: See Annex 6 for detailed explanatory notes of typology. *See Annex 7 for modes of implementation.

Source: Adapted from Tostensen and Amundsen (2010).

2.2.2 Overview of Approaches in Practice

In practice, however, particular elements of assistance have most commonly been combined¹⁰ and specific organisations have favoured particular approaches. As a result, five main *modalities* for strengthening parliaments have emerged since the 1990s. These are:

Discrete PD projects: These take the form of short-term, *ad hoc* activities intended to develop the capacity of parliament, MPs and parliamentary staff in generic parliamentary functions, procedure and duties. These activities are usually funded by a single agency (for example bilateral or multilateral organisation, association, foundation), are implemented directly with parliament and often focus on infrastructure or building the skills and competencies of individual parliamentarians. Typical activities include trainings; strengthening of committees and committee systems; South-South learning and other activities designed to transmit democratic norms (exchanges, study visits, training); discrete information-sharing and generation activities (conferences, reports); and physical infrastructure projects (e.g. information technology equipment, buildings, furniture, libraries, etc.).

Direct funding for parliamentary organisations: Core funding or grants to support parliamentary associations or political foundations and, more recently and only rarely, the general activities of parliaments (i.e. sector/budget support),¹¹ or groups operating within parliaments (e.g. parties).

Longer-term PD programmes: Single-donor or basket-funded multiyear programmes of linked activities to develop the capacity of parliament to perform its core functions. These often focus on institutional and organisational capacity development and include activities such as legal and regulatory reform; development of new management structures and parliamentary offices/committees and related procedures; and other support to parliament's administrative and legislative functions, but increasingly include activities that support more political functions of parliaments. Funders also sometimes support (long-term) strategic plans developed by parliaments themselves, which can be used to frame the PD programme of activities. Programmes may be implemented directly with the recipient government/parliament or managed and implemented via third parties (international NGOs, NGOs, foundations, consultancy firms). The outcomes and activities pursued within these programmes depend on the preferences of the funders and implementers concerned.

Issue-based programmes and projects: Long- or short-term interventions that work with/through parliaments/parliamentarians to achieve other, more targeted, policy objectives, either as a discrete project or as part of a broader sectoral programme. Strengthening of parliamentary capacity is an indirect/secondary outcome. Can be single donor or basket funded, and implemented directly by the funder(s) or via a third party. Policy issues that donors seek to advance through work with parliamentarians, especially through the committee system, include peace and reconciliation, budget monitoring, poverty reduction, human rights, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, environment and transparency/anti-corruption.

Integrated democracy programmes: Single donor or basket-funded multiyear programmes integrating activities targeting different elements of democratic governance, with parliaments as only one element of the programme and also including support to other democratic institutions and organisations (party systems, political parties, civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights or electoral

¹⁰ For example, projects that aim to improve the legislative function of parliaments (policy focus) by working with MPs (beneficiary) to improve their individual competencies (outcome) have often taken the form of a short-term project implemented by a third-party (modality) who organises training, seminars, exchange visits, etc. (activity).

¹¹ For example, the European Commission (EC) provides sector budget support to the South African parliament (Murphy, 2012). However, as Murphy also points out, it is unlikely that budget support will become a common modality because of institutional capacity constraints in low-income countries and because 'budget support programmes are typically negotiated and contracted with the executive. Channelling parliamentary support through budget support modalities can therefore have the inadvertent consequence of reversing the appropriate scrutiny relationship of parliaments over the executive, and thus compromise institutional independence' (Murphy, 2012: 7).

commissions). These are often managed by an intergovernmental organisation (IGO) and/or implemented through third-party organisations (NGOs, foundations, consultancy firms). The activities and outcomes, as well as the degree of actual integration of these and thus their ability to contribute to combined strategic objectives, depend on the funders and implementers concerned.

A sixth variant has emerged recently. This is not itself a modality but instead a set of crosscutting design elements or principles that can be incorporated into any of the other five modalities outlined above.

Politically aware programming that seeks to understand and influence the informal politics, rules and relationships (for example the distribution of power, interests and incentives) that operate within parliament and shape how parliamentarians behave. The three crosscutting principles for interventions that are more politically aware are (a) politically informed: political economy analysis used to ensure realistic outcomes and/or outcomes include tackling political obstacles to change; (b) locally owned: demand for support/buy-in from key stakeholders and defined responsibilities/deliverables for beneficiaries; and (c) strategic adaptation: able to adapt activities to changing circumstances over the life of programme in pursuit of clearly defined goals (Power and Coleman, 2011).

To some degree, these different modalities are chronological and reflect learning about how best to support parliaments. However, new modalities have not replaced older ones, and all are still in use. For instance, and as described in more detail below, some organisations still mainly use discrete projects to provide infrastructure support and train MPs and parliamentary staff in their general duties, whereas others use PD programmes mainly to develop the institutional/organisational capacity of the parliaments they work with. Most donors provide some funding to political foundations and parliamentary associations/organisations. A few now use integrated democracy programmes alongside other types of modalities, but politically aware programmes continue to be rare.

There are three main reasons why all modalities continue to be in use. First, the core mandate/objectives of some organisations make some types of activities more appropriate than others.¹² Secondly, the level of democratisation and other contextual factors make some types of activities more or less appropriate for a particular parliament. For example, parliaments being set up immediately after the resolution of a conflict and/or after the holding of the first multiparty election are likely to need physical infrastructure and equipment, technical assistance to draft a new constitution and other legislation and training for newly elected MPs and parliamentary staffers, but a parliament in a country that is relatively stable, is not very low income and has held several democratic elections does not. Thirdly, some organisations/agencies have been less able or willing to respond to or act on lessons that have emerged about what types of support are likely to help parliaments function better. We return to these issues in more detail in later sections of this report.

2.3 Main actors in parliamentary development

Over the past two decades, the number and types of organisations that provide support to parliaments and parliamentary reform processes has proliferated. General overviews of PD often give the impression that the field is quite homogenous – with many organisations trying to achieve similar things using similar methods. However, while some organisations do share key characteristics and favour similar approaches, the typology of interventions illustrates that the universe of these is potentially very diverse. Our research, and, in particular our interviews, suggest there are important differences between PD actors, and sometimes significant ones, in terms of their objectives and their preferred modalities and activities. These differences are often most pronounced across the different categories of actors, but

¹² For example, the World Bank focuses mostly on institutional rather than political aspects of parliaments, and parliamentary associations provide professional training for their individual members, often as a discrete activity.

there are also important variations within categories, and these may be more interesting from an evaluation perspective. The main categories of PD actors are outlined below, including an overview of the most established and/or active organisations within each and a discussion of some similarities and variations within them.¹³ A specific actor can be categorised not only by what type of organisation it is (see Annex 5 for a typology of actors) but also by the role it plays within a particular project or programme, that is, whether it is a funder, commissioner, coordinator, implementer or recipient of PD assistance (see Annex 7 on implementation modes).

BOX 1: A NOTE ON DATA ON PD ACTIVITIES

There are few statistics on PD in the literature reviewed, and even fewer that are comparative (for example using the OECD CRS). Overall, available information on internationally supported parliamentary strengthening efforts is patchy, with more detailed data available only for single donors, organisations, regions or programmes. A recent Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) study of support to legislatures (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010) has gone some way towards addressing this data gap for the main bilateral development agencies. Alongside a mapping of parliamentary support actors, the authors compiled a dataset of PD projects between 1999 and 2009. This dataset, for the first time it seems, enables comparison of the five main bilateral donors by funding level (USAID, DFID, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Sida and Norad), preferred modalities (basket funding, implementing agencies, project duration) and policy focus. The figures are based on the project data the authors collected, and they do not show this as proportion of overall spending. Nevertheless, we draw heavily on this study for data for the analysis of bilateral donors, using data from other sources for the main multilateral agencies (which means they are not strictly comparable).

Such project-based datasets need to be treated with caution (as Tostensen and Amundsen themselves acknowledge). Problems of under- and over-reporting of data and double counting occur because information supplied by agencies may not be comprehensive, sufficiently detailed or accurate, and coding may not be consistent. In particular, projects are often given only a single code for purpose or activity, which means that projects that have several different activities are miscoded and/or put under a catch-all category. For example, 'good governance and democracy' also includes representation, accountability and rule of law, as in Tostensen and Amundsen (2010), whereas 'representation' is itself quite an expansive category, including activities relating to gender and civil society. The increased use of integrated parliament or democracy programmes accentuates this problem. The figures are therefore illustrative only, to give an indication of levels, spread and trends.

2.3.1 Bilateral Development Agencies

Bilateral agencies and associated ministries of foreign affairs are one of the main funders and commissioners of PD activities. They sometimes also coordinate projects, or are involved in implementation, but this is less common.

USAID is by far the largest and most established bilateral agency in the field, in terms of both total spend and number of projects. It has been active since the 1960s, allocating around \$240 million between 1999 and 2009 alone (double the funds provided by all other agencies combined), and currently has the two largest programmes (in Iraq and Afghanistan) (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010).

¹³ For more detail on the different types of actors see EC (2010), Power (2008), Tostensen and Amundsen (2010) and Hubli and Schmidt (2005). Tostensen and Amundsen give the most detailed overview of the approach taken by the main donors. Some more in-depth reviews of specific organisations or areas of the field are also available. See Annex 4 for a description of the key donor/grey (that is, non-commercial/unpublished) literature by category.

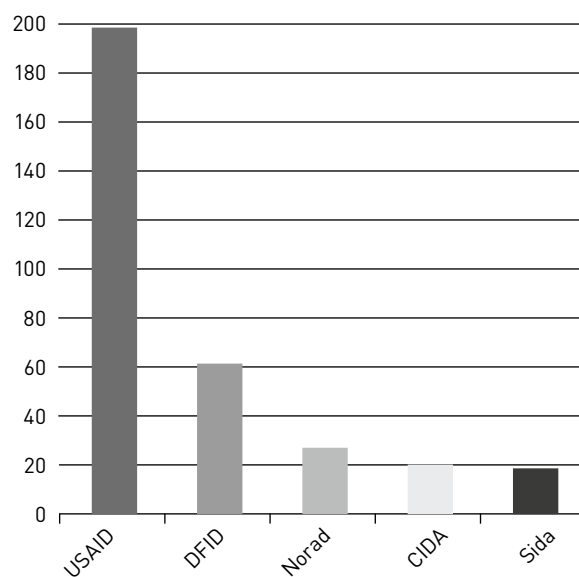


Figure 3: Aggregate Funding for PD for Five Bilateral Largest Donors, 1999–2009 (US\$ millions)

Source: Tostensen and Amundsen (2010) (but see Box 1 on some of the limitations on available comparative data).

A second group of bilateral donors, including CIDA, DFID, Norad, Sida and the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), mainly began funding parliamentary activities in the 1990s. DFID is the largest funder within this group, spending around \$60 million between 1999 and 2009, followed by Norad (around \$30 million) and CIDA and Sida (around \$20 million each). Sida has remained a steady, if not very large, provider, working mostly with parliaments and parliamentary networks at the regional and global levels,¹⁴ and indirectly at the national level through basket-funding arrangements.¹⁵ The French have also been quite involved with parliamentary support over the past 20 years, mostly through the French National Assembly which is, in fact, the only parliament in the world that is both a donor and an implementer of parliamentary support (receiving funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as a variety of multinational institutions). A final group of bilateral donors allocate small amounts to parliamentary activities, including, for example, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) are among the newest donors to enter the field, with SDC in particular seeking to expand its engagement as part of a recent and explicit mandate to develop a programme of work on how to support democratisation processes in the developing world against the backdrop of the Arab uprisings.

¹⁴ From our interviews and the review of the literature, there may be different things at work here. First, it seems that small donors like the Nordics are more likely to give to associations and multilateral or other basket funds because they may not always have sufficient capacity or resources to manage their funds directly or work with a large number of country partners on a bilateral basis, whereas larger donors usually prefer to channel most of their aid in the latter manner. There also seems to be a perception, even if it is not explicitly articulated, that at least some donors do not fund global or regional parliamentary associations and networks because of concerns about their impact. In the case of Sida in particular, however, one of the recommendations that emerged from the 2005 review was to provide greater support to such organisations, and this may have influenced its spending decisions.

¹⁵ While Tostensen and Amundsen's data indicate a decline in Sida's parliamentary funding since the 2005, as discussed in Box 1 the data have some limitations that need to be taken into account. It is also important to note that these figures indicate only absolute parliamentary development funding rather than parliamentary development as a proportion of overall aid portfolio. As our interviewee at Sida highlighted, the agency remains deeply committed to parliamentary development and democracy support more broadly – even if guidance on if and how to provide this kind of support more systematically at the country level is still lacking. The commissioning of this Pre-Study to follow up on the 2005 evaluation is a reflection of Sida's ongoing commitment to and interest in this area. Note that these figures also indicate only absolute parliamentary development funding rather than parliamentary development as a proportion of overall aid portfolio.

At the same time, there are signs that some of these bilateral donors are pulling back from parliamentary support. For instance, Norad's strategic orientation is now economic governance, which will presumably have implications for its funding to democratic governance programmes. The Netherlands has not had any specific focus on PD over the past several years, preferring to concentrate on the promotion of inter-party dialogue instead. It was also reported during our interviews that CIDA's funding to the Parliamentary Centre, through which it has channelled most of its PD support, has reduced dramatically since 2010. While Germany has been an important provider of support (especially in terms of strengthening parliamentary committees), the Federal Ministry for Economic Development Cooperation (BMZ) does not plan to continue working with parliaments directly in the coming years – although it will continue to focus on the provision of accountability support more widely, and parliaments remain a highly relevant institution, given that they sit at the centre of a web of domestic accountability.

In addition, emerging donors, such as India, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey, are making considerable inroads in the provision of development assistance. However, these have for the most part remained reluctant to embrace a democracy and human rights agenda – even if many of them are themselves newly democratised states (Carothers and Youngs, 2011). China, for its part, has provided considerable development assistance to parliaments, especially in Africa. Such assistance, channelled mostly through loans and credits, supports large infrastructure projects (e.g. parliamentary buildings) and is not intended to be part of a governance or democracy strengthening agenda.

Overall, the Tostensen and Amundsen (2010) dataset shows that the five bilateral agencies providing the most funds to PD are doing similar things, but it also suggests there have been some important differences between them over the past decade in terms of their choice of modality, preferred partners, main beneficiaries and relative policy focus.

Modality: Here, there is a stark contrast between DFID, Norad and Sida, who have channelled a large proportion of their funding through basket funds over the past decade, and USAID and CIDA, who have tended not to work in collaboration with other donors but rather on their own with other partners.¹⁶ CIDA's projects are, on average, much longer than those of the other four donors (around 5.5 versus around 3 years). In addition, there are significant differences in average project funding, ranging from \$3 million for USAID to just \$640,000 for Norad and Sida.

Implementing partners: USAID is unusual in its frequent use of private firms, alongside the more usual foundations and international NGOs, to implement many of its projects. USAID also hardly channels any PD funding through multilateral organisations or IGOs (such as UNDP). By contrast, DFID, Sida and Norad regularly work with these as implementing agencies. CIDA also stands out in having used international NGOs (in particular the Parliamentary Centre) to implement a large proportion of its projects (around three-quarters).

Beneficiary: National parliaments and their different components (e.g. committees, political leaders, speakers, MPs, caucuses, secretaries and other parliamentary staff) have been the main beneficiaries of parliamentary funding from all the donors. This focus is particularly acute in the case of CIDA, USAID and DFID. By contrast, nearly half of Sida's funding over the decade has benefited international parliamentary bodies and networks (for example core funding to the IPU, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) and the Association of Western European Parliamentarians for

¹⁶ Wild and Hudson (2009) present a similar picture of DFID's preferred modalities for delivering political party support, for example often pooling its funding with like-minded donors (including Norad, Sida, CIDA and the Netherlands, but also UNDP, AusAID and USAID) and using a wide range of implementing agencies, including foundations and NGOs (e.g. IDEA). In terms of activities, more traditional methods remained prominent (training, workshops, seminars), but there is also evidence of attempts to respond to new thinking (such as exchanges) becoming less common, while there is some support for multiparty dialogue forums.

Africa (AWEPA) – more on these regional and international bodies and networks below). For the most part, donors have focused on parliaments at the national level, although there have also been some efforts to support decentralisation reforms/local democracy, including elected councils at the local level.

Policy focus: All of the donors have adopted a parliament-focused approach to PD over the past decade, with their interventions concentrated mainly on representation, good governance and democracy rather than legislation or oversight, but all have provided some form of issue-based support alongside this. However, whereas nearly all of US and DFID support is focused on parliaments, a significant proportion of Sida's and CIDA's funding has been to issue-based activities. There is no systematic breakdown of the data by parliamentary strengthening programmes versus democracy promotion programmes, but the project descriptions do show that most of the donors have projects that combine support to two or more political institutions within a single programme.

This analysis indicates that a choice made in relation to one component of support is likely to influence choices in relation to other components. For example, it is reasonable to assume that Sida's broader policy focus is linked directly to its preference for working through international NGOs and parliamentary associations (which were both recommendations for focus in the evaluation the agency commissioned in 2005 – see Hubli and Schmidt, 2005). But it also illustrates the point that effectiveness and responsiveness are determined not by one component of the PD approach or programme but by the specific combination of components in a given context. For example, while Sida may achieve broader policy focus by working through associations, the extent to which funding is used to support less *ad hoc* and more long-term activities will depend on the degree to which such associations work in a strategic way (or not).

2.3.2 Multilateral Institutions and Other Implementing Agencies

A handful of multilateral organisations and IGOs are also active contributors to PD, acting as funders, coordinators and implementers of interventions.

The EC is a significant actor, with a spend of around \$150 million between 2000 and 2009, mainly through the European Development Fund (EDF) (Huyghebaert, 2012). UNDP takes the lead on parliamentary support within the UN system. It has been providing technical support to parliaments since the 1970s and PD is reported to be one of the fastest-growing areas within its democratic governance portfolio (Murphy and Lynge-Mangueira, 2011).¹⁷ UNDP's main instrument for supporting parliaments, the large-scale Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS), is now in its third phase. According to Murphy and Lynne-Mangueira, UNDP also increased its PD and political party strengthening programmes in West and Central Africa during the 2000s. UNDP prominence is further bolstered through its coordination of a number of basket-funded PD programmes and its lead role in Agora, a new PD web portal set up in 2010 (more on Agora in Box 6 in Section 4 below).

The World Bank, which has historically shied away from overtly political areas, has become steadily more involved in PD since 2003/04, partially through its Institutional Development Fund but mainly through the activities of the World Bank Institute (WBI). The WBI partners with other organisations (e.g. the State University of New York (SUNY) and the CPA) to deliver targeted technical courses to parliamentary staff, and it also supports parliamentary networks (such as the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC)). Through its research, it has become an intellectual leader on the role of parliament in areas related to the Bank's core mandate, such as budgetary oversight and corruption (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010).

¹⁷ Global figures for UNDP support over the past decade are not available. However, Murphy and Lynge-Mangueira (2011) estimate that active UNDP parliamentary development projects in West and Central Africa in 2010 totalled around \$5.5 million.

International IDEA, a membership-based IGO dedicated to international democracy support, is an intellectual leader and a prominent implementing agency of political party strengthening efforts and initiatives. While the organisation does not have a global programme on PD, it is engaged in different efforts in the field. Many of its country/regional offices, especially in Latin America, are involved in projects and programmes that seek to bring political party support and parliamentary support closer together.

Our research and interviews also point to some interesting similarities and variations between implementing agencies. For instance, UNDP often acts as coordinator of large-scale parliamentary strengthening or democracy promotion programmes, such as the GPPS and other basket-funded donor PD programmes, such as the Deepening Democracy programmes. By contrast, with some notable exceptions (for example its support to the South African parliament), the EC has to date taken a much more *ad hoc* approach to its parliamentary support, with short-term activities tacked on to governance programmes (EC, 2010).

There are also differences, as well as commonalities, between multilateral agencies in terms of their policy focus and desired outcomes. The WBI was among the first organisations to champion an institutional approach to PD and continues to focus its support on institutional strengthening through parliament-focused programmes, mostly in the form of targeted courses on technical issues for parliamentary secretariats/committees (World Bank, 2007). A significant proportion of UNDP's projects also have sought to strengthen the administration of parliaments over the past decade, at least in Central and West Africa (Murphy and Lyngue-Mangueira, 2011). However, whereas UNDP has a clear mandate to promote democratic development and human rights, the World Bank's Articles of Agreement are restricted to 'growth and development'. These institutional differences are reflected in the WBI's focus on the specific functions (such as financial oversight) and policy issues (such as anti-corruption) that are most relevant to its core business, and UNDP's increased prioritisation of support to the representative function of parliaments and its work with CSOs (while still having trouble to get to grips with the politics involved).¹⁸

International IDEA, by contrast, is a much smaller organisation than either the World Bank or UNDP, and this has meant it is also more flexible. IDEA is said to be well placed to exploit opportunities to act more politically, and it has proven quite adept at adapting programmes to the local context and building strong relationships with political parties over time (Power et al., 2009).

2.3.3 Parliamentary Associations

Parliamentary associations are interest organisations for parliaments and parliamentarians. As with other types of interest organisations, their core mandate is to generate and maintain a supportive professional community through peer support, networking, training, exchange programmes, transfer of specialist knowledge and the setting/maintenance of professional standards (EC, 2010). Parliamentary associations and networks have proliferated over time, and now amount to close to 30. They also vary considerably in terms of their composition and focus. Established in 1889, the IPU is the oldest and one of the largest parliamentary networks, as well as one of the first providers of technical support.

Membership consists of formal parliaments as institutions from all over the world, while others are voluntary associations made up of parliamentarians who join individually based on their own interests (such as AWEPA, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and PGA). Other associations and networks are formed around a regional or historical grouping (such as

¹⁸ Murphy and Lyngue-Mangueira (2011) report that, in the past decade, in West and Central Africa, UNDP support to administrative functions (largest areas) and to oversight, legislation and budget monitoring (much smaller areas of work) have remained constant, while support to representation has increased steadily to become a primary focus. The authors acknowledge that the 'representation' category is quite expansive, but they maintain that, along with administration, it is by far the largest content area. Our interviews also support the general perception of growing support to the representation function of parliaments.

the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) and the CPA). There are also sub-regional parliaments like SADC-PF and EALA, with the latter having legislative powers. Some organisations/networks (IPU, CPA) are general in interest; others (AWEPA, GOPAC, PGA) are interested in development or specific issues (such as gender, peace, human rights, the MDGs, climate change or budget monitoring) or affiliated to specific organisations (for example the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank). Some associations act as implementing agencies of PD assistance (IPU, CPA), receiving both core and project-based funding from development agencies/donor countries.

2.3.4 Political Foundations¹⁹

Political (party) foundations are organisations that are affiliated to either one or several political parties within the funder country and that have been established to promote democracy and/or strengthen political parties in countries undergoing democratic transitions. There are two American political party foundations (the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI)) and numerous (32+) European political foundations, with varying modes of operation (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). In Sweden, there are seven political foundations. Some of these provide only sister party support and others non-partisan support, while all are committed to assisting in the development of a well-functioning party system and to participatory and democratic political processes (SADEV, 2009). But in general, the German party foundations, or *Stiftungen*, are the most established and best known, sitting at the origin of European efforts to support democracy.

In general, political (party) foundations have found it much easier than bilateral or multilateral agencies to work directly with political parties and parliaments because such engagement is the basis of their mandate. Some foundations, like those in Sweden, provide party-to-party (sister-party) support for the purpose of cooperating with, influencing and strengthening ideologically like-minded parties through capacity development projects (often short term, such as training, seminars and exchanges) to develop knowledge and skills (for example relating to party organisation and governance, budgeting, policy development, campaigning, committee skills, etc.) (such as German *Stiftungen*). Other foundations, such as the American ones (NDI and IRI), have historically been linked to a particular political party, but over time have become non-partisan organisations providing support to democratic parties across the ideological spectrum. Others still are affiliated to all parties within the host parliament and focus mostly on cross-party activities, such as the party system and inter-party dialogue (for example the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)).

Some foundations specialise wholly in party development, some in party, multiparty and PD and others in an even broader range of democracy promotion activities. Some activities are managed by political parties themselves (such as German *Stiftungen*), some have over time become arms-length government or non-governmental organisations staffed by professional political/development experts (NDI, IRI, NIMD). Others still combine the two modes, with sister-party support managed by the host country parties' secretariat and multiparty, parliamentary and democracy promotion activities by the foundation secretariat (such as the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)). Many foundations have field offices/in-country presence (NDI, German *Stiftungen*), but others (such as NIMD) work almost entirely through local intermediaries.

Thus, there is a great deal of variation between the history, institutional set-up and policy focus of the different foundations. For example, founded only in 2000, NIMD is a cross-party foundation focused specifically on long-term multiparty support. It is a small organisation with a singular vision and model, and with hardly any field presence. Instead, as in the work it has carried out in Latin America, with support from DFID and other donors, NIMD works through local NGOs to establish multiparty dia-

¹⁹ Information for this section comes from GPA (2010); Power and Coleman (2011); Tostensen and Amundsen (2010); Wild and Hudson (2009); and Wild et al. (2011) as well as key informant interviews.

logue forums as a first step in a longer-term process of more constructive party relations (Rocha Menocal et al., 2008b) (also Box 10 in Section 4).

By contrast, WFD, set up in 1992, provides support to both parliamentary strengthening and party-to-party activities but as separate silos of activity, with the UK parties managing the (largely short-term) party support activities and WFD programme team overseeing the longer-term parliamentary programmes (GPA, 2010). NDI has an even longer history, a broader policy focus and range of programmes types and a more extensive global presence through its network of regional and country teams. An interesting new entrant is DIPD, mixing elements of both the NIMD (small, clear vision/strategy, long-term commitment, working through local partners) and WFD (combining bi-party support managed by Danish parties with a secretariat managing multiparty programmes).²⁰

The foundations are usually publically funded with (varying degrees of) core funding from their respective ministry of foreign affairs and/or bilateral development agency, or via another state body (such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)). Many also receive additional project-based funding from their respective donor agencies, which use the foundations as implementing agencies. Donors tend to have close relationships with the foundation in their country (USAID and NDI/IRI; DFID and the WFD) but foundations also implement projects for donors from other countries (for example DFID party support activities have been implemented by WFD, NIMD and NDI, and WFD also implements multiple projects for USAID). As these organisations increasingly become implementers of donor agencies as much as party foundations *per se* (and, for NDI and IRI in particular, in some countries these party links are almost non-existent), some of their mandates and models are changing as well – which offers new opportunities but also poses new challenges as they try to adapt (Wild and Hudson, 2009).

2.3.5 International Development Arms of National Parliaments

The national parliaments of many OECD countries have international development arms that are involved in organising parliamentary twinning programmes and exchange activities. The House Democracy Programme managed by the US Senate (rather than USAID) is an example of this (EC, 2010).

2.3.6 Non-Governmental Organisations

Reflecting a desire for greater public accountability, over the past several years there has been a rise in the number of NGOs actively involved in parliamentary monitoring, reform and development at national, regional and international levels. Their aim is, ultimately, to strengthen the interface between parliaments and civil society. Some of these organisations, known as parliamentary monitoring organisations, or PMOs, are recipients of PD assistance themselves, although levels of support remain low and are confined to a few multilateral and bilateral agencies and some private foundations. Other NGOs act as intermediaries, delivering donor-funded programmes to parliaments or CSOs. Key international and regional NGOs involved in PD are the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (US), the Parliamentary Centre (Canada), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Fundación Directorio Legislativo (Latin America) and the International Budget Project (IBP).

2.3.7 Research and Consultancy Firms/Organisations

Donor agencies also use research and consultancy institutions, as well as private companies/individuals to provide research and advice on the design and implementation of programmes, as well as on strategy and policy development. These include the Association for Rural Development (ARD), the Centre for Legislative Development International (CLD), Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), Global Partners and Associates (GPA), SUNY, ODI and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI).

²⁰ An interesting avenue for future enquiry and analysis of best practice may be the comparative advantages of small organisations in this field, such as greater internal cohesion and adaptability, and whether these enable them to move from direct delivery of PD assistance to become facilitators of local agendas and actors. The Australian Centre for Democratic Institutions, funded by AusAID and with a mandate for parliamentary and party support, is another organisation in this field that has remained small.

2.3.8 Potential Importance of Variation in the Parliamentary Development Field

While it is true in general that PD organisations share characteristics and ways of working, as discussed above our research suggests there are some important differences between them. There are at least four reasons why it is important to recognise and understand this variation better in the context of efforts to improve support to parliaments (see also Box 2 for an illustration of some of this at work in the case of parliamentary associations and networks).

BOX 2: PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATIONS: TRADE-OFFS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Parliamentary associations illustrate the need to base judgements about the relative effectiveness of PD organisations on appropriate comparisons. They also demonstrate the potential tensions between different lessons on how best to improve parliamentary practice.

As interest organisations for parliamentarians or parliaments, parliamentary associations have a mandate to generate and maintain a supportive professional community and promote the needs and interests of their members. They can do this through the provision of peer advice/support and other professional development activities (such as seminars or exchanges), the establishment and maintenance of professional standards and the facilitation of dialogue and cooperation. In principle, therefore, associations have some of the features that are widely seen to increase the effectiveness of PD activities: that is, they should be well placed to provide support that is relevant to and valued by MPs and that promotes local capacity development and South-South learning and sharing of experiences. These characteristics explain in part why parliamentarians involved with them in different ways find them particularly useful and even instrumental to their development, at both individual and institutional level, as well as why donors such as Sida fund the work of associations.

At the same time, associations face other challenges that may constrain the effectiveness of their activities, particularly if assessed over the short term and in terms of their contribution to the broader objectives of development agencies (such as good governance, democratisation, sustainable growth or poverty reduction). For example, associations need to cater to a constituency with diverse backgrounds and interests and, very often, an exceptionally high level of turnover. Their mandates and primary stakeholders imply that they need to be more reliant than other PD organisations on short-term and discrete activities focused on generic issues (such as training for newly elected MPs), which are widely viewed in the international development community as being less effective than other types of modalities. Some associations also have objectives that are less tangible than those of other organisations – such as fostering democratic values or building a democratic political culture – and are difficult to demonstrate as having been achieved. Others, like the PGA, have much more tangible objectives that can more easily be monitored and measured.

This does not mean there is no better or worse practice within different associations, that their performance does not need to be assessed more rigorously or that associations need not heed relevant recommendations from learning within the field. Many such lessons are actually extremely pertinent, such as the fact that South-South exchanges tend to be more relevant than study tours to established parliaments in high-income countries; the need for short-term activities to be placed within broader strategy or the importance of follow-up actions to assess whether support has the intended effect. But it does mean it is inappropriate to judge the relative contribution of associations against, say, an institutional development programme provided by UNDP or the World Bank (though associations such as the CPA that are funded to provide long-term technical programmes more akin to those of other implementing agencies could be). It probably also means it is more appropriate to assess associations in terms of medium-term objectives such as developing South-South learning and local capacity rather than improvements in the functioning of a parliament in the short term (that is, over the lifetime of a project or parliament). And it almost certainly means that donors that fund associations are those that believe fostering a professional community of practice among parliamentarians in young democracies is an important endeavour over the long term, while accepting that it is a risky investment with few measurable impacts in the short term.

Identify potential activities to research: These differences provide a potential empirical base for learning about what type of activities have worked well and less well to improve the functioning of parliaments.

Compare like with like: However, asking what has worked well or less well makes sense only if joined by the following complementary questions: to achieve what, for whom and under what conditions? More thorough disaggregation and categorisation of actors within the field is the first step towards more rigorous evaluation of PD to ensure that apples are not being compared with pears.

Target recommendations better: Such disaggregation is also needed to properly target recommendations on how to improve practice. It is not possible to make blanket statements on the appropriateness or likely effectiveness of a particular method or activity divorced from consideration of organisational and programme objectives. As different actors have different mandates and constituencies, and operate within different constraints, not all recommendations will be relevant to all of them (see Box 2 on parliamentary associations). For example, while short-term or technical programmes have limitations, they are clearly the best tool for certain jobs (such as providing a basic foundation or infrastructure to parliaments, especially where parliaments are very new and there is a basic gap in knowledge about how the institution functions in the first place), they may be wholly unsuited to others (such as grappling with the political factors that undermine parliamentary effectiveness).

Assess constraints on uptake better: Related to this, there is also a need for more specificity in the analysis of uptake of lessons about how to improve PD. Again, blanket statements about the lack of progress in implementing lessons within the field and the tendency to fall back on ‘traditional’ and ineffective approaches are not particularly helpful in moving things forward. Some organisations have been able to respond to some lessons but others have not. It is important to understand the reasons for these differences in ability to absorb and act on lessons to improve effectiveness (we turn to this later in the report).

3 How to Improve Parliamentary Development Assistance

PD assistance is an under-evaluated area of donor support, in terms of both M&E of individual projects and large-scale thematic evaluations (Hudson and Tsekpo, 2009; Power, 2008; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). As with democracy promotion more generally, evaluation of assistance has not been systematic, comprehensive or robust (Burnell, 2007; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010; Wild and Hudson, 2009). (See Annex 8 for more detail on the kind of evidence that has been produced on PD activities.) There are four main reasons for this dearth of rigorous evidence about what has and hasn’t worked and why.

First, evaluations of PD activities, particularly learning exercises, have not been sufficiently or consistently prioritised and funded by international PD actors (see Box 3). Secondly, poor programme design undermines evaluation of impact – as in the case of poorly specified programme hypotheses or theories (that is, the propositions or assumptions about how programme activities will lead to desired outcomes *and through which causal mechanisms*), unsuitable indicators and a lack of adequate baselines. Thirdly, evaluations of complex socio-political processes, such as PD, are notoriously difficult – because it is hard to establish causality and attribution (Green and Kohl, 2007). Fourthly, M&E efforts have considerable cost implications and call for significant investments if they are to be done well – because, for example, primary data need to be collected as meaningful datasets to monitor progress are not readily available, in-depth case studies are needed to understand socio-political processes, appropriate time in the field is needed to properly collect and triangulate qualitative data, etc.

BOX 3: HOW DO ORGANISATIONS KNOW IF THEY ARE ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES?

As part of this study, we interviewed representatives from most of the main bilateral and multilateral donor agencies who fund PD activities (see Annex 2). One question we put to them was: 'How do you know if your programmes achieve their objectives?' While practice varies, we found that organisations tend not to have processes in place to ensure either systematic evaluation of the outcomes or impact of their activities or systematic feedback of learning into new programmes.

Bilateral and multilateral agencies appear to use two main mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of their PD programmes. First, many agencies use logframes as the basic monitoring framework for their programmes (such as Danida). Reporting against logframes can enable assessment of programme impact but both anecdotal evidence from our interviews and a recent survey of EC PD programme documents (Murphy, 2012) suggests this is often not the case. This is because appropriate baselines, outcomes or indicators are often not chosen (for example inputs, outputs and outcomes, or activities and indicators, are confused, outcomes are unrelated to activities and/or outcomes are not measurable) and data are not collected and reported systematically (ibid.). Where reporting against a programme logframe does take place, therefore, it usually relates to programme activities and outputs, and not the impact of these.

Secondly, funding agencies commission ad hoc independent reviews or evaluations (most often qualitative) of individual programmes (such as USAID evaluations of NDI programmes) or organisations (such as International IDEA programmes, UNDP). A review of programme-level evaluations would be valuable but was beyond the scope of this Pre-Study so it is not possible to comment on their numbers, focus or quality.

Few organisations have conducted thematic PD reviews/evaluations or attempted to aggregate findings from individual programmes (see Annex 4 for summary of key evaluations/reviews). And those that have do not seem to have undertaken follow-up actions to ensure this learning is absorbed and acted on or to assess their influence on subsequent programming. This means that, in most agencies, the main opportunity to feed learning from M&E – both agency specific and within the broader development community – into new programmes is when thematic advisors provide technical assistance and/or appraise/review rationale for or the design of new programmes. However, this seems to be taking place in a relatively systematic way in only a few agencies (USAID, EC).

There are some ongoing initiatives, led especially by the EC, USAID and NDI, to improve M&E in parliamentary support. Such efforts are discussed in greater detail in Section 4.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of material (including academic work and some donor evaluations and reviews) that provides a good sense of what is thought to have worked well/less well and why. Findings from both this body of empirically grounded evidence and more impressionistic and anecdotal evidence, as well as from our consultations with key stakeholders on the effectiveness of international PD efforts, point to a series of factors that have constrained or contributed to the success of parliamentary strengthening programmes. Based on these experiences, over the past 20 years a clear set of lessons about what external PD actors need to do to increase the effectiveness of their assistance has emerged from the literature assessing donor support. While there are differences in language and emphasis, reflecting shifts in international relations and development discourse more broadly, there has been remarkable consistency in the substance over time. There are also important linkages between the lessons, with elements of some leading logically to others. The most common lessons about how PD assistance can become more effective are the focus of the rest of this section.

3.1 Understand the political economy of parliaments

Perhaps the single most important lesson to emerge from the experience of PD efforts over the past two decades is the absolute necessity of understanding the political economy of parliaments in hybrid states. As in other areas of democracy support, notably political parties (Carothers, 2006; Wild and Foresti, 2010), international PD actors have, until very recently, tended to espouse a view of parliaments that is highly idealised. As a result, they have often had unrealistic expectations of parliaments as virtuous agents of change.

But, as much of the literature highlights, parliaments are highly political institutions with their own complicated dynamics (see Box 4 on some key features of the political economy of parliaments). Parliaments operate on the basis of both formal and informal institutions or rules that interact in ways that may be mutually reinforcing or may undermine one another. Furthermore, there are often significant gaps between the formal rules, powers and functions of parliaments, on the one hand, and the willingness and ability of parliamentarians (both elected politicians and permanent staff) to exercise those powers and fulfil their different roles, on the other (Power, 2011). This is especially true of parliaments in hybrid states undergoing incomplete processes of democratic transition and consolidation (Rocha Menocal et al., 2008b). Parliaments are also not monolithic or homogeneous entities, but rather consist of diverse collections of individuals and personalities, all with different interests and incentives coalescing around different issues. In particular, in order to understand parliaments and parliamentarians, it is also essential to understand how political parties function (or do not), as the two sets of institutions and actors are inextricably linked. The nature of the political/party system and relations with the executive is also essential.

When thinking about PD assistance, it is therefore essential to ask: What it is for? As one of our interlocutors put it, is support intended to fix the car, or to engage with the driver, while presumably also understanding road conditions and how these define where it is possible to head?

In general, until very recently, the more traditional forms of parliamentary support did not grapple with the kinds of political dynamics embedded in parliaments outlined above, or with the linkages between parliaments and other key institutions. In other words, they focused on fixing the car and did not pay sufficient attention to either the driver or the driving conditions. But while parliaments in many countries across the developing world have now received the kinds of institutional and individual capacity development support discussed for at least a decade (and often much longer), the effectiveness of parliaments in carrying out their core functions does not seem to have improved apace.

This points to the fact that formal rules and individual and organisational capacity constraints are not the only, or in most instances the most important, determinants of parliamentary effectiveness – and that politics and the political context within which parliaments and parliamentarians operate are an integral part of the puzzle. Building legislative capacity is invariably a complex, messy and contested process because it ultimately involves shifts in existing power structures and relations, usually away from the executive and/or the ruling party. As such, it will likely be resisted or subverted by the executive and those aligned with it, including MPs aligned with the executive and its party (Barkan, 2009). But change may be impossible to achieve unless these issues and dynamics are addressed, as they lie at the root of parliamentary (in)effectiveness.

It is against this backdrop that PD has consistently been criticised as one of the least effective forms of democracy and governance assistance. In 1999, for instance, Thomas Carothers gave a damning indictment of PD (see Power, 2008), concluding that, in general, it had ‘barely scratched the surface in feckless parliaments that command little respect from the public and play only a minor role in the political processes’. In his view, this was because donor-led programmes, which focused mainly on providing technical assistance, training and equipment, had been subverted by the real political dynamics at play

within parliaments. This assessment is not limited to PD, but is part of a general challenge of democracy assistance more broadly (Rakner et al., 2007). Carothers' summation has been delivered anew in most assessments of PD since, including the one Sida commissioned in 2005.

BOX 4: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PARLIAMENTS

What are these factors that help shape the incentives of parliaments and different parliamentarians in incipient/emerging democracies, the ways parliaments operate in practice and, ultimately, their quality and effectiveness? Some of the most prominent highlighted in our research include:

- Historical contingencies influencing state formation, in particular sectarian differences (based on ethnicity, geography, religion) that continue to be played out within state and society;
- Political histories that reinforce obedience and deference to those in authority (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008);
- The nature of the political system and the de facto balance of power between the executive and the legislature (Carothers, 2006; Chaisty et al., forthcoming);
- The nature and quality of political parties (e.g. machine party models, personality-driven parties, ideological parties, identity parties, etc.) and relations and linkages between parties in parliament (Carothers, 2006; Lindberg, 2007; Wild et al., 2011);
- The nature of patronage politics (e.g. political appointments) and resources that key figures inside and outside parliament (e.g. the president or executive, the speaker, committee heads) have at their disposal to influence the behaviour of MPs (Barkan, 2009; Power, 2011);
- Relations between civil society and political parties/MPs, which are often based on personalised and clientelistic ties and/or partisan interests, which leads to capture and corruption;
- Accountability mechanisms and incentives embedded in different electoral systems (e.g. whether MPs feel more accountable to their constituents or to their party depending on whom their political future depends on; perverse incentives from party selection processes; etc.) (Rocha Menocal, 2011b);
- Electoral politics and ensuing expectations of MPs, which can generate tensions between the different core functions of parliaments (e.g. constant pressures from constituents to deliver services to their districts may lead MPs to spend much more of their time and energy on constituency service than on legislating or on oversight) (Barkan, 2009; Lindberg, 2008);
- The 'winner-takes-all' nature of politics and the short-termist perspective this generates, because contenders and their supporters face a significant risk of being completely excluded from the spoils of office after the next electoral contest;
- Related to the above, a high degree of turnover among MPs;
- Widespread apathy and cynicism regarding public affairs, particularly the use of public resources (Blick and Hedger, 2008).

3.2 Be realistic about what can be achieved

As discussed, donors supporting PD have tended to work on an idealised vision of parliaments as agents of change. Although they are usually aware that the reality is different, donors still tend to work on parliaments based on the assumption that they are virtuous institutions by their very nature, and as such they often overlook the political dynamics that drive them. A key problem has been that donors begin with an idea of how parliament should work, then work back from that, rather than asking what parliaments and parliamentarians need to do their job better and working forward from there.

Among other things, this entails being more realistic about what is likely to be achieved given the challenges that parliaments face (see Power and Coleman, 2011, among others), as well as the (relatively limited) scale of international support to address them (see Section 2 and Figure 3 for a discussion of these). As highlighted by a number of our informants, a key problem is that programme designers tend to make unrealistic leaps from small-scale activities to objectives such as improved democratic governance, which they will be unable to measure and demonstrate in practice. (Wild and Foresti (2010) make the same point about support to political parties.) But, given the risky and highly political nature of efforts to strengthen the ability of parliaments and parliamentarians to fulfil their functions, PD assistance should focus on modest, realistic and incremental goals (grounded in a deep understanding of the domestic political environment) rather than the pursuit of ideal models.

As Carothers notes (OECD DAC, 2012b), it is very difficult to find examples of transformative effects of political party assistance – and the same is true for PD. But, our informants also suggested that support to parliaments has brought about some modest, but still significant, changes (such as work to strengthen constituency linkages in Zambia and work with the PAC in Kenya, which has proven remarkably successful in holding the executive to account). Part of the solution thus seems to be to set realistic intermediate outcomes that define the path towards longer-term change and establish a clear programme hypothesis about how these intermediate outcomes can be achieved in particular conditions (Wild and Foresti, 2011a). The volatility of parliaments and political systems in many hybrid systems reinforces this need to focus on intermediate outcomes and build flexibility to revise hypotheses and adapt activities if conditions change into programme management (see further discussion on these issues below).

3.3 Parliamentary development must be driven from within and donor interventions tailored accordingly

Legislative strengthening is an internal process that needs to be driven from within and cannot be imposed from the outside (Barkan, 2009; Chaisty et al., forthcoming; Resnick and van de Walle, forthcoming). Among other things, this has meant that buy-in from parliamentary leadership, both political and administrative – or, lacking that, from other reformers or change makers who can come together to exert sufficient pressure on those opposed to change – is a minimal condition for internationally supported PD efforts to work. There is thus a need to identify, work with and strengthen and nurture reformers and (potential) reform coalitions, both inside and outside parliament. Projects and programmes to support legislative development also need to be locally driven.

The way PD programmes and projects are designed can also impact the effectiveness of PD assistance. Effective programmes are those that:

- Are initiated by parliaments (or groups within parliament, or other beneficiaries, such as CSOs or parties) rather than introduced by donors;
- Respond to needs that beneficiaries and other relevant domestic stakeholders have identified rather than impose blueprints and models from the outside; and
- Have meaningful buy-in from key stakeholders. These include MPs and parliamentary staff (who may not always be involved directly in the project but may be able to undermine its effectiveness) (IPU and UNDP, 2003; Wild and Hudson, 2009), but also, crucially, other stakeholders outside parliament who can help advance the legislative strengthening agenda (Barkan, 2009).

Ownership is more likely if a body is created within parliament to identify and manage projects. This should contain a number of key players within parliament, as this ensures consensus and helps prevent the diversion of project resources to political ends (IPU and UNDP, 2003). There has also been growing

attention to supporting parliaments to develop their own (long-term) strategic reform plan (EC, 2010; Murphy and Lynge-Mangueira, 2011).

Part of developing an effective and responsive programme must also entail addressing the question, ‘What’s in it for me?’, which parliamentarians may ask as they decide whether or not to engage in reform efforts. Providing some tangible incentive, like the provision of equipment, has worked on some occasions to help facilitate a coalition for change (IPU and UNDP, 2003). Crucially, though, because programmes/projects (especially those intended to influence incentives) are dependent on local goodwill/buy-in, they are vulnerable to changing priorities. It is therefore important to establish conditions on the involvement of partners and continuation of the project (such as sequencing of benefits, building programmes around packages of reforms rather than single issues to build trade-offs into package, etc.) (Power and Coleman, 2011).

On the other hand, being purely demand led also poses challenges, because, as highlighted in the literature and during the course of our interviews, parliamentarians themselves may favour interventions that are more purely technical (such as provision of equipment and training), and stay away from confronting more politically sensitive challenges (such as antagonising the executive or government ministers by exercising more effective oversight, etc., addressing gender gaps in parliaments, etc.). There is thus a fine line that needs to be considered here, and the answers are not obvious or easy.

3.4 Use in-depth political economy analysis to ensure that assistance is appropriate to context

As the discussion above suggests, effective interventions are likely to be those that respond to the particular circumstances and needs of the particular parliament and political system (Hudson and Wren, 2007; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). To do this, it is essential for PD actors to undertake sound political economy analysis that seeks to understand the context and wider political system within which parliaments operate (see Box 4 above on the political economy of parliaments), and such analysis should be used to assess whether conditions are in place for PD to be effective and to customise donor approaches to these prevailing conditions and changing dynamics (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010).

3.5 Develop an approach that provides needed technical support but is also politically savvy

It is clear from our research and interviews that a crucial constraint to parliamentary effectiveness is a fundamental lack of skilled MPs and parliamentary staff, as well as of necessary technical knowledge and other key resources like adequate facilities and funds. It is also evident (as an MP present at the donor coordination meeting on PD held at the OECD DAC in Paris in April 2012 as part of the broader Govnet meeting vividly highlighted) that parliaments cannot function even at the most basic level if they do not have codified rules such as rules of procedures and conduct. A viable committee system is also the cornerstone of the modern legislature and essential to core legislative functions. As Barkan et al. (2010) have expressed, ‘if there is one universally accepted principle of ‘best practice’ that applies to all modern democratic legislatures, it is that a well developed system of parliamentary committees that shadows government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) is essential for the legislature to perform its defining functions’.

These are especially daunting challenges in countries where parliaments and parliamentarians need to build their capacity, skills and knowledge from a very low base, and need to be socialised in the basic ways parliaments work, particularly where they lack fundamental experience with and exposure to parliamentary business. The establishment of standards and precedents for political conduct that are widely shared and accepted is bound to be a long-term process. These difficulties are compounded by

high levels of turnover among MPs (with periodic elections). This makes it essential to provide capacity development for MPs as early as possible after they are elected. But even then, it remains difficult to maintain a trained body of parliamentarians because efforts to improve the skills of MPs can be undone within an electoral cycle.

All of these are areas in which international actors have been particularly active, especially in terms of training. For the most part, these have been technical interventions intended to fix the car – and they have played a meaningful role in building the foundations for incremental (and, as per the discussion above, more realistic) change. On the particular issue of training, PD actors have sought to build institutional memory and institutional capacity by working not only with MPs but also with parliamentary staff, reflecting the perception that they can provide greater continuity and permanence.

Yet, as experience also shows (and as has been highlighted above), technical approaches to PD are inherently limited. They cannot promote more effective parliaments and parliamentarians on their own because they do not address the root causes of parliamentary dysfunction and underperformance, but rather mainly their symptoms (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; Power, 2008; Oand Hudson, 2007). Thus, it is also absolutely essential for donors to engage at a more political level (that is, with the driver and surrounding road dynamics): ultimately, parliamentary strengthening cannot be achieved purely through improving the structure and formal rules of the institution, but must entail changes in the behaviour(s) that go on within it (OECD DAC, 2012a).

BOX 5: DESIGNING MORE POLITICAL PROGRAMMES

As a result of a joint project between GPA and WFD, Greg Power developed a useful approach or framework to support more political parliamentary programmes. Power makes the case that changing parliaments as an institution means changing the political behaviour of individual parliamentarians in ways that close the gap between the formal powers of parliaments and how these are used in practice. To do this, parliamentary strengthening programmes must understand and seek to influence/shape the power relations and incentive structures that govern parliamentary behaviour. The framework includes a two-part analysis for assessing the underlying causes of parliamentary (in)effectiveness and a discussion of how these insights can be applied to programme design and delivery.

Power also sets the following principles for political programming:

1. Understand what the institution looks like through the eyes of those in power: this allows understanding not only of the causes of underperformance, but also of the prospects for realistic reform.
2. Identify factors causing MPs to behave the way they do, which calls for understanding the impact of different political, personal and/or institutional incentive structures on MP behaviour.
3. Parliament needs a common understanding of the problem: success depends on the extent to which the project is seen as a solution to a commonly accepted problem.
4. PD should be framed in personal terms: this entails defining institutional deficiencies in terms of how they affect individual MPs and staff so as to help them do their jobs more effectively.
5. Programmes must establish responsibility within parliament: the success of PD must be measured by how far it changes political behaviours and not simply formal parliamentary structures. In other words, programmes must provide incentives for parliamentarians (and other interested stakeholders) to own and drive the change process.

Source: Power (2011).

For example, the training of parliament staffers may contribute to greater continuity, but it cannot be assumed from this that parliamentary effectiveness will automatically improve. Parliamentary staff may

well have their own political agendas and/or lack sufficient independence even if, technically, they are intended to be non-partisan/neutral. They can also play an important gate-keeping role (because they may have a particularly close relation with the executive, for example) that undermines the effectiveness of PD initiatives. On the other hand, there may be a potentially fine line between facilitating internal processes and attempts by external actors to directly engineer change – and the key to this must be for international PD actors to ensure their programmes are driven from within, rely on local intermediaries and/or enjoy the support of relevant domestic stakeholders/reform coalitions that can help advocate for change. Moreover, unduly privileging engagement with individuals who are committed to change also risks undermining the institutionalisation of parliament and can prove a short-sighted strategy. As has been highlighted, reformers and individual leadership are essential to any successful change process, but reformers may come and go while the institution should be there to stay. These are important dilemmas and trade-offs that need to be kept in sight. A clear implication from this is that both fixing the car and engaging with the driver and the surroundings are important and necessary, if not sufficient or sustainable on their own.

3.6 Treat parliaments as part of the broader political system and integrate with other areas of assistance

Because they sit at the centre of a web of domestic accountability, parliaments are integrated into broader political systems, and their functioning is relational, shaped by other parts of the system (OECD DAC, 2012; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010), such as the nature and quality of political parties, the type of electoral system, the nature of linkages with civil society, the media and other relevant stakeholders, etc. (see Box 4 above on the political economy of parliaments). Thus, parliamentary strengthening should not be treated in isolation but rather as part of a more comprehensive approach to supporting democratic governance.

This implies understanding the linkages within parliaments (such as between secretariat and (different groupings of) parliamentarians) (Hudson and Wren, 2007; IPU and UNDP, 2003), as well as between parliaments and other institutions within a democratic political system (political parties, civil society, interest groups, the media, judiciary, other oversight state institutions, etc.), and facilitating/supporting partnerships and coalitions among different stakeholders interested in reform (Barkan, 2009; OECD DAC, 2012c). Building on the lessons developed above, the emphasis here is on how different institutions work together in a democratising context (EC, 2010). In particular, there is an emphasis in the literature (as well as in discussion with informants) on the need to:

- More closely integrate PD and political party support, as parties are the building blocks of parliament but parliamentary and party programmes are still kept overwhelmingly separate, even when they are being funded or implemented by a single agency (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; Power and Coleman, 2011). This is not just about integrating support in the recipient country, but also about ensuring greater involvement of parliaments/parliamentarians from the donor country in policy-making and/or implementation.
- Support the interface between parliaments and civil society by engaging more proactively with domestic CSOs involved in parliament reform (such as PMOs) (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; IPU and UNDP, 2003) and supporting other mechanisms that can bring parliaments and civil society actors closer together (such as working with civil society to support the work of parliamentary committees through research, advocacy and dissemination, etc.) (Rocha Menocal, 2012).
- Plan for the whole election cycle. This means, first, the need to continue to support parliament/parties to do their work after the election. Elections are essential to build legitimacy, but institutions like parliaments and political parties are instrumental in giving such elections substance and meaning once elections have taken place and the task is that of governing. Some parties (and, consequently,

parliaments), may not be up to the challenge without substantial strengthening. For instance, formally, any party may be able to participate in elections, but in practice this requires financing, which can establish perverse incentives around corruption and illicit funding networks and calls into question the representative nature and accountability of (at least some) parties. There may also be an issue that, if conditions are not in place for parliaments and parties to govern, and they are not properly supported, this may lead to disillusionment with the democratic process on the part of the electorate and potential yearning for a return to strong man/authoritarian politics (Rocha Menocal et al., 2008b).

- Be mindful of the potentially detrimental effect that donor interventions or activities in other areas may have on parliamentary effectiveness. For instance, there is evidence emerging from several countries in sub-Saharan Africa that the provision of general budget support has helped strengthen the hand of the executive and further sidelined the role of parliament.²¹ It also often happens that donors support capacity development within parliament, only to undercut its role in other areas like trade and diplomacy more generally (see Gould, 2005, Murphy, 2012 and Resnick and van de Walle, forthcoming, among others).

3.7 Encourage South-South learning

South-South cooperation and peer learning can play a key role in socialising parliaments and parliamentarians, especially in hybrid, newly democratising and/or fragile contexts, where parliamentarians still have a lot to learn about the basic functioning of parliament (see also discussion above on the need to build such basic skills, knowledge and exposure).

Such networks provide unique opportunities for parliaments to share experiences and learn from how others work/operate and how they may be addressing similar challenges (IPU and UNDP, 2003). South-South learning can also play an important role in helping catalyse reform through peer advice rather than through donor guidance, which, according to many of our interlocutors, has made a big difference in terms of how receptive parliaments and parliamentarians might be to reform ideas and proposals (such as ARPAC and how the network has facilitated a discussion on corruption among parliamentarians from the region and encouraged different parliamentarians to take action based on the example provided by others).

The kind of South-South learning, peer exchange and exposure to the experiences and challenges of others that parliamentary networks facilitate tend to be particularly valued by parliaments and parliamentarians across the developing world – even if donors and experts remain sceptical about the added value of these networks and the sustainability of the exchanges, knowledge and training they help impart (see Box 2). This point was emphasised by many of the parliamentarians we spoke with during the course of our research.

3.8 Build assistance around specific policy issues rather than generic activities

An issue-based (or indirect) approach to PD can often prove more effective than generic parliamentary capacity development activities because they are likely to be more useful and relevant to MPs and parliamentary staff (EC, 2010). There has been a growing interest among both providers and recipients of PD assistance on training and advocacy activities on specific themes and issues – such as budget oversight, anti-corruption, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction – rather than general parliamentary procedures and mechanisms (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; IPU and UNDP, 2003; Wild and Hudson, 2009).

²¹ Research presented by Danielle Resnick at the ODI/UNU-WIDER event held on 17 May 2012 highlighted that this has been a constant finding in all of the case studies they have carried out as part of the project on Foreign Aid and Democracy in Africa.

Alternatively, engagement with parliamentarians can be mainstreamed within sector strategies (EC, 2010).

More specifically, issue-based approaches have the potential to:

- Strengthen and test MPs' powers of oversight and accountability while building their collective capacity to shape policy (EC, 2010; Power, 2008) (the work that the ODI's Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI)²² is doing with the Parliamentary Budget Office in Uganda is a good example of this).
- Facilitate cross-party relationships and contact between parliament and other branches of government (Power, 2008; Rocha Menocal, 2012).
- Facilitate coalition building between parliaments/parliamentarians and other stakeholders outside parliament (the media, interest groups, others in civil society, etc.) related to specific policy issues (such as transparency of the budget).
- Increase the likelihood of local buy-in and political contextualisation by linking PD with domestic policymaking processes that are of interest to parliamentarians, as well as donors (IPU and UNDP, 2003). Again, the BSI initiative with the Parliamentary Budget Office in Uganda is a good example of this.

3.9 Base assistance on long-term commitments to partners

As has been highlighted, PD is a long-term, protracted, even 'tortuous' process (Barkan, 2009), and facilitating locally owned processes of change and building local institutions takes longer than directly delivering projects. Effective programmes therefore require long-term engagement and support to local partners – ideally spanning several implementation phases (EC, 2010; Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; IPU and UNDP, 2003; Murphy and Lynge-Mangueira, 2011; Power and Coleman, 2011; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010; Wild and Hudson, 2009). This type of long-term engagement is essential to build relationships with in-country partners that are based on trust and mutual respect. An important implication for donors is that this may take considerable time, effort and commitment. But this kind of sustained investment over time is likely to prove more fruitful and rewarding than short-term expediency and impatience (Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010).

There will occasionally be a need for short-term targeted assistance, but this is the exception, and donors and implementing agencies should consider carefully the purpose of one-off activities, such as study visits and seminars (Hudson and Wren, 2007; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). Where they are used, these should be situated within a broader strategy and, where possible, combined with an issue-based focus on substantive policy goals in cooperation with parliamentary networks (Hubli and Schmidt, 2005).

3.10 Improve programme management

Experience with PD support suggests that how donors operate has made their efforts less effective. Greater effectiveness requires donors and their implementing partners to improve the way they provide, manage and implement PD assistance. Key lessons emerging from our research and interviews in this respect include the need to:

²² www.odi.org.uk/bsi

3.10.1 Improve Donor Coordination

Better coordination is needed among all international actors involved in PD to avoid the unnecessary duplication of efforts and the problems such duplication tends to cause (especially in terms of draining already weak capacity among recipients). More consistent, and more systematic, collaboration among donors is needed, especially at the country level, where efforts to coordinate remain too dependent on personalities on the ground and the (informal) relationships between different individuals in charge of PD programmes. On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that too much coordination – or at least too much integration of activities and funding – can restrict choices by the beneficiaries of assistance and thereby undermine ownership (see Section 5 below). At the very least, however, it seems essential to improve efforts to share information and experiences on lessons learnt.

3.10.2 Streamline Donor Procedures and Requirements

During the course of our interviews, beneficiaries consistently highlighted the complex and elaborate bureaucratic procedures and reporting requirements involved in the provision of PD assistance as a an impediment to greater parliamentary effectiveness. This is a concern that has also been highlighted in the literature more broadly: Andrew Natsios (2010) has referred to it as the ‘counter-bureaucracy’.

3.10.3 Improve Programme Design

To do this, programmers need to:

- Develop more strategic thinking at the organisation/leadership level to determine where the comparative advantage of a particular PD actor is and what areas the organisation should focus on as a result, as highlighted in the evaluations of both International IDEA and WFD (GPA, 2009; Power et al., 2009). (A more strategic approach should also help with donor coordination efforts.)
- Identify more realistic intermediate objectives (informed by context analysis/political economy analysis – see discussion above on this as well).
- Have a more realistic assessment of how objectives might be achieved in a particular context (Power and Coleman, 2011; Wild and Foresti, 2011a) (informed by, for example, relevant academic theory, relevant thematic evaluations, discussions with local stakeholders and experts, discussions with thematic specialists, identification of realistic entry points, etc.). This should enable better evaluation of programmes and showcasing of results, because these are being assessed within realistic parameters for the type of intervention and context.
- Correctly distinguish activities, outputs and outcomes (Murphy, 2012) and ensure a good fit between activities and outcomes or objectives. As noted by Power and Coleman, this remains a key challenge because ‘political programming is still, to large extent, based on “hit and hope” [...] [with] at best a tenuous link between some of the techniques and the hoped-for outcomes [...] [P]olitical programmes need a strategy which is not just based on an integrated analysis, but has an integrated strategy to achieve change’ (Power and Coleman, 2011: 9).
- Focus on outcomes rather than activities – or, as Hubli (2012) calls them, ‘ends-based programming’, with flexibility for programme planning to evolve and activities to adapt to changing circumstances or political opportunities so as to achieve strategic objectives (IPU and UNDP, 2003; Murphy and Lyngge-Mangueira, 2011; Power and Coleman, 2011; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010).

3.10.4 Develop More Strategic Tolerance towards Risk

As has been highlighted, promoting political reform and behavioural change is a long-term endeavour, and it takes time to get results. Progress is also not likely to be linear, so donors – and their respective publics – need to develop a higher tolerance to risks and setbacks (Hubli, 2012; Rocha Menocal, 2011a). This is essential so as to be able to make the kinds of investments needed to build long-term relationships, understand context, identify suitable entry points over time and facilitate change process-

es, even if pay-offs from such investments do not materialise in the short term. For example, International IDEA is currently working in Latin America on drug money in politics, the seeds for which were planted over 10 years ago.

3.10.5 Improve Programme Evaluation

To do this, funders and implementers need to:

- Undertake more systematic evaluation with an emphasis on learning and not just accountability or compliance (to funders, managers, etc.).
- Focus on finding the measures most suited to capturing political change (which may not be the most robust) rather than resorting to measures that satisfy the desire to demonstrate concrete results rather than meaningful change (Power and Coleman, 2011).
- Support work to develop and operationalise suitable benchmarks and indicators.
- Base evaluation methodology on the evaluation subject and questions rather than fitting these to the preferred methodology.

3.10.6 Ensure Staff Have the Appropriate Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Incentives, Especially to Engage with the More Political Aspects of PD

Donors and implementers need to:

- Hire competent and qualified staff to manage, implement and assess programmes. In order to engage with the political dimensions of PD work, staff need to be able to act as brokers and facilitators/coalition builders rather than simply as funders or implementers of a particular programme or project. This calls for a set of skills that may be different from those donors have traditionally required of their staff. There is therefore a need to recruit staff who are politically savvy and who have specialist knowledge and experience of parliaments, know the local context, have good networks, etc., all of which take time to develop (EC, 2010; Power and Coleman, 2011).
- This makes it essential to address problems of (often very high) staff turnover and insufficient institutional memory within donor agencies/organisations themselves, at both the headquarters and the field level (Burnell, 2007; Hubli and Schmidt, 2005). Locally employed staff, who tend to stay on for longer periods of time, can be important assets in helping build and maintain expertise and country knowledge.

These are the key lessons on improving the effectiveness of parliamentary assistance that have emerged from experience with such efforts especially over the past 20 years. These lessons, which, as noted earlier, have proven remarkably consistent over time, have broad resonance at a strategic level within the international assistance community. As such, they represent a widely shared consensus on what needs to be done. Our interviews also show broad support for many of these (with some caveats, as highlighted in Section 6.2 below). The following section looks at what PD actors, especially donors and implementing agencies, have been doing since 2005 to incorporate these strategic insights into their PD work to improve their practice and impact, as well as overall effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening assistance.

4 Innovative Practice in Parliamentary Development

How have international PD actors responded to the clear set of lessons that have emerged over the past two decades for improved and more effective donor practice outlined above? How much uptake has there been of these? And to what degree does the thinking and approaches of different actors reflect the insights about the dynamics that influence the quality and effectiveness of parliaments? Over the past few years, many organisations have engaged in initiatives to improve the effectiveness of their parliamentary support. This section outlines some of the most significant trends in, and examples of, innovative practice as identified during our research, looking at both strategic efforts at international level and practice on the ground.²³

These efforts are promising but three caveats are needed upfront. First, as already noted, not enough effort has been put into researching and documenting effective practice within the PD community. It is therefore likely that there are further examples of innovation or success that can be a source of learning, particularly from frontline organisations. Secondly, however, our discussions with various stakeholders did validate the view that many PD activities remain hampered by poor practice (although this varies from organisation to organisation). Thirdly, it should be stressed that many of the initiatives discussed below are from the past five years, which means the impact of these new ways of working is largely untested.

4.1 International and strategic efforts

4.1.1 Improved Donor Coordination

Over the past five years, many donors have made more consistent efforts to improve the coordination and coherence of their PD activities and to share knowledge and experience. This is in large part an outcome of the donor coordination group, set up in 2007 by DFID, UNDP and the World Bank, with further meetings in 2008, 2010 and most recently April 2012 (DFID et al., 2007; 2008). These meetings are extremely well attended by the donor community, including all the main PD players, and, most recently, OECD/DAC/Govnet.

Meetings of the donor coordination group have sometimes also been open to other (non-donor) stakeholders, including implementing agencies and CSOs. At other times, there have been attempts to keep them smaller and focused more specifically on donors themselves. This has generated some tensions that will need to be addressed going forward, based on what the donor group is seeking to achieve and how it should get there.

One of the most significant initiatives to have emerged from this donor coordination group is the creation of the Agora Portal and Trusted Area (see Box 6).

Alongside these activities by PD policymakers and practitioners, the political party support community has also undertaken noteworthy efforts to improve coordination and knowledge sharing, as well as to engage more fully with the parliamentary agenda. In particular, acting on the findings of an external evaluation of its political parties programme (Power et al., 2009), International IDEA set up a roundtable with DFID, NDI, NIMD and ODI to act as a platform to interact more on lessons learnt, planning, evaluation, etc. The first meeting of this group was held in Wilton Park in 2010 (Stevens and Cavanagh, 2010) and the second in 2011 to discuss support to parties *and* parliaments, political programming and M&E (NIMD and IDEA, 2011).

²³ As per our ToRs, we were not intended to identify specific programmes as such, so these are merely some indicative examples that can help to orient the direction of the next stage of work.

BOX 6: AGORA AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

Agora was launched in 2010 as a leading web portal and discussion forum/online community for those active in PD, including bilateral agencies and multilateral organisations, PD experts and professionals, MPs, parliamentary staff and CSO. It is intended to facilitate cooperation, and make knowledge and expertise more accessible. Through its members-only Trusted Area, Agora also seeks to provide a platform for exchanging practices and experiences in PD, and some communities of practice have begun to come together around specific issues of interest (e.g. PMOs, corruption, elections, etc.).

Agora is still a very young initiative. The past two years have been dedicated to getting the portal up and running and its main sponsors, including UNDP, the WBI, NDI and International IDEA, are committed to expanding its use and reach and giving it greater visibility. Ongoing efforts on this front will be particularly crucial to ensure Agora is a relevant and useful resource to those involved in PD efforts. Many of the conversations we carried out as part of this Pre-Study (including with parliamentarians themselves as well as other relevant stakeholders) revealed that people were either not aware of Agora's existence or knew very little about it.

There also appears to be some confusion about who Agora was for (donors or the wider community?) and how it differs from other online resources (such as the IPU's), as well as concerns that Agora needs to build more strategic synergies with the efforts of other organisations to bring together and disseminate information on parliaments. And, while Agora seems to be gaining members at a steady pace, there is a sense that it needs to become a much more dynamic and proactive virtual community to act as the centralising body of information and knowledge sharing it wants to become.

Realism is needed, however. Agora has only one dedicated member of staff and relies on its (time-constrained) members to post timely information (for example, for its database mapping donor PD programmes) and to spread the word about Agora within their own and partner organisations.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness has been a driver of greater donor coordination across all areas of development assistance, including PD. This is reflected in like-minded donors using more basket-funding arrangements for PD programmes (such as the Deepening Democracy programmes: see below). It is also reflected in the USAID Forward agenda, which generates new policy for the US to adhere more closely with the Paris principles, including working in closer collaboration with other donors and more directly with government. This is a potentially significant development, given that the US provides most funding to PD but has not, until recently, fully embraced the Paris agenda.

4.1.2 New Strategic Consensus within the Donor Community

At the strategic level, there is now a consensus among donors about the key features of more effective parliamentary programmes (Power, 2008). This strategic consensus – which is in line with the lessons outlined in Section 6 – is reflected in the joint documents from donors meetings and forums, such as the Agora overview of effective parliamentary support programmes,²⁴ the key messages from the 2007 Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development (see Box 7) and, most recently, the OECD DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET)'s 'Orientations on Aid, Accountability and Democratic Governance' (OECD DAC, 2012a), as well as in the policy and guidance documents of individual donors, such as Sida's 2006 'Parliamentary Strengthening Position Paper' or Danida's 2010 'How To on Parliamentary Strengthening'.

²⁴ <http://www.agora-parl.org/parliamentarystrengthening>

BOX 7: KEY MESSAGES FROM THE 2007 DONOR CONSULTATION ON PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME DOCUMENT

- Donors should ensure greater dialogue, sharing of information and coordination around parliamentary strengthening work.
- Donors should maintain strong links and coordination between headquarters and country offices.
- Donors should undertake further evaluations of parliamentary strengthening work and, when possible, carry out joint evaluations so as to conserve resources and increase coordination.
- Donors should encourage and support further research related to parliamentary strengthening.
- Parliamentary assistance and party assistance should be better integrated.
- National ownership is critical. If possible, support to parliaments should be tied to national parliamentary plans for strategic, long-term, institutional development.
- Donors should undertake long-term support whenever possible.
- Donors should support parliamentary groups developing a widely agreed set of norms and standards for effective democratic parliaments.
- Donors should work towards principles for donor support to parliaments and standards governing donor actions in this area.
- Parliament has a critical role to play in the budget process. Parliamentary strengthening programmes geared towards improving budget oversight and financial accountability should take a comprehensive approach and, where appropriate, encourage partnerships between parliament and civil society.

Source: DFID et al. (2007).

4.1.3 Improving Programme Design and Evaluation

The PD experts and practitioners we spoke to recognised the need to improve both the planning and design of programmes and their M&E – and that progress in these two areas are linked. A key issue here is the development of more appropriate process and performance indicators to monitor activities and monitor impact. The following initiatives are worth particular mention.

The EC has undertaken a series of linked activities to improve both the design and the evaluation of its parliamentary support, including an assessment of its PD in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and a review of its support to parliament in non-ACP regions (International IDEA, 2010; Murphy, 2011). It also includes the development of a substantive handbook on support to parliaments (which includes detailed assessment frameworks) (EC, 2010), which was accompanied by training for some EC delegation staff. Building on the evaluation work, the EC is now in the process of developing a matrix of meso-level indicators for seven categories of PD programmes, which practitioners can then adapt to assess intermediate outcomes in a meaningful way.

USAID have two relevant activities underway at the moment. It has developed an evaluation framework (using mixed methods) for its legislative strengthening support and piloted this in Uganda and Tanzania. The methodology and results of these exercises are now being analysed, with the possibility that a further four to eight comparative case studies will be conducted to enable aggregation of results. However, in recognition that the lack of adequate baseline hampers evaluation efforts (but also no doubt because of the intense pressure for quantifiable results in the US, as described by Natsios, 2010), USAID is also in the process of developing a small set of quantitative indicators that could be applied

consistently to all programmes to enable comparative, empirical impact evaluation of its legislative strengthening work in another three to four years time. There is also now a mandatory requirement that all USAID programmes develop a ‘programme hypothesis’.

Following an organisational review, NDI established a programme to improve its monitoring, evaluation and learning, which has led to efforts to strengthen programme design (for example more systematic use of context and problem analyses) and the use of a range of evaluation methodologies. The latter include the use of formative and experimental impact evaluation design (for example random controlled trials of constituency relations programmes in Uganda in partnership with an academic institution) and qualitative and participatory approaches (such as use of participatory story telling and most significant change methodologies to assess women in politics programmes in Burkino Faso (a Sida-funded programme) and Guatemala).

Alongside these initiatives of individual agencies, efforts are also underway to help parliamentarians develop benchmarks to monitor the performance of their own parliaments, with activities around the development of benchmarks mushrooming in recent years (for an overview see DFID et al., 2007 and Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010). What seems important to note here is that, while these efforts focused initially on developing global standards, such as those produced by the IPU (2006) and CPA et al. (2006), the recognition that different parliaments may have different needs and expectations based on context has meant that momentum has now shifted towards the regional level, which could be a positive development for fostering localised ownership. For example, COPA has developed benchmarks for the Americas (COPA, 2011) and SADC-PF (2010), with the support of UNDP, has developed some for Southern Africa. More than half of the world’s population now lives in countries that belong to parliamentary associations that have adopted benchmarks for democratic parliaments or are in the process of doing so. There is also ongoing work within the OECD DAC to develop principles for PD engagement (alongside principles on electoral assistance, political party assistance and media assistance) (see OECD DAC, 2012b).

However, it is not clear how these efforts to develop benchmarks and indicators will be taken forward and what impact they will have on the performance of parliaments and the behaviour of parliamentarians, an issue we turn to later in this report.

4.2 Translating strategic knowledge into practice

4.2.1 More Political (and Realistic) Programming

More political programming can mean three different things: (i) support to more political elements of parliaments and the broader political system; (ii) using better political analysis to inform strategic planning, implementation and follow-up more generally, so as to endow context-appropriate programmes with realistic objectives; and (iii) designing programmes that explicitly seek to influence informal rules, relationships and distribution of power relations that impede parliamentary reform in practice.

Reports suggest that one of the most significant changes over the past five to ten years is the increase in support to the political elements of parliamentary business. This includes more support to parliament’s oversight function (particularly for some organisations, such as the World Bank: more on this below). But, in particular, the trend is towards support to parliaments’ representation function, which involves working with MPs, the media and CSOs to improve how parliament, and individual MPs within it, communicate with and represent the interests of citizens. For example, a recent UNDP evaluation of its PD and political party assistance in Central and West Africa over the past decade found a significant increase in projects relating to representation, which now constituted a proportion of its portfolio similar to that of the more established institutional and organisational reform projects (Murphy and Lyngemangueira, 2011).

The same review of UNDP support also found an increase in support to political parties, which appears to reflect a more general trend within development assistance. Political foundations have been providing support to parties for some time, but development agencies are now also giving more attention to party support as part of their democratic governance portfolios, either integrating this within broader programmes (for example Democracy Deepening programmes) or providing support to the work of foundations, including those located in other countries (such as DFID funding to NIMD – see Rocha Menocal et al., 2008a and Wild and Hudson, 2009).

Less progress appears to have been made in terms of using political economy analysis to design more strategic, realistic programmes that target the underlying causes of parliamentary dysfunction, however. While it is clear that development agencies are on board with the need for solid political economy analysis to inform programming decisions and design, it is much harder to find examples of this being done systematically in practice. Reports (Power and Coleman, 2011; Wild and Foresti, 2011b) and experience suggest (as with Strategic Governance and Corruption Assessments carried out by the Dutch) that donors are increasingly doing this type of analysis as part of their country strategy development but that they find it much more difficult to apply political economy insights to the design of specific programmes.

However, there are some examples of efforts to design and implement programmes that are more political in this sense, including Uganda’s Deepening Democracy programme, NDI’s parliamentary work,²⁵ the work that International IDEA is doing with *bancadas políticas* as well as on the infiltration of drug money into the political process in Latin America (the latter with other partners like UNDP) (see Boxes 9 and 10, as well as Fritz et al., 2009, Power and Coleman, 2011²⁶ and Wild and Foresti, 2011b, which analyse some of these in more detail). However, the most frequent documented examples of this type of work are in political party support programmes rather than the PD sector. Of all the foundations, NIMD appears to apply a political approach most systematically (see Box 10). However, it may be that more of these types of programmes emerge in the near future as new organisations get properly up and running (such as DIPD) or strategic activities begin to take effect at an operational level (for example, WFD reports it is currently looking at how to use a framework for understanding political incentives and institutional behaviour, developed by GPA (Power, 2011) across its programmes).

However, our interviews also suggest that staff in implementing agencies may implicitly conduct and apply political analysis in their day-to-day work and programme implementation, even if they do not identify their programmes as being ‘political’, do not have a formal political economy framework and do not document these activities.²⁷ In fact, one informant observed that this was, in general, an important difference between staff with a political, rather than a development, background: the former have the political experience and insight to do political programming in practice but tend not to be particularly good at the bureaucratic elements of the job, whereas the reverse is often true for development actors. This reinforces the point made by several of our informants, that political programming does not fit neatly into logframes and that the most successful programmes are those that are implemented by staff with appropriate experience and that deviate from programme documents.

²⁵ It was reported that NDI parliamentary work usually involves cross-party and caucus work rather than more traditional institutional building activities. For example, in the parliament in Kyrgyzstan, NDI has supported the set-up of an informal committee that brings together two members (a senior party member and a young reformer) of each of the five main parties to work on constitutional reform.

²⁶ Power and Coleman’s (2011) analysis of concrete examples of political programmes is itself a step forward in terms of assessing and refining the application of the general lesson about the need for PD to be more politically aware or informed. However, for the most part, these programmes or approaches are too recent to assess impact and so case studies largely review better practice in terms of approach and process.

²⁷ A recent evaluation of UN Women/UNDP support to women’s political participation in Africa made a similar point, arguing that this stressed the need to hire staff with the appropriate skillset and knowledge to engage in these more political activities (Domingo et al., 2012).

But it also underlines the need to better document practice that works well and less well, and to better understand the constraints on implementing agencies designing and executing more political programmes.

BOX 8: POLITICAL PROGRAMMING: KEY FINDINGS FROM POWER AND COLEMAN

In a recent International IDEA paper, Greg Power and Oliver Coleman (2011) review how donor and implementing agencies in the PD and parliamentary strengthening field are responding to the challenge of more political programming, that is, programmes that 'seek to engage with the political incentives and structures to achieve change, rather than solely relying on technical support (Power and Coleman, 2011: 8). The study includes in-depth studies of four programmes: multi-donor Deepening Democracy programmes in Uganda and in Tanzania, NIMD's work with political parties in Ghana and WFD's work with the Macedonian parliament.

These programmes were chosen because they both have overtly political objectives and seek to integrate parliament and party support. All four attempt to translate political analysis into programme design and delivery. Power and Coleman found, however, that their relative success was influenced by the challenges that the different programme staff faced and the approaches they adopted to deal with these. Key points include:

- The effectiveness of the Tanzanian programme was hampered by (i) unrealistic objectives for the timeframe and rigid approach; (ii) poor strategic integration and coordination of the five main components, including the party and parliamentary ones, which were funded by different donors; and (iii) continued use of technical support/institutional capacity development to achieve political aims.
- By contrast, the Ugandan programme was explicit about its objective of redressing imbalances in the political system and that activities (grants, research support) would benefit opposition parties more than the ruling party. This allowed it to address the political tensions that inevitably arose. Programme staff also had a flexible approach, remaining focused on outcomes and adapting their activities as circumstances changed.
- NIMD's programme in Ghana shows that it is not necessary to try to work with several institutions simultaneously; small interventions focused on one political institution – in this case political parties – can promote broader political change, including within parliament. The programme had a long consultation period and modest objectives in its first year. NIMD staff acted as effective facilitators rather than direct implementers, with the programme managed by a respected local partner and parties themselves determining its direction.
- WFD support to the Macedonian parliament illustrates the merits of harnessing the opportunities for progress that local political conditions can present – in this case, the common interest of Macedonia's parties in accession to the European Union (EU). Key local stakeholders initiated the programme and were centrally involved in its planning and implementation, including establishing measures of progress. However, the programme also shows the risk of relying on local actors to drive change: WFD as facilitator was not in a position to move the programme forward once dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties broke down.

Given the growing consensus within the PD community on the need to engage with the underlying political causes of parliamentary dysfunction, it is important that more attempts are made to track, document and, importantly, share the lessons from these more political programmes. Assessing the challenges and intermediate outcomes of these programmes as they unfold will enable agencies to build an evidence base and refine their approaches. This is important because donors currently have little available evidence to guide them in what is a highly sensitive area of assistance with potential unintended and harmful consequences.

Source: Power and Coleman (2011).

4.2.2 Longer-Term Integrated Parliamentary Support or Democracy Programmes

Efforts to work with more political elements of parliaments and political programmes can be discrete and/or short-term activities, but there have also been attempts to develop more comprehensive and longer-term programmes that integrate support to several different political institutions or organisations, usually some combination of support to parliaments, parties, party systems, media and CSOs/PMOs. The two main examples of this are USAID Political Governance programmes and the basket-funded Deepening Democracy programmes (see Box 9).

BOX 9: DEEPENING DEMOCRACY: MULTI-DONOR INTEGRATED DEMOCRACY PROGRAMMES

Since 2005 or so, there has been a move towards the use of integrated democracy programmes in some countries, for example Bangladesh, Zambia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Often called Deepening Democracy programmes, these have several common features:

- Basket-funding arrangements, with contributions from donors such as CIDA, Danida, DFID, the EU, Irish Aid, the Netherlands, Norad and Sida.
- Often coordinated/managed by UNDP (but sometimes a joint-donor project management unit).
- Long term, typically five years, with some now in a second phase.
- Comprehensive, with components on several different political institutions, e.g. elections, parliaments, parties, media and civic engagement.

There have been some independent evaluations (e.g. Uganda) and comparative analyses of these integrated programmes. These suggest the management arrangements, approaches and relative success of these vary from programme to programme. For example, the extent to which programmes:

- Integrate the different elements of the programme in practice, rather than simply using the fund as an umbrella for a series of disjointed interventions focusing on individual institutions.
- Are able to translate political economy analysis into a programme that addresses underlying political constraints, such as executive/ruling party dominance, 'big man' politics, competitive clientelism, lack of funding for opposition parties, fluid personality-based parties, etc.
- Are comfortable having overtly political objectives and ways of working and do not fall back on more familiar technical or institutional assistance.
- Support/facilitate genuinely local agendas rather than falling back on supply-driven programming.
- Adopt a strategic and flexible approach and are able to adapt activities to contextual changes and negotiate political tensions and with staff (and discretion) able to manage this process.
- Have realistic objectives and are innovative in their approach to monitoring and assessing their results.

To refine and improve future programming, more comparative research is needed to learn more about what has and hasn't worked in different conditions and why.

Sources: Power and Coleman (2011); Tskepo and Hudson (2009a; 2009b); Wild et al. (2011).

The need to integrate parliamentary and political party support in particular is a frequent recommendation in the literature (GPA, 2009; Hubli and Schmidt, 2005; Power et al., 2009). There are activities around this at a strategic level, such as donor/implementing agency meetings (NIMD and International IDEA, 2011) and joint evaluations or reviews of the two areas (Murphy and Lynge-Mangueria, 2011; Power and Coleman, 2011), but examples of this being applied in practice are few and far between. Power et al. (2009) argue that, even when organisations assert that they are integrating parliament and

party work, closer examination usually reveals that parliament is simply the entry point for more traditional party development activities.²⁸

However, there are some examples of organisations that are working with parties to improve how parliament functions, including the following:

- NDI works with parties on health policy throughout the electoral cycle in Peru, for example, by helping individual parties develop health care policy positions and to facilitate an accord between 16 of the 18 parties in the run-up to the election and by continuing to work with young party leaders from different parties on health care policy development post-election.
- The multi-donor Deepening Democracy programme in Uganda seeks to address ruling party dominance, which is a key weakness in the political system, including parliament, by offering activities that will specifically strengthen opposition parties, direct grants and a research fund for the opposition parliament (Power and Coleman, 2011; Wild et al., 2011).
- The NIMD-supported multiparty platform in Guatemala has established seven commissions to work on specific issues. These mirror and, in some instances, directly support the work of commissions within parliament by, for example, working out proposals for revision to law or policy.
- There are also indications that International IDEA may be working on developing a programme that links political parties and parliaments in a more strategic manner, including understanding why parties/parliamentarians from a given party behave the way they do in parliament, and to what effect.

Interestingly, it appears that foundations and other implementing agencies that work on both parties and parliaments usually separate these activities (for example different teams work on these issues in separate projects) and political governance/democracy programmes that have both a party and parliamentary components often contract different organisations to implement these (even when one of the implementing agencies specialises in both areas of assistance). There are a variety of reasons why this is the case, including donor preferences and funding of these projects, staff specialisms and the different objectives of party and parliamentary development (GPA, 2009; Power et al., 2011), to which we return later in the report. However, as one informant observed, there can be substantive and important informal relationships between an organisation's parliamentary and party projects (such as sharing information and identifying opportunities and champions) even when these are not integrated formally within a single programme with shared objectives.

4.2.3 Demand-Led Programmes

The view from the literature is that PD programmes are too often still top-down affairs (Power, 2008; Wild et al., 2011), proposed by funders and designed by implementing agencies in the context of donor specifications – rather than being requested by recipients and tailored to their specific needs and preferences. In general, our interviews validated this perspective. However, they also suggested that some organisations may be better at more systematically doing demand-led work, such as NIMD and possibly also WBI (both of which work on a limited set of issues and have more secure funding streams, which may well be connected), but that there are also more *ad hoc* examples of more effective practice in this respect, such as:

- The EU partnership agreement/sector budget support to the South Africa parliament – the only example of this type of arrangement that was found (EC, 2010; Murphy, 2012);

²⁸ However, as one informant pointed out, there can be informal linkages between an organisation's party and parliamentary programmes/teams in-country, in terms of sharing of information, identifying windows of opportunity for reform and identifying champions, which enable the programmes to feed into one another even when separate donor or project cycles mean they cannot be formally integrated.

- Example of organisations engaged in long-term building of local organisations with the objective of eventual withdrawal or a relationship where headquarters provides only support (dissemination of global technical knowledge, networking local experiences, etc.), such as the Parliamentary Centre's West Africa/Ghana office, which was initiated and is staffed and led by Africans, and SUNY's Kenya programme, which is now mostly run by Kenyans;
- Examples of long-term support to locally anchored and initiated frontline CSOs and their agenda, such as the Parliamentary Centre's work with the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency or the King Prajadhipok Institute in Thailand;
- The NIMD/DIPD model of working through local groups rather establishing a country presence (see Box 10).

NDI's new programme of work on PMOs aims to strengthen domestic capacity to monitor parliamentary performance and forward parliamentary reform through support to PMOs. Activities so far have included a global survey on PMOs (with WBI) (Mandelbaum, 2011) and a conference (April/May 2012) to bring together PMOs from different countries to foster cross-border cooperation and knowledge sharing among these frontline organisations.

There has been a particular tendency for externally driven, generic activities in relation to knowledge and skill transfer in PD. Realising some of the limitations inherent in traditional training, some PD actors have begun to engage in more intensive and hands-on efforts to build capacity that are intended to be more responsive to contextual needs and prove more sustainable over time, including the following:

- UNDP has begun to provide mentoring and coaching to parliamentary committees in-country through the deployment of long-term advisors. This has been possible especially in larger and longer-term programmes, like in Timor-Leste, where the advisor has played an instrumental role of accompaniment and support to parliamentarians as they set out to build a more effective parliament from a low base.
- This has also been the model of assistance that the French National Assembly has been pursuing for some time, although deployed advisors tend to be more short term.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has also engaged in such mentoring and coaching efforts, including facilitating dialogue with opposition parties in parliament as well as strengthening the political-administrative interface at the Cabinet level. These are particularly sensitive areas of engagement, and it has been possible for the Secretariat to do this kind of work in large part as a result of the very strong relations it has been able to build over time with partner countries at the highest levels.
- The IBP has also begun to experiment with coaching as a more involved way to support some of the organisations it works with, and this has entailed working with them to explore whether and how CSOs can engage with parliaments in a more effective manner.

BOX 10: THE NIMD MODEL

NIMD was founded in 2000 by the seven political parties in the Netherlands parliament to provide support 'from parties for parties'. NIMD has programmes in 18 countries and is funded mainly by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although it is also trying to diversify its funding base and support more established multiparty platforms to secure their own funding. It has three main objectives: (i) strengthen multiparty democracy by facilitating long-term multiparty dialogue platforms; (ii) strengthen parties bilaterally; and (iii) strengthen the link between political and civil society.

NIMD has a cohesive and distinctive 'model', with many elements building on lessons about more effective modes of operation and programme design in parliamentary and party support. Notable features include:

- **Local ownership:** Programmes are set up only where there is genuine interest and support from the main stakeholders, political parties. Working through a respected local organisation, NIMD aims to set up and support a multiparty dialogue platform that involves all parties represented in parliament and which has responsibility for its own agenda.
- **Focused and realistic objectives:** NIMD views well-functioning multiparty platforms as a first step (or intermediate objective) towards its broader objective of a well-functioning healthy multiparty democratic system. This lends important strategic focus to NIMD's work and demonstrates that, even though political institutions are interdependent, external actors do not need to work with them all simultaneously: well-designed support to a single institution can have positive externalities for the system as a whole.
- **Political means and ends:** NIMD has the explicitly political ends of facilitating changes in political culture and behaviour and uses political means of facilitating dialogue between all parties to achieve it. In-depth political advisers inform its programmes, NIMD staff have political experience/backgrounds and incentives for the continuing participation of partner are built into programmes.
- **Long-term commitment:** NIMD recognises that changes in political culture take time and only begins programmes in countries where long-term engagement is possible.
- **Peer support:** NIMD programmes support training of trainers and political brokerage provided by politicians, sometimes from Dutch political parties but often from the global South.
- **Flexible and context-specific approach:** Within NIMD's broad objectives, local partners are supported to identify medium-term outcomes, and programme activities are then designed around these for the first year or so. Once partners reach their first milestone, the process is repeated.
- **Arms-length facilitators:** NIMD sees its role as facilitating local agendas and processes rather than directly implementing projects. Wherever possible, it works through the party platforms and local organisations and has a country presence/office only where there is no local organisation able to manage the project. This model allows NIMD to maintain a small, adaptable and specialist staff team.
- **Exit strategy:** NIMD see multiparty platforms as a necessary, first step towards its longer-term objectives. These platforms provide a safe and private space for party dialogue. Once they function well, they can be an effective forum to discuss issues of national concern and develop proposals that can be taken to parliament. In the medium term, the aim is for these platforms to become institutionalised and financially self-sufficient and for NIMD to withdraw its support. In the long term, the aim is for the platforms themselves to become unnecessary because their function has been taken over by parliament and its committees.

There are some independent PD/PPS evaluations/studies that include NIMD programmes (e.g. Power and Coleman, 2011; Wild and Hudson, 2009; Wild et al., 2011). These note challenges that NIMD faces – for example NIMD programmes are vulnerable because they are political: reform proposals may become stalled if they are unpopular with an electorate, and the interpersonal relationships on which the platforms are based can unravel if personalities, parties and the balance of power change after each election.

But, overall, these studies emphasise the strength of NIMD's approach in comparison with that of other organisations/programmes and its achievements to date. The studies/evaluations on NIMD often focus on process and 'best practice' (e.g. securing local ownership, adapting to local context, etc.) and/or intermediate outcomes (e.g. institutionalising the platforms, improved inter-party relations, multiparty consensus/proposals on issues of national concern and, in some cases, these being taken forward by parliament/executive, improved party functioning, etc.). NIMD has plans to do more comparative reviews and lesson learning from its programmes in the next couple of years and it is important that such efforts are followed up on and findings shared.

Sources: Interview with NIMD; Power and Coleman (2011); Wild and Hudson (2009); Wild et al. (2011).

4.2.4 Issue-Based or Indirect Programming

The literature suggest that agencies are using more issue-based approaches to PD, for example work focused on budgetary oversight, anti-corruption, health issues or specific areas of legal reform. The general overviews of PD and thematic PD evaluations do not provide many specific examples of this type of work, but our interviews did validate this view to some degree and provided some concrete examples:

- NDI has supported issue-based governance activities in two areas – health (particularly HIV/AIDS) and extractive industries – which has involved working with parliamentarians at both regional (SADC-PF, EALA) and country level (for example Nigeria).
- IDASA has moved to an issue-based only approach to engaging with MPs (such as around particular reform efforts) since it closed its parliamentary programme.
- PGA works on international law and human rights, and on peace and democracy.
- IPU works on human rights, women in politics and education, among others.
- UNDP and NDI work on decentralisation with the National Assembly in Niger (for example support to a large public consultation exercise in the run-up to the debate of controversial decentralisation laws) (EC, 2010).
- BSI and IBP work on budgetary oversight.

However, it is likely that there are many other examples of issue-based work – as it is a reasonable assumption that this will be the outcome of other trends in the PD field, such as the setting-up of issue-based parliamentary organisations (e.g. GOPAC, APNAC, PGA) and the entrance of new players in the PD field over the past decade, such as the WBI, which works with parliaments on a specific set of issues. More issue-based work is the consequence of supporting interest-based CSOs and their engagement with parliaments. For example, in many countries, significant support has been directed at CSOs engaged in budget monitoring for service delivery.

However, until recently, this has not been conducted in ways that facilitate connections with other processes, such as formal audit processes, parliamentary investigations or political parties' policy development. More needs to be done to build these kinds of linkages around specific policy issues to gain traction and realise more meaningful change. A key constraint in efforts to increase the interface between parliaments and a wider set of stakeholders around policy issues is that parliaments continue to be viewed as ineffective (if not irrelevant) partners: all the action is perceived to be taking place within the executive and as a result it seems more effective to target efforts and engagement at that level.

4.3 Parliamentary development at a crossroads?

Despite important changes at the policy level and the development of the kinds of initiatives that have been outlined above, translating the insights from different lessons learnt into more effective programming and practice in PD is clearly an enduring challenge. Very similar findings have emerged with respect to political party support (Wild and Hudson, 2009; Wild et al. 2011). And, as with political parties, this is especially true of the need to develop and implement more realistic, contextually grounded and politically informed approaches to PD.

In general, country-level projects built from local political conditions and which engage with these remain exceptional (e.g. a deepening democracy type of program in Uganda – see Power and Coleman 2011). There has been no substantive or consistent progress in increasing the political contextualisation of programmes, undertaking/using political economy analysis, developing more integrated approaches (particularly around parties, party systems, parliaments and civil society) and working in

a more politically aware manner in order to tackle underlying causes of parliamentary underperformance and influence incentives and behaviour (Power, 2008; 2011; Power and Coleman, 2011). As many of our informants suggested, while pockets of progress and innovation do exist, much donor practice continues to be founded on more traditional, technical approaches, focused on fixing the car without necessarily engaging the driver and taking account the road and its surroundings. PD actors remain risk averse, and still need to learn what it means to work in a more politically informed manner and do it well.

In short, there is no longer disagreement or lack of general understanding that the most difficult challenges in supporting more effective parliaments are not technical but rather political in nature.²⁹ The key constraint now is the inability to translate this knowledge into different types of programmes – and the question is why. We turn to this challenge in the section below.

5 Understanding the Slow Uptake of Lessons

The high-level strategic activities and the more downstream examples of innovative practice that have been discussed in this report are signs that things are moving – incrementally – in the right direction. Nevertheless, looking at the PD field and its players as a whole, these changes appear to remain largely on the margins. As discussed in Section 2, there is a good deal of variation between PD actors, and it is not surprising that there have also been differences in the uptake of the lessons that have emerged for improved PD practice. But there appears to be more resistance to putting some types of lessons into practice than others – and difficulties with applying any of them consistently.

This shortfall between strategy and practice is curious, given that, as has been noted, the core of the policy advice has been consistent, at least over the past decade. In addition, many of the lessons are common sense preconditions for effectiveness, not only in PD but also in development efforts more broadly – for example, long-term engagement or demand-led programmes, which, as one informant commented, are so obvious as to be almost ‘non-issues’. In short, it is clear that many organisations face considerable constraints – or perverse incentives – in internalising and/or acting on lessons learnt so as to design and implement more effective PD programmes.

While in some cases these constraints relate to genuine knowledge gaps (see Section 6), our interviews suggest that PD specialists are painfully aware of what the problems, challenges and shortcomings of parliamentary strengthening efforts are and what *should* be done to address them, but they face substantial constraints that undermine their ability to act on this knowledge. Clearly, some of these are linked to the political context of target parliaments (as discussed in Section 3 above and also in Box 4). But just as importantly, many of the constraints are related to the internal workings of organisations providing PD support and to the broader context in which PD programmes are being funded, designed and implemented.

Therefore, working out what are realistic objectives for different PD organisations and what might be done differently in practice within the PD field means understanding not only the political economy of newly democratising countries, but also, crucially, that of the donor and implementing agencies and the institutional and political incentives they face (and, in a recent paper, Copestake and Williams (2012) make a more general call for greater reflexivity and self-assessment of incentives within the commissioning agency as part of political economy analysis).

²⁹ Again, Wild et al. (2011) echo this with respect to political parties.

Unpacking the black box of the apparent lack of political will of PD actors to change the ways they work is an urgent issue. A worrying trend that came across very clearly during the course of our research (especially through our interviews) is that the current context in which different PD (and other democracy assistance) efforts are being deployed is not likely to facilitate more effective programming. Below are some of the key issues that have emerged from our discussions with various stakeholders and, to a lesser extent, from the literature.³⁰ Some of these are more relevant for a subset of PD organisations; others represent broader obstacles to more consistent uptake of lessons learnt.

5.1 Donor commitment to democratic development

According to several of our informants and recent academic literature (Resnick and van de Walle, forthcoming), one of the main barriers to more effective and responsive parliamentary assistance is the lack of serious commitment (despite the rhetoric embodied in high-level political and policy statements) on the part of many (but by no means all) donors to democratic development in general, and PD in particular. Within development agencies, this creates incentives to ‘focus on short-term commitments and do safe things’, as one informant put it. Four main reasons were given for this:

- Outside the democratic governance cadre, development agencies tend to view democracy promotion as either separate from development or undermining its core objectives, for example economic growth, agricultural reform, infrastructure development, etc. Realpolitik trumps democratisation efforts, particularly for some donor countries, and also where recipient countries are of strategic interest.
- Donors are generally unwilling to antagonise their development partners by pushing meaningful political reform (and may instead support more technical democratic governance work that is unlikely to challenge the *status quo* or vested interest and may actually be instrumentalised by spoilers of democratic change).
- Donor countries engage in broader development efforts and may have other diplomatic and trade interests that may undermine the role and relevance of parliaments in-country.
- Even where democracy promotion programmes are in place, frontline staff are often reluctant to engage explicitly with political drivers on the ground (Power and Coleman, 2011).

Given that PD funding (constituting only a very small portion of overall spending on democracy assistance) is already inadequate for the task at hand, it is a real cause for concern that there are indications that PD assistance will be even less of a priority for some donors in future – because of a change of government and/or the ongoing economic crisis, because PD has moved down their strategic agenda or because the pressure for results might *de facto* divert funding to other (more easily measurable) areas of assistance (see more on this below).

5.2 Ways of working and staff incentives

Democracy promotion is an inherently political endeavour, likely to be viewed with suspicion by significant sections of the political elite in the recipient country and actively resisted by many. Interventions that are most likely to contribute to sustainable and meaningful change within parliaments are based on long-term engagement to support the agenda and capacity of local stakeholders. This calls for those providing support to act as facilitators and conveners – bringing together domestic stakeholders, supporting them in identifying problems and solutions, etc. – rather than simply as providers of funds or

³⁰ See Ostrom et al. (2001) in particular, which was commissioned by Sida and provides an excellent institutional analysis of development cooperation.

implementers (Power and Coleman, 2011). And it also requires greater donor tolerance for the ‘messiness’ of democracy – and for building more effective parliaments in particular. In short, done well, PD is likely to be uncomfortable, risky and resource intensive (especially in terms of well-qualified staff, both in-country and at the headquarters level).

However, for the most part, this is not how organisations that provide PD support tend to work. Mirroring many of the challenges besetting broader democracy and development efforts, much PD work continues to be short in term, *ad hoc* and reactive. In addition, while for the most part PD actors now acknowledge the inherently political nature of parliamentary strengthening efforts, many of them remain highly risk averse and continue to feel more comfortable working on the technical aspects of PD support while shying away from its more political (and tricky) dimensions.

Staff, especially at the country level, also face perverse incentives to working more strategically on PD issues. For example, they have severe pressures on their time, which limits their ability to keep up to date with the latest research and guidance, particularly when PD is not a priority for their agency. Another crucial challenge is that staff incentives continue to favour continuous fluctuation and rapid turnover rates, especially in terms of presence in the field. This situation persists despite the presence and greater permanence of locally employed staff; and it poses considerable problems for the building and sustaining of long-term relationships with in-country partners and the maintenance of institutional memory (see Ostrom et al., 2001). (International IDEA is a notable exception of this, proving immensely helpful in building strong relationships with partners in-country and engaging on difficult political issues).

According to some of our informants, until donors change these practices (for example developing longer-term horizons, a greater tolerance to risk and openness/competence to engage in the more political aspects of PD work, greater continuity of personnel in the field, etc.), effective practice will continue to be the exception and assistance will continue to fail to have a significant and sustained impact. Until such fundamental constraints are tackled, other obstacles to better practice are, in many ways, secondary. However, it is important to highlight that this should not be used as an excuse for inaction on other fronts, such as improving the conception and design of PD programmes, which is also essential, even if not sufficient on its own to ensure greater effectiveness of PD assistance.

5.3 Organisational set-up and procedures

How donor agencies are organised internally – including mandates and relationships between different parts of the organisation, how powers are distributed, which procedures are in place – has a significant impact on its ability to absorb, disseminate and act on learning about how to design more effective programmes. Particular issues include the following:

- The degree of decentralisation within the agency, in particular how much discretion embassies/country offices have over programme funding, design and priorities. When organisations are highly decentralised (as with many of the bilateral agencies, multilateral institutions and implementing agencies we spoke with), there may be a disconnect in priorities between the headquarters and field levels, and PD may not be part of the set of activities country offices choose to carry out unless there is someone with the embassy/office with a particular interest in this area. More generally, field offices may find it hard to act on/operationalise high-level policy messages coming from headquarters, especially if they are not given adequate support (resources, guidance, etc.) to do so. In other instances, decentralisation may actually enable staff in the field to carry out a more politically savvy agenda without being too constrained by headquarters, but this again will depend greatly on the quality of the staff on the ground.

- Related to this, the degree of involvement of thematic specialists in head offices in the review of/ input into country strategies and programme design and evaluation to ensure that latest research and learning tools and guidance inform these, and whether internal procedures support this being done systematically.
- The different pressures facing different parts of the organisation. High-level strategic insights may not be prioritised in the face of frontline pressures to devise coherent logframes and demonstrate results.
- Separation of ‘development’ work carried out by aid agency country offices and the more ‘political’ and diplomatic work undertaken by the embassy staff (Wild et al., 2011).
- Development agencies may not have influence over some forms of PD assistance programmes, for example parliamentary exchange programmes managed by the parliament in the donor country.

Development agencies’ room for manoeuvre is also constrained/enabled by their relationship with other parts of government. For instance, depending on where development agencies sit or what kind of standing they have in relation to ministries of foreign affairs, programmes may be more grounded in *de facto* political realities and enjoy close relations between technical and political advisors, or they may be more likely to be reactive and focused on short-term political events, rather than being more proactive and strategic. Where development agencies report to other government departments, their agenda may be subverted to/instrumentalised by non-development objectives (for example security – see Hyman, 2010).

5.4 Results-based agenda

There was widespread concern among many of the informants we spoke with that the current focus on results and demonstrable impact may well be undermining both the quality and the impact of PD programmes in the long term, a preoccupation that has been highlighted in relation to development assistance more broadly in policy circles as well (see Natsios, 2010 and Power and Coleman, 2011, for example). It is essential to highlight upfront that it is not results-based management (RBM) *per se* that is the problem, but rather the way this agenda is currently being conceived and applied. While there are differences between organisations in terms of intensity, all PD actors are under tremendous pressure to demonstrate concrete results that can be easily measured and quantified, especially in the context of the ongoing global economic crisis. This can have perverse incentives for effective PD programming.

The way to address this is clearly not to abandon the results agenda as a whole, but rather to approach it in a way that is more appropriate and suitable to the nature of parliamentary (and other governance) programmes (see also Section 7, Recommendations, for more on this). The challenges and limitations of RBM for programmes that seek to influence (often long-term and complex) socio-political processes must be recognised, but this should not be used as an excuse to stop efforts to assess effectiveness and impact altogether (barriers to better programming design and evaluation are discussed further below in this section). Having said that, the RBM agenda as currently practised is problematic in different ways, and these challenges also need to be recognised more fully and explicitly so they can be addressed properly – or at least better managed.

As has been discussed, if PD assistance is to be more effective, it needs to become better attuned to context, more politically aware and better suited to facilitate processes of change – but all of this can be extremely difficult to capture in a logframe that lacks flexibility and adaptability. Some of the challenges related to measurement and results are outlined in Box 11.

BOX 11: CHALLENGES THE RESULTS-BASED AGENDA AS CURRENTLY CONCEIVED POSES TO PD ASSISTANCE

PD programmes need to be attuned to (often volatile) political processes (e.g. able to respond to contingencies). They need to have the flexibility to adapt their activities so as to capitalise on new opportunities and manage risks. Activities and outcomes may also not become apparent until the programme is underway and implementers have the opportunity to sit with beneficiaries. This makes PD programmes unsuited in many ways to planning and measurement using rigid *ex ante* log frames³¹ – as one informant commented, ‘you cannot have independently verifiable indicators for something that may or may not happen’. It also makes the use of generic indicators difficult, which in turn makes the comparison of programmes difficult.

PD is more like a trade or a craft than a science – and knowing what is and isn’t likely to work depends on experience and skills as well as the intuition and ability to adapt to circumstances that come from this. There are no blueprints to follow, and sticking rigidly to an *ex ante* plan/activities is almost certain to mean the programme will not achieve its objectives. What is critical for programme success is to ensure those who design and implement them have the appropriate skills, experience, knowledge and, crucially, flexibility, to operate effectively in political environments. Programmes (and the monitoring frameworks used to represent them) need to build in flexibility to adapt to new circumstances if they are to achieve their desired outcomes (Power and Coleman, 2011).

Collecting data on meaningful outcome indicators requires qualitative research (and is therefore costly/time consuming). As a result, programme outputs are monitored more often than outcomes, but these do not provide insight into real impact.

Beyond cost issues, many actors involved in PD assistance have found identification of appropriate outcome indicators challenging (as one informant observed, it is relatively easy to measure how many new laws a parliament has passed, but much harder to assess the merits of a particular law, what difference the new law has made and whether it is being followed, etc.). There are no universal benchmarks. Regional benchmarks have been developed, but there are no readily available data on performance against these that can be used to measure the performance of parliaments (unlike in sectors such as health or education, which have readymade quantitative datasets on education achievement or maternal mortality rates, for instance).

A further problem relates to timescales for demonstrating results: political change is long term and non-linear so PD programmes are unlikely to influence high-level outcomes, such as improved oversight, in any substantive sense in the life of one programme (Green and Kohl, 2007). This makes the relevant indicator for PD programmes (particularly over a single project cycle) an intermediate outcome rather than a benchmark of parliamentary performance overall. However, collecting data on intermediate indicators that in some way monitor changes in qualitative processes and collective behaviour requires primary, qualitative research.³²

Even when data are collected that show qualitative changes in the functioning of some part of parliament or related institutions, attributing these changes to particular donor interventions can be notoriously difficult to do.

³¹ These are logframes that are developed before a programme begins and they tend to lack built-in flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

³² This has implications for when it is appropriate to evaluate whether an approach has achieved its objectives, and the types of methodologies that can be used to do this. However, as it is not possible to assess the linkages between intermediate outcomes and higher-level objectives in the medium term, it is all the more important that the assumptions about these are realistic and informed by relevant theory and evidence.

As a result of these difficulties, many commentators have expressed concern that the results-based agenda may be distorting strategic planning and creating incentives for programmers to ‘do things the right way rather than do the right thing’ (Power and Coleman, 2011, citing an informant). In other words, the desire for quantifiable data may lead projects and programmes to focus on things that can be easily measured through (relatively straightforward) indicators (number of trainings, workshops) and to shy away from more complex issues (quality and relevance of such training, more fundamental incentives at play) that may be required to address not only the symptoms but also the causes of weak and ineffective parliaments. In this way, it is the indicators that lead to the choice of activity rather than the other way around. This can considerably undermine the ability of PD actors to programme effectively.³³ Another concern is that resources are diverted away from democratic governance programmes, and PD assistance more specifically, to other sectors where it is easier to demonstrate impact but where programmes may be less transformational (Natsios, 2010). This creates further pressure for PD programmes to show results.

5.5 Barriers to better programming design and evaluation

The results-based agenda as currently conceived creates a particular set of perverse incentives around design, monitoring and evaluation. However, there are broader, more systemic problems in this area that undermine the ability of PD actors, especially donor and implementing agencies, to learn and to improve practice. Some of the most salient of these are outlined below:

- Actors in the PD field have not committed enough resources, either in terms of funds or staff, to evaluation efforts, which can be quite demanding on both fronts (Kohl and Green, 2007).
- There are strong incentives to use resources that do exist to meet the demands of bureaucratic compliance, which generally means evaluations intended to demonstrate results to funders, senior management or politicians (accountability evaluations) (Green and Kohl, 2007).
- At the same time, there are perverse incentives against doing learning evaluations that arise from (i) the costs and difficulties of doing robust evaluations (whatever the particular methodology being used) and (ii) the potential to be ‘punished’ for findings that show a programme has not worked (despite the fact that understanding the reasons why a programme has been unsuccessful may be essential to improve programming going forward). This also militates against greater transparency and the sharing of information on what works and doesn’t.
- Both thematic experts (who do not wish to see a reduction in funding to democratic governance/PD) and implementing agencies (which compete for this funding in the development marketplace) face these incentives.
- Programme evaluations are an important source of knowledge for programme designers about what may or may not be the best approach to achieve a particular objective under certain conditions (and what is likely to prevent success). The absence of robust evaluation greatly reduces the resources PD programmes have available and undermines their ability to identify realistic objectives and construct realistic programme hypotheses. (Wild and Hudson, 2009 make the same observation about support for political party strengthening.)
- These difficulties tend to be compounded when there is no overall sector strategy (based on thorough political economy analysis) to inform/guide programming, as well as when the sector/country strategy is superseded by *ad hoc* demands made by funders on programmers.

³³ For example, the results agenda can undermine local capacity development, and therefore meaningful ownership of reform agendas over the long term, because donors prefer to invest in concrete activities rather than institution building.

- In addition to the approach to evaluation being problematic and producing particular types of knowledge, there are also insufficient mechanisms for systematic feedback of evaluation findings to programmers (Green and Kohl, 2007). Agencies tend to rely on the knowledge, judgement and experience of thematic experts through their input into programme design. However, these advisors are usually not located in the field (and most agencies are decentralised). In some agencies (for example EC and USAID), procedures are in place to ensure technical advisors review programme design, but in most agencies this process is much more *ad hoc*.
- State-of-the-art programme design is also hampered by agencies not having or not training staff to use tools to translate strategic and academic insights into programming.
- There may be resistance from staff at headquarters and/or field level to incorporate new approaches/practices around design and evaluation (because it challenges existing models, fear of impact on funding, lack of capacity or knowledge, etc.).
- There is no doubt that there have been few thematic or multi-agency reviews of parliamentary support and that relatively little has been produced in a systematic manner about PD and its impact. Yet, it also seems to be the case that not enough effort has been made to capture, synthesise and share tacit and documented knowledge that does exist in the field about what has and hasn't worked, under what conditions and why (for example Agora – see Box 6 in Section 4).
- Not only is there a problem with sharing learning from evaluation efforts across programmes and agencies but also there can be an issue in feeding the findings from a programme evaluation into its next phase. One reason for this is that the commissioning organisation is often different from the implementing organisation (or they are different parts of an organisation), resulting in a lack of ownership of evaluation findings (Burnell, 2007). In other cases, implementing agencies may produce robust and positive evaluation findings but donors may decide they no longer prioritise this particular area of work or do not have sufficient resources to continue with the programme.

Other factors that impede robust evaluations in the democratic governance field include:

- An absence of adequate programme hypotheses based on assumptions about how change will happen in the context of the programme³⁴ and the baselines and indicators needed to assess whether change does in fact take place (although practice in this respect varies widely between agencies);
- A need to satisfy the political desire for scientific results in a field that is largely unsuited to experimental impact evaluation (because of the challenges of establishing controls and counterfactuals); and
- The time it takes to undertake thorough qualitative evaluation (for example because of the need to properly triangulate the data or the time it takes to collect and analyse data, such as in participatory forms of evaluation, as when using the most significant change method).

The points above highlight the need to do more to develop appropriate but robust methodologies to assess the quality and effectiveness of donor interventions in PD, an investment that seems necessary and long overdue.

³⁴ As Murphy notes in relation to EC PD programmes: 'in many of the projects reviewed [...] there is a starting logic and a desired end-point but these are not connected by the proposed programme. Most commonly, a systemic issue is to be addressed by a capacity enhancement approach, an approach which is unlikely to be successful' (Murphy, 2012: 5).

5.6 Incentives implementing agencies face

Most thematic reviews of approaches to PD use donor agencies as their entry point. However, the overwhelming majority of PD programmes are implemented by intermediaries rather than directly by donors. The incentives and constraints facing implementing agencies – and the impact these have on their ability to respond to knowledge about what the most effective programmes look like – is therefore under-appreciated and under-researched in the current literature. The following issues appear to be of particular importance. How donor actions impact on the incentives facing implementing agencies is a key theme.³⁵

The degree of autonomy the implementing agency has from its funder and how much control it has over strategic planning and programme design and evaluation are issues that merit attention. Allowing implementing agencies more discretion or control over programme design could support more effective programming because implementing agencies are more likely to be staffed by PD specialists and people with direct experience of working in and with political institutions.

The business model of an implementing agency has a significant impact on its ability to do long-term strategic planning and programming. These business models are, in turn, related to donor commissioning and funding models. The importance of this factor for the ability of implementing agencies to programme effectively cannot be stressed enough. The bottom line is that it appears that organisations that receive a significant amount of core funding are much more able to put in place good practice than those that have to compete for project funding to cover their operating costs. This does not mean all organisations with core funding will put in place good practice: core funding can give an organisation greater autonomy and longer time horizons, but how an organisation uses these depends on other features such as leadership, governance models, political constraints, size/agility, ability and willingness to adapt, etc. However, it does mean that those organisations without core funding (or that least have a significant proportion of predictable/untied funding) will find it difficult to do so consistently, particularly when implementing agencies have to compete for a lot of small projects.

If this is the case, the trend towards further ‘projectisation’ of PD funding and, as one informant put it, ‘treating implementing agencies as if they were fungible’ is worrying and likely to further impede their ability to form coherent country strategies and engage in long-term programming. As another informant observed bleakly, ‘Market conditions [in which implementing agencies operate] are directly antithetical to the lessons learnt about how parliamentary support should be provided. Organisations are essentially reduced to doing what opportunities arise, taking short-term opportunities in the hope that they lead to more substantial programmes’. A key driver of this trend is the greater emphasis within donor agencies on making programmes fit bureaucratic/compliance demands (see discussion above on the challenges presented by the results-based agenda).

The organisations that implement PD activities are diverse and, beyond their business model, other characteristics appear to influence their ability to act on lessons about more effective programming. These include:

- Mandate, leadership and governance models – for example, which stakeholders is the organisation accountable to and for what? (private consultancy firm versus political foundation versus association, for instance);
- Size and spread of an organisation – for example smaller organisations may be more agile/able to adapt to new circumstances, and larger implementing agencies with extensive field presence seem to

³⁵ As Ostrom et al. state in their study for Sida on of aid and incentives more generally, ‘We find that the aid system lacks important error-correcting mechanisms. Rather, incentive problems in one part of the system can propagate and inflame those in other parts’ (Ostrom et al., 2001: xvi).

face some of the same challenges as donor agencies in terms of their relationship between central and field staff;

- Internal organisations and relationships – for example the division of institutional mandates and programmes can impede the greater coordination and integration of different elements of their work, for example WFD (GPA, 2009).

6 Conclusion: Current Knowledge Gaps

The Pre-Study has synthesised existing knowledge about international efforts to promote parliamentary strengthening. We have discussed why support to parliaments is deemed an important component of the democratic governance agenda (even if PD still remains a small area of support within this broader agenda) and provided an overview of the key trends and actors in the PD field and the main approaches they have undertaken to promote more effective parliaments. We have also looked at some of the most important lessons that have emerged in the last decade or so about how to improve the quality and impact of PD assistance, and sought to highlight some of the most innovative practices in the field in the past several years. Finally, we have also explored why the uptake of lessons learnt has been so difficult and slow for the international community, and argued that part of the answer lies with the political economy of PD actors themselves, and not just with that of beneficiary parliaments.

Based on this analysis, this section identifies current gaps in knowledge about PD and the issues and methods that need to be revisited or deserve further attention from the international assistance community for PD policy and practice to improve. These have been organised around seven key categories for clarity and simplicity. Importantly, ‘gaps in knowledge’ here refer not only to those areas where there is not only no or only little knowledge/evidence base about a particular issue, but also to those where there is an indication that some knowledge does exist (either documented or tacit) but this has not been adequately collected, synthesised and shared, and/or those where further follow-up is required to assess usefulness and significance in making PD assistance more significant.

6.1 Programme design and evaluation

Overall, there is broad agreement within the PD (and the broader democracy) assistance community that **there is a lack of a robust evidence base for assessing the impact of parliamentary support**. Efforts to collect evidence are neither systematic nor comprehensive, and the methods used are not rigorous enough.³⁶ Annex 8 provides an overview of the kind of evidence that has been produced, but the following points are worth highlighting:

1. There are few thematic evaluations, and in general these tend to be rather ‘quick and dirty’, that is, they take a relatively shallow look at a large set of diverse interventions that may not necessarily be comparable, they lack a robust methodology and evaluation framework and, for the most part, they look at process, activities and outputs rather than impact. As a result, these evaluations tend to produce generic or macro-level findings, and associated recommendations, about factors that explain more or less successful interventions, with little emphasis on spelling out causal mechanisms.
2. In addition, there are few meso-/micro-type findings and recommendations about the specifics of what is more/less effective in PD. But this is the sort of learning that allows managers, programmers

³⁶ But note that the call for rigour is not a call for quantitative or even experimental methods. The research subject and question should determine the appropriate research and evaluation methodologies.

and partners to choose between different types of approaches for achieving different types of objectives in different types of context – which suggests a need for much more fine-grained findings and recommendations than are currently available. Note that this is not about trying to have a blueprint for effective PD, which is not possible; however, things can still be said about what is more or less likely to work under different conditions based on experience. And, without this, the danger is that programmers fall back on untested theories or idealised models based on how things work (or, even worse, how things should work!) in consolidated democracies (see more on this below).

3. We were not able to look at evaluations at the programme level as part of this Pre-Study, but, as has been noted both the literature and was corroborated by our informants, there is limited systematic/robust evaluation. However, our interviews have also suggested that some agencies (for example NDI, International IDEA) have undertaken learning evaluations, oriented towards finding out what programmes have and haven't worked, and why, and have experimented with different research and evaluation methodologies, so these may be an under-utilised source of empirical evidence and lessons (more on this below).
4. In addition, as we have stressed, there is a high level of generality in overviews of PD assistance that may imply a higher degree of similarity/homogeneity in the field than is actually the case. We have suggested that there are some differences between and within different categories of PD actors, and more needs to be known about whether and how these differences impact the quality of parliamentary strengthening efforts. Thus, much greater specificity is needed, which is essential to be able to compare like with like and properly target efforts to improve the practice of different PD organisations.

Overall, **programme design** remains poor:

1. Our research and interviews suggest that programme hypotheses are poorly articulated, and/or based on erroneous or unrealistic assumptions about how change might occur as a result of specific activities. Poor design poses a significant challenge to PD efforts because it makes robust M&E difficult.
2. Greater information/knowledge is needed about how processes of (democratic) change happen, including how parliaments have reformed over time. For instance, the discussion on whether parliamentary support should be oriented primarily towards fixing the car or supporting the driver as s/he seeks to navigate complex road conditions, or both, needs to be substantiated by focusing on crucial questions about the kinds of assumptions being made about what brings change about, what (pre-) conditions need to be in place, whether there is a logical sequencing of reforms, whether some actions may have unintended consequences and cause harm, etc.
3. There is a growing body of academic research emerging on some of these issues (for example the African Legislatures Project, the Africa Power and Politics Programme, the Centre for the Future State, etc.),³⁷ but there is a gap in translating insights from this research into the thinking and practice of international PD actors, or at least in promoting a more consistent interface and exchange between the academic and the policymaking community. Bridging this gap is needed for thorough problem analysis and for locating specific programme hypotheses within broader theories of change.
4. Much greater knowledge is also needed about the more specific subject of the various interests, incentive and power structures that motivate and influence the behaviour of MPs (see below).³⁸

³⁷ <http://www.africanlegislaturesproject.org/>; <http://www.institutions-africa.org/>; <http://www2.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/>

³⁸ While Power (2011) has developed a framework for analysing the power and incentive structures within parliament that govern MPs' behaviour and interests, almost no empirical research on this topic was identified (other than the work of Staffan Lindberg and related work from the Africa Power and Politics Programme on Ghana).

5. Based in part on these gaps, broader socio-political theories of change, as well as understanding about how to facilitate or manage more specific change processes within parliaments, remain under-specified and unsubstantiated. As a result, activities tend to be founded on poorly articulated assumptions, hypotheses and causal mechanisms. Some of our informants were sceptical about the possibility of programmes being informed by overarching theories about how change happens in different contexts. However, no project or programme is completely theory-neutral,³⁹ and our discussions indicate that many commentators do subscribe to one or many types of theories about how change does or should happen in this field. Different emphases perhaps relate to the particular background and interests of those designing and implementing programmes and projects, but presumably these have an impact on preferred entry points for programming (for example whom to work with within and outside parliament and how) and the specific programme assumptions they give rise to. No programming can be completely absent of assumptions about how and why change happens, even if this is only implicit.
6. Context analysis remains weak and inconsistent in PD interventions, which means there is insufficient understanding of, and tailoring of efforts to, the specific circumstances in which a particular intervention will be implemented (more on this below).
7. Problem analysis is also weak, which means insufficient specification of the cause of a problem to better understand what the intervention is seeking to influence, and possible intermediate steps to achieving this if the underlying causes cannot be addressed with a single intervention or even a set of interventions.
8. Finally, programmes also reflect little awareness of approaches that have been tried in different contexts. Part of the problem here is that what has and hasn't worked within the field is insufficiently documented and shared between organisations (not least because these may be competing for funding or, at the least, credibility). But this is problematic because programmes need feedback to improve future design (Green and Kohl, 2007), and constructing a reasonable/realistic programme hypothesis for an external intervention requires learning from other programmes about what has/hasn't worked in different conditions. Without this type of feedback, there is a danger that programme hypotheses and theories of change are being developed in a vacuum or in silos.

Finally, there is a considerable **gap in the kinds of indicators that have been developed** to measure parliamentary performance and their suitability:

1. There is a general feeling within the PD community that there is a need to develop more suitable and meaningful indicators for PD support – ones that are more able to capture qualitative change. A key challenge relates to the type of evidence that may be needed. Given the emphasis being placed on results and the way the results agenda is being conceived (see Section 5.4 above), there has been a great drive towards identifying indicators that can be easily quantified and measured, with project objectives often focused on objectives like number of bills passed, number of committee reports published, number of questions asked of ministers, etc. These do not adequately capture whether the quality of oversight or accountability is actually improving.
2. Another crucial gap relates to the difficulty of working more politically. As discussed, this calls for a different way of working among PD actors – as facilitators and advisors rather than simply as funders or implementers of PD programmes. How best to capture these more dynamic/organic and flexible processes is an open question, but there is agreement that this cannot be done within a traditional logframe. As several of our observers noted, democratic change does not and has never hap-

³⁹ A theory of change describes how particular actions lead to certain outcomes. All programme designers have some conception of how the change they desire will happen – even if this is not explicit, well articulated or based on an established body of evidence – and this 'theory' is reflected in their choice of activities, partners, beneficiaries, etc.

pened on the basis of a pre-established set of actions (however well coordinated or integrated), but rather as a result of (often conflictual and even violent) processes of negotiation and bargaining.

Several regional associations have developed (or are in the process of developing) benchmarks of the performance of their associated parliaments. And some work is also being conducted to develop better indicators to assess the contribution of external interventions (USAID, EC). It is essential to follow up on these to assess how innovative these new indicators and benchmarks are and whether they focus on process and not simply outcomes, and to see what difference they can make (more on this in Section 7, Recommendations).

In a sense, there is a feeling in the PD community of a Catch-22: better design relies to some extent on there being more robust evaluation to provide an empirical basis on which to make design decisions and construct more realistic theories of change, but evaluation is hampered by poor design and monitoring in the first place (no baseline, weak programme hypotheses, inappropriate indicators, inadequate record keeping, etc.) (Green and Kohl, 2007; Murphy, 2012). In other words, parliamentary support seems to be somewhat locked in a vicious cycle of poor design because of lack of evidence and guidance from actual practice (beyond general principles/recommendations – see below on this), but poor design makes robust evaluation difficult.

6.2 Consensus on lessons learnt

As has been noted, much of the evidence base on the effectiveness of PD assistance is weak. However, based on the (documented and tacit) learning that does exist, within both PD and development assistance more broadly, there is good reason to have confidence that many of the general principles/(meta) lessons that have emerged are sound and are required for more effective PD assistance. These lessons are also reflected in the high-level strategic consensus among PD actors and were mostly validated by the experts we spoke with during the course of the study.

Yet, it is also essential to keep in mind that some of these lessons – or at least their appropriate interpretation or implementation – remain (relatively) untried/untested and are insufficiently specified. This constitutes a key gap in knowledge on what works and doesn't in the PD field, which needs to be addressed. As discussed, some recent donor initiatives seek to heed some of these longstanding lessons, but more needs to be done to build an evidence base to assess whether more integrated, better-coordinated and better-pooled and more politically aware programmes have been able to make a difference, and what kind of difference, in parliamentary effectiveness.

Some of the issues where further knowledge is needed include the following.

6.2.1 What Does More Political Programming Actually Mean?

No informant we spoke with disagreed with the need for PD programming to be informed by more substantive analysis of the political/political economy context of parliaments and the broader political system within which they operate. And all agreed that the fundamental causes of parliamentary under-performance are political and not purely technical. On the other hand, there are significant challenges in acting on this, as well as differences in opinion as to what the response to this should be. Some of the main issues highlighted by different specialists include the following:

1. There is still a very large gap on how to make insights from political economy context analysis operational and incorporate these into programme/project design and implementation, at both the country level and the sectoral level.
2. There are differences in perception about what 'working more politically' means in practice – and a feeling that greater clarity about what is actually being referred to is needed. All PD assistance is inherently political, given that strengthening parliament and building its institutional effectiveness

ultimately entails altering the balance of power within the political system. However, different commentators refer to political programming in one or more ways; others insisted that their role as PD providers remained strictly technical and were reluctant to acknowledge that the work they were undertaking was political in any way.

- **Politically informed programming:** Interventions, which may be delivering technical assistance, informed by a political economy analysis grounded in context. A majority of PD actors stressed the importance of this but, as has been noted, much remains to be done in practice;
 - **Political programmes I:** Interventions to support the more political elements of parliament (working with MPs rather than the secretariat, working with oversight committees, working on representation rather than legislation, etc.);
 - **Political programmes II:** Interventions that seek to strengthen parliaments by influencing or supporting other related political institutions within the broader political system (PMOs, political parties, media);
 - **Working politically:** Seeking to influence political incentives and power relations in order to change behaviour and close the gap between the way parliaments are intended to function formally and how they function in practice. Ways to do this include identifying and working with reformist MPs and other change agents and supporting or brokering coalitions for change (see in particular the work of Joel Barkan and Greg Power).⁴⁰
3. The point was made by some informants that, given their origins, political foundations are inherently political and have always worked politically, in all of the senses covered above. However, they may not explicitly label their approaches as political because in their view this can be counterproductive, given the sensitivities around/resistance to political change in countries undergoing democratisation processes.
 4. Some of our commentators argued that being aware of the political context does not mean international PD actors should work on influencing this directly. Some were sceptical about whether the answer to ineffective external intervention thus far is to become more interventionist, cautioning that this can lead to all sorts of unintended consequences (such as undermining domestic ownership – see more on this below) and ultimately backfire. As one informant put it, ‘Various factors are needed for democracy to move forward and some may be in place and others may not be, but external actors cannot do everything to assemble the factors otherwise they themselves become a negative force’. (Iraq and Afghanistan may serve as cautionary examples of this.)
 5. Even if, in principle, more political programmes are appropriate, some argue that it is not clear that donors are able to provide this type of support effectively, whether they have the skills, tools and institutional set-up to act as effective brokers or, indeed, whether external actors can have any real influence on the internal politics of parliaments and other dimensions of the domestic political system more broadly. Some examples of innovative practice suggest that, if done well, political programming can be quite effective (for example the work of International IDEA on encouraging cross-party dialogue and engaging with parliaments on sensitive issues like the influence of drug money in the political process), but the evidence base remains small. In any case, this way of working is time and resource intensive, and so, within the context of frequent pressure to disburse funds quickly, is likely to remain a small proportion of most donors’ portfolios.

⁴⁰ Greg Power from GPA has been a leading advocate of the need for donors to work more politically in PD and parliamentary strengthening. He defines political programming as ‘attempts by donor agencies to apply more political forms of analysis [...] in the design, delivery and implementation of projects to achieve “political” outcomes, that is where donors and implementers are seeking to engage with political incentives and structures to achieve change’ (Power and Coleman, 2011: 8).

6. As has been discussed, informants recognise the need for a greater balance between support to technical aspects of parliament work (the hardware of parliament) and support to its political functions (such as softer issues related to incentives). However, some felt there is now a real danger of over-privileging the political dimensions of parliamentary development to the neglect of more basic technical competence (and other institutional capacity needs). As we have stressed, both a well-oiled car and a competent driver are needed for parliaments to work well and, despite political barriers to reform, many parliaments continue to need (well-designed) technical support. These concerns map on to the difference in opinion about whether it is more important or appropriate to build institutional memory and capacity in order to provide the foundations needed for when politics become more conducive to reform, or whether it is important to work directly with agents of change and other elements of the political system (such as parties) so they are able to take advantage of political openings.
7. The use of training should not be conflated with technical (or ineffective) approaches. Training is a method: it is the content, target and objective of the training that determines whether it is technical or not (and an appropriate method or not). It may be inappropriate to train MPs in certain types of technical knowledge, but this does not mean there will not be a place for training and other forms of learning for MPs. The context within which training is imparted and where a particular parliament (and its parliamentarians) is in terms of its development will be essential in determining these kinds of issues (see more on this in the discussion on context in Section 6.4). Training might be particularly useful and needed as early as possible during an MP's period in office, given steep learning curves in some instances (especially in fragile settings or countries with relatively little experience with parliaments or parliamentary politics), as well as high turnover rates.

6.2.2 Will More Integrated Programmes Be Effective? What Are Their Unintended Consequences?

Once again, there is widespread agreement that there is a need for greater analysis of the political context and of the linkages between different institutions and actors as they affect the prospects for democratic governance. It is also broadly recognised that there needs to be greater coordination between those working on different elements of parliamentary and democracy support, so as to reduce duplication, build synergies, ensure the conditions are in place for effective interventions, sequence activities more effectively and minimise unintended consequences.⁴¹

As has been discussed (see Section 4 on innovative practice), some donors have engaged in efforts to develop more integrated programmes (the Deepening Democracy programmes various donors are involved with, USAID Political Governance programmes), and some of these efforts do seem to show some promise (such as the multi-donor Deepening Democracy-type programme in Uganda). However, some issues continue to merit much closer attention than has thus far been the case. Some of the most salient of these are highlighted below:

1. There is a danger that, given how complex and politically sensitive PD work is, attention and funds in a broader democracy support programme may shift towards areas perceived to be less contested and overtly political (such as the media and CSOs). Of course, these are still political areas of engagement, even if donors do not necessarily see it this way. But, given how little funding goes to PD as it is, in favour of areas the international community feels more comfortable with, there is a real risk that it will be further marginalised in integrated programmes.
2. Integrated programmes may create the impression that substantive linkages between different elements of the democracy assistance agenda are being built. However, as some experience thus far has shown, different components may continue to operate as standalone projects, with different strategic

⁴¹ Examples include the need to work throughout the electoral cycle and to avoid the unintended consequences of putting large amounts of money into elections/creating a level playing field in terms of open access, which then set up perverse incentives around raising political financing or put parties in parliament that are not effective governing actors, etc.

objectives and different implementing agencies. The call for more integrated programmes can also create the misplaced impression that there is a need to work on all areas simultaneously (Power and Coleman, 2011).

3. The recommendation that there is a need to integrate PD and political party strengthening is often found in the literature, and many recognise the logic of this, given the interdependence of parties and parliaments. However, there seem to be very few, if any, examples of where the two have been fully integrated in practice – that is, integration at a strategic level rather than using one or the other as an entry point to achieve objectives in the other dimension or simply having both types of projects within a broader programme – or discussion of what this more substantive integration might look like. This reflects the substantial challenges around integrating the two in practice. The interdependence of the institutions does not necessarily mean that ways of working or objectives in one area will lend themselves to those in the other.⁴² These are specialised fields with often different objectives and implementing agencies (GPA, 2010), and this separation tends to exist even for the few organisations (such as WFD and DIPD) that provide both types of support.
4. There is a more fundamental concern about the appropriateness of highly coordinated/integrated democracy programmes and whether these are consistent with either the spirit of democracy or how political change (including democratisation) takes place in practice, both historically and more contemporarily. As one informant put it, ‘democratic change does not happen through a coordinated five-year plan of reform but rather through contestation and alliances between different groups in society with competing and shared interests’. There is therefore an argument that several less coordinated, small-scale programmes that support the agenda of local groups is a better (if still uncertain) way to try to foster the type of pluralist society that is able to incrementally negotiate and nudge forward democratic reform.
5. There continues to be a role for well-targeted support to solve specific problems. As a review for DFID on political party strengthening in four countries highlights, the context or problem should determine the choice of instrument, and a combination of different approaches is needed (such as small *ad hoc* issue-based brokerage alongside larger integrated programmes) to address multiple elements of the political system (Wild et al., 2011)

6.2.3 How Internally Consistent Is the Set of Lessons?

Some lessons may not reinforce each other but rather pull in opposite directions, and these tensions deserve closer attention and need to be investigated more thoroughly. Among other things:

1. Bundling programmes into a single instrument may create a bigger target for opponents of democratic reform and risks being subject to political capture.
2. Highly coordinated donor assistance may undermine domestic ownership by depriving recipients of sufficient choice.
3. Contrary to the rationale for greater harmonisation and more pooled funding, some informants suggested that basket funds can make funding processes more bureaucratic and increase transaction costs for frontline organisations, because of the increased time it takes for decisions to be made and because the fund needs to be managed according to the requirements (such as around monitoring and reporting) of the most demanding donor. This can be particularly detrimental to smaller and

⁴² One informant commented that organisations that have been engaged in party and intra-party work have the contacts and relationships that enable them to move into parliamentary programmes, while organisations that have provided more technical support to parliaments may be less equipped to work with political parties. Another informant thought that donors may not have the tools to move from supporting parties to compete in elections to helping parties become constructive governing actors once in power.

more community-based organisations, which may be unable to meet more taxing requirements to access funding.

4. Pooled funding can also instrumentalise local CSOs. Pooled funding may not reduce the overall amount of funding available but it reduces the number of sources CSOs can approach. Where CSOs are competing for scarce funds, limiting their options in this way can increase the likelihood that they will adapt their agendas and ways of working to fit donor preferences in order to secure funding. Therefore, there is a high risk that home-grown agendas for change will be superseded by the objectives and requirements of the donor community (Rocha Menocal and Sharma, 2009). There is also a danger that pooled funding (or funding from a single large donor source for that matter) may potentially delegitimise local CSOs if there is a perception that they are all receiving funding from the same (external) source for the purpose of promoting internal political change.
5. As has been noted, political programming may also run the risk of becoming unduly interventionist, which again can undermine ownership. Clearly, the emphasis needs to be on facilitating processes of change rather than engineering them or imposing them from the outside, but there is still very little in the form of an evidence base for what this looks like in actual practice, and there is a need to proceed with care.
6. Demand-led programmes may be less strategic (in terms of both focus and beneficiary groups/ organisations/actors), and they may yield less tangible and immediate results, while working more through associations of parliaments or parliamentarians, especially at the local level, may mean activities are more short term and/or *ad hoc* (see Box 2 on parliamentary associations and networks).
7. What this discussion on the different tensions between lessons and/or their potential to generate unintended (negative) consequences suggests is that progress in one area of PD may not necessarily entail progress in others, and so the challenge may well be in selecting the lessons that best support longer-term objectives and assessing their relevance and usefulness in light of specific circumstances. More work is needed in this area. It also highlights that there is a risk (highlighted by Unsworth, 2010, among others) that lessons and recommendations become excessively simplified and/or taken out of context and then reapplied – to the point where they can become meaningless or even potentially harmful.
8. Tensions between PD efforts and the broader development agenda also need to be considered more fully, as these can play a role in undermining the effectiveness of parliamentary strengthening interventions. Among others, these include:
 - Tensions between PD and the results-based agenda (as currently conceived) emerging from the need for PD providers to engage in a more politically aware manner, to act as facilitators and brokers of change and have greater tolerance for risk and what this implies for donor practice, which need to be further spelt out (building on the work of Greg Power and others).
 - Tensions involved in donor support to the executive via general and/or sector budget support, and the impact this can have in terms of weakening or further marginalising parliaments. As reflected in the donor coordination meeting in Paris, there seems to be an assumption among PD actors that budget support can be very helpful in strengthening parliaments because they are the institutions intended to scrutinise the budget. However, there is an emerging body of case study work in academic literature (such as Resnick and van de Walle, forthcoming) that suggests this is not as straightforward and in fact budget support may strengthen the hand of the executive branch at the expense of the legislature. This seems to be especially true in dominant or hegemonic party systems (see Gould, 2005).

- Building on the above, tensions between parliamentary strengthening and democracy assistance more generally and other (socio-economic) goals (such as whether political systems that have weaker parliaments and are in general more insulated from competitive electoral pressures, like Rwanda and Ethiopia, are better at promoting economic development (Rocha Menocal, 2007) and providing basic services (Chambers and Booth, 2012)), which highlights the need to further explore what PD assistance is meant to achieve within a broader developmental context and what some of the trade-offs may be.

6.3 Successful and innovative approaches to parliamentary development

Within the context of having more realistic expectations about what different types of PD organisations are likely to achieve (that is, what success looks like over different timeframes), it is realistic to assume that some organisations, programmes and approaches have been successful in supporting (small-scale and limited) improvements or gains within parliaments. But this information has not been synthesised and shared in a consistent manner. Thus, learning from more successful and/or innovative approaches remains a critical gap.

As we have discussed, some examples of effective programming and some attempts to document innovation and to assess it have been developed, but more research is needed to identify further examples. This includes programmes that have finished and been evaluated/researched; it also includes new initiatives/innovative approaches in progress that are unlikely to be captured in the evaluation literature because they are so recent. For instance, there is still insufficient knowledge about whether sustained, long-term and in-country donor engagement makes a difference, and if so what kind (for example the new UNDP focus on coaching and mentoring). And while there has been greater focus on issue-based support to parliaments (such as strengthening budgetary skills and parliamentary roles in scrutinising budgets in relation to issues like gender equality and health; human rights, etc.), it is again not yet clear what has worked and what kind of qualitative difference it has made.

In addition, entry points for reviews also influence what is captured. For instance, if a report is commissioned by like-minded donors or the UN, these tend to focus on their programmes and their preferred implementing agencies. This is in a way natural, but it also means the PD field will not necessarily be able to take advantage of the full range of learning and experience and cross-fertilisation that should be available. This seems to be the case in particular for private firms (such as GPA), related organisations (such as NIMD work on multiparty dialogue) and US-preferred implementing agencies (such as NDI, whose programmes hardly appear in the thematic reviews of PD/political party strengthening, SUNY and other for-profit implementers like DAI).

Based on what we have said about the need to recognise that the PD field is not homogeneous, there is also a substantial gap in terms of disaggregating approaches according to different types of PD actor. Such disaggregation seems important so as to be clear about what types of issues are appropriate for cross-fertilisation and learning (such as how to work with local partners or more realistic/intermediate indicators), and what type of learning and related lessons and recommendations is more specific to particular types of organisations (such as how to be more political, more integrated programmes may be appropriate for foundations but not parliamentary associations, etc.).

6.4 Adapting approaches to context

The importance of taking context into account, especially in terms of understanding underlying political economy dynamics and the key features of different governance systems and processes, has been emphasised throughout this report. We have also noted that PD actors have become increasingly aware of this and have engaged in different (if inconsistent and uneven) efforts to develop programmes and

projects that are more aware of and responsive to context. However, there is still a striking gap in knowledge about whether and how different international PD actors have adopted different programmes/approaches to specific contexts, or if they have mostly tinkered with overall standard models. Presumably, deciding what is needed in terms of PD support depends completely on context, and a lot of our informants mentioned that donors usually rely on parliamentary needs assessments to determine what their support should focus on. Still, remarkably little is known about PD in different contexts. Much more information/evidence, or better gathering of existing knowledge, is urgently needed, especially given that so many organisations providing PD are decentralised and evidence of adaptation to context may remain only at the local level and may not have filtered on to headquarters.

For instance, the criticism that more technical or infrastructure support is unlikely to achieve change is wholly warranted – in, for example, semi-authoritarian or dominant party systems, where the problem is not really about a lack of resources for parliament or knowledge, etc. In these kinds of settings, it is likely to be more important to work on other parts of the political system, and to seek to encourage reform from without, coalitions among reforms and issue-based support.

However, as some of the limited evidence suggests, technical and infrastructure programmes are likely to be completely appropriate in countries that are emerging from conflict/authoritarianism and/or are very low income – and anecdotal evidence suggests that parliaments and parliamentarians in such settings are remarkably receptive to such assistance. In such cases, more issue-based or other more political approaches may actually prove more effective only after a minimally functioning parliament (that is, the car itself) is put in place (although of course even technical projects should be politically aware in the sense that they meet needs, don't aggravate tensions, etc.). As has been noted, there is also some intuition that PD efforts may be particularly effective where the basic foundations of a parliament need to be built, because this offers a unique window of opportunity where domestic partners are particularly open to PD support, while they may be less effective where parliaments have been established for longer and therefore interests and incentives have become more hardened.

In general, insufficient comparative evidence has been produced that discusses whether and how PD approaches look different in substantially different settings and to what effect (post-conflict/first democratic transition versus long-term engagement in stable situations; semi-authoritarian versus relatively open; dominant party versus fluid party system; presidential versus parliamentary; etc.). Some initiatives to fit specific context needs seem to be distinctly new (such as mentoring and coaching efforts UNDP is currently involved in, especially in fragile states and democracies emerging from the Arab uprisings as a step beyond traditional training and BSI work to strengthen the Parliamentary Budget Office in Uganda), but these are still too recent and small in scale for us to be able to assess the kind of impact they may be making.

6.5 Constraints actors face in the uptake of recommendations

There is a need for **greater realism** in assessing the likelihood of uptake of different lessons. This requires more understanding of the relationship between different actors within PD assistance, the different incentives and constraints each faces and how they impact on other parts of the PD system. Rather than a lack of knowledge about what should be done, the key obstacle to better practice may be underlying constraints in absorbing and acting on such knowledge that arise from incentive structures governing the funding, commissioning, design and implementation of PD. Improving practice requires understanding these constraints and whether they can be influenced. Without this, simply reiterating general principles is unlikely to improve practice.

Related to this is the need to for **more disaggregation, nuance and specificity** within discussion of the PD field and what needs to be done and by whom to improve practice. Within the PD universe, different types of organisations have different mandates and stakeholders (for example associations

versus foundations; World Bank versus UNDP). Organisations have (related) but different objectives. This means it is not appropriate to compare some PD organisations and make assessments of their relative effectiveness. It is also likely to mean some recommendations are more or less appropriate to different organisations (and therefore explain poor uptake of some by some organisations).

6.6 Incentives MPs face and how actors can engage with these

At the policy level at least, there is recognition that politics and incentives need to be taken into account but, again, the challenge is to translate this insight into actual donor practice and programming. Power and Coleman (2011) have developed a useful framework for assessing power and incentives structures within parliament as a first step to designing more realistic and strategic interventions that address underlying political causes of parliaments underperformance. Research on the politics of hybrid regimes provides an indication of the types of factors that influence MPs' behaviour, but there appears to be almost no current and detailed empirical research in this area, let alone research looking at whether external actors are likely to be able to influence these (for example in electoral systems that are candidate rather than party centric, whether and how donors may be able to shift MPs' narrow focus on their districts towards policymaking and the national agenda when they are focused on re-election).⁴³ The perspectives of MPs on programme effectiveness have also been largely absent from evaluation work. As one expert observed, 'I can't think of an evaluation that started and ended with these questions to MPs: Did this achieve what you wanted it to achieve? Is it the right thing and should it be done differently?'

There are several elements to this gap in knowledge:

- How do MPs/parliamentarians see their role and what their objectives are;
- What factors shape their incentives and behaviour in different contexts (for example the role of media/social media in encouraging greater independence of MPs and demanding greater accountability, or not, etc.);
- What kind of PD assistance they want/need – it should not be assumed that providers and beneficiaries share common goals or reform agenda (see the contribution by Carothers in OECD DAC, 2012b);
- What they understand as effective PD.

6.7 Other areas where there are important research gaps

A key gap remains in terms of **parliamentary associations and networks and in assessing/measuring what their impact has been**. As has been noted, experts and donors are often critical, but beneficiaries very much appreciate such opportunities. There is a need to explore their value added in a more nuanced manner, in a way that addresses some of the issues we have raised related to relevant and meaningful indicators, and the specific opportunities and resources they have at their disposal, their particular mandates and the institutional constraints they confront (see Box 2). For instance, it would be important to ask/assess whether organisations have more clout and the potential to leave a greater mark on the basis of their composition/membership (for example associations and networks that represent parliaments as formal institutions versus those that are organised more loosely around MPs who come and go).

⁴³ This is the case not only for majoritarian systems, but also for proportional representation systems with open rather than closed lists of candidates.

Another is **how training efforts can be made more sustainable over time**, especially within the context of very high turnover rates among MPs in emerging democracies. As discussed, in an attempt to address this, PD organisations often seek to provide training as early as possible once MPs have been elected, and many also focus their training not only on MPs but also on the more permanent parliamentary staff (such as parliament secretaries, clerks and other support staff). But there is a widespread perception that more creativity is needed here to think about how training skills can be passed on more effectively to others (including how those who have been trained and moved on can be tapped into to share their experiences).

Little still seems to be known about how donors can work more effectively to support the **interface between parliaments and civil society** and under what conditions civil society can engage more productively with parliaments to promote transparency and greater accountability. Some recent initiatives focus on supporting domestic civil society/PMOs engaged in monitoring parliaments/advocating for parliamentary reform (such as NDI, the WBI, DFID's Global Transparency Fund) – but most of these are still too young, so it may be too early to tell whether and how they can make a difference and how sustainable they are likely to prove over time. It is also not clear whether this work draws on broader learning about supporting civil society, social accountability mechanisms and governance reforms.

The **explosion of social media and mobile technology** and the effect this may have in promoting transparency and in strengthening or hindering parliamentary effectiveness. These new media technologies are increasingly shaping how people interact with the political system, and parliament and parliamentarians in particular, around the world. New information and technologies have added channels and platforms for citizens to demand transparency and hold their governments and elected officials to account. The impact may not be all positive, though. The pressures emanating from such media exposure may encourage parliaments, and especially MPs, to focus relentlessly on the short term and to shy away from more difficult and protracted reform efforts. However, it is also possible that the media spotlight on parliaments can act as a catalyst of positive change. What is clear is that these new technologies are changing the rules of engagement between citizens and parliaments/parliamentarians, and this dynamic process needs to be better captured and understood to assess whether and how PD can engage with new media effectively (see IPU and UNDP, 2012; OECD DAC, 2012b).

Constituency development funds and their impact on parliaments and parliamentarians and the overall effectiveness of the institution. This was not a focus of this Pre-Study, but it is a gap in knowledge that many of our informants raised.

Role of parliaments and electoral politics more broadly in **supporting or undermining other governance objectives (such as peace and stability, anti-corruption, etc.)**. Again, this was not a focus of this Pre-Study, but it is a gap in knowledge that many of our informants raised.

There is a sense that, but for a few limited exceptions (Sida being one of them), international PD actors have tended to neglect **global and regional parliamentary associations as well as regional or global parliaments**. What the contributions of such supra-level organisations can be in terms of helping improve the effectiveness of domestic parliaments and promoting other development goals at the international level remains an open question with which most PD actors have not engaged.

7 Recommendations on a Possible Future Evaluation

7.1 Do not proceed with a single, large-scale evaluation of assistance; instead use targeted exercises to fill knowledge gaps

As this report has suggested, the question of how well PD assistance has worked and how it can be improved has not been sufficiently explored empirically, and there is a need to build a more robust and/or substantive evidence base on many areas related to PD effectiveness. Based on the research and information we have gathered for this Pre-Study and analysed in this report, our **overall recommendation is that PD actors engage in more concerted efforts to support research/evidence gathering and other learning exercises and share these more systematically across the PD community as a whole.**

Deepening evaluation efforts of parliamentary strengthening assistance is a crucial element of this. Based on our conversations with different stakeholders, however, **we do not believe what is needed is a single, large-scale evaluation of the PD field.** Instead, **our recommendation is to focus on/undertake a series of more discrete and tailored exercises and activities to develop a deeper understanding of and drill down into the specific knowledge gaps we have identified in this report.** Such efforts should be forward looking and focus on potential for innovation and improvement. They can be individually led by different stakeholders depending on the issues to be further analysed/assessed and levels of interest among different partners in the PD community, but should be coordinated to ensure lesson learning.

There are several reasons for this overall recommendation. One is the sheer diversity of the international actors involved in PD and the activities they carry out, which makes it very unlikely that a single evaluation will be able to capture all of what is going in the field in a manner that does it justice and compares like with like. Past experience suggests large-scale joint evaluations can be difficult to manage because they can have high transaction costs, and they tend to work best when they have a very clear focus or objective.⁴⁴ Within the field of PD, there are a variety of levels that more rigorous impact evaluation would need to capture, including (i) individual project or parliament level; (ii) sectoral level of legislative strengthening; and (iii) more macro-level assessment of whether or not PD assistance makes a difference to overall efforts to promote democracy (or even broader socioeconomic outcomes). Again, it is unlikely a single evaluation can adequately address all these different levels at once.

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, there is a very strong feeling among those involved in the field of international parliamentary support (either as active stakeholders or as observers), reinforced by most of the people we spoke with as part of this Pre-Study, that even if the evidence base is not robust enough, the criticisms made of PD assistance are for the most part valid. The general perception is that a large-scale, rigorous, retrospective evaluation of PD assistance is unlikely to generate new knowledge and will instead reinforce lessons, recommendations and principles that are already widely accepted. Such an evaluation would thus not be particularly valuable, while it would likely be very expensive. There is also a clear message from almost all the experts we spoke to that (solely or mostly) quantitative research and evaluation methods are inappropriate for capturing and explaining complex socio-political processes and phenomena, such as parliaments. There is a great desire to see finite funds for research and evaluation concentrated on exercises that are thorough and add cumulatively to existing knowledge rather than those that are broad, shallow and intended mainly to serve bureaucratic functions.

⁴⁴ The Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support 1994–2004 commissioned by 24 donor agencies and 7 partner governments is an example of a very solid evaluation with such focus. See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/2006/705_docs_en.htm for more details.

For these reasons, our overall recommendation is that efforts to address some of the key gaps that have been identified are focused on a series of issues that are more forward looking and involve more discrete and tailored activities and exercises.

Below, we highlight some of the most relevant of these, many of which build on one another. To the extent possible, we have also sought to list recommendations in order of priority/preference among the group of stakeholders we spoke with. As per the ToRs, these options are not fleshed out, but rather provide a menu of the kinds of options available should Sida (along with other interested stakeholders) wish to build on this Pre-Study and take them forward. If this is the case, the intention is that, building on the possible next steps to take this Pre-Study forward agreed at the donor coordination meeting in Paris (which was part of the OECD DAC Govnet meeting in April 2012), we will work closely with Sida and others to develop more fully those proposals that seem to hold the most promise and interest. The informal feedback we have already received from some of our informants, as well as during the Paris meeting, indicates there is support for the general direction we are suggesting.

7.2 Address knowledge gaps by undertaking targeted evaluation exercises

Donors should engage in concerted efforts to move the PD field forward by conducting or commissioning evaluation work that can address some of the knowledge gaps identified and build the evidence base in a more systematic and rigorous manner. This could include some of the following:

7.2.1 Undertake a Systematic Review of Already Existing Evaluations and the Body of Evidence in the PD Field

In terms of priorities and next steps to improve the quality and effectiveness of PD assistance, perhaps the leading theme that emerged in most of the conversations we had as part of this Pre-Study was that there is a real interest/appetite/desire among all actors involved to have greater and more specific knowledge about what does and does not work under different conditions, and why. There is a widespread perception that not enough effort has been made to capture, synthesise and share documented knowledge (such as individual programme evaluations) that does exist in the field around this, or to draw on the tacit knowledge of long-term experts or other relevant stakeholders (such as beneficiaries) in the field about what has and hasn't worked well and to use this as the starting point for in-depth case studies.

This calls for developing a body of shared knowledge that is reliable and easily available. A **systematic review** of already existing evaluations and body of evidence could be very useful in this regard. Systematic reviews are intended to be a rigorous and transparent form of literature review, and they are increasingly considered a key tool for evidence-informed policymaking.⁴⁵

Such a review/meta evaluation should entail capturing learning about programmes that have been more/less successful (and issues of time lag for assessing impact on intermediary outcomes). Among other things, such an exercise should be pursued by:

- Undertaking a **desk-based analysis of existing evaluations** to identify common themes in different areas and potential case studies for further analysis, documenting examples of where work with parliaments was done and linking this with other related activities that have made a difference and may contribute to guidance on better practice that can inspire work elsewhere.

⁴⁵ See www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=6260&title=systematic-review-slrc-international-development-research-methods for more details on how systematic reviews can work for promoting greater rigour and building the evidence base in international development research.

- Related to the above, supporting the **production and dissemination of short briefing papers synthesising existing programme evaluations** and/or relevant research programmes relating to particular categories or areas of activity.
- Conducting a **desk review that elaborates on what are now only hunches** about the range of evaluation methodologies in use and their robustness; the degree to which programmes are being adapted to context; whether theories or change/programme hypotheses are being well elaborated, etc.

Agora would appear to be an ideal repository for this kind of more systematic sharing of lessons and experience, but, as we have noted, this needs to become a much more dynamic and proactive virtual community to act as this kind of centralising body of information and knowledge sharing. Donors need to support ongoing plans to make Agora a more meaningful resource that those involved in PD actually seek out and to build bridges and synergies with key stakeholders working on similar areas.

7.2.2 Commission Focused Evaluations

Focused evaluations could be useful to allow meaningful comparisons of particular initiatives in different contexts. Speaking to different stakeholders, below is a list of the key themes that emerged as priority areas.

Undertaking targeted research and evaluation of **parliamentary networks and associations**. As this report has discussed, there is a strong desire among many different stakeholders in the PD community to develop a more rigorous evidence base about the impact parliamentary networks and associations have on the ways parliaments work. This can be a difficult and challenging task for the many reasons that this Pre-Study has identified (see Box 2 on parliamentary networks). However, a focus on results is also important. Some evaluations of individual organizations have been carried out or are forthcoming (e.g. on Awepa, the IPU, and PGA). Yet, an evaluation that covers several (four to five?) of these networks/associations over a period of at least three years (but ideally longer) could be useful in assessing what results their different programmes/initiatives have yielded or are contributing to; highlight what the different entry points and/or comparative advantage of each organisation might be; and enable an analysis of what types of interventions have worked best where, and why.

A key issue to address from the start would be to determine how ‘progress’ is measured and assessed, and what kinds of (qualitative and quantitative) indicators and milestones are most suitable, based in part on the kinds of concerns identified in this Pre-Study. Beyond this, the methodology for such an evaluation could include a review of key documents (including those internal to the organisations being evaluated and other relevant literature – such as on parliamentary support, capacity development – more generally); interviews with key informants and relevant stakeholders; and structured surveys. Fieldwork would also be important for this, especially if it is possible to identify countries/parliaments and parliamentarians supported by two or more of the organisations being assessed.

Undertaking targeted research and evaluation of **integrated democracy programmes** (building on a large enough sample of countries with such programmes). As this Pre-Study has discussed, over the past several years a variety of donors have been working jointly on promoting democratic governance in a more integrated, coherent and consistent manner that seeks to incorporate many of the lessons that have emerged in the field of democracy support. This seems to be a good opportunity to explore how these programmes have been working in actual practice and what kind of difference they have been able to make. There have already been some qualitative efforts to assess at least some of these programmes (for example Power and Coleman, 2011; Tskepo and Hudson, 2009b; Wild et al.,

2011). The idea here could be to build on such efforts and undertake a more rigorous evaluation that looks at a wider sample of countries and can generate more robust and systematic evidence about whether integrated democracy programmes have helped countries move in the right direction, and how/under what circumstances. An example of what could be used as a model for such an evaluation is the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support (1994–2004) commissioned by 24 donor agencies and 7 partner governments. It is of course essential to keep in mind that this was an evaluation that was extremely ambitious in terms of scope and breadth – but this may also help explain why it has proven so important and influential in that field.⁴⁶

Undertaking targeted research and evaluation of **issue-based approaches**. Particular areas/issues worth exploring, which involve a lot of PD actors of different nature and size (including bilateral and multilateral donors, implementing agencies, parliamentary networks and CSOs), include gender, health, budget transparency and peace and reconciliation. One important component of an exercise like this could consist of mapping the range of organisations working on these issues as well as the kinds of initiatives and interventions they are involved in. This could then be used as the basis to determine what organisations and interventions it would be worth focusing on in an evaluation, taking into account a variety of factors like types of organisation and how comparable they are, how long different initiatives/interventions have been in place and in which settings, where most innovative practices seem to be taking place, etc. As elsewhere, in terms of methodology, it would be extremely important to think about what kind of impact the evaluation would seek to assess and at what level, and what indicators are most suitable to capture this. In-depth case studies that can provide insights into whether and how positive change on the issues at hand (for example gender, budget transparency, etc.) has taken place on the basis of different development actor initiatives would be very useful as well.

Undertaking targeted research and evaluation of **support provided to regional parliaments**, such as EALA and SADC-PF. As discussed, this is an area in which only a few international development actors are active (including Sida in particular). However, regional parliaments are growing in terms of relevance and interest, especially within the developing world, and a targeted evaluation of ongoing efforts to strengthen these regional bodies could provide insights and lessons of broader relevance to the PD field as a whole. As above, a first step in such an exercise could consist of a mapping of international PD actors engaged in this area, the regional parliaments they engage with and the kinds of support they provide. From this, a few regional parliaments (three?) could be selected for in-depth case studies that would seek to capture whether international support has made a difference, and to what effect. A synthesis study could then bring together the key findings, insights and lessons emerging from the different cases in comparative perspective.

7.2.3 Track New/Innovative Approaches in Real Time

As has been suggested, much of the innovative practice in PD, while untested, is also relatively young/new, which could make a rigorous impact evaluation difficult. The focus here would be less on monitoring impact and more on process and learning, for example how difficulties are overcome, how strategic but flexible long-term approaches play out in practice, how mentoring and coaching are seen to make a difference, unintended consequences, etc. (such as NIMD programmes). Such tracking could also shed light on the incentives of funders/implementers and how they change over time in light of shifting circumstances (see also Section 7.6's recommendation on the political economy of development actors). In-depth case studies based on 'participatory observation' could be particularly useful here, especially if it is possible to have a sense of how a parliament in a particular country functioned before a given intervention started, and how the intervention is seen to be working out as it evolves.

⁴⁶ Again, see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/2006/705_docs_en.htm for more details. See <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=6260&title=systematic-review-slrc-international-development-research-methods> for more details

7.2.4 Commission Comparative Case Studies

Carrying out a study consisting of a series of **(four to five) in-depth, comparative case studies of parliamentary strengthening in historical perspective**, focused on whether and how PD assistance has been able to make a difference over time and what factors have been important in determining its impact, and analysing findings and lessons emerging across the case studies in **a synthesis report**. Among other things, this should help provide insights about the extent to which the lessons generated to improve the effectiveness of PD hold in different country experiences, whether and how tensions embedded between different lessons can be addressed and, depending on the diversity of cases selected, whether and how different donors have adapted their approaches to different contexts (different party systems, more/less fragile settings, etc.), including more recent changes and innovations.

Some of this has been carried out by specific agencies, and insights from existing research should be duly incorporated into a **literature review** that would help to ground the case studies. But it seems that little has been done in a comprehensive way involving multiple PD actors (including, for example, donors and implementing agencies). It also seems that not enough has been done to capture and build on lessons from early periods of democratisation and PD support, such as in Latin America.

7.3 Address knowledge gaps by undertaking further research

Not all knowledge gaps (including those identified in this Pre-Study as well as others) can be solved by evaluation. Other forms of analysis may be needed to help build the evidence base on what works well and less well in PD. Some of this further research can include the following.

- Undertaking in-depth **research on what MPs and parliamentary staff need and want** and on whether ongoing programmes are the right ones and if and how things can be done better or differently. A similar exercise could be done for CSOs involved in parliamentary work (again building on what is already being done in this area) (see Youngs, 2010, who did this for democracy promotion assistance). This could be pursued partly through surveys, as well as through a series of (face-to-face) interviews with a wide variety of parliamentarians from different countries and regions and some of their constituents. It would be important to identify and link up with research institutions pursuing similar work.
- Undertaking a **study on the impact that social media and mobile technologies**, as well as other transparency initiatives, are having on parliaments and their role in promoting oversight and accountability. This is a rather new and very fast-moving field. It would be important to assess what kind of literature has emerged on this, but most likely a lot of the evidence base will need to be built from fieldwork. One way to approach this could be through two to three in-depth case studies involving engagement with parliamentarians, social media activists and other media actors, constituents and parliamentary watchdog organisations at the local, and not just the national, level. It would also be important to link up with media organisations working on issues of transparency and accountability.
- Carrying out and/or synthesising existing knowledge about **whether and how ongoing donor practices in other areas have undermined the role of parliaments** and exploring ways that can help address that. This could entail undertaking a desk review of available literature, complementing it with case studies in a few selected countries (including fragile/conflict-afflicted countries and emerging/hybrid democracies), and pulling findings, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations into a synthesis report. It could also be built into efforts to carry out in-depth case studies as discussed above.

7.4 Promote greater coordination and dialogue among diverse PD actors

Building on efforts that have been ongoing since 2007, **continue to promote greater coordination in the PD field**. Most of our interlocutors expressed great interest in having an ongoing (face-to-face) forum that meets on a regular basis where different organisations are able to share their experiences and discuss the challenges they confront so as to learn from others (such as on how to make insights from political economy analysis operational or address problems of poor uptake of lessons, etc.). This could benefit considerably from donor support. The UNDP/DFID PD donor group offers a good basis to build on, but, crucially, these efforts should include not only bilateral and multilateral donor agencies but also other PD actors, including implementing agencies, CSOs and experts that may be well established or newer (this was the model followed in previous donor coordination meetings). One idea that has been proposed is to have what an informant has called ‘géometrie variable’, that is, a core group of donors that could mix closed and open meetings with different types of stakeholders, for example by having their own meeting piggybacked on more open sessions (and various sub-sections of the ‘non-donors’ having their own open and closed sessions). In general, what is needed is a (physical) space that can bring together in a more substantive and regular manner actors who otherwise rarely speak to each other (partly because they are competitors) and therefore do not coordinate or share lessons and experiences. Agora could then be used as a virtual forum to continue to strengthen these interactions, but again its capacity to play this kind of role would need to be strengthened significantly.

In addition, there is a strong argument for building linkages with non-OECD DAC donors and creditors such as emerging democracies like Brazil and South Africa, as well as countries like China, which as has been discussed has been active in providing crucial support in building the physical infrastructure of parliaments, and involving these different actors in an ongoing dialogue on PD support. Donors could also play a more proactive role in encouraging greater coordination and the sharing of practice and experience among CSOs involved in parliamentary work. For the most part, with the exception of a few regional networks that do exist (such as Directorio Legislativo in Latin America), these organisations focus on activities at the country level, and much more could be done to bring them together across countries and regions. This is something both NDI and the WBI have begun to work on, and it should be built on further.

7.5 Redefine the results-based agenda

Rather than being on the defensive about the results-based agenda, the PD community should seek to redefine it so it can become more appropriate to the types of support most likely to help transform parliaments, better attuned to risk and better able to focus on qualitative dimensions of parliamentary effectiveness.

PD actors can begin to get some traction on this through improved project or programme design (see Section 6 on gaps for what is needed for this) that can help establish more realistic objectives and appropriate activities, and the use of political economy analysis can be instrumental in this. As part of this, it is also essential to ask what kinds of indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) would be more appropriate for PD and what kind of evidence would be needed (for example stakeholder perceptions of performance via interviews or surveys, baselines and follow-up, reliance on existing surveys like Afrobarometer; baselines and follow-up) – while focusing on intermediate outcomes and keeping in mind that impacts on the quality of democratic governance can rarely be proven to result exclusively or even directly from parliamentary support. Indicators could be more process oriented rather than focused on a measurable outcome. They should also be tailored to context – they need to meet the needs of a given project and its operating environment.

Overall guidance on how to do this could be very helpful, including smarter ways to identify and approach risks and develop forward-looking tools to anticipate future risks. Importantly, both the EC

and USAID are currently doing substantial work on the development of indicators; it will be essential to wait to see the outcome of this work rather than engage in parallel duplicative efforts. If well developed, these efforts could then be used as the foundation to move forward in this area, and build synergies with ongoing work on benchmarks for parliamentary performance.

However, donors and other relevant stakeholders must grapple with a more fundamental issue. Donors and other PD actors need new approaches to managing and communicating results if they are to become brokers of meaningful change (rather than direct implementers) and if they are to design programmes that help parliaments address the root causes of their dysfunction (rather than simply their symptoms). Programme managers need the space to work with stakeholders in the early stages of a programme to identify realistic, intermediate outcomes, as well as appropriate indicators, and to revise activities as conditions change. This requires M&E frameworks that focus on reporting against agreed processes and higher-level strategic objectives. By contrast, programme managers are unlikely to design transformative programmes if they are held to fixed, *ex ante* logframes and/or put under pressure to undertake activities that produce quick and easily measurable outputs (which can be presented as ‘results’). To move forward, an honest debate is needed about these issues.

7.6 Invest in better understanding of the political economy of donors

There is an urgent need to develop a better understanding of the internal constraints that have made it so difficult for donors and, importantly, implementing agencies to act on lessons learnt in the PD field and to be much more explicit and honest about them. Working in a more politically aware manner calls for some step changes in the ways donors currently operate – there is a need for different roles (for example as facilitators and brokers rather than simply providers of assistance), different forms of assistance (related to this more brokering/coalition building role), adjustments to funding modalities and new/more creative approaches to risks and results.

If the PD field really is to move forward, then it is essential for donors to ask how the development assistance architecture can be better aligned with the need for PD assistance to be more politically attuned and savvy, and based on longer-term commitments, while also being more tolerant to risk and uncertainty. Are donors ready for and able to take on approaches to promote PD that call for very different ways of working? What do they need (in terms of evidence base, skills, incentives, competing interests and mandates, etc.) to be able to do so, and how can they (begin to) explore moving more fully in this direction? How can donors seek support from others in the international community for this?

Understanding the constraints and opportunities different PD actors face in order to adapt to this new way of operating is crucial, so political economy analyses of PD providers are an important way forward (among other things: as one of our observers put it, looking at the political economy of the commissioning agency should be part of any analysis of the problem and potential solution). In other words, it is essential to develop a deeper understanding of the political economy of the PD field from the perspective of those who provide assistance (and not just beneficiary parliaments), and to develop a politically informed approach to improving PD based on that analysis. Sida has already invested in this area through work it commissioned in 2001 (Ostrom et al., 2001) – and this work provides a solid basis for more focused work on PD and its various providers. Over the past 10 years, other international actors have been actively engaged in developing guidelines, toolkits and training that also seek to address (at least some of) the questions and concerns that have been highlighted. However, challenges remain, especially at the operational level, and this is the new frontier that needs to be tackled (DFID, 2009; Fritz et al., 2009; Unsworth and Williams, 2011).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See also <http://www.odi.org.uk/work/projects/details.asp?id=943&title=training-course-political-economy-analysis>

7.7 Give substance to PD principles and parliamentary benchmarks

The OECD DAC has been working with different stakeholders on developing principles for more effective engagement with parliaments, alongside other principles for engagement with electoral processes, political parties and the media. It is now crucial for the DAC and the donor community more broadly to think about what these principles will be for and how they can be given substance and traction. A first step is to establish how these different principles are linked to each other, and how they relate to other principles that have been established (such as the Principles for Engagement in Fragile States). Some outstanding questions that need to be addressed include the following: What is the value added of these PD principles? Once agreed and finalised, should PD principles be monitored and tracked (as those on fragile states have been)? How would this be funded? Etc.

The same holds true for the different benchmarks of PD that have been developed, especially at the regional level. Now that international norms and standards for democratic parliaments have been codified and different parliaments and regional organisations have endorsed them, what comes next? How can these benchmarks be used to promote greater parliamentary effectiveness not only on paper but also in practice? How can this agenda be taken forward, and by whom?

7.8 In acting on the above recommendations, adhere to some basic principles

In addressing the above and other knowledge gaps, donors, implementing agencies and partners should keep in mind a few key principles:

Appoint a leading organisation that can oversee all these different initiatives: Depending on particular interests and preferences, different donors and development partners may wish to lead on one or more of the exercises /activities outlined here. However, there should be a leading actor (which could be Sida or another organisation, like the International Governance Platform that is intended to succeed the OECD-DAC Govnet) coordinating all these efforts to ensure greater coherence across different initiatives, avoid duplication, build synergies across themes as relevant and, crucially, promote the sharing of experiences and lessons within the PD field.

Coordinate: Beyond establishing this coordination role, donors should also identify shared priorities about the kind of knowledge they are interested in generating, and avoid spending too many resources on bureaucratic internal procedures as opposed to actual learning exercises to fill gaps.

Build on the comparative advantage of different organisations/PD actors: Coordination is important but it also carries the risk of lowest common denominator approaches. For instance, it is essential for organisations like Sida, DFID and International IDEA to retain the room for manoeuvre to undertake the type of innovative research and learning they are known for – such as research on incentives within the aid system, political economy analysis and support to innovative qualitative approaches – and to build on the work done by other agencies with more capacity or knowledge in other areas, such as USAID on quantitative methodologies.

Be more targeted and specific: More general or under-resourced evaluations of a lot of different types of activities will result in reiteration of existing general knowledge. To be able to better understand whether and why different types of approaches have been effective, it is essential to be clear about what questions are being asked; to specify the field and level of inquiry and identify the most appropriate unit of analysis; and to determine appropriate methodologies on that basis. There is also a need to distinguish between research/evaluation on meta-level recommendations about PD (political versus technical, short term versus long term) and those that look at the relative effectiveness of specific types of activities or approaches within these broader categories, that is, the best way to achieve meso-objec-

tives (which may be technical, such as improving the capacity of a committee, or more political, such as supporting the development of more programmatic party platforms).

Disaggregate: As we have discussed, there is a lot of variation in the field, with different types of PD actors specialising in different areas, with different objectives and different constraints, etc. Taking these differences into account is important not only to more accurately represent what is happening on the ground, but also to ensure like is being compared with like and to root recommendations about how things might be done better in a realistic assessment of what can be done differently based on the institutional and political constraints facing different organisations.

Know your audience: Who are different exercises to address knowledge gaps aimed at, and how can those audiences be reached? All research efforts should include a dissemination strategy to improve lesson learning and the sharing of experience.

Don't reinvent the wheel: Donors, implementing agencies and partners should make greater efforts to capitalise on existing knowledge, for example sharing and using each others' tools and handbooks; building on research and findings of research programmes like the Africa Power and Politics Programme, the Centre for the Future State and the African Legislative Project; and capturing learning from other areas (such as governance research/theory more generally) and earlier periods (such as parliamentary reform and assistance in Latin America).

Adequately invest in disseminating findings and lessons learnt, as otherwise the point of undertaking evaluation and research work may be lost.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

[...]

2 SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Purpose and Objective of the Pre-Study

The *purpose* of the Pre-Study is to assess the need and potential purpose and objectives of a possible future evaluation. Based on the findings of the pre-study/approach note, Sida may consider the commissioning of a fully fledged evaluation of this evolving and challenging field.

The *objectives* of the Pre-Study would be to gather and analyse existing knowledge; validate those findings with a select number of stakeholders, mainly partners and implementing organizations with solid and diverse experience; identify stakeholders who may want to spearhead or participate in a possible future evaluation; and, if necessary, contribute to the design of an evaluation to address gaps in existing knowledge and cater to emerging issues.

Interested stake-holders will be welcome to provide input at appropriate occasions throughout the process mainly through postings by Sida at AGORA, the Parliamentary Development knowledge portal (<http://www.agora-pari.ora>). This will be done with a view to maximize the openness and transparency of the exercise.

Only continental, sub-regional and national parliaments will be covered in the pre-study. Popularly elected assemblies at provincial and local levels will not be included. Global and regional organizations of parliaments, parliamentarians or parliamentary staff should be included, as appropriate.

It is anticipated that the completion of a pre -study/approach note would be of great assistance in delineating gaps in current knowledge, issues and methods in need of being revisited, and areas in which innovative approaches could be pursued by partners, implementing organizations and donor agencies.

Moreover, it is of utmost importance that a possible future evaluation would be accurate, timely, and reliable and reflect the diversity of concerns of the various stakeholders. In our view, an evaluation carried out based on input and views of partners, implementing organizations and donors, rather than as a solely donor driven top down process, could facilitate the extent to which findings are actually used, turned into practice by inter alia being fed into policy discussions and decisions, and reflected in parliamentary reform programs.

In addition, a more participatory approach may by itself trigger future usage of the evaluation as stakeholders are aware of, and can influence its outcome. The precise organization of a possible ensuing evaluation will be decided based on the findings of the approach note and lessons learnt on the process through which it was drafted. For obvious reasons, it remains to be seen whether the focus of the possible evaluation would be efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, or relevance – or a combination of these evaluation criteria.

2.2 Scope of Work

Analyse Existing Knowledge:

1. Compile and review major evaluations and studies made of parliamentary development programs during the last five years with a view to identifying gaps in knowledge, issues in need of being revis-

ited and scope for further innovative work. To the extent possible, the study should categorize findings and lessons learnt according to different political systems/types of support/implementing parties/funding mechanisms et cetera.

2. Review state of the art type of academic research on parliamentary development published in peer reviewed academic journals et cetera.

Validation:

3. Interview representatives (Speakers, MP's, Heads of permanent staff, and staff) of a *select* number of Parliaments (continent wide ones like the Pan -African Parliament, sub-regional ones such as East African Legislative Assembly, and national ones) with a view to identify their major concerns as regards *current* parliamentary development programs (including forms, content, aid modalities, approaches, relevance, results based management, political environment), as identified in the Pre-Study. How do findings of the study coincide with their experiences? Which experiences /lessons learnt are missing? What ideas for *alternative* options do partners have?
4. Interview a select number of representatives of relevant watch dog organizations such as gender equality advocacy organizations and anti-corruption organizations which scrutinize parliamentary actions/non-actions and parliamentary reporters of regional /national broadcast/print/social media as regards their views of the Pre-Study findings. How do findings coincide with their experiences? Which experiences/lessons learnt are missing? What ideas for *alternative* options do partners have?
5. Interview representatives of a select number of global and regional organizations for parliaments (Inter Parliamentary Union) and parliamentarians (inter alia Parliamentarians for Global Action – PGA; E-Parliament; Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption – GOPAC; and The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, AWEPA, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, PNoWB) with the purpose of identifying their major concerns as regards *current* parliamentary development programs in relation to the findings of the Pre -Study. How do findings coincide with their experiences? Which experiences/lessons learnt are missing? Which are their ideas for alternative options in these respects?
6. Interview representatives of key implementing partners (inter alia UNDP, European Commission; National Democratic Institute of International Affairs, NDI; State University of New York, SUNY; Parliamentary Center of Canada, Westminster Foundation) about lessons learnt as identified in the Pre-Study, and their considerations for future programming. As implementing partners' experiences are quite likely to be captured in existing guidelines and evaluations, this particular group of interviewees should be managed more extensively than others.
7. Interview a few representatives of a limited number of key development partners/donors in the field of parliamentary development such as UNDP, World Bank/World Bank Institute, EC, USAID, France, Sida, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland and others, including emerging and so called non-traditional donors, as relevant, about their lessons learnt, as summarized in the Pre-Study, and future ideas for funding/programming. As donors' experiences are quite likely to be captured in existing evaluations, this particular group of interviewees should be managed more extensively than others.

Recommendations as to a Possible Future Evaluation:

8. Based on the above, assess the need for a future evaluation on parliamentary development. If an evaluation is assessed to be needed, propose purpose, objectives, design, participatory approach, methods, focus, and content of a potential subsequent evaluation of parliamentary development.

Preliminary lessons learnt in relation to parliamentary development should be compiled, as appropriate and if possible.

9. Suggest partners/implementing organizations /donors which may be interested in taking part in a potential future evaluation; which cases/issues they would be interested in probing further, and how they would use the findings of an evaluation.
10. Validate these ideas through a series of meetings/videoconferences OR a joint donors and partners meeting (piggy backed to some appropriate event), should Sida decide to move ahead with a future evaluation.

Annex 2: Key Informants

Semi-structured interviews and informal discussions were held with key stakeholders between March and May 2012.

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Parliamentarians		
Abdi, Abdirahin H.	Speaker	EALA
Avoka, Cletus A.	Majority Leader and Leader of the House	Parliament of Ghana
Bizimana, Evariste	Senator	Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda
Boadu, Linda Gyekye	Assistant Clerk	Parliament of Ghana
Casado López, Arleth	Senator	Parliament of Colombia
Chhim, Sothkun	Director of Protocol and International Relations Department	Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia
Gbediame, Gershon K.B.	Majority Chief Whip	Parliament of Ghana
Kenneth Joseph, Kiyingi Bbosa	MP	Parliament of Uganda
Kowa, Emma	MP	Parliament of Sierra Leone
Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, Osei	Minority Leader	Parliament of Ghana
Lemma, Negus	Secretary General	House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia
Khalwale, Boni	MP and Chair of the PAC	Parliament of Kenya
Machaieie, Baptista Ismael	Secretary General	Parliament of Mozambique
Mansura, Mohamed Kamal	Secretary General	National Assembly of South Africa
Mwinga, Katai Doris	Secretary General	National Assembly of Zambia
Oum, Sarith	Clerk	Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia
Rehman, Yasmeen	MP	Parliament of Pakistan
Tumukwasibwe, Robert	Principal Clerk Assistant	Parliament of Uganda
Viegas, Maria Terezinha	MP	Parliament of Timor-Leste
Zvoma, Austin	Clerk	Parliament of Zimbabwe
Donors		
Bjuremalm, Helena	Senior Policy Specialist	Sida
Bradley-Jones, Ruth	Senior Governance Advisor	DFID
Bull, Beate	Senior Advisor, Evaluation Department	Norad
Davidson, Søren	Senior Technical Advisor, Governance	Danida
Duluc, Francois	Head of Democracy Support	French National Assembly
Holenstein, René	Manager, Multilateral Humanitarian Aid	SDC
Huyghebaert, Thomas	Head of Democracy Support	European Commission
Jurgensen, Cedric	Parliamentary Development Advisor	UNDP (on secondment from the French National Assembly)

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Hansen, Kjetil	Policy Analyst	OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
Kossoff, Stefan	Senior Governance Advisor	DFID
de Lencastre, Bruno	Legal Advisor to the Standing Committees of the National Parliament	UNDP, Timor-Leste
Moen, Eli	Senior Advisor, Department for Economic Development, Energy, Gender & Governance	Norad
Norqvist, Johan	Senior Programme Officer	Sida
Rangarajan, Vijay	Director, International Institutions	FCO Commonwealth Coordination Office
Ravel, Beatrice	Head of Democratic Governance	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Schulz, Keith	Chief of Governance Division	USAID
Schläfli, Kuno	Policy Advisor, Decentralisation and Local Governance	SDC
Teekamp, Liesbeth	Senior Policy Advisor of Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department, Stabilisation and Rule of Law Division	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Watkins, Meghan	Team Leader, Democracy Support, Democratic Governance and Human Rights Division	CIDA
Widmer, Alexander	Programme Officer, East Asia	SDC
Implementing agencies		
Deveaux, Kevin	Parliamentary Development Advisor, Democratic Governance Group	UNDP
Duffield, Linda	Chief Executive Officer	WFD
Falguera, Elin	Political Parties and Parliaments Team	International IDEA
Foerde, Bjoern	Director	DIPD
Gerrits, Pepijn	Director of Programmes	NIMD
Hubli, Scott	Director of Governance Programmes	NDI
Kunnath, George	Director, The Westminster Consortium	WFD
Louveaux-Olivier, Pierre	Agora Knowledge Manager	UNDP
Nwasike, Joan	Former Head of Caribbean, now Head of Thematic Programmes Group in Governance and Institutional Development	Commonwealth Secretariat
Sample, Kristen	Head of Mission, Andes	International IDEA
Stern, Linda	Director, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	NDI
Van der Staak, Sam	Political Parties and Parliaments Team	International IDEA
Parliamentary networks		
Babic, Norah	Programme Officer, Division of Programmes	IPU

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Balch, Jeff	Director of Research and Evaluation	AWEPA
Barcroft, Peter	Senior Officer, Peace and Democracy Programme	PGA
Chungong, Martin	Director, Division for the Promotion of Democracy	IPU
Tuggey, Andrew	Executive Committee Member	CPA UK
Watchdogs/CSOs		
Gilbert, Stefan	Governance Specialist, Executive Projects	IDASA
Herrero, Alvaro	Executive Director	Asociacion por los Derechos Civiles
Van Zyl, Albert	Research Manager	IBP
Moon, Samuel		BSI
Otieno, Gladwell	Executive Director	Africa Centre for Open Governance
Parliamentary development assistance experts		
Barkan, Joel	Professor of Political Science/ Senior Consultant, Governance	University of Iowa/World Bank/ African Legislatures Project
Cheeseman, Nic	Fellow	Jesus College, University of Oxford
Carothers, Thomas	Vice President for Studies/ Director, Rule of Law	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Miller, Robert	Senior Fellow (ex-Director of the Parliamentary Centre)	Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Murphy, Jonathan	Independent Consultant	Cardiff Business School
Power, Greg	Director	GPA
Stapenhurst, Rick	Independent Consultant	World Bank/WBI
Tostensen, Arne	Senior Researcher	CMI

Annex 3: Interview Questions for Informants by Category

A. Experts

1. Thoughts on how the PS field has changed since 2005 (Sida evaluation)...

A. Prompts

- a. What has driven change?
- b. What has prevented change?
- c. There's consistent advice on what need to do to improve PS. Is this having an impact on practice?
- d. If so, in what ways?
- e. If not, why not? Why do donors find it difficult to act on recommendations
- f. Variation e.g. more progress in some areas than others?

2. Thoughts on variation between PS actors...

B. Prompts

- a. Any significant differences between approaches of bilateral/multilateral donors?
- b. Any differences between approaches of other PS actors/implementing agencies? E.g. foundations, associations, NGOs.

3. Thoughts on factors that influence programme design and evaluation

Prompts

- a. Do (different) donors have clear objectives?
- b. Are they clear about how their support will contribute to those/through what pathways?
- c. If they do, what is the basis for their assumptions about how change happens?
- d. Do (different) donors make efforts to adapt type of PS to specific context?
- e. What are (different) donors doing to measure their impact and learn from this?

4. Do you think an evaluation of PS support would be useful?

Prompt

- a. What would it contribute?
- b. What type? E.g. who involved, evaluate what, approach (e.g. theory-based)?
- c. Any particular questions or themes it should address?
- d. Any factors that would undermine effectiveness of an evaluation? E.g. lack of indicators, too soon to evaluate innovative practice?
- e. Do you think an evaluation would influence donor practice? In what ways?

5. Anything to add / any further info that might be useful for us/Sida to consider e.g.

- a. Future trends?
- b. Related activity e.g. evaluations, studies

B. Bilateral donor/inter-governmental organisations

1. Overview of what you are doing to help parliaments work better?

Prompts

- a. What are your main objectives? E.g. parliamentary functions, democracy/governance, other issues?
- b. Programme types, e.g. multiyear PS, integrated democracy, discrete projects?

- c. Activities, e.g. infrastructure, TA, training, peer support, conferences, brokerage, funding (e.g. grants/core funding)?
- d. Partners, e.g. pooled funding/implementing agencies?
- e. Countries?
- f. Related activities, e.g. work on benchmarks/indicators; donor coordination?

2. We're interested in variation in approaches to PS support...

- a. Does your model of support differ from other donors? How? Why?
- b. Are there differences between the agencies that you use to implement your projects?
- c. Has your support changed since 10 years? In response to what?

3. Could you tell us a about your process for programme planning and design?

C. Prompts

- a. What factors determine programme type, activities, etc.?
- b. Are projects tailored to context?
- c. How e.g. through context analysis?
- d. In what way do they differ e.g. FCAS vs. stable; E Europe vs. aid dependent?

4. How do you know if your programmes achieve their objectives?

Prompts

- a. M&E in place?
- b. Process for learning lessons, feeding back into design?
- c. Key factors in success of PS programme? Examples of projects?
- d. Key barriers to effectiveness?

5. Thoughts on existing recommendations re: how to improve PS

- a. Aware of them? E.g. integrated programmes, issue-based, adapt to context, more political, demand-drive, etc.?
- b. Agree with them?
- c. Has it changed your operational practice? In what ways?
- d. Where not, what are the difficulties in responding to these? Why difficult to respond to them?

6. Thoughts on whether evaluation would be useful?

- a. What do you think it would achieve?
- b. What form should it take? E.g. multi-donor, comprehensive or? Approach?
- c. Any particular questions or themes it should address?
- d. Any factors that will undermine effectiveness of a PS evaluation?
- e. Would it help you to be more strategic/change operational practice?

7. Are you interested in participating in future evaluation?

8. Any other information that might be important to the study e.g.

- a. Relevant material;
- b. Recent/planned evaluations
- c. Other PS organisations that might be interested in participating.

C. Political foundations/parliamentary associations/international NGOs

1. Could you give an overview of your work?

Prompts

- a. [For foundations] Areas – PP and PPS?
- b. Objectives?
- c. Who do you work with? Donors, NGOs?

- d. Activities/ways of achieving objectives?
- e. Countries?

2. [For foundations] If do PP and PPS, what are the linkages between these activities?

3. [For associations] Why do you think parliamentary associations are important?

4. Does your approach differ from others in the field? How? Why?

5. How has your approach changed over the past five years? How? Why?

6. How is your work funded?

7. How much autonomy do you have over programme design?

8. Could you tell us a bit about the process for planning and design?

D. Prompts

- a. What factors determine programme type, activities, etc.?
- b. Are projects tailored to context?
- c. How, e.g. through context analysis?

9. How do you know if you are achieving your objectives?

10. Do you think an evaluation of PS would be useful? Why? What type of evaluation? Any particular questions / themes it should address?

11. Would you like to participate?

12. Any other information that might be important e.g.

- a. Relevant material;
- b. Related activities e.g. evaluations, studies.

D. Watchdog organisations

1. Like to explore some issues around the relationship between civil society and parliaments in the country/region/area that you work in...

- a. How is civil society linked to parliament?
- b. What are the main barriers to parliaments working better re: country/area you work in?
- c. How could the relationship between CS and parliament be improved?
- d. How could parliamentary assistance contribute to that?

2. Do you have a relationship with any of the donors working on PS?

Prompts

- a. Are you the recipient of PS – either funding or capacity-building projects for your organisation?
- b. Are you the implementer of any PS projects?

3. Do you think PS is helping you do your job better/helping parliaments to work better?

Prompts

- a. What are the strengths of PS?
- b. What are the weaknesses?
- c. (If relevant) How do you know if you are achieving your objectives?

4. Do you think an evaluation would be useful? Why? What type of evaluation?

5. Would you be interested in participating?

- 6. Any other information that might be important** e.g.
- Relevant material;
 - Related activities e.g. evaluations;
 - Other organisations that might be interested in participating.

E. Parliamentarians

- 1. What do you think is the main role of an MP and a parliament?**
- 2. What are the main challenges you face?**
- 3. What would help you to do your job better?**
- 4. What are the main constraints on your parliament doing its work?** i.e. can they think about it in more holistic terms / not just about their own constraints
- 5. Does your parliament receive any assistance?**

E. Prompt

 - What type?
 - From whom?
 - Has the type of assistance change over time?
- 6. Does this support help you to do your job better?**

Prompt?

 - Why? Examples?
 - Why not? Examples?
 - Differences between different providers?
 - Has the type of support changed?
 - How could it be improved? Do things differently? Do different things?
- 7. Some argue that the main constraints to parliaments doing their jobs better are political and that support needs to focus on that** e.g. training for individual MPs will not help parliaments to work better if the main problem is that they do not have much power in relation to the President? [not sure how best to introduce this or related ideas?]
- 8. Are there constraints that external organisations cannot or should not try to help you with?**
- 9. Do you think an evaluation would be useful? In what way? What should it look at?**
- 10. Would you / your parliament be interested in participating?**

Annex 4: References

Key literature commissioned or produced by PD donors and implementing agencies since 2005, by category and with description

REFERENCE	SCOPE
Full evaluations	
Disch et al. (2011) Democracy Support through the UN . Oslo: Norad.	Evaluation of Norwegian support to democracy through the UN between 1999 and 2009, including literature review; mapping study reviewing structure of Norwegian funding to the UN; 7 country/programme case studies (none specifically looking at PS but with parliament element to some); analysis of findings; and recommendations.
GPA (2010) 'Review of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy'. London: GPA.	Light-touch evaluation (focus on strategic issues rather than details) of WFD commissioned by FCO, including: performance against strategic objectives; organisational structure and procedures; and recommendations; field visit to Macedonia.
NIBR (2010) Evaluation of the Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support 2002–2009 . Oslo: Norad.	Evaluation of Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support, a Norwegian cross-party forum for strengthening democracy through party assistance in developing countries, which was closed in 2009, to draw lessons and present options for an alternative model based on the experiences of other countries.
Power et al. (2009) Evaluation of International IDEA's Political Parties Programme . London: GPA.	Evaluation of quality and impact of IDEA Parliamentary Parties Programme including desk-based research, interviews and field visits to IDEA projects to feed into new programme work plan and IDEA's mid-term review of its overall strategy. GPA also contracted to conduct evaluation of Political Parties Programme.
Murphey and Alhada (2007) Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening II: Mid-Term Evaluation Report . New York: UNDP.	Mid-term evaluation of UNDP GPPS (including national, regional and global activities), involving review of project documentation, interviews and field visits to pilot countries (Algeria, Benin, Lebanon, Morocco and Niger).
IPU and UNDP (2003) Ten Years of Strengthening Parliaments in Africa, 1991–2000: Lesson Learnt and the Way Forward . IPU and UNDP.	Most comprehensive pre-2005 evaluation, assessing impact of programmes on parliaments' functioning and ability to meet needs of democratisation and GG. Inventory of assistance based on questionnaire sent to all African parliaments and many bilateral/multilateral donors, followed by deeper investigation of 6 parliaments (with field visits to 5 of them).
Other empirical reviews//research (i.e. involving primary data collection, either field or interviews)	
Power and Coleman (2011) 'The Challenges of Political Programming: International Assistance to Parties and Parliaments'. Draft. Stockholm: International IDEA.	Looks at current donor strategies to provide more effective and politically informed PS and PPS programmes, and the challenges they face in translating this into actual project design and delivery, based on secondary lit, interviews (with donors, implementing partners, experts) and case study of 4 programmes based on a political approach (2 Deepening Democracy programmes, NIMD PPS programme and WFD PS programme).
Murphy and Lynge-Manguera (2011) 'Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening in West and Central Africa'. New York: UNDP.	Comprehensive mapping and analysis of UNDP PS and political party support projects in West and Central Africa (both active project in 2011 and an analysis of recent UNDP trends 2001–2010), using documents and interviews to analyse success and challenges, identify UNDP's niche in these areas and make recommendations. Data included review of 600 documents; interviews with UNDP reps and other key actors in 21 countries; and 2 in-depth studies in Cameroon and Ghana.

REFERENCE	SCOPE
Tostensen and Amundsen. (2010) Support to Legislatures: Synthesis Study . Oslo: Norad.	Desk- and interview-based review of donor support to legislatures, including mapping of main PS actors and forms of support; review and synthesis of international experiences; lessons learnt; and recommendations both general and for Norad.
International IDEA (2010) 'European Commission to Parliamentary Development in the ACP (2000–2009): An Assessment'. Report prepared for EC.	Forward-looking assessment of EC PS activities between 2000 and 2009 in the ACP region to inform future programmes; included review of documentation for 46 programmes and 3 country field studies (Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa).
Hudson and Tsekpo (2009) 'Parliamentary Strengthening and the Paris Principles'. London: ODI and Parliamentary Centre.	Research commissioned by DFID and CIDA to generate better evidence about parliamentary strengthening and improve donor support, including case studies in Cambodia, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda, framed using the Paris Declaration principles.
AAPPG (2008) Strengthening Parliaments in Africa: Improving Support . London: AAPPG.	Enquiry exploring factors holding African parliaments back and what the UK and others can do to support them. Included evidence gathering visits to Malawi, Kenya and Uganda.
Hudson and Wren (2007) 'Parliamentary Strengthening in Developing Countries: Review of Current Issues and DFID Experience to Date'. London: ODI.	Desk- and interview-based review of knowledge regarding role and potential of parliaments in developing countries; what PS support is being provided, with particular focus on DFID approach/projects and what is known about its impact; review on future options/recommendations for DFID on PS.
WBI (2007) Strengthening Parliament, Strengthening Accountability: The WBI's Parliamentary Strengthening Programme Retrospective . Washington, DC: WBI.	Desk- and interview-based examination of delivery of programme since 2003 across 8 programme areas, describing programme approaches and outcomes, highlighting success stories for the purpose of lesson learning and sharing.
Synthesis of literature with analysis/recommendations	
EC (2010) Engaging and Supporting Parliaments Worldwide: Strategies and Methodologies for EC Action in Support to Parliaments . Brussels: EC.	Comprehensive reference manual written/coordinated by Jonathan Murphy with sections covering (i) key findings from assessment of EU support to ACP parliaments; (ii) aims of PD and its preconditions, including a checklist to determine whether minimum conditions are in place and assessment framework to inform programme design (which builds in part on Greg Powers' WFD political diagnostic tool; and (iii) principles, entry points and implementation modes for PD. Also includes detailed annexes covering the role of parliaments in democratic development, key themes in PD (e.g. gender, budget process, post-conflict) and international benchmarks.
GOVNET (2010) 'Review of Donor Practices in Strengthening Domestic Accountability'. Paris: OECD.	GOVNET work stream on improving support to domestic accountability; paper provides overview of developments in donors' conceptualisation of support to domestic accountability; sample of evaluations, studies and innovative approaches in 3 areas: resource mobilisation; service delivery and electoral processes; mapping tools; lessons learnt from donor practice. Includes some consideration of role of parliaments and support to them, either within broader democratic governance programme or in issue-based programmes (e.g. budget processes).
Power (2008) 'Donor Support to Parliaments and Political Parties'. London: GPA.	Danida-commissioned review of donor PS and political party activities; reasons for limited effectiveness; and emerging strategy likely to shape future engagement.

REFERENCE	SCOPE
Expert/donor learning event reports	
NIMD and International IDEA (2011) 'International Assistance to Parties and Parliaments and Monitoring and Evaluation of Political Party Assistance'. Meeting Report.	2-day expert meeting of Effective Party Assistance Framework network to (i) get feedback on the GPA and International IDEA discussion paper; (ii) share views on political approaches and integration of parties and parliaments; and (iii) identify ideas for follow-up research.
Von Trapp (2008) 'Conference Conclusions: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Parliaments: Challenges and Opportunities'. Washington, DC: WBI.	3-day event of 90 parliamentarians, donors and experts to share lessons on PS. Session on comparative regional perspective, FCAS, Southern perspective on PS programme, political parties and benchmarking. Part of 3-year programme on Governance and the Role of Parliament (Wilton Park, WBI, DFID and CPA).
DFID et al. (2007) 'Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development and Financial Accountability'. Meeting Report.	Consultation on topics including (i) sharing of findings from reviews and evaluations; (ii) challenges of developing common benchmarks and indicators; (iii) lessons learnt with respect to PS for better financial accountability and oversight; and (iv) agreed mechanisms for moving forward.

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Annex 5: Typology of Parliamentary Development Actors

1 Development agencies	2 Parliamentary associations	3 Political foundations	4 NGOs	5 Private companies
<p>a) Bilateral agencies, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AusAID - CIDA - Danida - DFID - France MFA - German GTZ/BMZ - Irish Aid - Netherlands MFA - Norad - Sida <p>b) IGOs, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EC - International IDEA - UNDP - UN Women - World Bank/WBI 	<p>Interest organisations/ networks for parliaments and parliamentarians, often with local branches, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AWEPA - CP - FIPA: - GOPAC - PGA (policy-focused network e.g. peace making) 	<p>a) Single-party, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FES (Germany) - FNF (Germany) - IRI (US) - KAS (Germany) - NDI (US) - OPIC (Sweden) <p>b) Multi-party, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NDS (Norway, now closed) - NIMD (Netherlands) - WFD (UK) - DIPD (Denmark) - Centre for Democratic Institutions (Australia) 	<p>a) International NGOs</p> <p>International organisations working in area of parliamentary/democracy support, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IFES (US) - The Parliamentary Centre (Canada) <p>b) Recipient country/ regional NGOs</p> <p>In-country organisations receiving support; can be beneficiaries or implementers of funding depending on activity implementation model, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parliamentary watchdog or general advocacy organisations - Interest groups (faith, women, youth) - Media organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ARD (US) - CLD (Philippines) - DAI (US) - SUNY/CID: (US) - GPA (UK)

Source: Adapted from Tostensen and Amundsen (2010).

Annex 6: Note on the Typology of PD Approaches

Below is more detailed explanation of the typology of PD approaches found in Figure 1. A parliamentary activity, project or programme has five components (organised under two categories). In principle, elements within each of the components can be mixed and matched, with the appropriate modality and activity depending on what and whom the support is for. A good fit between elements, and between project and implementation context, will increase the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes.

I: Aim of support

A. Policy or thematic focus: This can be further split into three broad categories:

1. *Democratic strengthening (direct) support:* Set of linked activities that aim to strengthen a set of linked institutions and organisations, including parliaments but also other such as the constitution, electoral system, election bodies, parties, media and CSOs.
2. *Parliament-focused (direct) support:* The primary objective of the activity is to strengthen the capacity of parliament (i.e. the capacity of its MPs or parliamentary staff) to fulfil its central functions (legislation, oversight, representation) and contribute to improved democratic governance (rule of law, accountability).
3. *Issue-based (indirect) support:* The activity principally aims to further other policy objectives (e.g. peace, human rights, inclusion, health, democratic political culture) or organisations related to parliament/democratic governance (e.g. parties, social accountability groups) by working with or through parliament and its constituent parts, but some improvement in parliamentary functioning is an important secondary outcome of the activity.

B. Desired outcome: There are several types of intermediary outcomes that parliamentary projects seek to achieve because they are thought to be requirements for a parliament that functions better; an outcome that is, in turn, seen as a requirement for democratic governance (i.e. the higher-level objectives):

1. *Secure/untied funding* to facilitate operation of an organisation viewed as important to parliamentary strengthening (e.g. through core funding);
2. Improved *physical infrastructure* of parliaments;
3. Improved *central/support services* of parliaments (e.g. library and research services, administration);
4. Improved *institutional capacity* of parliaments (e.g. relevant *de jure* and *de facto* laws, rules, regulations that govern its operation);
5. Improved *organisational capacity* of parliaments (e.g. reforming structures, management, systems and procedures);
6. Improved *skills, competencies and orientation of individuals* (political and administrative) that work within parliament and related institutions (e.g. watchdogs, parties, etc.), including improving interpersonal skills/relationships and deepening democratic culture.

C. Type of beneficiary: The project may target/be intended to benefit:

1. Parliament (international, regional, national or subnational);

2. Constituent part of parliament, e.g. MPs, leaders, parliamentary staff, groups (e.g. caucuses, parties, committees) or departments (e.g. library, research units, speaker's offices);
- 3.&4. An actor or organisation related to parliament or important for its functioning or reform, either e.g. in-country CSO/watchdog or political foundation, parliamentary association/network, international NGO, etc. The benefit is often in the form of core funding but can also be capacity development activities (e.g. for in-country CSOs).

II: How aim of support is to be achieved

D. Type of modality: Project/programmes can take several different forms depending on factors such as:

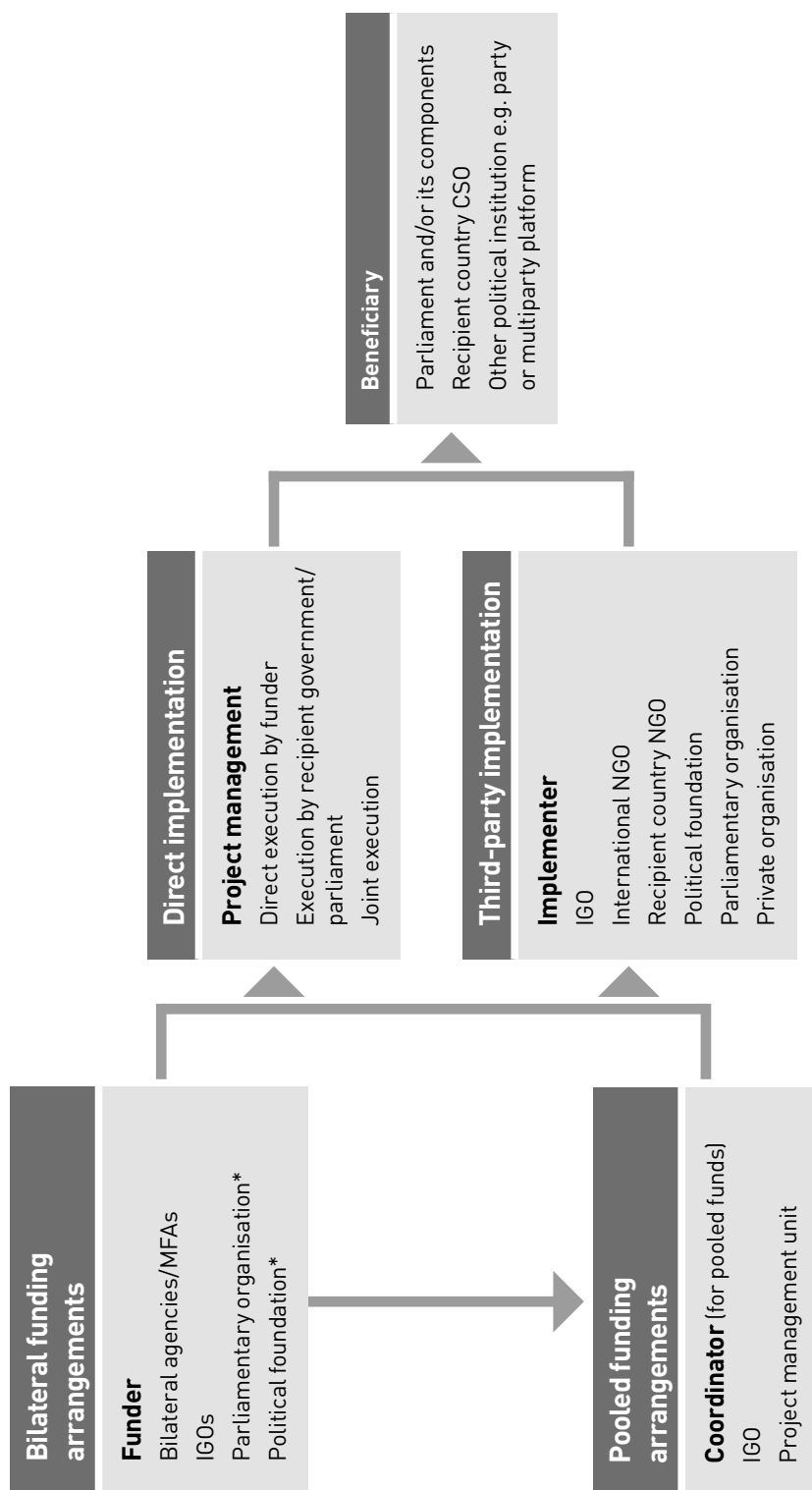
1. *Funding arrangement* e.g. single donor or pooled/basket funding.
2. *Project type* e.g. whether it simply involves the transfer of funds (e.g. core funding, grants or budget support), is a discrete parliamentary project, is a larger programme involving a number of linked projects all relating to specifically to parliaments or larger programmes of linked activities relating to democratic institutions.
3. *Duration:* Project duration is influenced by project type, e.g. discrete projects are more likely to be short term and programmes longer term, but there are also variations between programme duration, e.g. some programmes are multiyear and have second or third phases of support.
4. *Design* e.g. project design can be more or less generic/off-the-shelf or tailored to the needs of a particular context. In turn, the likelihood of this is influenced by other factors, such as the degree to which the project is supply driven or instigated, designed and/or managed by the recipient/beneficiary. Another important design variable is whether the activities undertaken through the life of the programme are rigid (set at the start) or can be adapted to allow the programme to respond to changes within the project environment. Projects can also be more or less strategic or *ad hoc* in terms of their likely contribution to higher-level objectives.
5. *Implementation:* The project may work directly with the recipient government or parliament or be implemented via a third-party intermediary e.g. parliamentary association, political foundation or international NGO (see Annex 7 for a breakdown of implementation models).

E. Specific project activities: Projects use several different methods or inputs as a means to achieve their intended outcomes (and therefore particular types of activities tend to be linked to particular types of outcomes), including:

1. Provision of funds (e.g. core funding, grants, sector/budget support);
2. Provision of physical goods (e.g. buildings, furniture, equipment or IT software);
3. Capacity development/knowledge sharing:
 - Training/seminars;
 - Peer support (e.g. exchanges, study visits, twinning, secondments, mentoring);
 - Technical assistance (e.g. drafting laws, research support, expat staff posts);
4. Generation and sharing of information (e.g. through conferences or networks);
5. Relationship/political brokerage (e.g. mediation between parliamentary groups, facilitating inter-party dialogue, etc.).

Annex 7: Implementation Modes for PD Activities/Projects

Depending on the project, a particular donor or other organisation might perform a different role in the project delivery chain. This is important because the incentives and constraints an organisations faces, including its ability to put in place best practice, changes according to whether it is a funder/commissioner, coordinator, implementer or recipient/beneficiary.



Note: * Foundations, associations and NGOs are viewed as funders rather than implementers when they fund activities from core/untied funding rather than funding for a specific donor project.

Source: Direct implementation categories taken from Murphy and Lynge- Manguera (2011).

Annex 8: Available Evidence on Effectiveness of PD Assistance

As with democracy promotion in general, evaluation of PD assistance has not been systematic, comprehensive or robust (International IDEA and Sida, 2007; Tostensen and Amundsen, 2010; Wild and Hudson, 2007). What has been produced over the past decade are:

1. A handful of thematic or organisational evaluations. These are mostly light-touch, qualitative evaluations: they often cover a large number of quite disparate interventions and are based mostly on a document review alongside a couple of field visits to conduct interviews with programme staff and beneficiaries; they are usually without a clear evaluation framework or baselines and often focused on activities and outputs; findings usually comprise description of some cases of good practices, alongside an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of programmes, and some broad conclusions, rather than identification of specific causal pathways leading from programme activities to particular intermediate or broader outcomes under different conditions. No multi-donor evaluations or thematic evaluations of PD using theory-based, participatory or (primarily) quantitative methods were identified. No comparative qualitative case studies of PD assistance were found. There are some interesting in-depth case studies of how parliaments have evolved in different emerging democracies over time, but these focus mostly on domestic processes of change and not on international assistance per se (including the African Legislatures Project, for example).
2. A set of more general studies of international PD experience that review approaches, synthesise lessons learnt and make recommendations about how practice could be improved. These reviews differ in scope, with some covering global efforts and others focused on specific regions and/or organisations. They also employ different research methods, that is, the combination of document review, project mapping and analysis, fieldwork interviews and (often quite descriptive) case studies of particular organisations, countries or programmes. There are also a few purely desk- and meeting-based reports synthesising donor practices and lessons. The basis for assertions or conclusions in these studies are not always clear, for example whether they are anecdotal and impressionistic, based on the author's experience, whether the methodology in studies that are being referred to are particularly robust or whether they are drawing on best practice principles in aid discourse more generally.
3. A larger set of PD programme evaluations commissioned by funding or implementing agencies. No existing comparative analysis or synthesis of these evaluations was found and a review of individual programme evaluations is beyond the scope of the Pre-Study. However, our interviews suggest that some agencies (e.g. NDI) have undertaken learning evaluations, oriented towards finding out what programmes have and haven't worked, and why, and have experimented with different research and evaluation methodologies, so these may be an under-utilised source of empirical evidence and lessons.

Annex 4 provides a full list of these evaluations and studies.

Annex 9: Power and Coleman's Findings on Political Programming

In a recent International IDEA paper, Greg Power and Oliver Coleman (2011) review how donor and implementing agencies in the PD and political party strengthening field are responding to the challenge of more political programming, that is, programmes that 'seek to engage with the political incentives and structures to achieve change, rather than solely relying on technical support (Power and Coleman, 2011: 8). The study includes a review of strategy documents of PD agencies, key informant interviews and in-depth case studies of four programmes: multi-donor Deepening Democracy programmes in Uganda and in Tanzania, NIMD's work with political parties in Ghana and WFD's work with the Macedonian parliament.

Below is their summary of their key findings and recommendations.

Challenges

1. **Need to translate strategy re: need for more political approach into action/practice;** country-level projects that build from local political context/engage at political level are exceptional.
2. Engaging with incentive structures and drivers of change, seeking to change political behaviour and the balance of power, is a deeply political activity and also a potentially partisan one. This needs to be acknowledged but it is also territory that donors are wary of and **staff are often tentative when it comes to explicitly engaging with political drivers on the ground.**
3. **Need to establish political realistic objectives**, i.e. those that are owned by the internal political actors who need to drive reform/change behaviours; programmes need to be designed and delivered in different way, i.e. longer timeframe for change to take place, more realistic assessment of how change happens and goals within this along with flexibility within this to take opportunities of political windows.
4. **Need to integrate parliamentary and party support.**

Recommendations for improving political programming

1. More flexible projects:
 - 1a: *Project design driven by outcomes not process/activities*, focusing on causes rather than symptoms; address the why not (e.g. why oversight isn't prioritised by MPs) rather than simply the how to (i.e. training in oversight).
 - 1b: *Projects should be iterative, with flexibility to diverge from original plans to respond to changing dynamics*; even good analysis won't capture all dynamics or predict all changes over several years if they are to remain focused on outcomes not activities.
 - 1c: *Projects also need a flexible approach to measuring impact*, to recognise that finding indicators that capture political change is difficult and not resort simply to quantitative measures.
2. Have more political realism:
 - 2a: Need for *integrated strategy to achieve change as well as integrated analysis; theory of how political change happens* (unpredictable [NB: but then how can you have a theory?!], messy, non-linear, not just one intervention changes behaviour/institutions) and *strategy for managing that process.*

- 2b: *Political projects are dependent on the goodwill and buy-in of local stakeholders*, which also means they are vulnerable to politicians changing priorities, making conditions on the involvement of partners necessary. e.g. sequencing of benefits; building programmes around a package of reforms rather than single issues in order to build trade-offs into the package.
- 2c: *Realistic assessment of scope for meaningful change*: Recommendations about need for integrated approaches risk temptation for donors to design wide-ranging projects that try to influence every aspect of policy. A way round this is to set broad objectives but use tightly focused methods for achieving them that are well grounded in context analysis of root causes, in other words, ‘think big, act small’.

Source: Power and Coleman (2011).



Mind the Gap: Lessons Learnt and Remaining Challenges in Parliamentary Development Assistance – A Sida Pre-Study

Parliamentary development (PD) assistance has been a growing area of democracy support since the 1980s. Sida commissioned this Evaluation Pre-Study to review the state of knowledge on international approaches to PD and their effectiveness, identify lessons learnt and gaps in knowledge, and assess the need for a multi-stakeholder thematic evaluation. The Pre-Study concludes that, while efforts to collect evidence about what works in PD assistance and why have not been systematic, rigorous or comprehensive enough, a single, large-scale evaluation of assistance should not be undertaken. The report recommends instead the use of targeted evaluation and research exercises to fill knowledge gaps.

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