TECH-FACILITATED PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING:
8 USE CASES

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Citizen-led parliamentary monitoring can provide the relevant, accessible and timely information that citizens need for effective participation and informed voting decisions. By systematically gathering information and reporting on legislative processes, parliamentary monitoring organizations (PMOs) can foster stronger accountability relationships with members of parliament (MPs) and lay the foundation for greater citizen influence over political processes and outcomes.[2]

As outlined in our 2024 Report *Parliamentary Monitoring in Tough Times: Lessons Learned for Building Networks and Achieving Results*, PMOs are facing escalating challenges in recent years, including closing space, executive overreach, polarization, and information manipulation, as well as a constrained funding environment. The pervasive, dynamic and transnational nature of these threats underscores the need for responses that are cost-effective, innovative, nimble and networked.

Against this challenging backdrop, the use of technologies for parliamentary monitoring is becoming increasingly urgent. Technologies present potential benefits in terms of efficiency, speed and scale. As illustrated through the eight use case categories presented in this guide, PMOs have employed a wide range of technology-based tools to enhance their capacities for data collection, analysis and information dissemination.

This guide presents 20 tech tools deployed by 12 PMOs from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Information was collected through open-source research and interviews with PMO staff. Given the multidimensional roles of parliaments – spanning representation, lawmaking and oversight – it should be noted that no single monitoring technique is sufficient to cover the full range of operations. Similarly, the diversity and dynamism of political systems mean that tech tools must be adapted and tailored across contexts and over time.[3]

USE CASE 1: LEGISLATOR DIRECTORY AND ACTIVITY MONITORING

Some organizations offer public directories of legislators, with detailed profiles of MPs, including their legislative activities, voting records and any potential conflicts of interest. By consolidating this information into a single, accessible platform, PMOs enhance transparency and also facilitate public engagement. Examples of this use case are:

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Directorio Legislativo's (DL) – Directory of Legislators – is an early and notable example, evolving from a simple legislative directory into a robust tool that has been adopted to monitor multiple aspects of parliamentary activity across Mexico, Argentina and Colombia since its creation in 2000.
- **Uganda:** The Centre for Policy Analysis's (CEPA) Parliament Watch facilitates discussions between MPs and the public, and keeps citizens updated on parliamentary matters. Citizens can view updates on bills and MP activities on social media before being directed to comment on these developments through Parliament Watch's website.
- **Jamaica:** Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal (JAMP) developed an MP tracker denoting the party, constituency and portfolio of all parliamentarians. The tracker also includes data on MP attendance at all sittings related to public finance as well as the Constituency Development Fund reports.

[1] We are grateful to the 12 PMOs who participated in interviews for this resource. We also acknowledge with appreciation NDI Project Manager DoYun Kim for coordinating its development, as well as Deputy Director Sarah Moulton, Program Director Maurice Sayinzoga, and Temporary Project Assistants Tristan Paci, Jahnavi Mukul and Zachary Stoor for their contributions.

[2] Monitoring relies on examining legislative bodies using an established set of principles. For example, in 2012, NDI and the World Bank Institute facilitated a conference of civic groups that resulted in the Open Parliament Declaration. The Declaration identifies 44 actions that signify parliamentary openness. More than 80 civic groups in 55 countries have signed on to the Open Parliament Declaration.

[3] This report builds on NDI and Directorio Legislativo's joint publication, *Parliamentary Monitoring in Tough Times: Lessons Learned for Building Networks and Achieving Results*, that examines the parliamentary monitoring landscape amid intensified antidemocratic threats and how PMOs in Latin America, Asia and Africa are working to foster more transparency and civic participation in legislatures. NDI has also published a parliamentary monitoring case study on DeFacto, a local watchdog in Moldova that monitors parliamentarians' campaign promises and performance.

- **Greece:** Vouliwatch has a similar MP tracker for the Greek parliament as well as a tracker for members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and parliamentary committees. These trackers provide access to information on MPs' political careers and voting behavior.
- **Taiwan:** Citizen Congress Watch also lists an MP directory and expands on this by publishing citizen-based evaluations of legislators – the first of its kind in Taiwan's history. The evaluation consists of over 50 indicators grouped into four categories: basic performance, citizen evaluation, bonus indicators and deduction indicators. Based on findings, Citizen Congress Watch labels legislators as "outstanding" or "under observation."
- **Malaysia:** Sinar Project's People's Representatives (*Wakil Rakyat*) fosters heightened understanding of representatives' work and their engagement with citizens by providing information on public officials at state and parliamentary levels and guidance on how to engage them.
- **Pakistan**: Numainda developed by Code for Pakistan is an artificial intelligence knowledge bot that responds to user questions regarding Pakistan's constitution and parliament in either Urdu or English. Accessed through a web platform, Numainda draws on Pakistan's constitution, laws, bills and parliamentary procedures.

Technology Type

For this specific use case, organizations created comprehensive digital databases that serve as a directory of legislators, offering detailed profiles of MPs. Platforms typically rely on either manual updates by PMO staff or automatic scraping tools that transfer information from official government websites and documents.

Opportunities

Holistic Platforms: Tools that integrate multiple functions, such as legislative tracking, MP monitoring and conflict-of-interest databases, create a one-stop shop for users. The expansion plans for some of the organizations are a prime example of this trend, offering comprehensive services that address additional dimensions of transparency and accountability.

Challenges

Resource-Intensive: Developing and maintaining multifunctional platforms is resource-intensive, requiring not only financial investment but also high technical expertise. Some organizations highlighted the strain that limited budgets place on sustaining multipurpose tools. Without adequate funding to ensure consistent content and technical updates, the functionality, relevance and impact of these tools can be compromised.

USE CASE 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH MPs

Platforms that allow citizens to directly engage with their MPs are an important tool for participatory governance. These tools enable the public to submit questions, track responses and hold their representatives accountable. Two examples of this use case include:

- **United Kingdom:** MySociety's TheyWorkForYou allows users to identify their representative based on their postcode, send a message and track parliamentary activity. Written answers from parliamentary officials are published daily, and the platform lets users vote on whether or not the answer given is adequate.
- **Greece:** Vouliwatch features a similar interaction platform where citizens can ask questions to MPs and MEPs. The platform features data on parties' response rates and ranks the issues citizens care about.

Technology Type

For this specific use case, organizations tend to use a form-based feature on their website where users can submit queries and comments. Comments can be directed at specific MPs, bills or debates. The tracking features typically depend on either artificial intelligence

or web scraping applications that monitor developments published through official government channels. These tools can require large time investments from PMO staff to moderate discussions and maintain functionality.

Opportunities

Increased Access to MPs and Information-Sharing: These platforms provide structured avenues for citizens to connect with their representatives. These tools encourage citizen participation by providing transparent, easy-to-navigate interfaces that update the public on MP activities, legislative proceedings and deliberations, aiming to instill more trust in legislatures. These interactive platforms also provide another avenue for MPs to directly hear from citizens about their priorities and answer their questions.

Challenges

Sustaining MP Engagement: Encouraging MPs to actively and consistently participate in digital platforms can be difficult. MPs may be hesitant to answer public questions or see little incentive to do so, particularly when individuals ask for personal support rather than questions about parliamentary affairs.

Resource Requirements: Depending on the level of functionality integrated into them, MP engagement tools can require significant PMO staff time and resources. For tools like TheyWorkForYou, both content moderation and maintenance of key functions can be heavy investments. Balancing MP engagement with available resources is an important consideration in selecting the right approach.

USE CASE 3: LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

Tracking the progress of legislation allows citizens to better understand legislative priorities, potential policy changes and the status of bills on issues that matter to them. Examples of this use case are:

- **Jamaica:** Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal's (JAMP) legislative tracker is a "real-time" legislative bill tracking tool that allows citizens to monitor the progression of bills related to public finance and accountability. It offers easy access to the bills along with a simplified version for citizens. The annual legislative agenda and the weekly meeting schedule are uploaded.
- **Uganda:** CEPA offers tools for tracking a bill's journey through the Ugandan parliament and understanding what has happened at each stage.

Technology Type

For this use case, organizations constructed specific pages on their website where they can track legislation in real time, providing users with up-to-date information on decision-making actors, who should be consulted (e.g., civil society organizations [CSOs], relevant committees), and parliamentary decisions. These trackers were built using either scraping tools to transfer information from government sources to the PMO's centralized page or manual tracking of legislation by PMO staff.

Opportunities

Public Awareness and Media Collaboration: Legislative tracking platforms can benefit from developing strategic partnerships, such as with investigative journalists, media outlets and government oversight bodies, which can potentially amplify their exposure and impact.

User-Friendly Design: Tools that prioritize ease of use and accessibility, while ensuring regular updates are easily accessible, can support continuous user engagement with a broad audience. Clear interfaces and regular updates encourage continuous user engagement.

Challenges

Data Accessibility: While some tools have contributed to notable improvements in parliamentary transparency, organizations noted difficulties in accessing timely and complete data from government bodies, especially in contexts with weaker institutional structures and where

open data is not available or machine-readable. For tools that pull data from multiple sources, the varied data formats present an additional hurdle.

Sustaining Operations: Funding and human constraints limit the ability to maintain and regularly update these tools. Organizations face challenges in sustaining long-term projects, particularly in countries with less consistent funding and political instability.

USE CASE 4: DISCOURSE QUALITY MONITORING

Monitoring parliamentary discourse can help understand how parliamentarians intervene during debates to foster enhanced deliberation and interaction.

- **North Macedonia:** The Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" (IDSCS) uses the Discourse Quality Index (DQI) as part of NDI's Parliament Support Programme. This tool involves coding interventions during parliamentary sessions (plenary and committee) according to several key characteristics including:
  - Level of argumentation of each discussion;
  - Level of respect toward other MPs and their arguments;
  - Readiness and openness for changing the positions when presented with better arguments during the debate;
  - Interruption or constraints toward speakers; and
  - Use of inappropriate or abusive speech.

The DQI has been used by different groups to analyze the quality of political discourse in parliament, focusing on aspects like the breadth of perspectives discussed, the depth of a speaker's understanding, justification, respect and inclusivity.[4,5]

Technology Type

Digital tools such as Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count and other qualitative analysis tools (like NVivo, MAXQDA, or ATLAS.ti) are commonly used for qualitative data analysis. These tools help in coding and analyzing text data for themes, sentiments and discourse patterns. IDSCS uses human coders to categorize and generate a report, published in English, Macedonian, and Albanian, that assesses the quality of discourse in parliamentary debates against a predetermined set of indicators. IDSCS publicizes its work online and keeps a repository on its website.

Opportunities

Structured Metrics for Accountability: Tools like the DQI provide measurable insights into the quality of debates, argumentation of the discussions and supporting evidence (or lack thereof), while exposing areas for improvement by MPs. By applying structured metrics, such tools add a layer of qualitative analysis to parliamentary monitoring.

Challenges

Technical Expertise and Maintenance: Tools like the DQI require significant technical expertise and time to develop and maintain, which may be a challenge for groups with limited resources. Additionally, integrating real-time analysis and speech-to-text technology remains a technical hurdle. Some MPs are not receptive to findings from the analysis, notably when they receive a lower DQI score.

USE CASE 5: BUDGET AND PUBLIC FINANCE TRACKING

Fiscal transparency and accountability are important tools for planning, risk mitigation and preventing corruption. It has become even more critical in recent years, given the

[4] Christopher Lord and Dionysia Tamvaki, "The Politics of Justification? Applying the 'Discourse Quality Index' to the Study of the European Parliament," *European Political Science Review* 4, no. 2 (2012): 303-27, doi:10.1017/S1755773911000300.

[5] Jane Suiter, David M. Farrell, Clodagh Harris, and Philip Murphy, "Measuring Epistemic Deliberation on Polarized Issues: The Case of Abortion Provision in Ireland," *Political Studies Review* 20, no. 4 (2021): 608–24, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/14789299211020909.

global public debt crisis characterized by ballooning debt service payments that have reduced the funds available for social services. Numerous PMOs have developed online tools and platforms to track government spending and responses to financial mismanagement, including:

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** DL works to familiarize the public about legislative processes around national budgets through its Let's Talk About the Budget project. With a focus on national budgets in Argentina, Colombia and Mexico, the platform explains what a national budget is, the decision-making processes, and the actors involved (such as budget committees and budget offices) to help citizens understand the distribution of public spending and the potential impacts.
- **Jamaica:** JAMP created a budget tracker which simplifies the national budget – providing a summary of the budget, including proposed public spending, revenue by category, source of funds, and debt repayments, as well as comparison with the previous year's budget.
- **Uganda:** CEPA's loan tracker aims to record and monitor loans taken by the government across sectors (health, education, transport, etc.). The tool provides transparency into the lender, loan amount, committee reports, and how borrowed funds are allocated and repaid – enabling the public to evaluate if loans are being used effectively and for their intended goals.
- **Brazil:** Open Knowledge Brazil's Serenata de Amor created "Rosie," an artificial intelligence tool designed to review reimbursement claims and receipts of congressional representatives to identify potential fraudulent spending. Rosie was programmed to present results in a nonpartisan and neutral tone.[6] Results were disseminated through Twitter (now X), but the program was discontinued in 2022 when the social media platform eliminated free application programming interface (API) access for third-party developers.[7]

Technology Type

To display the data, organizations have often created a dedicated page on their website that tracks financial transactions, such as loan disbursements and procurement contracts, and offers detailed breakdowns of government spending, fund allocations and any misuse of funds.

These tools depend on scraping tools to monitor changes and document uploads in real time. Artificial intelligence and machine learning tools can also be used to monitor changes or flag public financial documents for warning signs of corruption. Rosie, for instance, was an open-source, GitHub-hosted Python application that applied algorithms to estimate a "probability of corruption" for each reimbursement receipt submitted by politicians in Brazil.[8] Flagged documents can then be either disseminated for journalistic and public investigation or verified internally by organization staff.

Opportunities

Increased Transparency: These tools increase transparency by making government financial data more accessible and digestible to the public. They empower citizens, journalists and CSOs to monitor public expenditures and hold authorities accountable for fund mismanagement or irregularities.

Challenges

User Engagement: Ensuring that these tools are widely understood and used by the public can be difficult, especially when public interest in fiscal accountability and fiscal literacy is low.

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[6] Yasodara Cordova and Eduardo Vicente Gonçalves, "Rosie the Robot: Social Accountability One Tweet at a Time – Part 2," World Bank Blogs, November 5, 2019, https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/governance/rosie-robot-social-accountability-one-tweet-time-part-2.

[7] Fernanda Odilla and Alice Mattoni, "Unveiling the Layers of Data Activism: The Organising of Civic Innovation to Fight Corruption in Brazil," *Big Data & Society* 10, no. 2 (July 2023),https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20539517231190078.

[8] FRomano, "Operation Love Serenade: Fighting Corruption in Brazil with an Open-Source, Machine Learning-Powered Robot," Harvard Business School, November 13, 2018, https://d3.harvard.edu/platform-rctom/submission/operation-love-serenade-fighting-corruption-in-brazil-with-an-open-source-machine-learning-powered-robot/.

Data Quality and Availability: Maintaining up-to-date databases, ensuring accurate tracking, and addressing incomplete or obscured government data remain constant hurdles. Rosie, for instance, faced challenges in maintaining the corps of volunteer contributors needed for coding, running tests and data analysis.[9]

USE CASE 6: MP ASSET AND CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST MONITORING

Asset declaration tools play an important role in promoting transparency, accountability and public service integrity by requiring public officials to disclose their financial interests. These tools enable the monitoring of assets and potential conflicts of interest to ensure that politicians face the proper disciplinary actions for any discrepancies or unexplained wealth. Two examples of this use case are:

- **Greece:** Vouliwatch's Asset Declarations Monitor conducts comparative analysis of MPs' financial disclosures over time and against other MPs. The platform allows citizens to review and track discrepancies in legislators' asset declarations, examining factors such as changes to income, real estate holdings and debts. Vouliwatch has used the data to conduct a detailed review of asset declarations to provide an overview of how MP finances have evolved and how their economic activities align with their declared income sources for public scrutiny.[10]
- **Latin America:** DL's Joining the Dots (JTD) tool was developed to identify MPs who fail to submit their financial disclosures or who provide incomplete or inconsistent information. In addition, the tool cross-references these disclosures with public databases containing information on state contractors, electoral campaign financing and state subsidies. This allows detection of potential conflicts of interest (red flags) – for example, cases where an MP hires campaign donors or holds shares in a company that receives a state contract. JTD was implemented first in Colombia and Nigeria and more recently in Argentina and Paraguay.

Technology Type

For the Asset Declarations Monitor, Vouliwatch created a dedicated website that allows citizens to track and assess the asset declarations of individual members of the Greek and European parliaments from 2012 onward through visualizations, comparisons and graphs. Highlights include a ranking of the top 10 MPs with the highest income and the average income of MPs per political party.

JTD relies on web scrapers and various programming tools to collect, organize and cross-reference information from multiple public databases. DL also developed a dedicated website that allows users to access financial disclosures and review the red flags identified by the tool.

Opportunities

Improved Accountability: By streamlining the often cumbersome and confusing process of sorting through asset declarations, these tools provide a clear opportunity for the media and public to more easily hold public officials accountable for any suspicious activities. This is especially true when AI-powered features can automatically flag inconsistencies for investigation.

For instance, DL partnered with La Silla Vacía, an independent media outlet in Colombia, which published regular reports based on findings from the JTD tool. These reports highlighted conflicts of interest involving MPs and other government officials.[11] DL also collaborated with local anti-corruption organizations to support advocacy efforts aimed at pressuring MPs

[9] Fernanda Odilla and Alice Mattoni, "Unveiling the Layers of Data Activism: The Organising of Civic Innovation to Fight Corruption in Brazil," *Big Data & Society* 10, no. 2 (July 2023), https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20539517231190078.

[10] "How Much Have Politicians' 'Where Are You From' Statements Changed?," Vouliwatch, April 5, 2023, https://vouliwatch.gr/actions/article/ereyna-gia-pothen.

[11] Jerson Ortiz and Jineth Prieto, "Conflicts of Interest in Congress: Family Members, Financiers, and Opacity," *LaSilla Vacía*, June 20, 2024, https://www.lasillavacia.com/silla-nacional/los-conflictos-de-interes-en-el-congreso-familiares-financiadores-y-opacidad/; "Court Investigates Congressman for Possible Irregular Hiring at His UTL," *LaSilla Vacía*, May 7, 2024, https://www.lasillavacia.com/en-vivo/corte-investiga-a-congresista-por-posible-contratacion-irregular-en-su-utl/.

who had not submitted their financial disclosures to comply. Additionally, these efforts contributed to reversing a government administrative decision that had significantly restricted public access to MPs' reported information.

Challenges

Data Access: Asset declarations can be difficult to access and to convince public officials to take seriously in contexts where enforcement is lacking. Additionally, declarations, tax documents and other comparable documents may vary in format, complicating the implementation of comparison and flagging features.

Technical Requirements: Building tools that can effectively parse and analyze asset declarations requires significant technical expertise, particularly when AI-powered tools are used. Smaller organizations may struggle to achieve their goals with these tools without experienced technical staff.

USE CASE 7: ISSUE-BASED LEGISLATIVE MONITORING

Legislation has direct and tangible impacts on people's lives, and these effects can vary significantly across different social groups and policy areas. Issue-based groups may choose to monitor the legislative process through the lens of a specific issue or cause (e.g., health care reform) to ensure that legislative work is focused on the public interest and conducted transparently and responsively. Additionally, identity-based groups may choose to assess laws based on the specific impacts on their community.

- **Brazil:** Elas no Congresso is a project developed by Revista AzMina that conducts legislative monitoring of women's rights[12] using public data from the National Congress. Elas no Congresso consists of a platform that presents legislators' votes on bills related to women's rights, including labor, women's health and reproductive rights, social rights (education, housing, social security), LGBTQI+ rights and gender-based violence. Information on the topics, authors and legislative process pertaining to each bill in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies is available and searchable. Based on the bills proposed during a given legislative session, the platform also provides a ranking of lawmakers and political parties, as evaluated by women's rights CSOs in Brazil.

Technology Type

For this use case, Elas no Congresso created a web scraper that pulls keywords in bills from the federal legislature's website, which are then exported into a spreadsheet. Each bill is then examined by staff to determine its issue category before being sent to partner organizations for rating on relevancy and support/opposition. In the second half of 2025, Elas no Congresso will integrate a generative AI tool to assess categorization, relevance and support/opposition decisions, which will then be verified by staff. This large language model has already been implemented and is currently undergoing testing and validation. This new mechanism is streamlining the process and optimizing human and financial resources on day-to-day operations.

Opportunities

Issue-Specific Accountability: Applying an issue-specific lens to policymaking using technology tools ensures that efforts to address women's issues are easily trackable by the public, academics, journalists and civil society. The gender-sensitive lens employed by Elas no Congresso could be expanded to other categories, significantly enhancing the ability of civil society, the media and the public to hold legislators accountable for their positions on key issues.

Challenges

Resource-Intensive: The amount of resources, particularly staff time, necessary to categorize and

[12] AzMina does not perceive women as a universal category and considers various factors such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and gender identity.

rate each proposal as well as maintain the platform is quite intensive and would be difficult for an organization with limited resources to manage. While deployment of AI features may help alleviate these issues in Elas no Congresso's case, such a solution would require significant technological expertise and financial resources in other contexts.

USE CASE 8: TRANSCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

AI-driven tools, particularly those for transcription, translation and interpretation, can help overcome barriers to accessibility and efficiency. For instance, real-time speech-to-text transcription can automate the documentation of parliamentary debates, while machine learning algorithms can analyze large volumes of legislative data to categorize parliamentary speeches, facilitating searching/referencing, identifying trends and detecting irregularities. AI can also be used to analyze and compare existing and proposed legislative language – pinpointing legal gaps, identifying conflicting statements and performing impact analysis. AI-powered translation tools can break down language barriers, making parliamentary information accessible to more citizens in multilingual and multi-dialect countries. These advancements not only streamline processes but also enhance the inclusivity and reach of parliamentary monitoring efforts, enabling organizations to provide more timely and accurate insights into government activities.

- **Kosovo:** In 2023, the deputy mayor of Pristina launched a pilot of a generative AI-powered transcription of parliamentary proceedings. In collaboration with the private sector (shqip.ai) and the nonprofit sector (Open Data Kosovo), this project aimed to both transcribe parliamentary data and create accessible visualizations to bolster public engagement. The pilot ended after the deputy mayor lost reelection.

Technology Type

Tools under this use case have typically opted for AI-powered transcription tools. These tools use the live speech-to-text functionalities of artificial intelligence to significantly reduce the time required by staff to accomplish these administrative tasks. Transcripts can then be checked manually for errors before being uploaded to public-facing platforms or applications that present the transcriptions in standardized, searchable formats.

Opportunities

Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness: AI-powered transcription tools significantly reduce the amount of staff time required to ensure access to complete information on parliamentary proceedings. This staff time can then be redirected toward other public engagement and administrative work.

Increased Transparency: By providing standardized, searchable formats for transcriptions and translations, these tools streamline access to crucial public proceedings and facilitate transparency efforts.

Enabling Multilingual Participation: Translation tools in particular have the potential to remove barriers to participation for minority language speakers in multilingual societies. By making parliamentary information accessible in more languages, speakers of these languages are then more able to ensure transparency from officials and advocate for their interests in parliament.

Challenges

Limits to Translation: AI-powered translation tools can be useful, but they are less reliable for minority languages than for larger languages with more training data available. Nuance or context-specific details may be lost in such cases, requiring clear caveats about the language of record, unless the translation is officially reviewed and approved.

OVERARCHING TRENDS

Over the last decade, citizen-led parliamentary monitoring has adapted and experimented with technology in new and innovative ways. The organizations interviewed for this report have shown that harnessing emerging technologies to increase parliamentary accountability, transparency and public engagement is both possible and promising. These interviews have provided important evidence of effective strategies for using technology for parliamentary monitoring that can be adapted to other contexts and frameworks. They have also shown the recurring challenges that PMOs face in implementing new technical tools, providing examples of important roadblocks for PMOs and their partners to address going forward.

Promising Practices

1. **Partnerships with Media**: Organizations that have collaborated with media outlets have seen greater success in public engagement, especially in contexts where parliaments' engagement with CSOs is limited or is marked by contention. This trend is evident in the experiences of DL, JAMP, Serenata de Amor and Elas no Congresso, where media partnerships significantly boosted tool visibility and impact.
2. **The Role of PMO Networks:** Local and regional PMO networks can significantly enhance the impact of individual organizations. By collaborating, members can explore opportunities to share resources for common activities, such as technology platforms, data analysis tools or joint campaigns for disseminating results. While some costs, like access to shared tools or platforms, can be more easily distributed, other resources, such as specialized staff or country-specific initiatives, may still require individual investment. This approach allows organizations to exchange experiences and best practices, identify common challenges and strengthen their collective capacity to address issues across different contexts.
3. **User-Centered Design**: Tools that prioritize ease of use, clear design and accessible data foster sustained public engagement. This needs to be coupled with a periodic assessment of tools for any adjustments and regular promotion of platforms.

Persistent Challenges

1. **Political Will:** The success of PMO tools often hinges on the willingness of MPs and government officials to engage with digital platforms and release timely data. Across organizations, the lack of sustained political buy-in remains a barrier. In some countries, the political tide is shifting toward less transparency, including targeting civil society monitoring groups that may receive funding for their work from international donors. A growing number of governments have also recently passed anti-NGO laws (also known as foreign agents laws) aimed at restricting civil society activities and access to donor funding.
2. **Funding and Sustainability:** A shifting and unpredictable funding landscape can significantly limit PMO ability to consistently maintain, update and scale their tools, potentially resulting in a negative public opinion about the tools, or the PMO itself, if the information is perceived to be out of date or irrelevant.
3. **Digital Literacy and Access:** In many contexts, particularly in lower-income regions, digital literacy and access to stable internet services limit the reach and impact of monitoring tools.
4. **Ongoing Technical Expertise:** Building and maintaining the technology tools used for parliamentary monitoring, such as integrating APIs, using AI and data scraping tools, or even maintaining a website, can require access to contracted developers or personnel with more advanced technical background. Securing funding for ongoing maintenance and updates for these tools, or replacing technical expertise lost with staff turnover, are key challenges in ensuring the longevity of the technology deployed.

CONCLUSION

Parliamentary monitoring tools offer opportunities for promoting transparency, holding governments accountable and fostering civic participation. These tools have created new ways for citizens to engage with parliamentary processes and track legislative developments – information that has traditionally been unavailable to the average citizen, or difficult to comprehend. Such tools have also led to new opportunities to make elected officials more accessible and accountable to constituents' inquiries and demands.

Despite the increases in transparency and engagement they offer, the effectiveness of these platforms is often contingent on several key factors: strong political will, active engagement from both policymakers and the public, and sustainable funding models. Many organizations have faced significant obstacles, including resistance from political actors, lack of technical resources and challenges in maintaining user interest. Financial constraints are a common issue, particularly when it comes to maintaining and upgrading technology. Additionally, the ability of these tools to influence policy outcomes is often hindered by limited political buy-in and the complexities of local political systems.

Nevertheless, many organizations have found innovative ways to use technology to drive accountability. By creating user-friendly tools that engage citizens and encourage dialogue, many PMOs have been able to build public trust and influence policy conversations, including legislation. The role of partnerships, both local and international, has also been instrumental in expanding the reach and impact of these initiatives. Ultimately, while the challenges are considerable, the numerous tools and approaches developed by PMOs for the various use cases described in this report demonstrate the critical role technology can play in strengthening democratic institutions and promoting government transparency.

Cover photo courtesy of the Ecuadorian National Assembly.

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