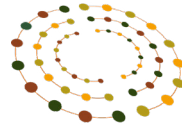




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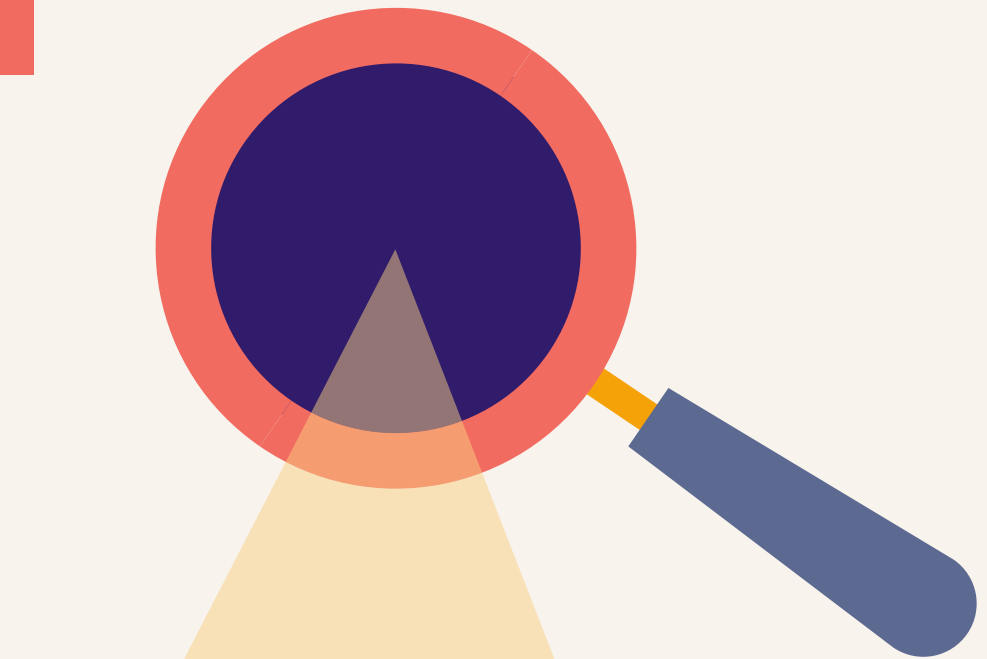


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*EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments*



# Handbook for Parliamentary Oversight of Large-Scale Infrastructure Projects

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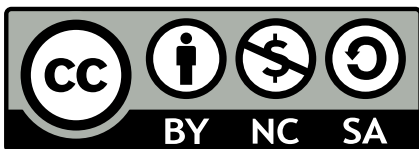
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# Preface

## Parliaments: Ensuring infrastructure works for people

The roads, bridges, railways, ports, and digital networks that connect our communities do more than move goods and people—they underpin economic development and distribute opportunities. If infrastructure projects bypass certain communities or serve only select interests, they are likely to exacerbate inequalities and create tensions, which can in turn undermine the sustainability and viability of the projects themselves. Infrastructure projects must also be effectively overseen to ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, and careful monitoring at all stages. Otherwise, projects not only risk their own failure but may contribute to broader social fragmentation and political distrust.

This is why parliamentary oversight of large-scale infrastructure projects is so important. Democratically elected parliaments represent societies in their geographic, social and economic diversity. With autonomy from the executive that implements infrastructure projects, and a constitutional duty to oversee the work of government, parliaments are in a unique position to ensure that infrastructure projects are effectively planned, budgeted, implemented, and evaluated. In carrying out this role, parliaments help assure that projects deliver inclusive economic and social benefits, while mitigating risk to public and private investment, and preventing countries from taking on an unsustainable debt burden.

For over thirty years, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) has worked to strengthen democratic institutions worldwide. Through our experience, we've learned that sustainable development requires more than economic investment—it demands robust democratic governance. Infrastructure projects, which often consume vast public resources and shape societies for generations, exemplify this need.

This handbook has been developed by the Inter Pares | Parliaments in Partnership project, which is delivered by International IDEA and funded by the European Union (EU). The initiative connects partner

parliaments in emerging democracies globally with EU Member State Parliaments, peer-to-peer, to share expertise and strengthen their capabilities. Through this unique model of collaboration, Inter Pares supports parliamentarians in their duties of legislation, oversight of the executive, voting and monitoring the use of the national budget, and, above all, representing the citizens who elect them. This handbook provides tools to help parliaments fulfil all these duties in the context of infrastructure projects.

Effective parliamentary oversight of infrastructure requires both technical knowledge and political courage. Parliamentarians must navigate complex financial arrangements, evaluate environmental impacts, and ensure meaningful public consultation. They must ask hard questions: Who benefits from this project? What are the long-term costs? How will marginalized communities be affected? This handbook provides frameworks for addressing these challenges systematically.

Well-governed infrastructure projects can transform societies, connecting communities to markets and citizens to their governments. Poorly managed projects drain public resources, deepen inequalities, and erode trust in democratic institutions. The difference often lies in the quality of parliamentary oversight. I therefore encourage parliamentarians and their staff to use this resource actively. By strengthening parliamentary oversight of infrastructure, we can renew not just roads and bridges but our democracy itself.



**Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora**  
Secretary-General  
International IDEA



# Foreword

## Ensuring that infrastructure investment works for everyone

Sustainable economic and social development depends on functional and adaptive infrastructure, both physical and virtual. Around the world, nations are embarking on infrastructure development, a critical engine for economic growth, strategic autonomy, social progress, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union, as the world's largest development cooperation donor, is proud to champion this global effort through our **Global Gateway strategy**. We have already mobilized more than €300 billion investments in smart, clean, and secure links in digital, energy, and transport sectors, while also strengthening health, education, and research systems worldwide.

Infrastructure investments must **benefit local citizens and economies**. They need to be well-planned, resilient, inclusive, fiscally sustainable, and maintained over time. Effective oversight, transparent procurement, sound policy frameworks, and attention to social, environmental and governance (ESG) impacts are essential to ensure that infrastructure becomes a catalyst for national development.

It is in this context that the **role of parliament** as the guardian of public interest becomes more critical than ever. As the directly elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians hold a unique and constitutionally vital mandate to ensure that these large investments are **transparent, inclusive, and deliver** lasting value for all citizens. Effective parliamentary oversight is not a bureaucratic hurdle. It is a **fundamental democratic mechanism** – ensuring that infrastructure projects align with national development priorities, meet the highest social and environmental standards, and are executed with the utmost integrity.

This expert handbook, “A Handbook for Parliamentary Oversight of Large-Scale Infrastructure Projects,” provides an invaluable independent resource for parliamentarians and their staff in this crucial endeavor. It offers a practical framework, grounded in international best practices, for navigating the complexities of infrastructure governance. From the initial planning stages to project completion and beyond, this guide offers a suite of tools and strategies parliaments can use to demand accountability, scrutinize decision-making, and ensure that the **interests and voices of their constituents** are heard.

The principles of good governance, transparency, and equal partnership are at the very heart of the Global Gateway strategy. We believe that infrastructure development must be a **collaborative and inclusive process**, one that empowers local communities and strengthens democratic institutions. This handbook serves as a vital companion to these principles, offering a clear roadmap for translating the ideals of good governance into concrete action.

This timely contribution to the field of parliamentary strengthening will contribute to empowering parliamentarians to effectively oversee large-scale infrastructure projects and ensure that any investment delivers on its promise of a more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable future for all.



**Erica Gerretsen**

DG International Partnerships  
Director for Human Development,  
Migration, Governance and Peace



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## Introduction to the Handbook

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### **Part IV: Fostering a Culture of Accountability**

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# Introduction to the Handbook

Public infrastructure is an essential pillar for economic growth, sustainable development and the reduction of social inequalities. However, in many lower- and middle-income countries, infrastructure remains severely inadequate. According to World Bank estimates, one billion people live more than two kilometres from a road passable all year round, 675 million have no access to electricity in their homes and almost four billion people live without Internet access. Investments in infrastructure reduce transaction costs, enable markets to function efficiently, improve access to basic services, enhance resilience to shocks and create jobs. The global investment needs in the infrastructure of developing countries are immense, and the annual investment gap is estimated by the United Nations (UN) to be around 2.5 trillion USD (€2.2 trillion). A World Bank report<sup>1</sup> estimates that investments amounting to 4.5 per cent of GDP would enable lower- and middle-income countries to achieve their infrastructure-related sustainable development goals (SDGs).

**This handbook provides parliamentarians and their staff with a practical framework for overseeing large-scale infrastructure projects by providing tools, strategies and best practices. It is based on a set of key principles of effective parliamentary oversight, derived from recommendations of international organizations and international best practices, illustrated by examples. It underscores that effective oversight is not a bureaucratic impediment but a crucial function for ensuring that these massive investments deliver sustainable national development, provide value for money and avoid the pitfalls of corruption and unsustainable debt.<sup>3</sup>**

The guide is structured around the five key phases of the project lifecycle, offering specific tools, key questions and document checklists for each stage. It helps the user to understand the stages and risks of such projects, identifies points of parliamentary involvement and explains available oversight instruments. Several appendices in this document and additional online reference materials (Annexes 1–7) hosted on the [webpage](#) provide practical guidance for committees, Members of Parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff.

For parliamentarians, this means that decisions on infrastructure investment are among the most consequential. Not only must projects be financed, but they must also be well-planned, resilient, inclusive, fiscally sustainable and maintained over time. Effective oversight, transparent procurement, sound policy frameworks, and attention to climate and environmental impacts are essential to ensure that infrastructure becomes a catalyst for national development.

By exercising their lawmaking, budgetary and scrutiny powers, legislatures can ensure that large infrastructure projects meet public needs, adhere to agreed principles and standards, and deliver value for money in a transparent way. Creating robust mechanisms for parliamentary oversight and for strengthening parliamentary capacities is, therefore, a critical step toward ensuring that infrastructure serves the public good rather than narrow particular interests. Strengthening parliamentary oversight of large infrastructure projects enhances accountability and helps ensure better outcomes for citizens.<sup>2</sup>

The handbook emphasizes the need for parliaments to build internal capacity and forge strong alliances with external bodies like supreme audit institutions (SAIs) and civil society to fulfil their constitutional mandate as guardians of the public interest. The goal is to empower parliaments to support the design and implementation of infrastructure that is transparent, inclusive and sustainable.

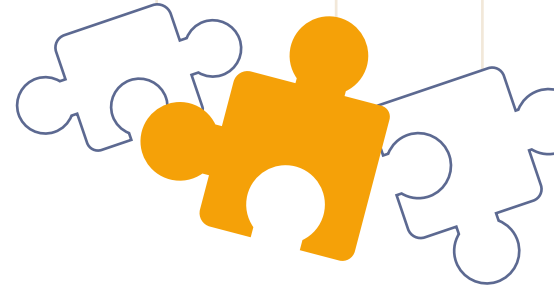
<sup>1</sup> Rozenberg, J. and Fay, M. (eds) 'Beyond the Gap: How Countries Can Afford the Infrastructure They Need while Protecting the Planet' IBRD/The World Bank, World Bank Group, Washington, 19 February 2019.

<sup>2</sup> OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on the Governance of Infrastructure*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme, 'Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account', Global Parliamentary Report (2017).



# Part I: The Foundations of Effective Parliamentary Oversight of Large-scale Infrastructure Projects



## 1.1 Infrastructure—Milestones for Development in a High-risk Environment

Large-scale infrastructure projects—such as roads, railways, ports, power plants and grids, water supply and sanitation systems, and digital networks—are essential catalysts for economic development and public welfare, particularly in lower- and middle-income countries where this infrastructure may be underdeveloped, acting as a barrier to growth and enhanced citizen well-being. When well-conceived and effectively implemented, such projects can transform communities, reduce poverty and stabilize post-conflict regions. They are strategic investments that stimulate economic growth, improve living conditions, provide access to essential services and foster inclusive regional integration. Such ‘mega-projects’ are typically characterized by high investment volumes, frequently involve a high organizational and technical complexity, and have long-lasting impacts on economies, societies and the environment.

To enable developing countries to finance large-scale infrastructure, several major international initiatives have been launched committing enormous financial resources. These initiatives include China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),

the European Union’s Global Gateway,<sup>4</sup> the G7’s Compact with Africa<sup>5</sup> and Japan’s Partnership for Quality Infrastructure,<sup>6</sup> and they span all types of infrastructure. Together, they represent an unprecedented push to bridge the infrastructure gap in developing regions. This influx of capital presents a historic chance for nations to build the foundations for future prosperity.

However, such opportunities aren’t without risks. Assessments of some of these initiatives note both strengths and weaknesses. These large-scale projects often require vast financial resources, involve complex planning and procurement processes, and have long implementation timelines. Experience shows that the benefits of such projects can fall short due to governance issues like weak regulatory frameworks, insufficient transparency, unclear decision-making processes, complex financing structures, cost overruns, delays, poor construction standards and corruption vulnerabilities. The very nature of these initiatives—often bilateral and with less stringent transparency requirements than traditional multilateral development banks—can exacerbate pre-existing governance weaknesses.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, [Global Gateway](#), accessed 25 February 2026.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, [Global Gateway overview](#), accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>6</sup> G20, G20 Compact with Africa, accessed 30 October 2025; Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Partnership for Quality Infrastructure](#), accessed 30 October 2025.



The financial implications can be particularly important. Without effective oversight, substantial external financing, often through complex loan agreements, can lead to high debt accumulation and long-term fiscal vulnerability. Several countries participating in the BRI, for example, have accumulated significant debt, raising serious concerns about their long-term sustainability, and what's more, in some cases, countries have defaulted on debt. The complexity, scale and often opaque nature of financing mechanisms create significant vulnerabilities that only robust, independent oversight can mitigate.

Furthermore, these projects can have significant and irreversible environmental and social consequences. The displacement of communities, threats to biodiversity and conflicts over land use are common challenges. Large-scale projects are often criticized for inadequate adherence to environmental and social standards, highlighting the immense responsibility that rests on national institutions to safeguard their people and natural heritage.

Consequently, the need for diligent parliamentary oversight is even more urgent. If infrastructure investments are not carefully assessed for their economic viability, or if loan terms are not transparent, nations run the risk of falling into a crippling debt trap that can jeopardize public finances for generations. Infrastructure investment is thus a powerful tool for progress, but one that can cause immense damage if not implemented with accountability, transparency and foresight.



## 1.2 Parliament's Unique Mandate as Guardian of Public Interest

In the face of these high stakes, parliaments have a unique and constitutionally vital role to play. Composed of elected representatives of the citizens, the legislature is entrusted with representing the public interest, enacting laws, approving budgets and holding the executive branch accountable.<sup>7</sup> For large-scale infrastructure projects—which are resource-intensive, politically sensitive and often span multiple electoral cycles—parliamentary oversight serves as the primary democratic safeguard against inefficiency, corruption and the misuse of public funds.<sup>8</sup> As representatives of the people, parliaments have an obligation to ensure that interests are balanced. They can encourage citizens to participate in decision-making and, through regular consultations with all stakeholders, bring in a wide range of perspectives.

The parliamentary mandate thus extends beyond mere fiscal oversight. It includes responsibility to ensure that infrastructure investments result in positive and equitable outcomes for all citizens and deliver their promised impacts. Parliaments are in a unique position to provide democratic oversight throughout the lifecycle of infrastructure projects. Through budget debates, committee hearings, consultations with stakeholders, investigative reports and legal reforms, parliamentarians can question the rationale behind projects, demand rigorous risk assessments and champion safeguards that protect affected communities and the environment. Their engagement ensures that infrastructure investments align with national development priorities and public needs, promote resilience and respect principles of environmental and social sustainability rather than short-term political considerations. Parliaments can also monitor procurement processes, track expenditure and evaluate project performance, thereby contributing to the efficient use of public funds and the prevention of misuse or misallocation.

This parliamentary oversight function has a powerful positive effect that extends beyond the projects themselves. Effective oversight of infrastructure builds public trust in governance and state institutions, which in many nations is a significant challenge to investment and development.<sup>9</sup>

Large, opaque infrastructure projects can worsen this perception, often being viewed as sources of corruption or as serving only the narrow interests of a few. By making these projects transparent and holding the executive to account for its performance, parliament performs a vital act of democratic legitimacy. Public participation ensures that infrastructure projects reflect local needs and priorities. Parliament can promote inclusive consultation processes, demand transparency and ensure that affected communities are heard through public hearings or community impact assessments. Meaningful participation also builds trust and reduces the risk of conflict or project failure. When citizens see their elected representatives ensuring that massive public investments deliver tangible benefits, it reinforces the legitimacy of the entire democratic system and demonstrates that it contributes to the common good.

Despite this critical role, many parliaments face practical challenges in exercising effective oversight, including limited technical expertise, insufficient access to timely and relevant information and institutional constraints in engaging with highly specialized sectors such as transport, energy or urban development. This handbook addresses these challenges by providing parliamentarians and their staff with the principles, tools and practical guidance needed to fulfil their mandate as the ultimate guardians of the public interest in infrastructure development.

<sup>7</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme, 'Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation' (2020).

<sup>8</sup> Transparency International, 'Strengthening parliamentary oversight' (2023).

<sup>9</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme, 'Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account', Global Parliamentary Report (2017).



## 1.3 Key Principles of Effective Parliamentary Oversight

For parliaments to exercise effective control over major infrastructure projects, certain framework requirements and conditions must be met. Effective parliamentary oversight is built upon a set of interconnected key principles that create a robust framework for accountability. These principles, derived from international best practices, are the essential prerequisites for ensuring that infrastructure projects are legitimate, sustainable and deliver value for the nation. The key principles and cornerstones of effective parliamentary oversight are summarized below and illustrated with individual best practice examples from different countries. A complete and detailed discussion of these key principles representing a sound international standard for parliamentary oversight on infrastructure is provided in **Appendix A**. Parliaments in lower- and middle-income countries should strive to comply with these principles as far as possible to best fulfil their unique and crucial role in infrastructure investments.

### 1.3.1 Sound Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Parliamentary Oversight and Investment Integrity

A clear, predictable and enforceable legal framework is the non-negotiable foundation for all investment and oversight activities. Especially in lower- and middle-income countries, the necessary framework conditions often need to be established to effectively oversee infrastructure projects. These conditions relate both to the framework for implementing investments and to the rights of parliaments to supervise projects throughout their entire life cycle. Parliaments must recognize their responsibility for a sound legal and regulatory framework as the foundation of good infrastructure governance. A comprehensive list with suggested legislation to ensure sound infrastructure governance and oversight is provided in **Appendix E**. Parliaments should have a clear role in approving, monitoring and evaluating infrastructure projects as parliamentary scrutiny otherwise lacks authority. By the ability to

point to a specific legal or regulatory violation—in a procurement process, an environmental assessment or a debt ceiling—parliaments can claim legal responsibility and enforce corrective measures. A first step for any parliament seeking to strengthen its oversight capacity is, therefore, to review and fortify the underlying legal architecture. Oversight of large infrastructure projects requires understanding complex technical, financial and legal issues, and parliaments must ensure that they have adequate capacity and expertise.

Sound legal and institutional frameworks for parliamentary oversight and investment integrity encompasses different aspects:

- **Legislative approval and democratic oversight:** Parliaments must have a clear, legally defined role in approving, monitoring and evaluating major infrastructure projects. This includes the scrutiny and approval of national development plans, significant debt commitments and public-private partnership (PPP) agreements. Parliamentary involvement ensures transparency and the democratic legitimacy of projects from the outset.
- **Robust legal and regulatory frameworks:** Parliament is responsible for enacting and regularly updating the laws that govern how projects are planned, financed, procured and managed. This includes legislation covering public investment management, procurement, environmental protection, land acquisition, independent regulatory agencies and anti-corruption measures. A strong legal and regulatory framework is the foundation of good infrastructure governance and ensures that infrastructure projects comply with national laws, international agreements and sustainability standards. It provides continuity for projects that span multiple governments and guards against politically motivated decisions.



- Oversight across the project lifecycle:** Parliament should assess and review infrastructure projects through all key stages—planning, financing, implementation and evaluation—and oblige government to submit regular progress reports during important project milestones. Early-stage oversight is especially critical at the project appraisal and selection phase. By reviewing feasibility studies, risks, cost-benefit analyses (CBAs), environmental and social impacts, and progress updates, MPs can spot issues early, control costs and ensure projects achieve their intended public benefits. Oversight roles may be assigned to a dedicated infrastructure committee or to existing standing committees.
- Developing parliamentary capacity for oversight:** Parliaments must have adequate capacity and expertise to review complex technical, financial and legal issues of large infrastructure projects. Building the knowledge and skills of MPs and their staff in areas like project appraisal, public finance and budgeting, engineering basics and procurement rules can be accomplished through specialized training programmes, hiring expert advisors or establishing support units like parliamentary budget offices (PBOs), parliamentary research services and/or libraries with appropriate research capacities.

### Anti-corruption Frameworks in Practice

#### Nigeria (2007) – Overhauling Procurement Laws to Curb Corruption



To address systemic corruption in the awarding of government contracts, including for large-scale infrastructure, Nigeria’s National Assembly passed the Public Procurement Act in 2007.<sup>10</sup> The Act established the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to ensure transparency and competition in the procurement process. It also requires that all federal contracts be publicly advertised and awarded through a competitive bidding process. While challenges in implementation persist, the Act provides a strong legal basis for parliamentary committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee (PCA), to scrutinize procurement processes and hold government agencies accountable for irregularities.

#### Uganda (2010)— Protecting Whistleblowers to Expose Corruption



The Uganda Parliament passed the Whistleblowers Protection Act in 2010 to provide a legal framework for the protection of individuals who expose corruption and other malpractices in the public and private sectors.<sup>11</sup> By protecting whistleblowers from retaliation, the Act encourages the reporting of corruption in infrastructure projects. Parliamentary committees can use the information provided by whistleblowers to launch inquiries and hold corrupt officials to account.

<sup>10</sup> Public and Private Development Centre, [Public Procurement Act](#), 2007 [n.d.], accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Uganda Legal Information Institute, [Whistleblowers Protection Act](#), 2010, accessed 30 October 2025.



### 1.3.2 Fiscal Responsibility and Value for Money

At the heart of parliamentary authority is the ‘power of the purse’, Parliament must ensure cost-effectiveness, risk assessment and financial sustainability, and prevent projects from being incompatible with national budgets and creating unsustainable debt burdens. Parliament must act as the ultimate guardian of fiscal discipline, ensuring that projects are affordable over their entire lifecycle, economically viable and represent genuine value for money for taxpayers. By adopting robust anti-corruption safeguards and diligently monitoring their enforcement, parliaments—in collaboration with auditors, anti-corruption authorities and civil society—can act as a bulwark against the misuse of public funds. Independent oversight institutions—SAIs and other watchdog agencies—are an essential complement to parliamentary oversight, especially for large and technically complex projects.

The responsibility of parliaments for the financial sustainability of infrastructure, the evaluation of the value for citizens, and the prevention of corruption and mismanagement is reflected in the following principles:

- Fiscal responsibility and budget control**  
 Parliament must ensure that projects align with national budgets and do not create unsustainable debt burdens. Parliamentary oversight is crucial to ensure these projects are financially responsible and sustainable. During implementation, parliament must monitor budget adherence and rigorously challenge cost overruns. Parliamentary approval should be required for any major borrowing, and legislators must carefully evaluate the long-term fiscal risks associated with foreign loans and PPPs. This requires systematic measurement, disclosure, and monitoring of multi-year commitments, including contingent liabilities.
- Independent auditing and evaluation**  
 Parliaments should make full use of independent audits and evaluations as tools to strengthen oversight. SAIs are their most critical allies, providing the independent, expert analysis needed to scrutinize complex projects.

Parliaments, particularly through their PACs, must review SAI reports on infrastructure projects, hold officials accountable for any identified misuse of funds or irregularities, and press the government to take corrective actions and to implement audit recommendations. By commissioning or reviewing independent impact evaluations, legislators can also gain important insights for more informed decisions.

- Anti-corruption measures and integrity**  
 Given that megaprojects can be magnets for corruption, parliaments must legislate and enforce robust anti-corruption safeguards. This includes strict procurement laws, conflict-of-interest rules, financial disclosure requirements for officials and strong whistleblower protection laws. Parliaments can also push for robust fraud and corruption risk management during project implementation and require anti-corruption action plans. Parliament itself must also uphold the highest ethical standards to ensure its oversight is credible.

#### Fiscal Responsibility in Practice

##### Zambia (2022)— Requiring Parliamentary Approval for Loans



In response to concerns over accumulating public debt from large-scale infrastructure projects, Zambia’s Parliament passed the Public Debt Management Act, which mandates parliamentary approval for all government loans.<sup>12</sup> This legislation gives parliament the authority to scrutinize the terms and conditions of loans, question the feasibility and alignment of the projects with national development plans, and ultimately, approve or reject the financing. The Act empowers parliament to effectively control their executive’s borrowing for infrastructure projects, aiming to enhance transparency and debt sustainability.

<sup>12</sup> National Assembly of Zambia, [Public Debt Management Act, 2022](#), Zambia (2022), accessed 30 October 2025.



### Denmark (2000s)— Embedding Contingency Reserves to Curb Cost Overruns



Drawing on academic research on megaproject cost overruns, the Danish Parliament has supported a financing model for new transport infrastructure that includes mandatory, transparent contingency reserves. This approach involves systematically accounting for the risk of cost escalation from the outset.<sup>13</sup> Parliament's role in approving budgets that are based on this more realistic approach to project financing demonstrates a sophisticated form of financial scrutiny that aims to prevent predictable cost overruns and protect public funds.

Parliaments are in a unique position to promote this holistic, long-term perspective by insisting on the following principles:

- **Policy coherence and long-term planning:** Infrastructure projects do not exist in isolation. Legislators play a vital role in examining whether proposed projects are coherent with national priorities and needs and international commitments. Parliaments have to ensure that individual infrastructure investments are aligned with the country's long-term strategic vision, such as national development plans, sectoral master plans and commitments to the SDGs. They should examine the coherence and synergies with other infrastructure initiatives.
- **Ensuring effective project governance and coordination:** Large infrastructure projects often involve many ministries, agencies, private contractors and multiple levels of government, making coordination essential. Parliament should monitor governance structures, require clear frameworks such as project management units or steering committees and ensure mechanisms for resolving conflicts are in place. Oversight should also cover risk management, with full disclosure of technical, financial and political risks, and contingency plans to address potential disruptions.
- **Environmental and social sustainability:** Large infrastructure works can have profound environmental and social impacts. Parliaments must insist that all major projects undergo rigorous environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs). Climate resilience is also of growing importance for infrastructure investments. Parliaments must act as watchdogs to ensure that legal safeguards protecting local communities, biodiversity and cultural heritage are upheld. This includes ensuring meaningful public consultation and fair compensation or resettlement for those affected by projects to ensure that infrastructure measures are socially balanced. A detailed outline of an impact assessment is provided in Annex 2 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials.

### 1.3.3 Coherence, Good Governance, Sustainability and Public Engagement

Today's infrastructure governance needs to shift its focus from outputs to outcomes. It is no longer sufficient for parliamentarians to ask: 'Was the project built on time and on budget?' The critical questions are now: 'Did the project improve citizens' lives? Was it environmentally and socially sustainable? Did it create inclusive growth?' Infrastructure projects need to align with a country's long-term strategic vision and development plans. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a globally recognized framework for assessing the long-term impact of public policy and infrastructure investment. Furthermore, the global investment landscape is increasingly shaped by Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria. Transparency towards the public through parliament is a fundamental principle to enable effective oversight and accountability in infrastructure projects. By demanding that projects meet these international standards, parliaments improve sustainability and make their countries more attractive to international investors and partners.

<sup>13</sup> Flyvbjerg, B., 'Curbing optimism bias and strategic misrepresentation in planning: Reference class forecasting in practice', *European Planning Studies*, 16(1), (2009), pp. 3–21.



- **Access to information and transparency:** Effective oversight requires adequate information. Legislatures must have legal rights and practical access to timely and reliable information on relevant project data, from initial project proposals and contract terms to financial disbursements and performance indicators. They should also advocate for the proactive public disclosure of key documents—such as feasibility studies, impact assessments, contracts and progress reports—through dedicated transparency portals or other accessible means. This empowers civil society and the media to act as partners in the oversight process.
- **Stakeholder consultation and citizen’s participation:** This principle is closely linked to guaranteeing access to project data and transparency. The integration and consultation of stakeholders is basically the responsibility of government departments or contractors, as is often required under social and environmental impact legislation. But giving a voice to and listening to the interests of all stakeholders is also a unique aspect of parliamentary representation and democratic oversight. It transforms parliamentary infrastructure oversight from a purely technical exercise into a comprehensive inclusive governance process. Public engagement enhances parliamentary oversight effectiveness while strengthening democratic accountability for infrastructure decisions. Given the importance of fostering public engagement and stakeholder consultation, **Appendix I** provides standard operating procedures to ensure systematic public participation while maintaining appropriate management and coordination of the process.

## Sustainability and Public Engagement in Practice

### Canada (2019)— Indigenous Knowledge and Federal Environmental Assessments



Canada’s Impact Assessment Act requires that the potential impacts of major projects on Indigenous peoples must be assessed and Indigenous knowledge integrated into the decision-making and environmental assessment process, recognizing Indigenous knowledge as a valuable source of information.<sup>14</sup> The Act, and the associated government policies, provides a framework for Indigenous communities to participate more fully in the assessment of projects that could affect their rights and territories. Parliamentary committees oversee the implementation of the Act, ensuring that this new approach is being effectively applied.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, [Impact Assessment Act](#) (2019), accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, [‘Policy Context: Indigenous Participation in Impact Assessment’](#) (2019), accessed 30 October 2025.



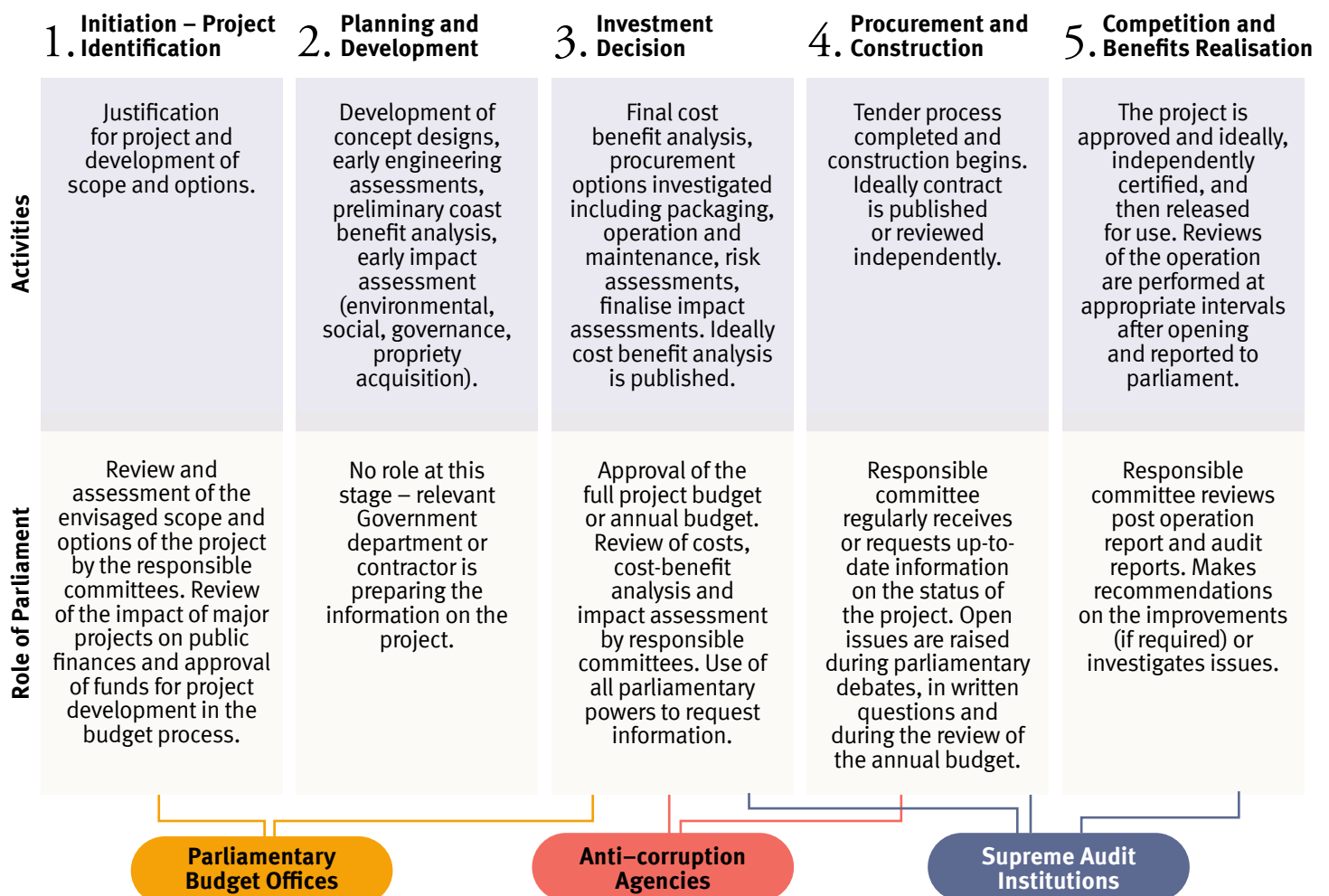
# Part II: A Practical Guide to Parliamentary Oversight Across the Infrastructure Lifecycle



## 2.1 The Project Lifecycle and Key Intervention Points for Parliaments

Large infrastructure projects frequently take more than five years to design, build and start operating. They are often built in conjunction with other projects and have a significant impact on governments’ current budgets, which are likely to extend beyond the legislative period. Parliamentary oversight can be exercised at various stages of the infrastructure policy and the project cycle of large-scale infrastructure projects. Figure 1 outlines the five main stages of a large-scale infrastructure project with the activities performed in each stage and the role parliament plays.

**Figure 1:** The Five-Stage Infrastructure Project Lifecycle





The following five key project phases of large-scale infrastructure projects can be distinguished within the project lifecycle:

1. **Initiation:** Identification of the need for the project
2. **Planning and Development:** Preparation of concept designs, impact assessments and project plans
3. **Investment Decision:** Final CBA and government approval to commit funds
4. **Procurement and Construction:** Tendering, contract award and physical implementation
5. **Completion and Benefits Realization:** Handover, operation and ex-post evaluation

To be effective, parliamentary oversight must be strategic and timely. The infrastructure project oversight checklist in **Appendix C** provides parliamentarians with standardized procedures for examining infrastructure projects across their lifecycle. It is important to emphasize that parliaments should be involved at a very early stage of the process.<sup>16</sup> Parliament's ability to influence a project's fundamental outcomes is highest during the initiation and planning phases. Intervening at the right moment can fundamentally alter a project's trajectory for the better, while late-stage interventions once contracts are signed and construction begins are often limited to costly and difficult damage control. This 'leverage curve' concept underscores the critical importance of early and continuous engagement. In all project phases, MPs have access to various institutions with different tasks and focus areas that support their scrutiny. Parliamentary budget offices (PBOs), for example, primarily examine budgetary aspects, while independent infrastructure safety agencies focus more on technical aspects and SAIs provide in-depth ex-post analysis of various detailed economic and technical topics. Support from the various institutions should ensure sufficient parliamentary scrutiny at every stage of the project lifecycle. While SAIs and anti-corruption agencies have been established in almost all countries, PBOs or scientific committee secretariats do not exist in all countries.

This part of the handbook provides a practical, chronological guide structured around the five distinct

phases of large-scale infrastructure projects. For each phase, it outlines the objective of parliamentary scrutiny, poses key questions for parliamentarians to ask and lists the essential documents that should be requested and reviewed. A checklist of key questions by project phase is provided in **Appendix D**.

At each stage in the infrastructure cycle, parliaments will focus on different tools and instruments. Depending on the timing of parliamentary intervention, a distinction is made between ex-ante (**before** implementation), **simultaneous** (during implementation) and ex-post (**after** implementation) control mechanisms.

- **Ex-ante oversight**  
Occurs **before** implementation (Phases 1–3). This is the most powerful form of oversight, allowing parliament to shape key decisions, critically question poorly explained assumptions and prevent ill-conceived projects from proceeding. Parliament can challenge unrealistic cost estimates, demand clarification on funding mechanisms or require independent reviews. Parliament should review the project in the context of whether it achieves national and developmental goals and outcomes.
- **Simultaneous oversight**  
Occurs **during** implementation (Phase 4). It refers to reviewing and influencing projects by committee hearings, site visits or parliamentary questions while they are being implemented. This involves monitoring progress, tracking expenditures and demanding corrective action for delays or cost overruns. Parliament should also be reviewing and debating available SAI reports on project milestones or comparable projects.
- **Ex-post oversight**  
Occurs **after** implementation (Phase 5). This is crucial for transparency, accountability and institutional learning, helping to identify whether a project delivered its intended benefits and how future projects can be improved. Typical ex-post tools or instruments include debates of audit results of SAIs or special investigations by parliamentary committees.

<sup>16</sup> OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on the Governance of Infrastructure* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020).



While some parliamentary oversight tasks can be clearly assigned to specific project phases, there are certain oversight aspects that are relevant throughout all project phases. Across all project phases as part of the parliamentary oversight task, parliaments should pay specific attention to corruption prevention, good governance, effective project and performance management, and coordination between project partners, ensuring technology transfer and local value creation to effectively operate and maintain the asset once built. Throughout the whole project lifecycle, parliaments must identify and assess the risks associated with infrastructure measures and recognize early warning signs. An overview on proactive risk identification and mitigation by parliaments and examples of a risk analysis are provided in **Appendix G** and in Annex 4 (hosted on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials).

### Simultaneous Oversight in Practice

#### Uganda (2020s) – Parliamentary Oversight of the Isimba Hydropower Plant<sup>17</sup>



The Parliament of Uganda has exercised ongoing oversight of the 183 MW Isimba Hydropower Plant through committee hearings, technical briefings and site inspections. During construction and early operation, the **Committee on Physical Infrastructure** conducted site visits to assess progress, construction quality and environmental safeguards. Following reports of structural defects in the dam's spillway, the **Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**<sup>18</sup> undertook further oversight visits and hearings with government agencies, engineers and the contractor. The committee subsequently recommended that physical model tests be conducted to determine the causes of the defects and guide appropriate technical remediation.

<sup>17</sup> Africa Energy (2025) *Uganda forces Chinese contractor to carry out repairs at Isimba dam*, accessed 6 March 2026.

<sup>18</sup> Parliament of the Republic of Uganda (2025) *Isimba dam defects: Spillway tests to be conducted in China*, accessed 6 March 2026; Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) (2023) *Parliamentary committee conducts oversight visit to Isimba Hydropower Plant (183 MW)*, accessed 6 March 2026.



## 2.2 Phase 1: Initiation

At this early stage, the goal of parliamentary oversight is to scrutinize the project's fundamental rationale. Parliament must question whether the project is the right solution to a clearly defined problem, ensuring it aligns with the nation's strategic priorities and meets national long-term development plans before significant resources are committed to detailed planning. Justifying the need for the project is closely linked to ensuring value for money and the most efficient use of public funds, particularly in high-risk sectors such as transport, energy or defence. There should be clear accountability for project cost estimates,

and the financing (i.e., through borrowing, PPP and aid funds) should be analysed. Even at this early stage, parliaments should also examine the governance structures for project management and clarify how the progress of the project will be reported to parliament.

Many countries have project appraisal frameworks (Table 1), and these are central to assuring that large infrastructure projects are selected to meet government priorities, represent value for money and are assessed consistently.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 1:** Basic Framework for Initial Project Appraisal

Topic	Detail and Purpose
<b>Project rationale, objectives and targets</b>	Demonstrate consistency with relevant national and sectoral strategies; provide indicative project objectives
<b>Option analysis</b>	Give qualitative explanation of why the proposed project concept is the best approach to meet project objectives
<b>Project description and timetable</b>	Present broad overview of main project elements and the estimated project timeline
<b>Cost and revenue estimates</b>	Provide broad estimates of investment costs and operational costs and give broad indication of possible revenue flows
<b>Project benefits and effects</b>	Give qualitative description of expected benefits and effects, including social development, environmental effects, job creation and regional economic effect
<b>Financing plan</b>	Identify secured and requested project financing from all relevant financing sources
<b>Risk analysis</b>	Identify key project risks and potential impacts on costs, benefits and timetable

Source: based on IMF

<sup>19</sup> International Monetary Fund, PIMA Handbook: Public Investment Management Assessment (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 2022).



## Key Questions for Parliamentarians:

- How was the need for the project demonstrated and what evidence was this based on?
- How does this project align with relevant national and sectoral strategies and approved national development plans?
- Have alternative solutions, including less capital-intensive or smaller options been rigorously considered?
- Is the project likely to deliver value for money?
- Who are the primary beneficiaries of this project and what cost-benefit considerations have been made and on what basis?
- How will its impact on the environment and different social groups (including women and marginalized communities) be assessed?
- Which risks have already been analysed and how are they assessed?
- What is the proposed governance structure for managing the project's development?



## Essential Documents to Request:

- **Project justification/strategic assessment:** A document explaining the need for the project and its consistency with national and sectoral strategies.
- **Option analysis:** A qualitative explanation of why the proposed project concept is the best approach to meet existing service requirements compared to alternatives.
- **Project description and timetable:** Initial rough verbal description of the project and the anticipated schedule.
- **Initial CBAs:** Rough estimates of costs and benefits, and a qualitative description of the expected benefits and impacts, including social development, environmental impacts, job creation and regional economic impacts.
- **Financing plan:** Outline of the funding already committed or envisaged for the project, with the corresponding funding sources.
- **Risk assessment and management plan:** Early identification and assessment of risks and a plan to manage and mitigate risks.
- **Stakeholder engagement plan:** A description of how affected communities and stakeholders will be identified and consulted. Which risks have already been analysed and how are they assessed?



## Warning Signs and Red Flags

When assessing large infrastructure initiatives, it is important to remain alert to certain warning signs that often appear during the early stages. One common pitfall is **'solution-eering'**, where a project is presented as if it were the only possible course of action, without first defining the underlying problem or considering alternative approaches. Another red flag arises when a project **lacks strategic alignment**. If it is not clearly linked to established national or sectoral plans, this may indicate that it is being driven more by political interests or pressure from certain groups than by genuine development needs. A further concern is opaque **decision-making**. If the justification for a project remains vague and no solid evidence is provided to back it up, it becomes difficult to judge whether the investment is well-founded or sustainable.



## 2.3 Phase 2: Planning and Development

During the planning and development phase, key documents are prepared, such as a concept design, which will be further developed into a detailed design, a project plan outlining the activities, tasks, dependencies and timeframes, and an impact assessment. Parliament does not play a significant role in developing the documents, however, as once the above documents have been completed, parliament should request them and ask questions about them. Parliaments may also make procedural requests requiring transparency, explanations or additional information from the executive and administrative bodies involved in project planning and implementation. For very large projects, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Council<sup>20</sup> recommends an ‘independent and impartial expert assessment’ of the project’s cost estimates, financial viability, timetable and risk management plans. Legislators may insist that such independent project assessments be carried out by independent evaluators or authorities and submitted to them.



### Key Questions for Parliamentarians:

- Are the planning and development of the project proceeding according to schedule?
- Can the budgeted costs for planning and development be met?
- Have any unexpected issues been identified and what impact do they have on the project?
- What detailed impact assessments are being conducted and what topics do they cover?
- Have the operating costs and expected returns been thoroughly analysed?
- Will an independent and impartial expert assessment be conducted for the project?



### Essential Documents to Request:

- **Detailed project plans:** Documents with detailed designs and drawings of the project and explanations of the intended effects and outcomes.
- **Detailed project budget and timeframes:** Cost breakdown for tracking actual against expected project expenditure. This should include ongoing operation and maintenance costs.
- **CBA:** Analysis comparing the expected costs of a project or measure with the anticipated benefits.
- **Distributional impact statement:** Analysis identifying benefits to citizens or certain groups.
- **Impact assessments:** Description of the project’s impact on various affected impact dimensions (e.g., economic, environmental, social or cultural impacts).
- **Risk-assessment:** Detailed assessment of the risks associated with the construction and operation of the project, and envisaged risk mitigations.
- **Independent and impartial expert assessment:** Analysis of the project’s impact by independent experts with no involvement or connection to the project.

<sup>20</sup> OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on the Governance of Infrastructure* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), accessed 30 October 2025.



## Warning Signs and Red Flags

Any warning signs already relevant in the initial phase, such as lack of strategic alignment with national or sectoral plans or opaque decision-making, must be carefully monitored with action taken as needed. Another significant warning sign for parliaments is poor quality or lack of detail in the documents and materials (especially regarding the project budget and schedule for construction) submitted after completion of the planning and development phase. Particular attention should also be paid to the ongoing operation and maintenance costs and any revenue expected to be generated by the new asset. Governments may sometimes withhold information or provide incomplete data, either deliberately or due to weak administrative capacities. In particular, if supplements or improvements requested are not provided or questions are not answered satisfactorily by the government, this is a clear indicator of a lack of transparency and a culture of mistrust. Parliament may, therefore, be unable to identify risks early, ensure accountability and safeguard the public interest.

## Oversight During Planning and Development in Practice

### South Korea (1999–present)— Mandatory Independent Reviews at Planning Stage



South Korea has a highly institutionalized system of project appraisal. All large-scale public projects are required to undergo a preliminary feasibility study (PFS) conducted by the Public and Private Infrastructure Investment Management Center (PIMAC) at the Korea Development Institute (KDI).<sup>21</sup> While PIMAC is not a parliamentary body, its independent, rigorous analysis of a project's economic and financial viability provides the National Assembly with a credible, evidence-based foundation for its own review and approval of the project's budget. Projects are thus thoroughly examined for value for money before public funds are committed.

<sup>21</sup> Korea Development Institute, Public and Private Infrastructure Investment Management Center, [Preliminary Feasibility Study](#) (2014), accessed 30 October 2025.



## 2.4 Phase 3: The Investment Decision

This is the critical ‘go/no-go’ point where the government formally decides to commit public funds. During this phase of the project, the detailed design is completed, and a final CBA is prepared (a template for a detailed CBA is provided in Annex 4 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials). The impact assessment should be completed, and parliaments should consult with affected stakeholders and the public. In most cases, parliaments also approve the expenditure for the project at this point. Parliamentary scrutiny must now be at its

most intense, focusing on the robustness of the economic and financial case. Parliaments can examine the project when approving the budget or during debates and votes on the enabling acts. Questions and debates should focus on the detailed draft and the content of the CBA. Project costs and financing mechanisms should be reviewed again. The objective is to ensure the project is viable, affordable and represents a sound use of limited public resources before the nation is locked into long-term financial commitments.



### Key Questions for Parliamentarians:

- Are the project cost calculations realistic and do they include a sufficient buffer for unforeseen contingencies?
- What are the key assumptions underpinning the CBA, particularly regarding demand forecasts and benefit valuations? How sensitive is the final benefit-cost ratio (BCR) to changes in these assumptions?
- Does the project’s budget include the full lifecycle costs, including long-term operation, maintenance and eventual decommissioning?
- What is the project’s impact on the national debt sustainability? Has an independent debt sustainability analysis (DSAs) been conducted?
- If a PPP is proposed, what specific risks are being transferred to the private sector, and what contingent liabilities (e.g. revenue guarantees) remain with the government? Is there a clear value-for-money justification for the PPP model over traditional procurement?
- Have the findings of the ESIA been fully incorporated into the project design and cost, including mitigation measures? Was the community consulted or is a detailed consultation plan available?



## Essential Documents to Request:

- **Detailed design drawings:** To understand the physical scope and impact of the project.
- **Full business case/final investment proposal:** The comprehensive document justifying the investment.
- **Detailed CBA:** Comprehensive costing over the entire project life cycle, including calculations for the BCR and Net Present Value (NPV), and a full breakdown of assumptions.
- **ESIA:** A detailed report on the project's potential impacts (including sustainability goals and gender equality targets) and proposed mitigation plans.
- **DSA:** An analysis of the project's impact on the country's overall debt profile.
- **Procurement plans:** Proposed procurement and contracting approach include details on public debt raising and considerations around PPPs and illustration of planned procurement processes
- **Draft PPP contract or loan agreement:** The terms and conditions of the proposed financing arrangement.



## Warning Signs and Red Flags

Warning signs at this stage may indicate incomplete, misleading or overly positive project documentation. One common risk is optimism bias, where CBAs rely on overly positive assumptions, such as inflated traffic forecasts or underestimated costs and timelines. Another red flag arises from hidden liabilities if not all fiscal consequences of loan agreements or PPPs are disclosed, particularly long-term contingent liabilities that may bind future budgets. A further concern is insufficient contingency planning. If a project budget lacks a reasonable reserve to absorb unforeseen risks or cost increases, parliaments should consider this as a sign of vulnerability and potential financial instability.



## 2.5 Phase 4: Procurement and Construction

Once a project is approved, the focus of oversight shifts from strategic direction to monitoring compliance, performance and risk management. The procurement and construction phases are the most critical stages of a project. Selecting an appropriate procurement method will assist in obtaining best value for money and managing procurement risk. Parliaments should not be involved in the selection of contractors—this is the role of executive bodies—but should have oversight or input into the procurement method and should also have mechanisms in place to monitor the selected contractor’s performance. Aside from requesting project updates, parliaments should proactively question all

known risks or seek information about any critical issues. Members of Parliament (MPs) can also play a vital role in shaping the interface between their communities and those managing the project. The objective is to ensure that the project is being delivered as promised, that public money is being spent correctly, and that the contractor is adhering to all legal, social and environmental obligations. This should enable the efficient use of public and private sector resources and balance key factors such as value for money, timeliness, and quality of design and construction. Examples of a sound procurement methodology and a construction schedule are provided in Annex 5 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials.



### Key Questions for Parliamentarians:

- Was the procurement process for selecting the contractor transparent, competitive and in full compliance with national procurement laws?
- Are project milestones being met on time and within budget? What are the reasons for the delays or cost overruns? What corrective actions are being taken?
- How are the agreed social and environmental management plans being implemented on site?
- How are affected citizens involved and compensated, if applicable? Are there mechanisms for affected citizens to raise grievances?
- Are adequate procedures for approving and managing contract variations (‘scope changes’) in place? How are ‘gold plating’ and unnecessary additions being prevented?
- Are construction standards and material quality being independently verified to ensure the long-term safety and durability of the asset?
- Is an efficient claims management system in place to protect against unjustified contractor demands?
- Is parliament kept informed of any serious problems that arise during the construction phase?



## Essential Documents to Request:

- **Detailed project schedule:** Structured overview to track project progress against planned activities (e.g., Gantt chart).
- **Regular progress reports:** Detailing progress on time, cost and scope, as well as emerging risks.
- **Procurement progress reports:** Overview of the procurement methodology, tender evaluation criteria and progress on the tender.
- **Final signed contract:** Including the allocation of risks between the government and the contractor.
- **Risk management plan and updated risk register:** Monitor how known risks are being managed.
- **Construction and environmental management plans:** The detailed plans for managing the on-the-ground impacts of construction.
- **Interface agreements:** Documents outlining coordination with other projects, agencies, affected communities or utility providers (an example of an interface agreement is provided in Annex 7 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials).



## Warning Signs and Red Flags

During the procurement and construction, parliaments should be alert to certain signals that could indicate underlying serious problems. Repeated **supplementary** budgets are a clear indication of difficulties with project implementation. Another warning sign is single-source **procurement**, where a major contract is awarded without a competitive bidding process. This not only raises concerns about favouritism but also undermines value for money. **Frequent contract variations** are another warning sign as repeated changes to the project scope often lead to escalating costs and delays. A further concern is the **lack of reporting**, particularly when governments fail to provide parliament with regular and detailed progress updates. Problems may remain hidden until they develop into full-scale crises. Additionally, a growing number of **community complaints** regarding environmental damage, safety risks or unfulfilled compensation commitments can be early indicators of poor project management and lack of accountability.

### Oversight During Implementation in Practice

#### Italy—Parliamentary Oversight of EU Recovery and Foreign-funded Infrastructure of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan



The Italian Parliament established a robust system for overseeing the implementation of its National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), which is heavily funded by the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility. Special parliamentary committees in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate monitor the progress of the plan's investments and reforms, including major infrastructure projects. They receive regular reports from the government and can hold hearings with ministers and implementing agencies, ensuring democratic accountability for the use of these significant EU funds.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Camera dei Deputati, '[Attività sul Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza](#)' [n.d.], accessed 30 October 2025.



## 2.6 Phase 5: Completion and Benefits Realization

Oversight does not end when the ribbon is cut. The final phase focuses on ex-post evaluation and accountability. Once the project is launched, depending on the nature of the project, an evaluation should be carried out that includes a review of the CBA and covers not only the construction of the facility, but also its operation and the costs to users. Reports may also propose mitigation measures and recommendations for future projects. Parliaments

should be able to use the information contained in the evaluation to assess whether the benefits have been achieved. The objective is to determine whether the project delivered the benefits promised in the CBA, to hold the government accountable for the final outcomes, and, most importantly, to learn valuable lessons that can be applied to future infrastructure investments.



### Key Questions for Parliamentarians:

- Did the project achieve the economic and social benefits that were promised in the original CBA? How large are the deviations and what are the reasons?
- What was the final total cost of the project compared to the initial approved budget? What were the primary drivers of any cost overruns?
- Has an independent post-completion audit been conducted by the SAI to assess value for money and compliance with the relevant regulations and obligations?
- Are there adequate plans and budgets in place for the long-term operation and maintenance of the new asset?
- What specific lessons have been learned from this project's successes and failures? How are they being institutionalized to improve the planning and delivery of future projects?



### Essential Documents to Request:

- **Post-completion audit report:** A comprehensive financial and performance audit from the SAI.
- **Final project accounts:** A full reconciliation of all project expenditures.
- **Benefits realization report:** A post-opening evaluation to measure the actual benefits against the forecast benefits.
- **Asset handover and operations plan:** The plan detailing the transfer of the asset to the operating entity and the strategy for its ongoing maintenance, including management of emergencies.
- **Maintenance plan:** Systematic breakdown of maintenance costs, schedule and proposed work
- **Utilization report/study:** Examination of what extent the infrastructure facility is actually used.

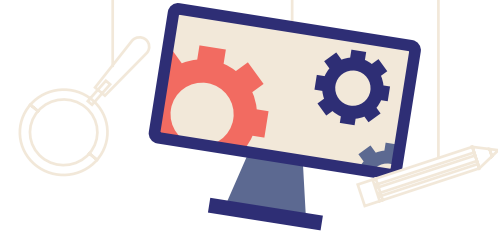


## Warning Signs and Red Flags

In ex-post evaluations, several warning signs can point to significant weaknesses in accountability, planning and long-term sustainability. If there is **no ex-post** evaluation after a project completion, parliaments cannot enforce accountability and opportunities for institutional learning are lost. Another warning sign are so-called **'white elephant' projects**—facilities such as motorways, ports or airports that are underutilized. This typically reflects inaccurate demand forecasts or poor alignment with actual needs. Another major concern is an **underfunding of maintenance**, which causes infrastructure to deteriorate prematurely because no provisions have been made for long-term upkeep.



# Part III: The Parliamentary Oversight Toolkit



Effective parliamentary oversight of infrastructure measures or individual projects requires functioning cooperation with the government or the implementing agencies. Government departments have the resources and detailed information and must, therefore, provide parliament with the necessary documents and information on which to base its scrutiny. This should already be accounted for in legislation on infrastructure projects to simplify the process of cooperation between parliament and the government, for example, by providing for regular project reports and updates and timely responses to inquiries or recommendations from committees. Parliamentary queries on infrastructure projects,

requests for additional documentation or parliamentary recommendations require a timely and adequate response from the government. An assessment scheme to evaluate government response is provided in Annex 1 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials. If parliament considers the cooperation to be not satisfactory, it should call for additional steps to perform its responsibility effectively.

The parliamentary oversight toolkit offers parliament a wide range of instruments for influencing infrastructure projects in the best interests of the population.



## 3.1 Establishing Clear Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Effective oversight depends on a solid legal and institutional foundation. Parliaments have a major role in enacting and updating the laws governing how infrastructure projects are planned, financed, procured and managed.<sup>23</sup> Weak regulatory frameworks create risks of mismanagement, corruption and investor hesitation, especially in PPPs. Parliaments should, therefore, ensure that laws governing land acquisition, procurement, investment, anti-corruption, environment, labour and transparency are clear, enforceable and continuously reviewed. They must also establish rules for dispute resolution and accountability mechanisms, including the rights of parliament to access information and scrutinize government decisions.

Investment financing is another area that requires clear regulations and parliamentary controls. These types of legal framework conditions include financing and governance agreements, such as national infrastructure or sectoral framework laws, rules for public investment management, budget and debt management, PPP regulations, and oversight of concessions. In sectors such as telecommunications, transport and energy, they must ensure that investments meet the needs of the public. Clear mandates for ministries, agencies and regulators ensure accountability and reduce duplication or gaps. Parliamentary committees play a vital role in monitoring implementation and ensuring compliance.

<sup>23</sup> IBRD/World Bank, 'Infrastructure Governance Assessment Framework', World Bank Group, Washington, 24 November 2021.



Finally, the responsibility of the authorities, accountability mechanisms and the rights of parliaments to participate and exercise oversight must be clarified. These regulations will usually not be specific to infrastructure projects, but they generally concern the responsibilities of institutions and the rights of parliaments to enforce accountability. They regulate how parliaments can get information, what documents must be presented to them and what control instruments are available to them. A robust parliamentary oversight system requires the substantial participation of opposition factions. Opposition MPs should have equitable access to committee assignments, information and resources.

By adopting and updating such frameworks, parliaments can align national rules with international standards, ensure investor confidence and provide the legal certainty needed for sustainable infrastructure development. They affect a wide range of areas that are crucial for the implementation of infrastructure projects and can be summarized under the general heading of the rule of law. See [Appendix E](#) for a list of suggested legislation for infrastructure oversight.

## Legal and Regulatory Frameworks in Practice

### South Africa— Parliament and the Infrastructure Framework Law



South Africa’s Infrastructure Development Act, 2014 establishes a statutory framework for the coordinated planning and prioritisation of major infrastructure across all spheres of government. It institutionalises the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) and empowers it to adopt a national infrastructure plan and designate Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) aligned with national development priorities. By creating intergovernmental coordination structures and a national system for identifying and fast-tracking priority projects across their lifecycle, the Act reduces fragmentation and promotes a strategic approach to infrastructure delivery. Executive reporting requirements indirectly strengthen legislative scrutiny over the alignment of infrastructure with national policy goals.<sup>24</sup>

### Peru— Multi-Party Commission for Major Public Projects



The Congress of the Republic of Peru has established special multi-party commissions to oversee specific, large-scale infrastructure projects. For example, a commission was formed to monitor the progress of the Lima Metro project. These commissions provide a dedicated forum for cross-party collaboration in the scrutiny of a single, nationally significant project. Their reports and recommendations can carry significant weight and provide focused, in-depth oversight.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Republic of South Africa (2014) *Infrastructure Development Act 23 of 2014*. Government Gazette No. 37712.

<sup>25</sup> Congress of the Republic of Peru, “Programa País OCDE-Perú Resúmenes ejecutivos y principales recomendaciones”, Peru, accessed 30 October 2025.



## 3.2 Parliamentary Tools and Their Application Across the Project Lifecycle

To conduct effective oversight across the project lifecycle, parliaments have a range of institutional and procedural instruments at their disposal.<sup>26</sup> The scope for parliamentary influence is broad, ranging from the approval of budgets and projects to committee scrutiny, from question rights to investigative powers. Mastering these tools is essential for transforming the principles of oversight into concrete action. This section details the primary mechanisms available to parliamentarians, from the foundational power of committees to the targeted use of questions and inquiries.

**Table 2:** Key Parliamentary Tools and Their Application Across the Project Lifecycle

Not applicable    Essential in the specific lifecycle phase    Recommended in the specific lifecycle phase

Oversight Tool	Phase 1 and 2 (Initiation/Planning)	Phase 3 (Investment Decision)	Phase 4 (Procurement/ Construction)	Phase 5 (Completion/ Benefits)
Budgetary Powers				
Project Approval				
Committee Review				
Plenary Debate				
Parliamentary Questions				
Public Hearings				
Site Visits				
Motions and Resolutions				
Special Inquiries				
Review of SAI Reports				

Systematic performance monitoring enables parliamentary oversight to track infrastructure outcomes over time. Performance indicators can be very helpful for MPs in this context. These can be used as a benchmark for various aspects of infrastructure projects and are intended to measure, for example, quality aspects of the investment or the realization of the expected benefits. **Appendix F** provides an overview of these indicators.

<sup>26</sup> Yamamoto, H., 'Tools for parliamentary oversight, A comparative study of 88 national parliaments', Inter Parliamentary Union (2007).



## 3.3 The Power of the Purse

At the core of parliamentary influence over public infrastructure lies its ‘power of the purse’—the authority to approve or reject government expenditure through the budgetary process.<sup>27</sup> This role is foundational for democratic accountability. Parliaments typically influence project planning and implementation through:

- **Annual budget approval:** Legislators examine proposed capital investment plans and scrutinize line items for infrastructure allocations. They can prioritize projects by additional allocations or withhold funding for specific projects deemed unnecessary or economically unsound.
- **Multi-year expenditure frameworks:** In systems that employ medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEFs), parliaments review and approve forward-looking multi-annual budget ceilings and development priorities.
- **Supplementary and contingency budgets:** Parliaments may approve or reject additional funding requests during the fiscal year—often critical in large-scale infrastructure when project costs escalate or emergency investments are needed.
- **Project approval:** Mega-projects frequently require parliamentary approval on a case-by-case basis or must be included in an approved national development plan. Approval is also often required for the intended financing mechanisms or for entering into substantial commitments and liabilities for infrastructure investments.

The right to approve or amend budgets allows parliaments to scrutinize how each project aligns with national budgets and broader debt management strategies and can help to improve budgetary discipline. In many countries, public investment or budget laws require that major projects be reported as part of annual budget documentation or in standalone updates to the legislature (e.g. annual public debt reports or bulletins providing details about infrastructure-related debts and liabilities). Some legislatures have also begun to integrate evaluation findings into their budget cycles regularly.

### Oversight in the Budget Process in Practice

#### Jamaica— parliamentary monitoring integrated into the budget cycle



The parliament of Jamaica, through its Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC), monitors infrastructure projects as part of the annual budget cycle. The government’s public investment management system (PIMS) provides a framework for the appraisal and selection of projects, and the PAAC scrutinizes the outputs and reports generated by this system.<sup>28</sup> This integration of project oversight into the routine of the budget process ensures that infrastructure spending is regularly reviewed and that projects are held accountable for their performance and alignment with national development goals.

<sup>27</sup> Transparency International, ‘Parliamentary Oversight Tools and Mechanisms’ (2022).

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, ‘Public Investment Management System (PIMS)’, accessed 30 October 2025.



## 3.4 The Power of Committees

Effective parliamentary deliberations require a solid institutional anchoring in parliamentary procedures and responsibilities. The debates in plenary sessions bring transparency for citizens, and voting on bills is at the heart of democracy. But the committee system is the engine room of parliamentary oversight, allowing for specialized, in-depth and continuous scrutiny that is not possible in plenary sessions. Effective oversight of large-scale infrastructure typically requires, on the one hand, a clear allocation of responsibilities to the relevant committees and, on the other, the coordinated action of several key committees typically involved in infrastructure governance. The framework of committees and their attributions vary from parliament to parliament. However, in all democratic parliaments, the roles described in this list will be addressed by one or other committee:

- **Annual budget approval:**

These committees are central to oversight. They review and approve expenditure plans, scrutinize funding mechanisms (including loans, state guarantees and PPPs), and evaluate the fiscal risks associated with major projects. Their role is paramount during the annual budget cycle and when any supplementary funding is requested. They deliberate on budget allocations and the inclusion of investment and operating costs for infrastructure in MTEFs. Sometimes, the budget or finance committee, or a sub-committee, plays the role of a PAC (see below).

- **Infrastructure, economic development or sectorial committees:**

These committees provide technical and policy oversight in areas like transport, roads, bridges, energy supply and water. They scrutinize sectoral strategies, examine alignment with national development goals, evaluate the technical feasibility of project proposals and monitor project execution against timelines and specifications by analysing progress reports. Other tasks

include assessing the macroeconomic impact of infrastructure investments and supporting the development of foreign direct investment. They are the primary body for reviewing project-specific legislation and regulations.

- **Environment or natural resources committees:**

These committees play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of major infrastructure projects. They review major infrastructure initiatives for compliance with legal standards and international best practices, scrutinize measures to address biodiversity loss, pollution, and community displacement, and promote the integration of low-carbon technologies, climate resilience and sustainability in investment decisions. In addition, they oversee the responsible use of natural resources such as water, forests, minerals and land.

- **PACs:** A PAC is the parliament's primary financial watchdog.<sup>29</sup> Its main function is to examine the audit reports of the SAI and hold government officials accountable for the use of public funds. For infrastructure, PACs conduct ex-post scrutiny, investigating financial irregularities, cost overruns and failures to achieve value for money. They often review procurement practices and contractor selection. Furthermore, PACs assess persistent financial risks and ensure disclosure of hidden liabilities. They reinforce the findings of audits by backing the SAI's recommendations for improvements in infrastructure policies, project management practices, procurement practices and internal audit systems. Parliamentary recommendations require systematic government response evaluation to ensure accountability and implementation effectiveness. A framework for assessing government responses is provided in Annex 1 on the [webpage](#) with additional reference materials.

<sup>29</sup> Not all parliaments have a specifically named PAC. The roles of a PAC in these cases are typically carried out by the finance or budget committee, often through a subcommittee established for these purposes.



- Ad-hoc or special enquiry committees:** For mega-projects of exceptional national significance or complexity, parliaments can establish special, multi-party commissions or joint committees. These bodies can provide focused, in-depth oversight, develop specialized expertise and coordinate the work of multiple standing committees. Special enquiry committees are sometimes set up for projects that have encountered serious problems and mismanagement to provide investigative oversight. These committees are temporary parliamentary bodies established to examine specific concerns or crises related to governance, policy or implementation. They may also investigate in-depth financial irregularities, including corruption, misappropriation of funds and unauthorized spending.

### European Parliament— Oversight of Submarine Internet Cables



The European Parliament's committee on industry, research and energy (ITRE) has begun to address the security and geopolitical implications of submarine Internet cables, which are critical cross-border infrastructure. The committee has held hearings and commissioned studies on the vulnerabilities of this infrastructure and the need for a coordinated EU approach to protect it. This represents an emerging area of parliamentary oversight focused on non-traditional, but strategically vital, cross-border infrastructure.<sup>31</sup>

## Committee Work in Practice

### Germany (2012–2020)— Legislative Inquiries into Megaproject Governance Failures



The state parliaments of Berlin and Brandenburg established a joint committee of inquiry to investigate the massive cost overruns and decade-long delays in the construction of the Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER).<sup>30</sup> The committee had the power to summon witnesses, review internal documents and hold public hearings to uncover the root causes of the project's failure. Its final report provided a detailed account of the mismanagement, technical failures and lack of effective oversight that plagued the project, serving as a powerful tool for accountability and a lesson for future megaprojects.

### Pakistan (2019)— Special Committee for a Mega-Project (CPEC)



Given the scale, complexity and geopolitical significance of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Senate of Pakistan created a dedicated parliamentary committee on CPEC as a strategic institutional adaptation to a specific oversight challenge. This special committee allowed for the development of specialized knowledge and a sustained focus required for effective scrutiny, which might be difficult to achieve in a general-purpose committee.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, [Bericht des 1. Untersuchungsausschusses „BER“](#), Germany (2020), accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>31</sup> European Parliament, Committee on Industry, [Research and Energy](#), Documents [n.d.], accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Senate of Pakistan, [Parliamentary Committee on CPEC](#), accessed 30 October 2025.



## 3.5 Procedural Instruments for Demanding Accountability

Beyond the formal structure of committees, parliamentarians have several procedural tools to extract information and enforce accountability.<sup>33</sup>

- **Parliamentary questions (oral and written):**  
To submit oral or written questions to members of government is a fundamental right of every MP. In most cases, executive must respond to the questions within a specified deadline. Targeted questions to ministers regarding project timelines, budget execution, procurement status or compliance with legal requirements can reveal delays, cost inflation or implementation gaps, often prompting public debate and forcing the executive to provide answers on the public record.
- **Public hearings:**  
Committees can use public hearings to gather evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including ministers, government officials, technical experts, civil society organizations and affected communities. Hearings increase transparency, provide valuable technical information and ensure that project decisions reflect public needs and concerns. They also provide platforms to demand political accountability.
- **Site visits:**  
The progress of a project—or lack thereof—can best be monitored by seeing it firsthand with your own eyes on site. Site visits by parliamentary committees allow legislators to verify official reports, speak directly with project managers and local communities or affected citizens, and assess the quality of work and the real-world social and environmental impacts. **Appendix J** provides a template for preparing and implementing site visits.
- **Motions and resolutions:**  
By formally expressing its opinion and intentions, parliament can exert considerable influence on large-scale infrastructure projects. Although resolutions are not usually legally binding, they carry political weight. MPs can use them to express concerns or make demands regarding project planning, financing, environmental and social impacts, or long-term sustainability.
- **Parliamentary inquiries:**  
In cases of major project failure, suspected corruption or significant public controversy, parliaments can launch special inquiries. These investigations often grant committees enhanced powers, such as the authority to request documents, conduct hearings with a legal obligation for compliance and summon witnesses to testify under oath. The findings of such inquiries can lead to significant political accountability and institutional reform. **Appendix H** provides a template for committee terms of reference (TOR) for an infrastructure project inquiry.

<sup>33</sup> Transparency International, 'Parliamentary Oversight Tools and Mechanisms' (2022).



## Demanding Accountability in Practice

### Mozambique— 'Hidden Debts' and Parliamentary Reckoning



A parliamentary commission of inquiry in Mozambique investigated a major 'hidden debt' scandal, in which state-owned companies took out over \$2 billion (€1.73 billion) in government-guaranteed loans from international banks, ostensibly for maritime infrastructure projects (the 'tuna bonds'). The inquiry exposed the secret and unconstitutional nature of the loans, which were not approved by parliament. The commission's report was a critical step in uncovering the scale of the scandal and holding the responsible officials to account.<sup>34</sup>

### Tanzania (2014)— Strengthening Public– Private Partnership (PPP) Oversight



The Parliament of Tanzania has amended its Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Act several times to strengthen legislative oversight and ensure that PPP projects deliver value for money. The amendments in 2014 and 2018, for instance, expanded the definition of PPPs, clarified the roles of various government agencies and enhanced the approval process for such projects.<sup>35</sup> These legislative changes give parliamentary committees a clearer mandate to review PPP agreements, assess their long-term fiscal implications and monitor their implementation, ensuring that public interest is protected in these complex financial arrangements.

<sup>34</sup> Centro de Integridade Pública, [CIP Custos e Consequencias Das Dividas Ocultas](#), accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>35</sup> Parliament of Tanzania (2018), ['The Public Private Partnership \(Amendment\) Act, 2018'](#), Tanzania, accessed 30 October 2025.



### 3.6 Building Capacity and Leveraging Expertise

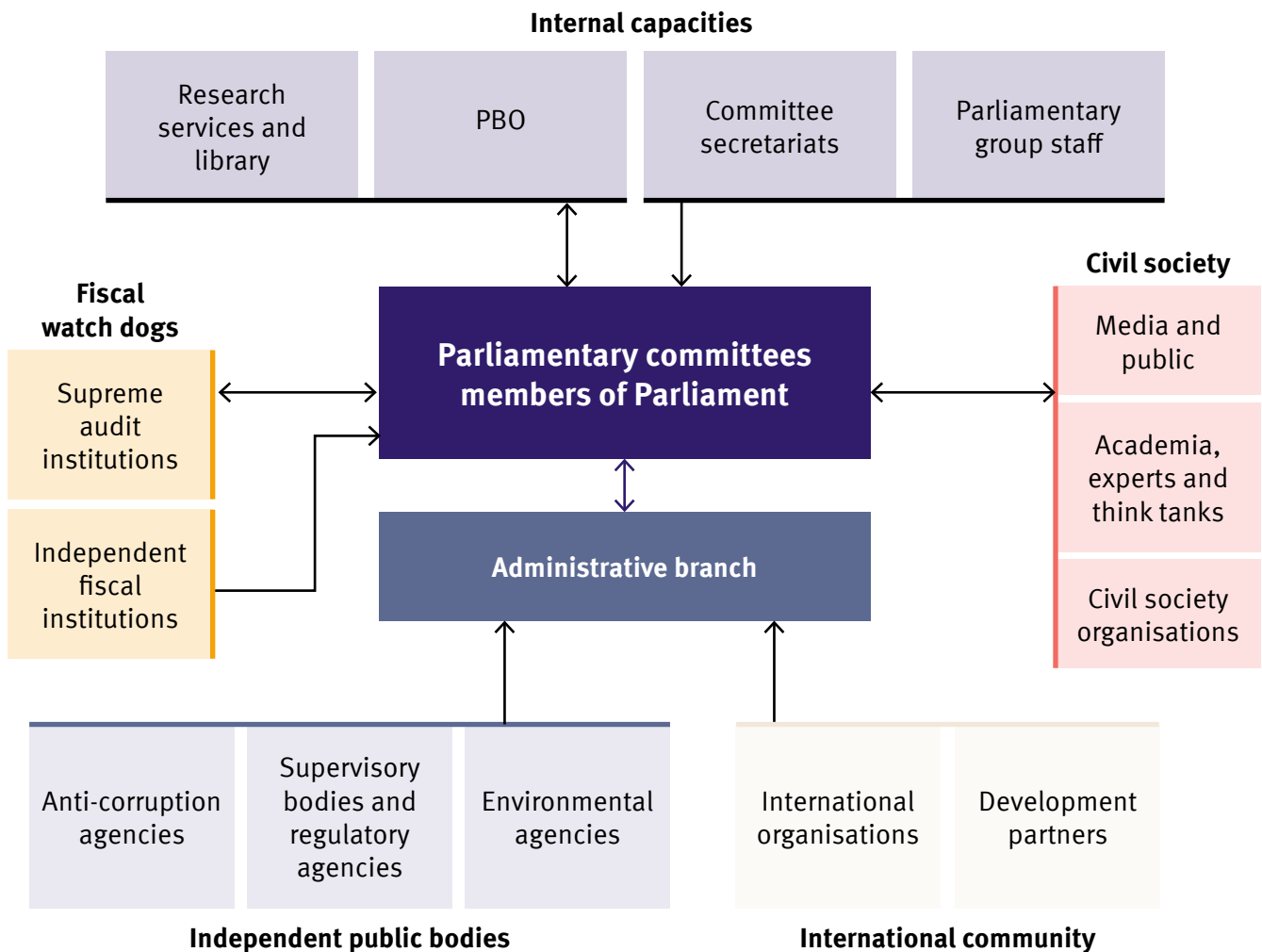
Before implementing enhanced oversight procedures, parliaments should assess their current capacity and identify areas requiring strengthening.

**Appendix B** provides a systematic framework on how parliaments could evaluate their oversight readiness. Infrastructure projects are often highly complex, involving engineering, financial, legal and environmental dimensions. Effective oversight of complex infrastructure projects requires significant technical expertise to enable committees to ask informed questions during hearings, identify irregularities in reports and interpret audit findings properly. While parliamentarians are not expected to be engineers or financial analysts, they must have access to independent, expert advice to effectively

challenge the information provided by the executive and to interpret reports or audit findings properly. This requires a dual strategy, both internally and externally.<sup>36</sup> Within parliaments, highly qualified support capacities must be built up, and political groups must continuously improve the knowledge and skills of their members and staff. Externally, parliaments should forge strong alliances and gain direct access to institutions that can provide them with the necessary technical expertise.

The flow of information in the parliamentary control ecosystem (Figure 2) will vary. In some cases, parliament will merely be a recipient of information, while in others, reciprocal information or working relationships will develop.

Figure 2: The Oversight Ecosystem



<sup>36</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union, 'Strengthening parliamentary oversight: Capacity building and institutional support', (2016).



### 3.6.1 Building Internal Capacity

Parliaments should invest in professional, non-partisan staff who can provide evidence-based analysis. Key institutions and programmes include:

- **Committee secretariats:** Well-resourced secretariats with researchers and policy advisors can provide committees not only with administrative but also with the background materials and analytical support needed for informed decision-making.
- **PBOs:** PBOs are independent bodies that provide parliament with non-partisan analysis of the budget, medium-term expenditure frameworks, public debts and long-term fiscal sustainability. They help to level the informational playing field between the legislature and the executive. In the context of large-scale infrastructure projects, PBOs may assess budgetary aspects and the fiscal impact, long-term sustainability and, in exceptional cases, value for money of proposed investments. Depending on their mandate, PBOs may in some legislations also review cost estimates, financing models (including PPPs or loans) and risks such as cost overruns or delays.
- **Research services and libraries:** These services can prepare background briefs, comparative studies and technical summaries to help MPs understand complex issues and sometimes also respond to specific research requests from committees or individual members.
- **Training and capacity-building programmes:** Specialized training programmes can enhance the knowledge and skills of their members and staff in relevant areas and develop institutional memory.

### Internal Capacities in Practice

#### Canada (2006–present)— the Parliamentary Budget Officer



The establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) in Canada has significantly enhanced the legislature's capacity for independent financial analysis. As a neutral, non-partisan party independent of government, the PBO assists members of parliament in their work. The PBO is responsible for providing economic and financial analysis to parliament for the purposes of raising the quality of parliamentary debate and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability. By analysing the estimates of the government and, if requested, estimates the financial cost of any proposal over which parliament has jurisdiction, the PBO reduces information asymmetries and creates a level playing field between the executive and the legislature. This enables more effective and evidence-based scrutiny of the budget and major spending proposals.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.6.2 Leveraging External Expertise and Alliances

No parliament can possess all the necessary expertise in-house. It is, therefore, essential to build a network of external allies who can provide independent information and analysis.

First of all, the **executive branch** itself is required, within the framework of its constitutional and legal obligations, to provide parliament with objective information and to submit relevant reports or analyses. Parliamentary committees may also request additional information or oral explanations from government officials.

Significant support for parliamentary oversight is provided by independent state bodies and institutions outside the state administration.<sup>38</sup> They have very specific knowledge and expertise that parliamentary committees can use for their oversight functions. They can either engage directly with these bodies in a mutual exchange or make use of their analyses and reports.

<sup>37</sup> Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, [Mandate](#), Canada [n.d.], accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>38</sup> Murphy, J. and De Vriese F. 'Parliaments and independent oversight institutions', Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2020).



- **The relationship with the SAI is particularly crucial.** This partnership should be symbiotic and mutually reinforcing.<sup>39</sup> The role of SAIs in assessing infrastructure projects is indispensable, since they usually have the necessary legal, technical and economic expertise. They have the mandate to conduct in-depth investigations of project finances and performance, providing the hard evidence that parliament often lacks the capacity to produce. In return, parliament, through its PAC, provides the political platform and public pressure needed to ensure the SAI's findings are debated and their recommendations implemented, rather than being ignored by the executive. Without parliamentary follow-up, audits lose their impact. Without audits, parliamentary debates lack evidence. Together, they form a powerful accountability loop that is essential for good governance.

### Pakistan (2019)— Exposing Cost Overruns via Audit and Parliamentary Probe



The PAC of the National Assembly of Pakistan, acting on a performance audit report from the Auditor General of Pakistan, conducted a detailed inquiry into significant cost overruns and delays in the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project.<sup>41</sup> The audit report identified financial mismanagement and technical flaws. The PAC's public hearings with **officials** from the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) brought high-level attention to the issue, leading to recommendations for corrective measures and greater accountability in the management of the project.

## Parliaments and SAIs in Practice

### Argentina— Auditoría General de la Nación (AGN) and Transport Megaprojects



The Auditoría General de la Nación (AGN) of Argentina, the country's SAI, applies standardized external audit methodologies (NCEG), for major infrastructure projects. The AGN's reports, conducted after implementation assess effectiveness, efficiency and economy, consistent with ex-post evaluation principles. These reports are submitted to a joint parliamentary committee, providing a formal mechanism for legislative scrutiny of the long-term performance of Infrastructure investments.<sup>40</sup>

- **Anti-corruption agencies** sometimes complement the work of SAIs by focusing specifically on identifying and combating corrupt practices within public administration and infrastructure projects. These agencies are typically independent and possess investigative powers to examine allegations of bribery, fraud and nepotism.
- **Independent financial institutions (IFIs)** represent another fiscal watchdog that some countries have established to analyse the sustainability of public finances and compliance with fiscal rules.<sup>42</sup> They deal with infrastructure projects if these have a significant impact on the budget or strongly influence macroeconomic indicators.
- **Academic institutions, research institutes and think tanks** often deal with infrastructure investments in the course of their professional activities. Their expertise may include CBA, ESIA's and international comparisons of infrastructure policy and financing models.

<sup>39</sup> OECD, 'Developing Effective Working Relationships Between Supreme Audit Institutions and Parliaments', SIGMA Papers No. 54 (2017).

<sup>40</sup> Argentina, *Auditoría General de la Nación*, 'Informes' [n.d.], accessed 8 April 2026.

<sup>41</sup> Auditor General of Pakistan, *Performance Audit Report on Neelum Jhelum Hydro Power Project*, Pakistan (2018), accessed 30 October 2025.

<sup>42</sup> OECD, *Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions* (2014).



- Similarly, **civil society organizations (CSOs)** and the **media** are vital partners.<sup>43</sup> CSOs often represent the interests of affected communities, bring specialized knowledge and perspectives to the oversight process and can conduct independent monitoring, while investigative journalism can uncover corruption and mismanagement. Media coverage increases transparency and keeps infrastructure projects in the public eye. By engaging with these groups, parliament can amplify its own oversight efforts and ensure it is connected to the ground realities of project implementation.
- **Independent supervisory bodies** and **regulatory agencies monitor**, regulate and control certain Infrastructure sectors. Their independent evaluations help ensure that projects align with national development goals.<sup>44</sup> Parliaments often do not have automatic access to such institutions, and, therefore, specific procedural rules are required. Independent environmental agencies are public bodies established by law to monitor and enforce environmental standards, typically operating at arm's length from the executive.
- Regular contact and information exchange between parliaments and **international organizations** and **development partners** is often institutionalized. Financing partners for infrastructure projects are, for example the World Bank, the IMF or the African Development Bank. These institutions prepare infrastructure diagnostics, procurement reviews and project monitoring reports.

### Leveraging External Expertise in Practice

#### South Africa (2020)— Multi-Agency Anti-Corruption Coordination Forum



In response to widespread corruption in the infrastructure sector, the South African Government, with the support of parliamentary oversight bodies, established the Infrastructure Build Anti-Corruption Forum (IBACF).<sup>45</sup> This forum brings together law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations and professional bodies to prevent, detect and prosecute corruption in infrastructure projects. The establishment of this forum was strongly advocated by parliament, and its reporting requirements to parliamentary committees, represents a systemic approach to tackling corruption and enhancing transparency in the sector.

<sup>43</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme, 'Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation' (2020).

<sup>44</sup> Murphy, J. and De Vrieze F., 'Parliaments and independent oversight institutions', Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2020).

<sup>45</sup> South African Government, 'Minister Patricia de Lille on Infrastructure Build Anti-Corruption Forum (IBACF)', 23 July 2020, accessed 30 October 2025.



## Part IV: Fostering a Culture of Accountability

**Parliamentary oversight is a cornerstone of good infrastructure governance. It is the essential democratic mechanism that ensures ambitious investment plans result in transparent, effective and citizen-centred development outcomes. Through the diligent exercise of their legislative, budgetary and supervisory powers, parliaments can ensure that infrastructure policies are not only technically sound but also socially legitimate and financially responsible.**

The effectiveness of these powers, however, depends on political will, technical capacity and a commitment to transparency. As this handbook has demonstrated, strengthening parliamentary oversight is a multifaceted endeavour. It requires building robust legal frameworks, asserting fiscal discipline and championing a holistic vision of sustainability. It demands the strategic use of a diverse toolkit, from the detailed work of committees to the public forum of plenary debates. Crucially, it involves building the internal capacity of parliament while simultaneously forging a powerful ecosystem of accountability with external allies like SAIs, civil society and the media.

For countries participating in major international infrastructure partnerships, empowering parliaments offers a double dividend. It not only improves project performance but also strengthens democratic institutions and is a key strategy to enhance accountability. Many of the challenges commonly observed in large infrastructure programmes—unclear planning, opaque financing and cost overruns—can be mitigated when parliaments demand clarity, openness and discipline in how projects are selected and executed.

Ultimately, effective oversight of large infrastructure projects is a collective effort. It involves the executive branch being responsive, independent auditors being vigilant, civil society being watchful and international partners upholding high standards. Within this ecosystem, parliaments represent the people's voice—the indispensable institution for ensuring that massive investments truly serve national development goals and do so efficiently, ethically and sustainably. By adopting the best practices and approaches outlined here, parliaments can transform infrastructure governance from a purely technocratic domain into a transparent, participatory and accountable democratic process, ensuring that big investments yield large and lasting benefits for society.





# Appendices

Appendices A–L provide reference materials and practical guidance on successfully implementing parliamentary oversight on infrastructure in practice. An expanded discussion of the key principles and cornerstones describes a sound international standard for parliamentary oversight of infrastructure measures. Further appendices include suggestions for instruments that parliaments could consider or adapt for their own purposes to improve their scrutiny over large infrastructure projects. Another important aspect highlights options for how parliaments might consult with affected or involved stakeholders and how they can involve them in the individual project phases, for example, through on-site visits. A glossary of key terms and a list of references used in the preparation of the handbook complete the appendices.

- **Appendix A: Key Principles and Cornerstones for Parliamentary Oversight on Infrastructure**
  - **Appendix B: Parliamentary Oversight Readiness Assessment**
  - **Appendix C: Infrastructure Project Oversight Checklist**
  - **Appendix D: Checklist of Key Questions by Project Phase**
  - **Appendix E: Suggested Legislation for Infrastructure Oversight**
  - **Appendix F: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**
  - **Appendix G: Risk Assessment and Early Warning Systems**
  - **Appendix H: Template for Committee Terms of Reference for an Infrastructure Project Inquiry**
  - **Appendix I: Public Engagement—Standard Operating Procedures for Parliamentary Stakeholder Consultation**
  - **Appendix J: Parliamentary Site Visit Protocol**
  - **Appendix K: Glossary of Essential Terms**
  - **Appendix L: Literature and References**
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# Annexes

Additional reference materials providing explanations of technical infrastructure documents that are typically used for infrastructure governance are provided on the **webpage dedicated to the handbook**. These include:

- **Annex 1:** Government Response Assessment Scheme
- **Annex 2:** Detailed Outline of an Impact Assessment
- **Annex 3:** Detailed Cost-Benefit Analysis
- **Annex 4:** Example of Risk Analysis
- **Annex 5:** Example of Procurement Methodology
- **Annex 6:** Example of a Construction Schedule
- **Annex 7:** Example of an Interface Agreement



# Appendix A: Key Principles and Cornerstones for Parliamentary Oversight on Infrastructure

Certain prerequisites must be met so that parliaments can exercise effective scrutiny over large-scale infrastructure projects. These prerequisites are summarized in the following key principles and cornerstones describing a sound international standard for parliamentary oversight of infrastructure measures. Parliaments in developing countries should strive to comply with and implement this standard as far as possible. This standard thus also provides a measure of the extent to which parliaments are sufficiently involved in infrastructure measures and can, therefore, fulfil their unique role in this regard. This standard is also used to demonstrate the extent to which these projects have sufficient democratic legitimacy.

## 1. Legislative Approval and Democratic Oversight

### Key Principles:

- Parliament should have a clear role in approving, monitoring and evaluating infrastructure projects
- Legislative involvement promotes transparency and legitimacy
- Debt-financed projects and PPPs should go through rigorous pre-commitment analysis
- Parliaments must assure that large infrastructure projects meet the country's development objectives and align with national priorities
- Parliaments should actively debate and approve national development plans or specific mega-project proposals

Effective infrastructure governance requires clear roles for legislatures in approving, monitoring and evaluating major projects to ensure democratic accountability from the very beginning of large infrastructure initiatives (OECD 2020). Parliaments should actively debate and approve national development plans or specific mega-project proposals (World Bank 2021). They are responsible for analysing, passing and amending legislation on public investment management, budgeting, government borrowing, procurement rules, environmental protection, land acquisition and anti-corruption measures. Legislative approval and oversight not only increase transparency; it adds legitimacy for projects that commit substantial public resources. This helps to ensure that infrastructure projects align with long-term strategies, public interests and broader developmental goals rather than short-term political considerations (OECD 2020; World Bank 2004).

## 2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

### Key Principles:

- A legal framework should be in place to prevent politically driven, short-term projects
- Infrastructure projects must comply with national laws, international agreements and sustainability standards
- Parliamentary approval should be required for significant public debt commitments related to projects
- Parliaments should regularly review if existing regulations are fit for purpose in the infrastructure sector
- Legislatures can host hearings on infrastructure policy and regulatory quality
- Parliaments should empower independent regulatory agencies

A sound legal and regulatory framework is the foundation of good infrastructure governance. Parliaments have a major role in enacting and updating the laws governing how infrastructure projects are planned, financed, procured and managed. These regulations can cover key topics like public investment management, budgeting, government borrowing, procurement rules, environmental protection, land acquisition, independent regulatory agencies and anti-corruption measures. Major investment projects should be included in an approved national development or medium-term framework plan for public infrastructure spending, which typically requires parliamentary approval. A strong legal framework, overseen by the legislature, makes sure that policymaking uses evidence-based tools like impact assessments and guards against favouritism and corruption while also providing continuity for large projects that span multiple governments (OECD 2020).



### 3. Oversight Across the Project Lifecycle

**Key Principles:**

- Parliament should assess and review infrastructure projects at all key stages (planning, financing, execution and evaluation)
- This task could be assigned to a separate parliamentary committee, which would ensure permanent contact with project management
- Parliament should have oversight mechanisms to scrutinize project funding, implementation and outcomes
- Government and project management should be obliged to provide the required quality of information that parliament needs to fulfil its tasks
- Regular reporting on the project from the executive branch ensures accountability

Large infrastructure projects unfold in several stages, including planning, financing, procurement, construction and operation/maintenance. Parliaments can help to ensure that these projects achieve their intended goals and desired public outcomes by engaging at each key stage of this lifecycle. Early-stage oversight is especially critical at the project appraisal and selection phase. Before government commitments to multi-million-dollar projects, parliaments should scrutinize feasibility studies, CBAs, environmental, social impact and risk assessments (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius and Rothengatter 2003). Some parliaments assign this oversight role to a dedicated infrastructure or public works committee. Others use existing committees (such as those for budget/finance, public accounts or specific sectors) to continuously follow large-scale infrastructure projects.

To enable parliaments to efficiently monitor large-scale infrastructure projects, government must submit periodic progress reports during key project phases. Regular reporting at milestones creates opportunities to correct investment decisions and check accountability during implementation, rather than investigating project shortcomings only ex-post (World Bank 2017; World Bank and Westminster Foundation for Democracy 2023). Both formal reporting requirements and transparency tools ensure that MPs have the information needed to monitor infrastructure projects effectively.

### 4. Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Control

**Key Principles:**

- Parliament must ensure cost-effectiveness, risk assessment and financial sustainability
- Parliament should ensure projects align with national budgets and do not create unsustainable debt burdens
- During project implementation, parliament should monitor budget adherence and address cost overruns
- Foreign loans and PPPs must be carefully evaluated to prevent excessive debt burdens and should require parliamentary approval
- Parliament should assess the ability of the project concept to leverage private investment

Large infrastructure investments have important financial implications that can shape a country's economic outlook for years. These projects involve substantial public expenditures, long-term loans or contingent liabilities such as government guarantees in PPPs. Parliamentary oversight is crucial to ensure that these projects are financially responsible and sustainable. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommends systematic measurement, disclosure and monitoring of multi-year commitments, including contingent liabilities, throughout project implementation. Parliamentary approval should be required for any major borrowing related to infrastructure projects. Effective oversight by parliament ensures that projects respect fiscal rules, maintain sustainable debt levels and avoid off-budget expenditures or hidden liabilities.

During the project implementation phase, robust parliamentary oversight is critical for monitoring budget adherence and addressing cost overruns. Legislators should actively monitor project expenditures, questioning significant deviations from authorized budgets and ensuring accountability.



## 5. Ensuring Effective Project Governance and Coordination

### Key Principles:

- Parliaments should have sufficient information to assess the project governance
- Parliaments should ensure that appropriate coordination arrangements are in place, especially when multiple jurisdictions are involved
- Parliaments should be able to evaluate the financing of the entire infrastructure project and the risk management and control systems established

Large infrastructure projects are typically complex efforts that involve multiple layers of governance. They typically include many ministries, agencies, private contractors and even multiple levels of government (national, regional and local). Infrastructure projects are even more complex when they span multiple jurisdictions. To oversee these complex arrangements, parliaments need to understand and monitor the governance structures involved to ensure that they are well-managed and accountable (OECD 2017). Parliamentary oversight should ensure that appropriate coordination frameworks such as special project management units or steering committees, instruments for monitoring ongoing coordination between authorities or conflict resolution mechanisms are in place. Good project governance also involves effective risk management practices. Legislators should insist upon disclosure of major technical, financial or political risks, and detailed contingency plans to address potential disruptions (Flyvbjerg 2014).

## 6. Policy Coherence and Long-term Planning

### Key Principles:

- Parliaments should assure the responsiveness of the project to national priorities and needs
- Projects should be aligned with national development plans and international commitments (e.g. national development strategies, sectoral master plans or SDGs)
- Legislatures should demand that the government present evidencebased assessments of needs and a rationale for why a given project is the best use of limited resources
- Parliaments should examine the coherence and synergies with other countries' infrastructure initiatives

Infrastructure projects do not exist in isolation—they need to align with a country's long-term strategic vision and development plans, including national development strategies, sectoral master plans or the SDGs (UN 2015). Legislators play a vital role in examining whether proposed projects are coherent with national priorities and international commitments (OECD 2020). A common challenge in infrastructure governance is 'establishing a viable strategy for assessing and prioritising infrastructure needs across sectors and regions' (OECD 2020). Legislatures should demand evidence-based needs assessments from the government on the best use of limited resources.

Policy coherence also means ensuring externally funded projects complement domestic and other donor-funded efforts rather than duplicating or working at cross purposes. Parliamentarians should examine how these different programmes interact and whether there are synergies or overlaps that could lead to a waste of resources. Thus, they contribute to maximizing the overall impact of development cooperation and ensure a coherent investment strategy rather than a patchwork of disconnected projects (OECD 2020).



## 7. Environmental and Social Sustainability

### Key Principles:

- Parliament should ensure adherence to environmental laws and sustainability goals
- Infrastructure projects should align with climate resilience and social impact considerations
- Parliaments should ensure that large infrastructure projects undergo environmental and social impact assessments and take sufficient account on the protection of local communities, biodiversity and cultural heritage
- Local communities, businesses, civil society and experts should be consulted and involved to ensure projects meet actual needs

Large infrastructure works can have profound environmental and social impacts, and it often falls to parliaments to guarantee that sustainability standards and safeguards are upheld to protect communities and ecosystems as development progresses (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] 2019). Most countries require ESAs for major projects with ongoing legislative oversight (Glasson, Therivel and Chadwick 2013; Vanclay 2003). Donor initiatives like the EU's Global Gateway may also have safeguard policies and principles as 'green and clean' or adhering to a 'do no significant harm' environmental philosophy (Buhigas and Costa 2023).

Social inclusivity and local benefits should be core criteria for parliamentary oversight on infrastructure projects, especially if Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) identify significant risks or if there is substantial community opposition. Parliaments should ensure that citizens and civil society participate in project design and monitoring, making projects more likely to deliver socially inclusive outcomes. Also, climate resilience is of growing importance for infrastructure investments. Given the increasing severity of climate-related disasters, legislatures should ensure that new infrastructure is built to be resilient against hazards like floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and other climate impacts (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2021). By exercising vigilance on environmental and social safeguards, parliaments help ensure that infrastructure development is sustainable and equitable.

## 8. Independent Auditing and Evaluation

### Key Principles:

- Parliamentary committees should review infrastructure projects at key stages (planning, financing, execution and evaluation)
- Parliaments should make full use of independent audits and evaluations as tools to strengthen oversight
- Independent audits and regular progress reports should be obligatory and reviewed by parliamentary bodies

Independent oversight institutions are an essential complement to parliamentary oversight, especially for large and technically complex projects. Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) (e.g. national auditors-general or courts of audit)<sup>1</sup> and other watchdog agencies (anti-corruption commissions, ombuds offices) often have the mandate and expertise to scrutinize projects in detail (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2014). Parliaments should make full use of independent audits and evaluations as tools to strengthen oversight. Members of Parliament (MPs) should not only examine whether money has been spent correctly, but also whether the project achieved its intended impact. This results-oriented oversight ensures accountability from inputs to outcomes.

Close collaboration between parliamentary committees and SAIs on development projects (e.g. through regular briefings) can significantly enhance the depth of the oversight of infrastructure projects. Parliaments should take audit recommendations seriously and press governments to implement corrective actions. Public accounts committees (PACs) or similar bodies in parliament can hold officials to account by calling officials to testify about any irregularities or deficiencies identified. By commissioning or reviewing independent impact evaluations, legislators can also gain important insights for more informed decisions in the future.

<sup>1</sup> INTOSAI Audit Standards, <https://www.intosai.org/focus-areas/audit-standards.html>, accessed 30 October 2025.



## 9. Access to Information and Transparency

### Key Principles:

- Governments should be required to provide parliament with comprehensive reports on project progress, expenditures and any issues that arise
- Major project decisions, contractual agreements and financial details should be disclosed to the public
- Public hearings and consultations should be conducted to ensure inclusiveness and to incorporate citizen and expert input
- Parliaments should assure ongoing communication and awareness of the public and civil society on development objectives and strategy in partner countries

Transparency is a core principle to enable effective oversight and accountability in infrastructure projects. Legislatures must have legal rights and practical access to timely and reliable information on relevant project data, from initial project proposals and contract terms to financial disbursements and performance indicators (Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes 2010; Heald 2006; OECD 2020). Governments should be obliged—by law and/or formal policy—to provide parliament with comprehensive reports on project progress, expenditures and any issues encountered (World Bank 2017).

For full accountability, public transparency is just as important as government-to-parliament reporting. International best practices call for ‘an adequate degree of transparency throughout the project life cycle, by offering accessible, high-quality open data’ to the public (Zuiderwijk and Janssen 2014; Wirtz et al. 2022; Infrastructure Transparency Initiative [CoST] 2021). Parliaments should advocate for open data and the proactive disclosure of information on major projects. In recent years, many jurisdictions have passed freedom of information acts that allow citizens (and MPs) to request and receive detailed project information.

## 10. Anti-Corruption Measures and Integrity

### Key Principles:

- Parliaments should establish clear procurement rules to prevent favoritism and corruption
- Anti-corruption measures must be enforced, with strict financial disclosure rules
- Whistleblower protections could be enforced by parliaments for reporting malpractice

Due to the vast sums of money involved and the complexity of contracts, mega-projects are often magnets for corruption (Transparency International 2012; Mungiu-Pippidi 2015). Legislating for robust anti-corruption safeguards and diligently monitoring their enforcement, parliaments—in collaboration with auditors, anti-corruption commissions and civil society—can act as a bulwark against the misuse of public funds. Parliaments shape the anti-corruption legal framework, for example, by enacting strict procurement laws, conflict-of-interest rules and financial disclosure requirements. They can also push for robust fraud and corruption risk management during project implementation (Transparency International 2012) and require anti-corruption action plans for major projects. Parliaments should support whistleblower protection laws protecting whistleblowers and journalists who expose corruption and encouraging insiders to report misconduct without fear of retaliation (Dworkin and Baucus 2017).

Parliaments must also maintain their own integrity in this process, as there is always a risk that powerful economic interests will attempt to influence or bribe legislators in trying to effect project approvals or oversight reports. Many countries have adopted codes of ethics for parliamentarians and strict lobbying regulations. Upholding strong parliamentary ethics rules—for example, requiring MPs to disclose business interests to abstain or step aside in case of (potential) conflicts of interest—is essential to ensure that oversight efforts are credible and focused on the public interest (Perry and Shields 2011).



## 11. Developing Parliamentary Capacity for Oversight

### Key Principles:

- Training and capacity-building programmes should be implemented to strengthen legislative oversight capacity to **evaluate complex infrastructure plans**
- **Capacity development should** include empowering parliament with the right procedures and authority
- Collaboration with **international organizations and civil society** can enhance oversight
- Parliamentarians should have access to technical expertise to assess complex infrastructure proposals properly

Oversight of large infrastructure projects requires the understanding of complex technical, financial and legal issues (Wong and Ng 2013) and parliaments must have adequate capacity and expertise to address these challenges (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] 2016; World Bank 2013). However, many parliaments face severe capacity constraints or lack of experience among MPs in infrastructure matters (Bennett and de Lima 2013). Parliaments should invest in building the knowledge and skills of their members and staff in areas like project appraisal, public finance and budgeting, engineering basics, and procurement rules (UNDP 2015). This can be accomplished through specialized training programmes, hiring expert advisors or establishing support units—such as a PBO or an economic research service—that can analyse infrastructure proposals for MPs. Drawing on international parliamentary networks and knowledge-sharing platforms can also support capacity development. The OECD’s Global Parliamentary Network, for instance, serves as a forum for legislators from different countries to exchange best practices and build expertise including infrastructure governance (OECD 2013). Organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2016) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD 2014) offer toolkits and workshops on infrastructure and public investment oversight.

However, building capacity is not just about technical knowledge; it also involves empowering parliament with the right procedures and authority. Parliamentary rules of procedure should enable the effective oversight of infrastructure projects, for example, by explicitly authorizing committees to conduct site visits to project locations and to request documents or subpoena officials if information is being withheld (UNDP 2015). It is essential for the long-term credibility and success of international infrastructure initiatives that the parliaments of partner countries have the capacity to effectively monitor these complex investments.



## Appendix B: Parliamentary Oversight Readiness Assessment

Before implementing enhanced oversight procedures, parliaments should evaluate their current capacity and identify areas requiring strengthening. The Parliamentary Oversight Readiness Assessment provides a systematic framework for examining legal authority, institutional capacity, technical expertise and stakeholder engagement capabilities.

### Legal Authority Assessment:

- Constitutional provisions for infrastructure oversight
- Statutory powers for information access and witness compulsion
- Parliamentary privilege protections for oversight activities
- Integration with audit institutions and oversight bodies
- Enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance

### Institutional Capacity Assessment:

- Committee structure and specialization
- Parliamentary research services and technical support
- Information management and documentation systems
- Stakeholder engagement procedures
- Staff training and professional development programmes

### Resource Availability Assessment:

- Funding adequacy for oversight activities
- Staffing levels and expertise
- Technology infrastructure and information systems
- External expert access and advisory arrangements
- Coordination mechanisms with other oversight bodies

### Implementation Readiness Assessment:

- Political commitment to oversight strengthening
- Administrative capacity for change management
- Stakeholder support for enhanced oversight
- Risk management and implementation planning
- Performance monitoring and evaluation capabilities



## Appendix C: Infrastructure Project Oversight Checklist

The Infrastructure Project Oversight Checklist provides parliamentarians with standardized procedures for examining infrastructure projects across their lifecycle. This comprehensive checklist ensures systematic coverage of key oversight areas while providing flexibility for different project types and complexity levels.

### Initiation Phase Oversight:

- Review needs assessment and strategic justification
- Examine alignment with national development priorities
- Verify public consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Assess alternative option consideration
- Evaluate environmental and social impact screening
- Review funding strategy and affordability analysis
- Examine institutional capacity and delivery arrangements
- Verify risk identification and preliminary assessment

### Planning and Development Phase Oversight:

- Review detailed feasibility studies and technical analysis
- Examine business case development and economic justification
- Assess financial viability and funding arrangements
- Review project scope definition and deliverable specifications
- Verify risk assessment and mitigation strategies
- Review implementation timeline and resource requirements

### Investment Decision Phase Oversight:

- Review detailed project design
- Examine the comprehensive project justification
- Assess the project budget including full lifecycle costs
- Review key assumptions of the detailed CBA
- Verify comprehensive ESIA
- Evaluate the DSA

### Procurement Phase Oversight:

- Examine procurement strategy, market engagement and competitive procedures
- Review bidder qualification criteria and evaluation methodology

- Verify contract terms and risk allocation arrangements
- Assess performance standards and accountability mechanisms
- Review dispute resolution and variation procedures
- Examine anti-corruption measures and integrity safeguards
- Verify value-for-money analysis and contract award rationale
- Review contract management and oversight arrangements

### Construction Phase Oversight:

- Monitor progress against approved schedule and budget
- Review quality assurance procedures and performance standards
- Examine issue identification and resolution procedures
- Assess contractor performance and management effectiveness
- Verify compliance with environmental and social requirements
- Review stakeholder engagement and communication procedures
- Monitor risk management and mitigation implementation

### Completion and Benefits Realization Phase Oversight:

- Review performance against original objectives and specifications
- Examine service delivery quality and user satisfaction
- Assess financial performance and sustainability
- Review asset management and maintenance procedures
- Examine benefits realization and impact assessment
- Verify ongoing stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanisms
- Review performance optimization and improvement initiatives
- Assess long-term viability and renewal planning



## Appendix D: Checklist of Key Questions by Project Phase

### Phases 1 and 2: Initiation and Planning

- What is the evidence base for this project's need?
- How does this project align with the National Development Plan and sectoral strategies?
- Have alternative, less capital-intensive solutions been considered?
- How will the impact on the environment and different social groups be assessed?
- Which risks have already been analysed and how are they assessed?
- What is the proposed governance structure for the project?
- Have the operating costs and expected returns been thoroughly analysed?
- Will an independent and impartial expert assessment be conducted for the project?

### Phase 3: The Investment Decision:

- What are the key assumptions in the CBA?
- Does the budget include full lifecycle costs (operation and maintenance)?
- Do cost calculations include a sufficient buffer for unforeseen contingencies?
- What is the project's impact on national debt sustainability?
- If a PPP, what are the state's risks and contingent liabilities?
- Have the findings of the ESIA been fully incorporated?

### Phase 4: Procurement and Construction:

- Was the procurement process transparent and competitive?
- Is the project on time and on budget? What are the reasons for any variance?
- How are social and environmental management plans being implemented?
- How are affected citizens involved and compensated?
- What is the process for managing contract variations?
- Are construction standards and material quality being independently verified?
- Is an efficient claims management system in place?
- Is parliament kept informed of any serious problems during the construction phase?

### Phase 5: Completion and Benefits Realization:

- Did the project achieve the benefits promised in the CBA?
- What was the final cost compared to the initial budget?
- Has an independent post-completion audit been conducted by the SAI?
- Are there adequate plans and budgets for long-term operation and maintenance?
- What lessons have been learned for future projects?



## Appendix E: Suggested Legislation for Infrastructure Oversight

This appendix provides parliamentarians with an overview of the key areas of legislation required to strengthen governance, accountability and sustainability in large-scale infrastructure projects. The categories in Tables 1–4 reflect international best practice and are designed to provide clarity, ensure investor confidence and empower effective parliamentary oversight.

**Table 1:** Core Legal Safeguards

Category	Legislation
Land and property	Regulates land acquisition, usage rights, community compensation and resettlement.
Investment	Provides legal certainty for domestic and foreign investors.
Public procurement	Establishes transparent, competitive and fair tendering processes.
Anti-corruption	Criminalizes bribery, fraud and misuse of public funds in infrastructure.
Environmental	Enforces environmental standards and sustainable use of natural resources.
Labour	Protects workers' rights and ensures fair labour practices.
Transparency and public participation	Guarantees citizen access to project data and consultations.
Dispute resolution	Provides clear rules for arbitration and judicial review of conflicts.

**Table 2:** Governance and Institutional Frameworks

Category	Legislation
National infrastructure or sectoral framework laws	Define strategic sectors, planning mandates and priority projects.
Infrastructure governance frameworks	Clarify institutional responsibilities for planning, delivery and maintenance.
Concessions and regulatory laws	Ensure competition, transparency and value-for-money in contracting.

**Table 3:** Fiscal and Financing Rules

Category	Legislation
Public investment management	Governs appraisal, selection and CBA requirements.
Budget and public finance	Sets rules for capital expenditure, disbursement and fiscal ceilings.
Debt management frameworks	Define limits and procedures for borrowing and contingent liabilities.
PPPs	Clarify roles, risk-sharing, contract terms and oversight.

**Table 4:** Parliamentary Oversight and Accountability

Category	Legislation
Parliamentary powers frameworks	Define Parliament's rights to approve, request information and investigate.
Audit and accountability frameworks	Assign responsibilities to SAIs and ensure follow-up.



## Appendix F: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Systematic performance monitoring enables parliamentary oversight to track infrastructure outcomes over time while identifying trends and patterns that inform future oversight priorities. The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework provides standardized metrics and assessment procedures.

### Key Performance Indicator Categories:

#### Financial Performance Indicators:

- Budget variance (actual costs versus approved budget)
- Cost escalation trends across project phases
- Value-for-money assessment against comparable projects
- Financial sustainability metrics for operational infrastructure
- Return-on-investment calculations for economic infrastructure

#### Schedule Performance Indicators:

- Schedule adherence across project milestones
- Critical path analysis and delay impact assessment
- Seasonal and cyclical scheduling effectiveness
- Resource availability impact on schedule performance
- Weather and external factor delay analysis

#### Quality Performance Indicators:

- Compliance with technical specifications and standards
- Defect rates and remedial work requirements
- User satisfaction metrics and service quality assessment
- Safety performance and incident reporting
- Environmental compliance and impact monitoring

#### Stakeholder Engagement Indicators:

- Community consultation participation rates
- Stakeholder satisfaction with engagement processes
- Complaint resolution effectiveness and timeliness
- Transparency metric achievement and information access
- Civil society engagement quality and impact assessment

#### Benefits Realization Indicators:

- Economic impact achievement against projected benefits
- Social outcome delivery and community impact assessment
- Environmental benefit realization and sustainability metrics
- Service delivery improvement and accessibility enhancement
- Long-term asset performance and value retention



## Appendix G: Risk Assessment and Early Warning Systems

Proactive risk management enables parliamentary oversight to identify potential problems before they compromise project success. Risk assessment and early warning systems provide systematic procedures for identifying, evaluating and monitoring infrastructure project risks. Risk analysis is part of the risk assessment process and to conduct this analysis a specific risk management framework is generally used. There are international standards that can be used as a guideline for completing a risk assessment.

### Risk Identification Framework:

- **Technical risks:** design flaws, construction challenges, technology obsolescence
- **Financial risks:** cost overruns, funding shortfalls, economic assumption failures
- **Schedule risks:** delay factors, resource constraints, external dependencies
- **Regulatory risks:** policy changes, approval delays, compliance challenges
- **Stakeholder risks:** community opposition, contractor failure, political changes
- **Environmental risks:** climate impacts, natural disasters, ecological damage

### Risk Assessment Methodology:

1. **Risk probability assessment:** likelihood of risk occurrence (1–5 scale)
2. **Impact severity assessment:** consequence magnitude if risk occurs (1–5 scale)
3. **Risk score calculation:** probability × impact = risk score (1–25 scale)
4. **Risk categorization:** high (15–25), medium (6–14), low (1–5)
5. **Mitigation strategy evaluation:** effectiveness of proposed risk responses

### Early Warning Indicators:

- **Red flags:** schedule delays >30 days, cost overruns >10 percent, quality failures
- **Yellow flags:** schedule delays 15–30 days, cost overruns 5–10 percent, stakeholder concerns
- **Green status:** on schedule and budget, quality standards met, stakeholders engaged

### Parliamentary Response Protocols:

- **High-risk response:** immediate committee attention, government explanation required
- **Medium-risk response:** enhanced monitoring, regular progress reports
- **Low-risk response:** standard monitoring, quarterly review cycles

**Example of a Risk Analysis:**

Risk management is a structured process for identifying, assessing and prioritizing and then addressing potential risks or uncertainties that could negatively impact on successfully completing a task or project. A risk analysis of infrastructure projects starts with the identification of potential project risks (harm or losses but also missed opportunities) in a risk register or inventory. The identified risks must be assessed according to the extent of damage to the project and the probability of their occurrence. A matrix is typically used to analyse risks to categorize the probability of the risk, the consequences and the level of risk.

Risk Matrix								
			Consequence					
			Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe	Catastrophic
			C6	C5	C4	C3	C2	C1
Likelihood	Almost Certain	L1	D	C	B	A	A	A
	Very Likely	L2	D	C	B	B	A	A
	Likely	L3	D	C	C	B	B	A
	Unlikely	L4	D	D	C	C	B	B
	Very Unlikely	L5	D	D	D	C	C	B
	Almost Unprecedented	L6	D	D	D	D	C	C

In this example of a risk matrix, the identified risks (e.g. cost increases, corruption, project delays, environmental damage, etc.) are recorded according to their likelihood and consequence. The events marked with an 'A' in the red area of the matrix have serious negative consequences and a high probability of occurrence. They represent a particularly high-risk potential for the project. Appropriate risk management must reduce their consequences and probability of occurrence.



## Appendix H: Template for Committee Terms of Reference for an Infrastructure Project Inquiry

Parliamentary investigations of infrastructure can take place at different phases of a project and cover a wide range of differing topics. A template for the committee terms of reference (TOR) is, therefore, necessarily limited to fundamental issues that describe the functioning and tasks of the committee in investigating infrastructure measures. The following example of TOR could be used by committee or as part of a special inquiry into a large infrastructure project. The TOR are supplemented by a general list of questions covering key issues that need to be considered in any major infrastructure project.

### 1. Purpose of the Inquiry

In the TOR, the committee should clearly formulate the objectives of the inquiry to ensure transparency, accountability and effective oversight. Typical purposes of an inquiry on infrastructure projects may include:

- Assessment of its value for money
- Assessment of its social and environmental impact
- Assessment of compliance with legal frameworks
- Identification of risks and irregularities
- Investigation of allegations of corruption
- Ensuring transparency and accountability

It may also be specified that the purpose of the investigation is to focus on recommendations for future infrastructure governance.

### 2. Scope of the Inquiry

The subject and the scope of the investigation will be determined by the specific infrastructure project and its particular circumstances. The following aspects in relation to infrastructure measures are typically examined in parliamentary inquiries:

- The objectives of the project and its alignment with national development priorities
- The robustness of the project appraisal process, including the CBA and risk assessment
- The cost of the project including the size of any over-runs
- The effectiveness of project management and oversight during the construction phase, including management of budget, schedule and scope

- The roles and performance of all relevant government ministries, departments and agencies involved in the project
- The transparency, competitiveness and legality of the procurement and contracting process
- The adequacy of social and environmental safeguards and the effectiveness of community consultation
- The impact of the project on the citizens
- The compulsory acquisition of land and homes for the project
- The extent to which the project has delivered its intended benefits and provided value for money

### 3. Powers of the Committee

The general powers of parliamentary committees are usually specified in the parliamentary rules of procedure. The committee may decide which powers to exercise in a specific case. Pursuant to such a resolution, the committee may, for example, be empowered to:

- Request and compel the production of documents and records from government bodies and other relevant entities
- Summon and examine witnesses, including ministers, public officials, contractors and independent experts
- Conduct public hearings and receive written submissions
- Undertake site visits to project locations

### 4. Reporting

The committee will submit a final report with its findings and recommendations to parliament. The government may be asked to issue an official statement on the committee's recommendations within a certain time period after the report has been tabled.



## Appendix H: Template for Committee Terms of Reference for an Infrastructure Project Inquiry (continued)

### Key Questions and Information Requests in Committee Inquiries

The following detailed table provides questions that the committee may ask related to the TOR. These questions are intended to allow the committee a good overview of critical issues in the decision-making and implementation process of infrastructure measures.

Question	Information to look for or details that should be provided
<b>Needs and options</b>	
Is it clear what problem the programme/project needs to address?	The need for the proposed infrastructure or service has been clearly identified and the issue being addressed is well defined and the need is clearly identified.
Is there a broad understanding of the scope of the problem and is it captured to its full extent?	The investment properly captures the full extent/scope of a well-defined problem. The link with national priorities, overarching government objectives and commitments is evidenced. Sufficient research has been conducted to substantiate the information justifying the problem.
Have other options of meeting the service need been identified and are all strategic options feasible?	Strategic responses to the problem, including measures to change demand, supply or productivity have been explored and are packaged into groups of feasible strategic options addressing the benefits sought.
Were the strategic options fairly evaluated and is the preferred strategic option the most effective way to address the problem?	Where the best strategic response is still unclear, several possible options should be considered for further examination. Once a strategic option has been identified, its main purpose, expected benefits and characteristics that are of particular strategic importance or relevance should be specified.
<b>Benefits</b>	
Have the benefits been adequately defined? Have the value, magnitude of the benefits and their strategic merit been identified?	The benefits are of high value to citizens and support the achievement of national priorities. A concept brief and benefits management plan should be well formulated and complete. An appropriate forum for reporting benefits should be outlined.
Have the key deliverables, approvals and timelines for developing the CBA been identified?	The key deliverables to measure the benefits and impact of the investment that will flow from addressing the problem should be pitched at a level that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound).
Does the proposal demonstrate clear and measurable customer outcomes?	There should be a clear understanding of what customers expect within the context of the problem, what outcomes should be achieved for customers and how they will be measured, as well as what factors drive customer satisfaction.



Question	Information to look for or details that should be provided
<b>Funding and value for money</b>	
Is there a high-level cost estimate and what contingencies are included? Have uncertainties that may impact funding been identified?	Adequate approaches for estimating cost and attributing risk on the project have been used. Sound reasons are justifying that the recommended solution is the best way forward.
Have available funds been identified and methods of securing additional necessary funding determined?	Financial and other resources have been considered for the project, and plans are realistic throughout all project phases.
Has a preliminary economic appraisal that justifies the investment been undertaken?	The project options analysis is likely to be high level in the initial stages. However, based on the size and cost of the proposal, it should include a general assessment of social, environmental, economic and financial aspects.
Have processes been identified for estimating, monitoring and controlling project expenditure?	Adequate approaches for monitoring and controlling expenditure on the project are in place.
Has a procurement strategy or methodology been nominated?	An anticipated procurement method can already be specified at an early project stage; analysis or details of the procurement strategy are only required later.
<b>Sustainability</b>	
Are the envisaged options likely to have a better sustainable lifecycle than others?	Appropriate estimations of whole-of-life maintenance and operating cost implications have been considered.
Does the environmental assessment indicate that any environmental impacts of the proposed project can be successfully managed?	An EIA is submitted. Energy or water reduction is being planned for minimizing need, optimizing usage and efficiency, including the use of alternative and renewable sources.
Does an impact assessment indicate that the social and economic impacts of the proposed project would be beneficial to the community as a whole?	Social impacts may include workforce diversity, local employment, employee well-being and corporate governance practices. Economic impacts may include economic development, local industry participation, regional and state employment, and the involvement of small to medium enterprises.
Do the project documents address commitments to sustainability goals or government policies?	Submitted planning illustrates compliance with government policies on finance, procurement, environment, safety, quality, etc.
<b>Governance</b>	
How will governance risks be managed and what framework is proposed?	There are sound governance arrangements and frameworks in place to ensure the concept and implementation of the investment is delivered successfully.
Is a programme steering committee in place?	Key stakeholders should be brought together under the umbrella of a steering committee to balance interests and to make decisions as a group.
Have senior representatives responsible for solving technical and business issues been appointed?	Designated officers are responsible for achieving the desired results and realizing the benefits of the investment within the limits of the approved budget, schedule and quality standards.
Are appropriate governance processes to manage, monitor and report on project progress and benefit realization in place?	A governance framework has been identified that would allow for oversight of delivery and benefit realization.

**Question****Information to look for or details that should be provided**

<b>Risk management</b>	
Have key risks been identified together with strategies for managing them?	A current list of the major strategic, political and/or reputation, environmental and legislative risks has been analysed in terms of likelihood and impact. Risk owners have been nominated and early warning indicators identified.
Has a framework to deal with risks been developed and has a risk register and risk management plan been established?	Roles, responsibilities and processes for managing issues and risk across the project have been defined. The main risks, risk mitigation options and contingency plans have been specified by management.
<b>Stakeholder management</b>	
Has a stakeholder assessment been undertaken and are consultations with stakeholders planned?	A list of key stakeholders and statements of their needs and support for the project has been created along with a definition of roles and responsibilities, and a realistic time schedule.
<b>Changes to the project and costs</b>	
How reliable is the cost plan and has a framework for managing changes to design or prices of the project been identified?	The cost estimates should be sufficiently reliable to indicate the 'order of magnitude' of the final costs. A change management plan has been prepared covering all aspects of change, including stakeholder management, market changes, communication and training.
What is the basis for determining the cost estimate and are all whole-of-life cost elements identified?	An adequate cost breakdown is available including operating costs. Estimated capital costs should be provided with a brief description, including estimated range, basis for this estimate, outline of cost inclusions/exclusions consistent with scope and used cost assumptions.



# Appendix I: Public Engagement—Standard Operating Procedures for Parliamentary Stakeholder Consultation

The integration and consultation of stakeholders to build the project is basically the responsibility of government departments or contractors, as they are adequately staffed and have the detailed information at hand. This often also corresponds to an obligation under social and environmental impact legislation. While this is usually part of the approval process for a project, parliament’s role would be to ensure that this stakeholder identification has been done and to seek reports and updates on progress.

On the other hand, stakeholder involvement and consultation is also of key significance for parliament for several reasons. Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the interests of their voters and act as an interface with the public. Their scrutiny and approval lend projects the necessary legitimacy. They must obtain the information they need from a variety of

sources to perform their oversight function and cannot rely solely on information provided by the government.

Meaningful public engagement enhances parliamentary oversight effectiveness while strengthening democratic accountability for infrastructure decisions. These standard operating procedures ensure systematic public participation while maintaining appropriate management and coordination.

The parliamentary stakeholder consultation process consists of several phases:

- Consultation planning phase
- Consultation implementation
- Analysis and reporting
- Integration with parliamentary oversight

## Consultation Planning Phase

Effective consultation on large-scale infrastructure begins with thorough planning to engage the right stakeholders with the right information. This involves a strategic approach to identify stakeholders, prepare accessible information and select appropriate consultation methods. Parliament will naturally draw on the work carried out by the government, which must undertake these processes as part of project preparation. However, based on available information, MPs must develop their own strategies for how they want to engage with stakeholders to perform their oversight and legitimization function.

### Stakeholder Identification and Mapping

Stakeholder Category	Key Interests	Information Provided
Government and regulatory bodies	Regulatory compliance, service integration	Technical reports, consultation schedules
Private sector and industry	Commercial viability, procurement fairness	Project briefs, procurement documents
Technical and professional bodies	Feasibility, safety, design standards	Full technical reports, detailed analyses
Environmental agencies and advocacy groups	Environmental impact, sustainability, compliance	EIAs, safeguards
Financial and economic experts	Cost-benefit, debt sustainability, financial risks	Full financial models, risk assessments
Directly affected communities	Social impacts, land use, compensation	Project briefs, technical summaries
Civil society and advocacy groups	Transparency, accountability, social safeguards	All public documents, consultation reports
Vulnerable and marginalized groups	Equity, accessibility, inclusive benefits	Accessible project briefs, targeted outreach
General public and media	National interest, costs, long-term benefits	Project briefs, media kits, public notices



The selection of the consultation method depends on various circumstances. One key question is related to what information to the project is already available. For holding public hearings, for example, a detailed project design should already be available.

### Consultation Method Selection

Method	Goal	Phase
Focus groups	Targeted discussions with specific stakeholder categories	Initiation, planning and development
Technical workshops	In-depth expert discussions	Planning and development
Community meetings	Discussing local impacts	All phases
Online consultation portal	Written submissions, feedback and document access	All phases
Closed-door hearings	Sensitive topics (finance, security)	Planning, investment decision
Parliamentary site visits	Observing progress and meeting stakeholders	Implementation, completion
Public hearings	Project presentation, gathering diverse public opinion	Initiation, investment decision

### Consultation Implementation

The implementation of consultations should be professional, transparent and inclusive. This phase focuses on executing the planned activities, systematically collecting and managing information, and ensuring its integrity for analysis. Public meetings can be managed to ensure fairness and meaningful dialogue.

#### Meeting Management Procedures

Meeting Tools	Activities
Independent facilitation	Engage a neutral facilitator to chair public meetings.
Structured agenda	Circulate an agenda in advance with clear time allocations.
Accessibility	Ensure venues are physically accessible and provide necessary language services.
Official record	Record and transcribe all public hearings and make a summary publicly available.

Infrastructure projects present unique risks that require targeted consultation. This section outlines condensed procedures for critical risk areas.

#### Risk-Specific Consultation

Risk Area	Key Consultation Procedure
Corruption and transparency	Establish procurement monitoring panels and secure whistleblower channels. Hold consultations with anti-corruption CSOs.
Environmental and social impact	Review EIAs with expert panels. Conduct consultations with displaced communities and cultural heritage experts.
Financial and debt sustainability	Convene independent expert panels to review debt sustainability and alternative financing options.

Proper documentation is necessary to make good use of the input from the consultations in the further parliamentary process. This can be ensured through various forms.



### Information Collection and Documentation

Inputs	Documentation	Initial Processing
Public meetings	Digital recording and transcription procedures where appropriate	Contact information collection and follow-up coordination
Expert opinions	Digital recording, minutes and written statements	Synthesis reports with key statements and recommendations
Written submissions	Standardized submission forms: date-stamped and acknowledged	Categorized by stakeholder and key themes
Site visit feedback	Photography and visual documentation	Formal visit report with key findings

### Integration with Parliamentary Oversight

Following collection, all input is rigorously analysed to identify key themes and actionable recommendations. This also requires finding suitable communication channels to inform about the results.

### Feedback Analysis, Synthesis and Public Reporting

Activities	Outputs
Structuring feedback	Thematic analysis of consultation feedback and recommendations.
Analysing feedback	Quantitative summary of support and opposition patterns.
Assessing modifications	Impact assessment of proposed changes and modifications.
Strategy development	Response strategy development for major concerns and suggestions.
Public communication	Consultation report preparation and public release.

This analysis informs a comprehensive Consultation Analysis Report for parliamentary committees. The integration of this feedback into oversight mechanisms is crucial.

### Oversight Mechanism Input

Oversight Mechanism	Integration of Consultation Input
Committee hearings	Analysis Report as primary evidence; key stakeholders invited to testify.
Budgetary scrutiny	Feedback on financial risks informs scrutiny of project allocations.
Legislative amendments	Recommendations for strengthening governance to be considered for new legislation.
Questions to ministers	Public concerns are formulated into parliamentary questions.
Performance audits	Analysis Report is shared with the SAI.

Consultation activities can be synchronized with the parliamentary calendar, ensuring reports are available to inform budget deliberations and committee inquiries.

**Project Lifecycle Consultation Timeline**

<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Key Consultation Activities</b>
Initiation	Months 1–6	Needs assessment validation, priority setting
Planning and Development	Months 6–18	Technical design review, EIA consultation, financing review
Investment Decision	Months 18–24	Final design consultation, procurement strategy review
Implementation	Years 2–5	Ongoing monitoring consultation, change management review
Completion and Benefits	Years 5+	Performance evaluation, lessons learned consultation



## Appendix J: Parliamentary Site Visit Protocol

Parliamentary site visits provide firsthand insight into infrastructure projects while demonstrating parliamentary commitment to effective oversight. This comprehensive protocol ensures systematic site visits that maximize oversight value while maintaining appropriate safety and security standards.

### Pre-Visit Preparation Phase

Careful preparation is essential to gain the relevant information during an on-site visit. The time required for preparation should, therefore, not be underestimated, and the process should be started in good time. Both logistical and technical issues need to be clarified.

#### Logistical Planning:

- Site access arrangements and security clearances
- Transportation coordination and accommodation booking
- Safety equipment and insurance coverage
- Media coordination and communication protocols
- Staff briefing materials and background documentation

#### Technical Preparation:

- Project documentation review and briefing preparation
- Expert consultant engagement and specialized advice
- Previous oversight report review and issue identification
- Stakeholder mapping and engagement planning
- Question preparation and focus area identification

### Visit Implementation Phase

Sufficient time should be allocated for the on-site visit. It may take several days to discuss all relevant topics with stakeholders and gain a comprehensive picture.

#### Project Briefing and Context Setting:

- Government and contractor briefing sessions
- Technical presentation and project overview
- Site maps, construction plans and progress documentation
- Safety briefing and personal protective equipment distribution
- Local authority and community leader meetings

#### Detailed Site Inspection:

- Systematic site tour covering all major project components
- Construction quality assessment and technical examination
- Worker safety and working condition observation
- EIA and mitigation verification
- Progress photography and documentation

#### Stakeholder Engagement and Wrap-up:

- Community leader meetings and public consultation sessions
- Local government and agency representative meetings
- Contractor and consultant exit interviews
- Site visit findings discussion and initial assessment
- Next steps planning and follow-up coordination

### Post-Visit Follow-up Phase

The evaluation of the results of the on-site visit should begin as soon as possible so that no results are lost. It includes the documentation and analysis of the information obtained and reporting for further use in the parliamentary process.

#### Documentation and Analysis:

- Comprehensive site visit report preparation
- Photography organization and evidence compilation
- Stakeholder feedback integration and analysis
- Technical assessment and expert consultation
- Recommendation development and priority setting

#### Communication and Reporting:

- Committee briefing and findings presentation
- Media briefing and public communication
- Government feedback and response coordination
- Stakeholder follow-up and additional information requests
- Integration into comprehensive oversight reporting



## Appendix K: Glossary of Essential Terms

- **Benefit-cost ratio (BCR):** A ratio used in a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) to summarize the overall relationship between the relative costs and benefits of a proposed project. A BCR greater than 1.0 indicates that the project's benefits outweigh its costs.
- **Contingent liability:** A potential liability that may occur depending on the outcome of an uncertain future event. In infrastructure, these often arise from government guarantees in PPP contracts (e.g. guaranteeing a minimum level of revenue for a toll road operator).
- **Cost-benefit analysis (CBA):** A systematic process for calculating and comparing the benefits and costs of a project, decision or policy. It is used to determine if an investment is sound and to provide a basis for comparing projects.
- **Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA):** A comprehensive assessment that evaluates a country's ability to service its debt obligations without compromising economic growth or requiring exceptional financing assistance.
- **Environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA):** A process of evaluating the likely environmental and social impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
- **Ex-ante, simultaneous, ex-post oversight:** Terms describing the timing of oversight relative to a project's implementation. Ex-ante is before, simultaneous is during and ex-post is after.
- **Net Present Value (NPV):** A financial calculation that determines the current worth of future cash flows from an investment by discounting them to present value, helping assess whether a project will generate positive returns.
- **Parliamentary Budget Offices/Officer (PBOs):** Independent or semi-independent institutions that provide objective, non-partisan analysis of government budgets, fiscal policies, and economic forecasts to support parliamentary oversight.
- **Public Accounts Committee (PAC):** A parliamentary committee responsible for examining government expenditure and ensuring public funds are used efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with parliamentary authorization.
- **Public-private partnership (PPP):** A long-term arrangement between a government and a private-sector entity to provide a public asset or service, in which the private entity bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance.
- **Supreme audit institution (SAI):** The national body responsible for auditing government revenue and spending. Known by various names (e.g. National Audit Office, Auditor-General, Court of Audit), it is a key partner for parliamentary oversight.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** A set of 17 interconnected global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to address poverty, inequality, climate change, and other global challenges by 2030.
- **Terms of Reference (TOR):** A formal document that defines the scope, objectives, methodology, timeline, and deliverables for a specific project, committee inquiry, or consultation process.



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