Terms of Reference (ToR)

Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiative (OPC)

1. Background and Rationale

Sri Lanka stands at a critical moment of political and institutional transformation. The election of a new Government, has brought with it a renewed national commitment to restoring public trust, strengthening institutional accountability, and advancing a model of governance that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens. This moment calls not only for policy reform, but for a deeper transformation in the relationship between citizens and the State.

Parliament, as the central institution of democratic representation, law-making, and oversight, is at the heart of this transformation. Its legitimacy and effectiveness depend on the extent to which it is accessible, transparent, responsive, and accountable to the people it serves.

Globally, these imperatives have given rise to the concept of Open Parliament, which applies the principles of open government to legislative institutions[1]. An open parliament is one that promotes transparency, participation, accountability and inclusivity throughout the legislative process, and actively seeks to strengthen trust between citizens and democratic institutions.

International experience—through initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), Inter Pares, and the Open Parliament e-Network (OPeN), supported by programs like Inter Pares—demonstrates that parliamentary openness is not a single reform, but an ongoing, adaptive process. It requires:

- Institutional platforms within parliament
- Cross-party collaboration
- Sustained engagement with civil society
- Structured reform processes such as Open Parliament Action Plans

These global experiences also highlight that parliaments play a unique role in open government by:

- Legislating for openness and transparency
- Holding the executive accountable
- Opening government processes to public scrutiny
- Creating space for dialogue across political divides

In Sri Lanka, the establishment of the Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiativereflects both this global momentum and a national recognition that strengthening democratic institutions requires deliberate, collective, and sustained effort. The OPC is therefore envisaged not merely as

[1] https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/open-parliaments/

a parliamentary grouping, but as a Member-led reform platform within Parliament, endorsed and driven by its Members, enabling Members of Parliament to work across party lines, in collaboration with stakeholders, to advance openness, rebuild trust, and strengthen democratic governance. The OPC will reinforce the role of Members of Parliament as champions of reform, both within Parliament and in their engagement with citizens, helping to strengthen political ownership and sustainability across political parties.

2. Purpose and Mandate

The purpose of the Parliamentary Caucus on open Parliament Initiative is to:

Promote transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and inclusivity in parliamentary processes, in support of Sri Lanka's commitment to democratic renewal and people-centered governance.

This mandate reflects both national priorities and global standards. It recognizes that openness is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen democratic legitimacy, improve decision-making, and enhance public trust.

The OPC will serve as a catalyst for institutional change, working to embed open parliament principles within parliamentary culture, systems, and practices.

In fulfilling its mandate, the OPC will:

- Promote greater openness in parliamentary information and processes
- Strengthen Parliament's accountability and oversight functions
- Facilitate structured and meaningful citizen engagement in legislative processes
- Advance inclusive practices, ensuring that all segments of society can participate
- Promote co-creation of reforms with civil society and stakeholders, while ensuring that Parliament retains ownership and decision-making power over reform priorities and its full implementation
- Contribute to the development and implementation of Open Parliament commitments and action plans, aligned with OGP and global standards

The Caucus will operate on the principle that Parliament should be "open by default," ensuring that information and processes are accessible unless there are legitimate reasons for confidentiality.

3. Objectives

The OPC will pursue a set of strategic objectives aligned with the four pillars of Open Parliament, while drawing on both Sri Lanka's context and global best practice.

3.1 Enhancing Transparency

Transparency is foundational to democratic legitimacy. In Sri Lanka, where rebuilding public trust is a priority, improving access to parliamentary information is essential.

The OPC will promote a shift toward proactive transparency, ensuring that citizens can access timely, relevant, and understandable information about parliamentary work.

This includes:

- Promoting publication of legislation, committee proceedings, and parliamentary outputs
- Supporting digital platforms and open data systems
- Enhancing accessibility of information across languages and formats

Global experience shows that transparency must go beyond information release and enable citizens to understand and engage with parliamentary processes meaningfully**.**

3.2 Strengthening Public Accountability

Accountability lies at the core of democratic governance. Parliament plays a dual role: holding the executive accountable and being accountable to the public.

The OPC will work to strengthen both dimensions by:

- Promoting mechanisms for public scrutiny of parliamentary performance
- Advancing transparency and accountability mechanisms for members and staff
- Supporting transparency in oversight and legislative functions
- Encouraging systems that enable citizens to track decisions and outcomes

Evidence from OGP processes highlights that effective parliamentary engagement strengthens accountability not only within Parliament, but across the broader governance system.

3.3 Promoting Citizen Participation

Meaningful citizen participation is essential for responsive governance. Global experience demonstrates that participation improves policy outcomes, enhances legitimacy, and strengthens trust.

The OPC will promote structured and inclusive mechanisms for participation, including:

- Public consultations on legislation
- Petitions and citizen engagement platforms
- Public hearings and outreach initiatives

Importantly, participation will be approached not as a one-off exercise, but as a continuous dialogue between Parliament and citizens**.**

3.4 Advancing Inclusivity

Inclusivity ensures that openness is not limited to a few, but accessible to all. In Sri Lanka's diverse social and regional context, this is particularly critical.

The OPC will promote:

- Engagement of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities
- Accessibility across languages and abilities
- Outreach to underserved regions and communities

Global experience cautions that openness reforms must avoid being purely technical and instead ensure that they genuinely expand who can participate and influence decision-making.

3.5 Supporting Open Parliament Reform Processes

Drawing from OGP, the OPC will play a central role in supporting structured reform processes.

This includes:

- Developing Open Parliament Action Plans, co-created with civil society
- Aligning parliamentary reforms with national open government commitments
- Promoting institutional reforms that are sustainable across political cycles

Globally, such action plans are recognized as key tools for translating political commitment into measurable and time-bound reforms.

4. Guiding Principles

The OPC will operate based on a set of principles that reflect both Sri Lanka's governance vision and international standards.

At its core is the principle of **people-centered governance**, ensuring that parliamentary processes are responsive to citizens' needs and aspirations.

The principle of **co-creation** will guide engagement with civil society, reflecting global best practice that reforms are most effective when developed collaboratively.

The principle of **cross-party collaboration** will ensure that the OPC functions as a neutral platform, enabling dialogue and continuity beyond political cycles.

The principle of **"open by default"** will guide transparency, while recognizing legitimate institutional constraints.

Finally, the principle of **institutional sustainability** will ensure that reforms are embedded within parliamentary systems, rather than remaining isolated initiatives.

5. Membership

The Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiative shall consist of Members of Parliament who voluntarily commit to advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and inclusivity within parliamentary processes.

Membership of the Caucus is grounded in the recognition that an open parliament must reflect the diversity, plurality, and lived realities of the people of Sri Lanka. As such, the composition of the OPC will go beyond formal representation and seek to embody the spirit of inclusive and people-centered governance that underpins the broader reform agenda.

In this regard, the OPC will strive to ensure that its membership reflects:

- Multi-party representation**,** bringing together Members from government and opposition to foster cross-party dialogue and collaboration
- Gender-balanced representation**,** promoting equitable participation of women and men in leadership and decision-making
- Mandatory inclusion of youth representation**,** recognizing the importance of emerging leadership and intergenerational perspectives in shaping the future of democratic governance
- Representation of Sri Lanka's diverse communities**,** including Members representing:
    - Malayaha Tamil communities
    - Muslim communities
    - Other historically underrepresented or regionally diverse groups

This approach acknowledges that openness is not only about access to information, but also about who is represented, who participates, and whose voices are heard in parliamentary processes**.**

Membership will therefore be guided by the principle that the Caucus should reflect the social, cultural, and political diversity of the country**,** ensuring that openness reforms are inclusive, equitable, and nationally relevant.

5.1 Participation and Commitment

Membership in the OPC carries with it a clear expectation of active engagement and commitment.

Members are expected to:

- Participate regularly in Caucus meetings and activities
- Contribute to discussions, initiatives, and reform processes
- Serve as champions of open parliament principles within Parliament and in their engagement with citizens

To ensure continuity and effectiveness, members will be expected to demonstrate consistent participation. In this regard:

- Attendance at Caucus meetings is considered essential**,** and
- Failure to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable justification may result in a review of continued membership

This provision is intended not as a punitive measure, but as a means of ensuring that the OPC remains an active and results-oriented platform**.**

5.2 Structure and Leadership

To support effective functioning and coordination, the OPC will establish a Core Committee**,** which will provide leadership and guide the work of the Caucus.

The Core Committee will consist of:

- Two Co-Chairs**,** preferably representing different political parties, to ensure neutrality and cross-party leadership
- Four Deputy Chairs**,** reflecting diversity in political affiliation, gender, representation and leadership
- A Secretary**,** drawn from the Parliamentary Secretariat, responsible for administrative coordination
- A Convener**,** responsible for administrative coordination and facilitation

This structure reflects both international good practice and local stakeholder inputs, ensuring shared leadership, cross-party ownership, and institutional support**.**

5.3 Engagement and Interaction

In line with the principles of openness and co-creation, the OPC will maintain regular engagement with stakeholders beyond Parliament**.**

In particular:

- The Caucus will hold quarterly engagement meetings with civil society organizations (CSOs)
- These engagements will serve as a platform for:
    - Dialogue and feedback
    - Co-creation of reform initiatives
    - Strengthening trust and collaboration between Parliament and citizens

Such structured engagement reflects global best practice, which emphasizes that parliamentary openness must be grounded in sustained interaction with society**.**

5.4 A Living and Inclusive Membership

Membership of the OPC will be dynamic and evolving, allowing for the inclusion of new Members who demonstrate commitment to its principles.

Ultimately, the strength of the Caucus will depend on the extent to which its membership reflects not only political representation, but also a shared commitment to democratic renewal, institutional integrity, and public trust**.** Through this approach, the OPC aims to serve as a model of inclusive, collaborative, and forward-looking parliamentary leadership in Sri Lanka.

6. Governance Structure

The Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiative will adopt a governance structure that reflects its core values of inclusivity, collaboration, cross-party ownership, and institutional sustainability**.** Recognizing that advancing parliamentary openness requires both political leadership and broader societal engagement, the OPC will be supported by a multi-layered governance framework that brings together Members of Parliament, parliamentary administration, and external stakeholders.

This structure is designed not only to ensure effective coordination and decision-making, but also to reflect the principle that open parliament reforms are most successful when they are collectively shaped, broadly owned, and institutionally anchored**.**

6.1 Core Committee

At the center of the OPC's governance will be a Core Committee (refer to 5.2), responsible for providing strategic direction, guiding implementation, and ensuring continuity of the Caucus's work.

The Core Committee will serve as the primary leadership body of the OPC, responsible for:

- Setting strategic priorities and guiding the work plan
- Convening and facilitating Caucus meetings
- Ensuring alignment with parliamentary procedures and institutional frameworks
- Representing the OPC in engagements with stakeholders and partners

This leadership model reflects both international good practice and local stakeholder inputs, emphasizing shared ownership, inclusivity, and institutional grounding.

6.2 General Membership

The broader membership of the OPC will consist of all participating Members of Parliament, who will contribute to discussions, support initiatives, and promote open parliament principles within their respective roles.

The full Caucus will serve as a platform for:

- Dialogue and exchange of ideas
- Collective decision-making
- Building consensus across political divides
- Sharing experiences and learning

6.3 Advisory Board

In recognition that parliamentary openness extends beyond Parliament itself, the OPC will establish an Advisory Board comprising external stakeholders who can provide technical expertise, diverse perspectives, and linkages to broader society.

The Advisory Board will play an important supportive role functioning strictly in a non-decision-making and advisory capacity, with all strategic direction, oversight, and decision-making authority remaining fully with Members of Parliament of the OPC by:

- Providing technical and policy advice to the OPC
- Contributing to the development of Open Parliament initiatives and action plans
- Supporting evidence-based decision-making
- Strengthening linkages between Parliament and society
- Facilitating innovation and knowledge exchange

The Advisory Board will reflect a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders, including:

- Academia and research institutions**,** to provide analytical and evidence-based inputs
- Public sector representatives**,** including relevant government institutions
- Civil society organizations and local actors, including grassroots and community-based organizations
- Former Members of Parliament, who can bring institutional memory and experience
- Youth representatives**,** including young leaders and advocates
- Representatives from Student Parliaments or youth-led governance platforms**,** to ensure intergenerational perspectives
- Development partners and donor representatives, in an observer and advisory capacity, to:
    - Share global experience and comparative lessons
    - Provide technical expertise and support
    - Facilitate knowledge exchange and learning opportunities

Development partners will participate in a manner that respects the independence and ownership of Parliament, with their role limited to advisory, technical, and knowledge-sharing functions, and without involvement in decision-making processes.

This composition reflects the understanding that open parliament reforms must be informed by diverse experiences, expertise, and societal voices**,** and that engagement with youth and emerging leaders is critical for long-term democratic sustainability. The Advisory Board will function in a non-decision-making, advisory capacity, ensuring that the OPC retains its parliamentary ownership while benefiting from external insights and collaboration.

6.4 Secretariat Support

The OPC will be supported by a Secretariat, anchored within the Parliamentary administration.

The Secretariat will:

- Provide administrative and logistical support
- Coordinate meetings, documentation, and communication
- Support implementation and follow-up of decisions
- Facilitate engagement with stakeholders and partners

This institutional anchoring is essential to ensure that the work of the OPC is sustained, coordinated, and integrated within parliamentary systems**.**

6.5 Engagement and Interface Mechanisms

To operationalize its commitment to co-creation and inclusivity, the OPC will establish structured mechanisms for engagement with external stakeholders.

These will include:

- Quarterly engagement meetings with civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Periodic consultations with the Advisory Board
- Thematic dialogues on specific reform areas
- Public outreach and engagement initiatives

These mechanisms will ensure that the OPC remains connected to societal perspectives and that its work is responsive, relevant, and grounded in citizen needs**.**

7. Work plan and Key Activities

The Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiative will develop and implement a structured and evolving work plan that reflects Sri Lanka's national priorities, the current governance reform context, and global good practices in advancing parliamentary openness.

Recognizing that meaningful reform requires both institutional strengthening and public engagement, the OPC's work plan will be implemented through a phased and prioritized approach that distinguishes between immediate, medium-term and longer-term actions, allowing the OPC to demonstrate quick wins while building momentum for deeper institutional reform. This approach distinguishes between:

- an initial pre-co-creation phase, focused on internal institutional readiness,
- a co-creation phase, grounded in Open Government Partnership (OGP) principles, and
- a subsequent implementation phase, driven by jointly developed commitments.

In line with global open parliament practice, the OPC's work plan will not be developed in isolation. Rather, it will be co-created with civil society and stakeholders, ensuring that it is inclusive, participatory, and responsive to citizen priorities (refer Annex 2). The internal actions identified by the OPC during a workshop in March 2026 represent foundational steps to enable an effective and credible co-creation process.

The OPC is uniquely positioned within Parliament to serve a broader institutional role. Unlike sectoral committees or issue-based caucuses, the OPC has the potential to function as a cross-cutting reform platform, bringing citizens closer to governance and strengthening the relationship between Parliament and the public.

7.1 Pre-Co-Creation Phase: Institutional Establishment and Internal Readiness

In its initial phase, the OPC will prioritize strengthening its internal foundations to ensure that it is institutionally prepared to lead a meaningful co-creation process. These actions, identified through the workshop, reflect the recognition that openness must first be anchored within parliamentary systems and practices.

Key internal actions will include:

- **Clarifying and strengthening the institutional mandate of the OPC**, including exploring its positioning within parliamentary procedures and its role in advancing openness as a national governance priority
- **Developing a strategic direction and preliminary action framework**, which will serve as a basis for engagement with stakeholders during the co-creation phase
- **Designing and operationalizing a monitoring and accountability mechanism**, to guide implementation and ensure transparency in the OPC's work
- **Exploring procedural and institutional enhancements**, including:
    - Consideration of amendments or alignment with Standing Orders to strengthen openness and public engagement
    - Establishment of quorum and procedural arrangements for effective functioning of the Caucus
- **Ensuring inclusive composition and representation**, including attention to district-level diversity, gender balance, youth inclusion, and professional representation
- **Institutionalizing the OPC within Parliament**, including:
    - Integration of OPC activities into the Parliamentary calendar
    - Establishment of a dedicated platform or website to support communication and transparency
- **Strengthening operational sustainability**, including:
    - Exploring budgetary allocations within Parliament
    - Engaging development partners for technical support and knowledge exchange

These preparatory actions are intended to ensure that the OPC is credible, organized, and strategically positioned to engage stakeholders in a structured and meaningful manner.

7.2 Co-Creation Phase: Development of the Open Parliament Work plan

Building on its internal readiness, the OPC will lead the development of its work plan through a co-creation process with civil society (including academia, professional associations) in full alignment with OGP principles.

This phase represents the core of the OPC's approach and reflects a fundamental shift from internally driven planning to collaborative and participatory reform design. Through structured engagement, the OPC will work with civil society organizations, stakeholders, and the public to identify priorities, define commitments, and shape the direction of parliamentary openness in Sri Lanka.

This process will culminate in the development of a co-created Open Parliament Action Plan, with clear, measurable, and time-bound commitments (refer Annex 2).

Importantly, this co-created Action Plan will also position Parliament to play a leadership role in supporting Sri Lanka's re-engagement with the Open Government Partnership (OGP)**,** contributing to broader national open government efforts.

7.3 Implementation Phase: Delivering and Sustaining Reform

Following the co-creation and adoption of the Open Parliament Action Plan, the OPC will move into an implementation phase, focused on delivering commitments and sustaining reform momentum.

Implementation will be guided by:

- The co-created Action Plan and agreed priorities
- Ongoing engagement with civil society and stakeholders
- Transparent monitoring and public reporting mechanisms (Refer section 8 for more information)

The OPC will ensure that implementation remains adaptive and responsive, incorporating feedback, learning from experience, and adjusting approaches as needed.

8. Monitoring, Learning, and Adaptation

The Parliamentary Caucus on Open Parliament Initiative will establish a robust, transparent, and participatory system for monitoring, learning, and adaptation, recognizing that advancing parliamentary openness is an iterative and evolving process that requires continuous reflection, evidence-based decision-making, and responsiveness to citizen needs. In line with global good practice under the Open Government Partnership (OGP), Inter Pares and ParlAmericas, the OPC will adopt a results-oriented and learning-driven approach, ensuring that its work is not only implemented, but also assessed, refined, and strengthened over time.

8.1 Results-Based Monitoring and Progress Tracking

The OPC will develop a structured monitoring framework to track progress against its work plan and, subsequently, the Open Parliament Action Plan.

This will include:

- Defining clear objectives, outputs, and indicators aligned with the four pillars of Open Parliament (transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusivity)
- Establishing baseline assessments to measure progress over time
- Tracking both:
    - Outputs (e.g., activities completed, tools developed), and
    - Outcomes (e.g., improvements in access, engagement, and public trust)

Where feasible, the OPC will draw on existing international tools and methodologies, including:

- OGP-aligned commitment tracking frameworks
- Self-assessment approaches used in Open Parliament initiatives globally

This results-based approach will ensure that the OPC's work is measurable, accountable, and impact-oriented**.**

In addition, the OPC will publish quarterly or biannual public progress updates on the implementation of OPC activities and commitments using accessible reporting formats, including summaries, citizen-friendly briefs, and digital communication platforms, to communicate progress and key decisions to the public

8.2 Participatory Monitoring and Co-Creation of Accountability

Consistent with OGP principles, monitoring will not be limited to internal processes. The OPC will promote participatory monitoring, ensuring that civil society and stakeholders play an active role in assessing progress.

This will include:

- Engaging civil society organizations (CSOs) in reviewing progress against commitments
- Establishing mechanisms for public feedback and input
- Facilitating periodic multi-stakeholder review sessions

Such approaches strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the OPC's work, ensuring that accountability is shared and externally validated, rather than internally driven alone.

8.3 Transparency and Public Reporting

To reinforce trust and accountability, the OPC will adopt a proactive approach to transparency in monitoring and reporting**.**

This will include:

- Publishing regular progress updates and reports on OPC activities and outcomes
- Sharing key findings, lessons learned, and challenges encountered
- Making information accessible in clear, user-friendly formats

Where appropriate, reporting will align with OGP reporting standards, enabling Sri Lanka to connect its parliamentary reforms with global accountability frameworks.

This transparency will ensure that the OPC not only promotes openness, but also models it in its own operations**.**

8.4 Learning, Reflection, and Continuous Improvement

The OPC will embed a culture of learning within its work, recognizing that reform processes require flexibility, reflection, and adaptation.

This will include:

- Conducting periodic reflection sessions within the Caucus to assess progress and identify areas for improvement
- Documenting and sharing lessons learned and good practices
- Encouraging peer learning among Members of Parliament and stakeholders

In addition, the OPC will actively engage in international learning and exchange**,** including:

- Participation in global platforms such as:
    - Open Government Partnership (OGP)
    - Inter Pares and OPeN initiatives
    - ParlAmericas networks
- Learning from comparative experiences of other parliaments
- Adapting relevant practices to the Sri Lankan context

This approach ensures that the OPC remains globally informed while locally grounded**.**

8.5 Adaptive Management and Responsiveness

The OPC will adopt an adaptive management approach, enabling it to respond to emerging challenges, opportunities, and stakeholder feedback.

This will involve:

- Regularly reviewing and updating priorities and activities
- Adjusting the work plan based on evidence, feedback, and evolving context
- Ensuring flexibility in implementation while maintaining strategic direction

This adaptive approach is particularly important in the Sri Lankan context, where governance reforms are dynamic and require continuous alignment with national priorities and citizen expectations**.**

8.6 Institutionalization of Monitoring and Learning

To ensure sustainability, the OPC will work toward embedding monitoring and learning practices within parliamentary systems.

This may include:

- Integrating OPC monitoring processes within parliamentary reporting structures
- Building capacity of parliamentary staff and Members in results-based monitoring and evaluation
- Developing tools and systems that can be sustained beyond individual leadership cycles

9. Conclusion

The establishment of the Open Parliamentary Caucus represents a timely and forward-looking step in strengthening Sri Lanka's democratic institutions and rebuilding trust between Parliament and the people. At a moment of renewed national commitment to accountability, inclusivity, and people-centered governance, the OPC provides a practical and collaborative platform to translate these principles into action.

Through its cross-party composition, structured engagement with civil society, and alignment with global open parliament standards, the OPC is uniquely positioned to serve as both a driver of institutional reform and a bridge between Parliament and citizens**.** Its work—grounded in transparency, participation, accountability, and inclusivity—will contribute not only to improving parliamentary processes, but also to strengthening the broader governance ecosystem.

The success of the OPC will depend on sustained commitment and leadership from its Members. By working collectively, across party lines and in partnership with citizens, the Caucus can demonstrate that Parliament is responsive, responsible, and committed to serving the public interest.

Ultimately, the Open Parliamentary Caucus reflects a shared national aspiration: to build a Parliament that is **closer to the people, stronger in its mandate, and trusted by those it represents**, contributing meaningfully to Sri Lanka's democratic renewal and its engagement with the global open government community.

Annex 1: Guidance for Co-Creation of the Parliamentary Caucus for Open Parliament Initiative Action Plan

1. Introduction

This annex outlines a brief structured approach for the Parliamentary Caucus for Open Parliament Initiative (OPC) to develop its Open Parliament Action Plan through a process of co-creation. Drawing on the principles and practices of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), as well as guidance from ParlAmericas and the Open Parliament Network, it emphasizes that meaningful reform must be developed collaboratively with citizens and stakeholders.

Co-creation is not simply a procedural requirement; it is central to the legitimacy, effectiveness, and sustainability of open parliament reforms. It ensures that initiatives are grounded in real needs, reflect diverse perspectives, and are jointly owned by Parliament and society.

2. Principles Guiding Co-Creation

The co-creation process should be guided by a set of core principles that reflect both global standards and Sri Lanka's governance context. These principles should inform not only the design of the Action Plan, but also the way in which the process itself is conducted.

At its core, co-creation requires:

- **Inclusivity** – ensuring representation of diverse stakeholders, including civil society, academia, youth, and marginalized communities
- **Transparency** – openly communicating the process, timelines, and decisions
- **Meaningful participation** – creating opportunities for stakeholders to influence outcomes, not merely provide input
- **Accountability** – ensuring that stakeholder contributions are reflected in the final Action Plan
- **Collaboration and shared ownership** – fostering a sense of joint responsibility between Parliament and society

These principles are essential to ensuring that the Action Plan is not only technically sound, but also credible and publicly owned.

These principles are essential to ensuring that the Action Plan is not only technically sound, but also credible and publicly owned. In the Sri Lankan context, the co-creation process should also be sensitive to political and institutional dynamics, including differing political priorities, institutional cultures, and potential resistance and or support to reform. The process should therefore promote dialogue, consensus-building, and trust across party lines, while recognizing the need to navigate reforms in a pragmatic and politically informed manner.

3. Co-Creation Process

The development of the Open Parliament Action Plan will follow a structured, iterative process that combines technical rigor with inclusive engagement.

3.1 Preparation and Institutional Commitment

The process begins with establishing a clear institutional commitment within Parliament. This includes defining the scope, objectives, and timeline of the Action Plan, as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities within the OPC.

Key actions at this stage include:

- Securing leadership buy-in within the OPC and Parliament, led by the OPC Co-Chairs and Core Committee
- Defining the scope and ambition of the Action Plan, with support from the Secretariat and technical partners (i.e Coalition for Inclusive Impact) where relevant.
- Establishing a coordination mechanism to guide the process, including clarification of roles between OPC leadership, the Parliamentary Secretariat, civil society partners, and external technical actors.

This stage sets the foundation for a credible and well-managed co-creation process.

3.2 Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Design

A comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise should be undertaken to identify the range of actors who should be engaged. Particular attention should be given to ensuring diversity and inclusion, so that the process reflects the full spectrum of Sri Lankan society.

Stakeholders may include:

- Civil society organizations and community-based groups
- Academia, research institutions and professional bodies
- Youth groups and representatives of student governance platforms
- Media and private sector actors
- Representatives of marginalized or underrepresented communities

Engagement methods should be carefully designed to ensure accessibility, including both in-person and digital platforms where appropriate. To avoid duplication and consultation fatigue, the OPC should adopt a strategic and phased engagement approach, including clustering consultations around thematic priorities, utilizing representative platforms and networks, and sequencing consultations in a manner that balances inclusivity with efficiency.

3.3 Baseline Assessment and Priority Setting

Before defining commitments, it is important to establish a clear understanding of the current state of parliamentary openness. This involves assessing existing practices, identifying gaps, and drawing on both evidence and stakeholder perspectives.

This stage may include:

- Conducting a self-assessment of Parliament's performance across the four pillars (transparency, accountability, participation, inclusivity)
- Reviewing existing laws, policies, and practices

- Identifying key challenges and opportunities for reform

As an initial step toward this process, the Parliamentary Caucus for Open Parliament Initiative convened in March 2026 for a workshop to develop the Terms of Reference of the OPC. During this workshop, participants undertook a preliminary assessment of the Parliament of Sri Lanka and identified key priority areas for intervention.

These preliminary areas of focus included improving public access to Parliament and enhancing the citizen experience; leveraging digital tools and innovation to expand transparency and engagement; strengthening public communication through simplified, citizen-friendly information and proactive disclosure; promoting civic education and public awareness on parliamentary processes and open government principles; and advancing inclusive participation through structured stakeholder engagement. In addition, the importance of strengthening collaboration with civil society, other parliamentary bodies, and government institutions was highlighted as essential to embedding openness within the broader governance ecosystem.

These initial findings provide a foundation for the more comprehensive and participatory assessment to be undertaken during the co-creation process. The subsequent stages of consultation and Action Plan development should therefore build directly on these initial discussions and priorities, ensuring continuity in the reform process and demonstrating that stakeholder engagement is cumulative rather than repetitive.

The outcome of this stage should be a set of priority reform areas that reflect both national needs and stakeholder input.

3.4 Multi-Stakeholder Consultations

Building on the identified priorities, the OPC will facilitate a series of structured consultations and dialogues. These engagements should be inclusive, well-documented, and designed to encourage open and constructive discussion.

Consultation formats may include:

- Workshops and roundtable discussions
- Thematic dialogues on specific reform areas
- Online consultations and feedback mechanisms
- Engagement through existing structured dialogue platforms (i.e. CII) and citizen engagement mechanisms, which can support outreach, strengthen interaction between Members of Parliament and citizens, and contribute to participatory monitoring and accountability processes

Importantly, the process should ensure that:

- Inputs are systematically captured and analyzed
- Feedback is shared transparently with participants
- There is clarity on how inputs will inform the Action Plan

3.5 Drafting the Action Plan

The insights gathered through consultations will be translated into a draft Action Plan. This stage requires balancing ambition with feasibility, ensuring that commitments are both meaningful and achievable.

Each commitment should be:

- Clearly defined and aligned with the four pillars of Open Parliament
- Measurable, with defined outputs and outcomes
- Time-bound, with clear implementation timelines
- Assigned to responsible actors within Parliament

Alignment with OGP standards and Sri Lanka's broader governance priorities will be essential.

3.6 Validation and Public Review

The draft Action Plan should be shared for broader validation, allowing stakeholders to review and provide feedback. This step reinforces transparency and strengthens the legitimacy of the process. This may include:

- Public dissemination of the draft
- Validation workshops or stakeholder review sessions
- Incorporation of feedback into the final version

3.7 Adoption and Public Launch

Following validation, the Action Plan will be formally adopted within Parliament and publicly launched. This marks an important milestone, signaling Parliament's commitment to openness and reform.

The launch should be accompanied by:

- Clear communication of commitments and expected outcomes
- Public dissemination through multiple channels
- Engagement with media and stakeholders

4. Implementation, Monitoring, and Continuous Engagement

Co-creation does not end with the development of the Action Plan. Its implementation must continue to reflect the same principles of inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration.

Key elements of this phase include:

- Participatory monitoring, involving civil society in tracking progress
- Regular public reporting on implementation status
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement, including periodic review meetings
- Engagement through existing parliamentary and multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms (i.e. CII) to sustain communication, coordination, and citizen participation throughout implementation
- Adaptive learning, allowing the OPC to refine its approach based on experience and feedback

This ensures that the Action Plan remains dynamic, responsive, and relevant.

5. Strategic Importance for Sri Lanka

The co-created Open Parliament Action Plan represents more than a technical document; it is a strategic instrument for advancing democratic governance. It has the potential to:

- Serve as a flagship reform initiative within Parliament
- Demonstrate Sri Lanka's commitment to transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement
- Support the country's re-engagement with the Open Government Partnership (OGP)
- Strengthen trust between Parliament and the public

Through this process, the OPC can position itself as a key driver of both national and global open government efforts.

6. Conclusion

Co-creation represents a shift toward more inclusive and collaborative governance. By embedding this approach in the development of its Open Parliament Action Plan, the OPC can ensure that its work is not only effective, but also legitimate and widely supported—contributing to a more open, responsive, and trusted Parliament.

Resources

1. Open Parliaments Fact Sheet: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Open-Parliaments_Fact-Sheet_Sept2023_EN.pdf
2. Guide to develop Open Parliament Action Plans: https://parlamericas.org/uploads/documents/Exec-Summary_ENG_May2019-online.pdf
3. Toolkit for advancing legislative openness: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/toolkit-for-advancing-legislative-openness/
4. OGP Handbook on developing National Action Plans: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/OGP-National-Handbook-Development-of-Action-Plans-and-Commitments-2025.pdf