

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

# GENDER SENSITISING PARLIAMENTS: A SEVEN-STEP FIELD GUIDE



# Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Gender Sensitising Parliamentary Guidelines: A Seven-Step Field Guide ('Field Guide') provides a blueprint for Commonwealth parliaments interested in undertaking a Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) review of their institutions with the objective of making their parliaments more representative and inclusive. The Field Guide builds on earlier Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian's (CWP) gender sensitising reports, in which a GSP is defined as a place that responds to the needs and interests of women in its structures, operations, methods, and work and is a workplace that removes barriers to women's full participation.

GSP reviews have the potential to respond to the needs of parliamentary members and staff who identify as women or as belonging to another marginalised group, and in some Commonwealth contexts, this includes people with intersecting identities, such as Indigenous People, Black People, and People of Colour, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ People (LGBTQ+), and people living with disabilities.

This Field Guide offers practical resources complementing the CPA Gender Sensitising Parliamentary Guidelines: Standards and Checklist (GSP Guidelines) to enable Commonwealth parliaments to gather the gender sensitive data needed to undertake and complete a gender sensitivity review. The Field Guide supports the key principle of successful GSP 'institutionalisation' – whereby gender sensitive parliamentary reforms specific to a parliament are identified as well as the political and administrative actors responsible for implementing and maintaining GSP standards. Starting from the premise that all Commonwealth parliaments undertake a GSP review as soon as possible, the CWP hopes to establish an "initial benchmark against which future efforts and developments can be evaluated". Moving toward this, the GSP Guidelines suggest measuring gender sensitivity across the **Four GSP Dimensions**:

1. **Equality of Participation within Parliament**
2. **Parliamentary Infrastructure**
3. **Parliamentary Culture**
4. **Gender Equality Policy and Women's Substantive Representation**

The GSP Guidelines also include a Gender Sensitising Checklist (Checklist) based on the above four GSP dimensions to assist Commonwealth parliaments identify how they are able to initiate and secure GSP reform and document the necessary institutional augmentations that need to be in place to ensure that GSP becomes a permanent feature of its governance. The Checklist identifies a parliament's current resource capacity and commitment to undertaking a GSP review. The Checklist allows Commonwealth parliaments to customise questions in a way that reflects institutional specificities and is completed by people with institutional knowledge in the following areas: **Institutional Leadership** (the parliamentary actors or bodies responsible for gender equality); **Data** (what gender and diversity information is collected and made public); and **Gender Expertise** (internal or external gender experts).

This Field Guide builds upon the 2020 GSP Guidelines and Checklist to provide a flexible framework suitable for different types of Commonwealth parliaments and different gender sensitising priorities as well as guiding questions to help make decisions on the scope, timing, and process of undertaking a GSP review. It offers customisable checklist, interview, and survey questions to help further assess a parliament's gender sensitivity. The Field Guide supports the implementation of a GSP review through the seven steps discussed in more detail throughout this document.

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### About CWP

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) is the network of women Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Parliaments and Legislatures. The CWP network provides a means of capacity-building for women elected to Parliament to be more effective in their roles, improving the awareness and ability of all Parliamentarians, male and female, and encouraging them to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation and helping Parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions.

### About the CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) connects, develops, promotes and supports parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA collaborates with parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its statement of purpose. It brings parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields, to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies.

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This Field Guide operationalises the Checklist and provides examples of how the Checklist can be customised to reflect the specificities of each Commonwealth parliament so as to provide a snapshot of the various degrees of a GSP review readiness. The Field Guide proposes a customised version of the Checklist be used to complete **Step 4: Performing Diagnostics**, and a customised Institutional Survey and Interview Questions be used to collect data for **Step 5: Preparing the Review**, alongside the **Red-Amber-Green Analysis (RAG)** and a multiyear approach to analyse these data. The Field Guide provides guiding questions on developing specific recommendations for **Step 6: Reporting Findings and Making Recommendations** and advises ongoing GSP reviews as laid out in **Step 7: Monitoring Progress**.

Assessing the extent to which formal and informal structures, culture, practices, and norms are gender sensitive involves developing a flexible research design and methodology. Doing so will allow a GSP review to move beyond mere documentation of descriptive statistics to instigating, entrenching, and expanding institutional change. This requires a commitment to undertake future GSP reviews and to focus on the dynamics of such gender sensitive changes. Conducting a GSP review typically requires institutional support and permission to, amongst other things, access the necessary data.

The precise length of time required to undertake a GSP review depends on available resources and political will as well as the remit, scope, and depth of the assessment. Depending on these factors, a GSP review may focus upon one or more levels of government or upon one or more chambers of parliament and may include interviewing a few parliamentary members or surveying a wider range of parliamentary members and staff.

# Toward Gender Sensitising Commonwealth Parliaments

This Field Guide is designed to assist Commonwealth parliaments with assessing the gender sensitivity of their institutions. It builds on the CPA's GSP Guidelines and Checklist alongside the existing and extensive expertise produced by the CPA and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), as well as by other international organisations and scholars concerned with parliaments and gender equity.

Concern about gender sensitivity in political institutions is widespread and longstanding, and as many Commonwealth parliaments become more diverse by electing more women, they face increasing pressure to also become more inclusive by giving women the opportunity to more fully participate and influence all aspects of their parliamentary work. Relatively newer is the "ideal and practice" of gender sensitising parliaments with the first publication on the topic surfacing in 2001 in the form of the CPA's publication *Gender Sensitising Commonwealth Parliaments*. The CPA's report flagged low levels of women's political representation as unacceptable and proposed women's political participation must include both formal and substantive representation, where women legislators exercise real political power. Such power sharing would benefit Commonwealth countries and the people living in them. Moving beyond highlighting the problem of women's political underrepresentation, the CPA's report further encouraged Commonwealth parliaments to adopt transformative gender sensitising reforms, for example, committing Commonwealth parliaments to "gender-based analyses of all parliamentary documents" and providing "maternity and paternity benefits for parliamentarians".

## Descriptive Representation

Central to GSP reviews is collecting and publishing data on the descriptive representation of parliaments, and in a more focused way, on the number of women members. In other words, counting matters. Diverse parliaments have the potential to become more effective and legitimate

institutions. Decisions reflect a more expansive set of interests, concerns, and issues and a wider range of skills, experiences, and perspectives. The public is more likely to view parliamentarians as more representative of their interests and parliaments as more responsive to their concerns.

A key feature of a GSP concerns descriptive representation, defined as a parliament proportionately reflecting the population in terms of sex and other social characteristics and shared experiences. Looking to women's descriptive representation across countries, some parliaments, including Commonwealth parliaments, are doing better than others but overall the political gender gap is considerable, and despite improvements, no parliaments fully reflect the diversities of the people they represent. While there have been improvements, gender equality is seldom promoted and achieved across all "bodies and internal structures". And, like others, Commonwealth parliaments are overwhelmingly comprised of "male elites" and as such, their institutions' "working practices continue to reflect the traditions and preferences" of the men "members who have historically populated" them.

Looking to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) most recent ranking of Women in National Parliaments, at 26 percent, the global average of women in lower houses is a considerable improvement upon the 2001 global average of 14 percent when the CPA first reported on GSPs, however, it is still far from gender parity. Of the 193 countries for which the IPU collect data, women make up a majority of members in five parliaments – Rwanda (61 percent), Cuba (54.4 percent), Nicaragua (50.6 percent), Mexico (50 percent), and UAE (50 percent). And in a handful of parliaments women are just a percentage point or few short of reaching gender parity as is the case in New Zealand (49.7 percent), Iceland (47.6 percent), and Costa Rica (47.4 percent).

Successive elections across Commonwealth countries have returned women members



in historically high numbers – for example, in Rwanda women comprise over 60 percent of parliamentarians and in New Zealand women are less than half a percentage-point away from gender parity. Still, at 19 percent, the Commonwealth average of women in national parliaments is several percentage points below the global average.

CWP surveys have revealed that most Commonwealth parliaments already collect data on members' gender, age, and profession, but few collect other diversity data such as education, disability, parenthood, sexuality, and ethnicity which could provide even more gender sensitive insight into women's political participation and experience.

A wide range of diversity data, whether on a single country or on multiple countries, is needed to track gender sensitivity changes over time and evaluate who is and who is not present, and if women's and other underrepresented groups' presence has increased, decreased, or levelled off. Focussing upon global and regional averages and on the narrative that "women's political representation is increasing" may, in some cases, mask instances where a country's growth has been slow or has even stalled. Accurate and current diversity data has the empirical potential to prompt the appropriate reforms needed to address women's political underrepresentation.

Important too is considering women's inclusion in parliament, for example, exploring what happens to women once elected to understand if they experience similar rates of promotion or incidences of intimidation, bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment as men, and if their parliamentary experiences differently influence their decision to seek another term or to leave politics.

### Gender Sensitivity: Beyond the Numbers

Ultimately, Commonwealth parliaments are workplaces for elected members and for a wide array of staff, and GSPs must respond to their needs as well as to the needs of all those present in these spaces, including visitors. The small but growing research on the gendered nature of parliaments reveals they are unique workplaces, with their own rules, practices, policies, infrastructures, and cultures, all of which are imbued with "organised masculinism" – thus, for many members and staff, parliaments are experienced as non-inclusive and unwelcoming spaces.

There is ever-growing evidence of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAW-P). Increasing are first-hand reports of VAW-P in traditional and social media and in gender and politics research. For example, Mona Lena Krook's game-changing publication, *Violence Against Women in Politics*, finds it occurs across all parliamentary institutions and compromises women's inclusion insofar that VAW-P prevents them from their right to participate in their place of work fully and safely. This is an example of why more diverse spaces also need to be more inclusive spaces. In the CPA GSP Guidelines it is reported that VAW-P takes several forms, from micro aggression to bullying, and includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, rape, and murder. Of the 19 Commonwealth parliaments responding to the CPA-CWP's Survey of Parliamentary Responses to VAW-P, 8 have undertaken VAW-P reviews and 11 have undertaken VAW-P consultations, whereas 8 have not begun VAW-P consultations. VAW-P, along with other gender insensitive realities, presents a significant barrier to women entering and remaining in their workplaces. Acknowledging this, the CPA produced an anti-harassment policy in which it is stated that "harassment can be identified as unwanted behaviour directed at an individual with the purpose or intent of humiliating, disrespecting, intimidation, hurting or offending them. This unwanted behaviour could also include but is not limited to discriminatory, sexual, physical, psychological, bullying, and coercion".

The CPA's ongoing commitment toward "better representation of women in legislatures and for furtherance of the gender equality across the Commonwealth", is seen in its gender sensitising efforts across Commonwealth countries. Together, the CPA and CWP have long been working to increase women's political representation and political equality, for example, the CPAs GSP Guidelines build upon the CPA's 2001 report *Gender Sensitising Commonwealth Parliaments Report*. Adding to current debates about GSP, including the implications of COVID-19 upon women's political participation, the CPA's GSP Guidelines assist Commonwealth parliaments to "create the necessary conditions to deliver on their responsibility to reach the standards of gender

sensitivity". Not alone in this endeavour, the CPA and CWP are united with international efforts toward achieving political equality between women and men – a key principle entrenched in the United Nation's Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Commonwealth Charter and in other international treaties. In light of the above support, Commonwealth parliaments, supported by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, are encouraged to undertake a GSP review, specifically as offered by the CPA.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the work of Commonwealth parliaments, but the ways in which it has differently affected women MPs and staff are still unknown. Responding to the global pandemic's impact upon Commonwealth countries,

the CPA published *COVID-19: Delivering Parliamentary Democracy – CPA Toolkit for Commonwealth Parliaments Democracy* to highlight the "ways in which legislatures can remain operational, in continuing to uphold their democratic responsibilities and exert their democratic rights". During the pandemic, some Commonwealth parliaments experimented with 'hybridity', where members were able to perform their parliamentary work face-to-face or remotely. Hybrid parliaments have the potential to become more inclusive and gender sensitive institutions, for example, working virtually can increase women's participation by permitting them to better balance their parliamentary work and caring responsibilities, and can reduce incidences of gender-based heckling, intimidation, bullying, harassment, and sexual assault.



# The Seven Step Review

This Field Guide is designed to assist Commonwealth parliaments in reviewing the gender sensitivity of their institutions. The Field Guide allows for a flexible approach to assessing the gender sensitivity of parliaments, allowing assessors to decide the scope of their GSP review activities. The Field Guide supplies assessors with questions and resources enabling institutional and political gender sensitivity programmes of work to be designed.

GSP assessors can be parliamentary practitioners, for example, members of parliament and parliamentary staff – as is the case when undertaking internal, self-assessments. Assessors can also be independent researchers or groups with gender sensitive and parliamentary knowledge, as is the case for external reviews. For internal, self-assessments, parliamentary members and staff lead, design, and undertake the review – and it can involve evaluating their own experiences in the workplace. Whereas for external reviews, independent researchers, or organisations, who, in some cases work with members and staff, collect and evaluate information from a range of sources to gain insight into a parliament's practices and processes and to make recommendations that are included in

a report to parliament. Self-assessments may allow for greater ownership over the review process whereas external reviews may allow for greater objectivity over the evaluation. Ultimately, it is up to individual parliaments to determine if their GSP review is to be an internal, self assessment or an external assessment, and, upon deciding this, the assessors who will conduct the review and write the report.

A GSP review benefits from a multimethod approach to collecting and analysing data and identifying and assessing the gender sensitivity of a Commonwealth parliament at various points in time. It also facilitates comparisons with Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth parliaments. The research design and methods move beyond documenting who is and who is not present and allow for considerations as to how to 'institutionalise' gender sensitivity. GSP review methods can potentially lead to instigating, entrenching, and expanding institutional change. Gender sensitising parliaments is an ongoing process as the full institutionalisation of gender sensitivity takes time. Monitoring is ongoing and ideally takes place every three to five years in order to identify any changes brought about by policy or government change, including a reversal in gender sensitivity measures.

Figure 1: Seven Steps to Assessing Parliamentary Gender Sensitivity

## Step 1: Understanding Gender Sensitivity

Parliaments explore the definition(s) of GSP, why GSP are important, and the various ways in which they can be and have been assessed, using the CPA's GSP Standards and Checklists

## Step 2: Embracing Gender Sensitive Parliament Principles

The organisation institutionally and politically commits to embed the principles of a GSP into the parliament's structures, operations, methods, and work.

## Step 3: Preparing a Team and Strategy:

Assessors set timelines, objectives, and resource levels for a GSP implementation team which can consist of, for example, an internal team of parliamentary members and researchers and or an external team of academic researchers and organisations.

## Step 4: Performing Initial Diagnostics

Assessors explore what gender data are available and what data need to be generated using a customised GSP Checklist to provide a preliminary 'snapshot' by which to assess the parliament's readiness for a full gender sensitive review.

## Step 5: Preparing the Review – Collecting Data

Surveys and interviews are developed and tested, then used to collect data. Focus groups and workplace observations of house proceedings, committee work, and use of facility space can also be employed. Data are analysed using statistical, comparative, and multi-year analyses as well as a red-amber-green light (RAG) rating system.

## Step 6: Reporting of Findings and Making Recommendations

Gender sensitising reform options are generated using data analyses, presented to stakeholders for comment, then finalised. Details of required resources as well as policy and legislative changes are included in the GSP review, as are key performance indicators and dates for future assessments and reports.

## Step 7: Monitoring Progress

Data are collected on a regular basis toward key performance indicators and are reported at regular intervals to track progress over time.

# Step 1: Understanding Gender Sensitivity

Familiarisation with the concept and practice of GSPs is Step 1 in assessing the gender sensitivity of your Commonwealth parliament. Returning to the definition of a GSP, as stated more fully in the CPA's GSP Guidelines, it is one with the gender sensitising features presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Gender Sensitive Parliamentary Features

<b>A Gender Sensitive Parliament:</b>	
Promotes and achieves equality of women and men across all its bodies and internal structures, and mainstreams gender equality throughout all its work, including the work of the parliamentary administration;	
Is founded on gender equality, where women and men have an equal right to participate without discrimination or recrimination;	
Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality, and respects the needs and realities of MPs – men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities;	
Responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods, and work, and has no barriers – substantive, structural, or cultural to women's full participation;	
Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality;	
Extends beyond elected members and equips parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, and actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and	
Offers a positive example or model to society at large.	

The scope of a Commonwealth GSP review includes a wide array of participants. As workplaces, parliaments include more than elected members, for example, officials, staff, and anyone involved in the day-to-day work of parliament to include the administration, non-partisan staff, ministers, and party caucuses. Given the diversity of many Commonwealth jurisdictions, an inclusive parliament is one that not only responds to the needs of women members and staff, but to other underrepresented groups, especially those with intersecting identities including ethnicity and physical ability.

Undertaking a GSP review is important for uncovering the institutional environments in which parliamentary members and staff work, and for understanding how "institutional design" affects parliamentary behaviour. GSP reviews have the capacity to unveil the inner workings of parliaments and the outcomes of representative processes, as well as the appropriate strategies that are needed to enhance gender equality in parliamentary workplaces.

The CPA's GSP Guidelines, adopted here, help Commonwealth parliaments "create the necessary conditions to deliver on their responsibility to reach the standard of gender sensitivity". Central to this is the guiding principle of institutionalisation to which Commonwealth parliaments undertaking a GSP review are encouraged to commit. Gender sensitising institutions includes identifying: (1) the

gender sensitive reforms required to meet a parliament's specific gender sensitive needs, (2) the parliamentary actor(s) who will implement them, and (3) how they will be implemented and maintained in a way that meets the CPA's GSP's Guidelines. The CPA's Survey of Institutional Practice finds that of 17 parliaments, the Speaker of the Governing Body is "the key actor or institution with formal responsibility for gender equality" and in five parliaments the Speaker and Governing Body shares this responsibility. It should, however, be recognised that it is the responsibility of all Members and parliamentary officials, both male and female, to build a gender sensitive parliament.

The guiding principle of "institutional leadership" is concerned with fixing parliamentary institutions and not fixing women or people from other underrepresented groups. Gender sensitising a parliament is the administrative and political work of the parliamentary institution as a whole and not solely the work of "willing" members.

The Field Guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the CPA's GSP Guidelines, and with this in mind, it is useful to include in Table 5 the Guideline's information on how a parliament's leadership (political and administrative) can "establish an embed new GSP procedures and parliamentary organisations" and "how they can develop a supportive GSP culture".

Integral to undertaking a GSP assessment is developing a Checklist that reflects the 2020 CPA's Guidelines which enables Commonwealth parliaments to determine how well positioned they are to undertake a GSP review and to "embed" gender sensitive reforms. The Checklist is designed to assess a parliament's leadership capacity (political and administrative) and institutional capacity (gender expertise) to undertake a GSP review and has the potential to provide considerable "new information" on a parliament's gender sensitive data, reviews, and capacity.

Table 2: Establishing GSP Procedures & Developing GSP Cultures

Identify:	Where gender insensitivities exist;
	How gender insensitivities manifest themselves;
	What changes need to be made to address gender insensitivities.
Determine:	How gender sensitive reforms can be implemented;
	How gender sensitive effects, over time, can be monitored, reviewed, and revised.
Confirm:	How the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, CWP Steering Committee, and regional and individual CWP Members and parliaments can support member the parliament's efforts to become gender sensitive.



# Step 2: Embracing Gender Sensitive Parliaments

Before undertaking a GSP review it is essential that there is a formal agreement in principle to a GSP review. There must also be the political will to undertake a gender sensitive review on behalf of those with the power to makes change. Assessors, whether members, staff, academics, or organisations are encouraged to begin by identifying who in parliament has the formal authority to agree to gender sensitivity parliamentary work and who has the power to set up this process on the administrative or political side. This, for example, could be the Speaker or the Governing Body.

Next, GSP assessors identify those with the power, authority, and resources needed to undertake a successful review, and where parliamentary decisions are made to agree, support, and supply resources for the assessment. Table 3 (Worksheet 1) provides questions to help identify these various positions and paths.

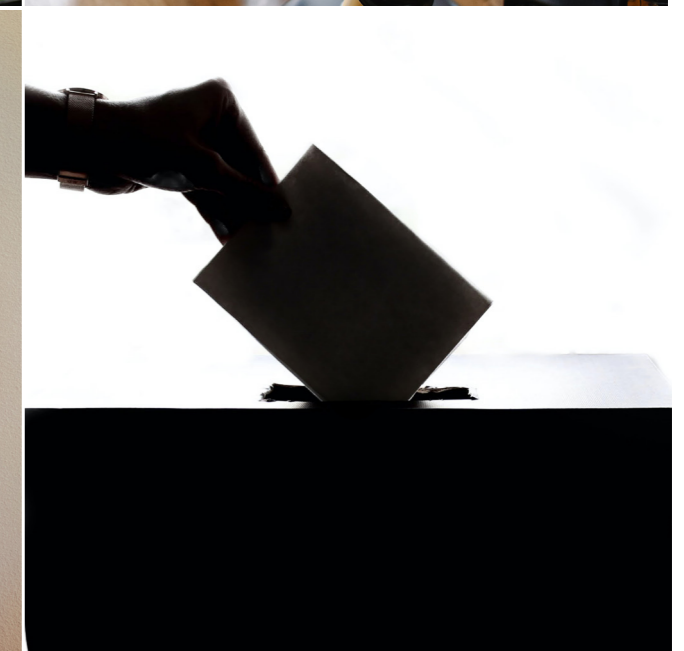
Table 3: (Worksheet 1) - Identifying Supports for a GSP Review

Questions	Notes
Who in the parliament has the formal authority to agree to gender sensitive parliamentary work?	
Who in the parliament has the power to set up this process on the administrative and political side?	
Who has the power, authority, and the resources needed to sign off on the assessment?	
Where are parliamentary decisions made to agree, support, and put resources to the review and report?	
Is your parliament open to a GSP review?	
Are there other formal and informal sources of support for a GSP review? Who are they?	
Where can support for a GSP review within parliament be mobilised? For example, women's caucuses, committees, friendship groups, Speaker, Clerk, and other parliamentary networks.	
Where can support for a GSP review outside parliament be mobilised? For example, women's organisations, media, and feminist academics.	

Is there any opposition to a GSP review that needs to be overcome? Can you identify resisters and challengers and sources of opposition and indifference? If so, can you develop a plan, if needed, and mobilise supporters to transform their views?

Have you contacted the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, the CWP network coordinator or your CWP Regional representative?

Have you considered reaching out to people who attended the CWP GSP Roundtables? They may have gender sensitising advice to share.



## Step 3: Preparing a Team and Strategy

Step 3 involves the practicalities of developing and conducting a full GSP review. Scope pertains to issues such as whether the review examines elected members, appointed members (where relevant and applicable), professional staff, or all three groups. If examining professional staff, does it include clerks, legislative staff, or party staff? Or, for example, does the assessment focus on one legislative house/chamber, or, where applicable, both upper and lower houses?

At Step 3, assessors also determine if the assessment will be undertaken by a team, and if so, the team membership and leadership. During this step a decision must be made about whether the assessment will be led by 'members only' – ideally representing different party grouping or if the assessment will be led by members working with senior parliamentary staff as co-professionals, and if the administrative staff will be supporting the members, or if it the review is a collective effort between administrative staff and political staff.

As discussed, a decision must also be made as to whether the GSP review will be conducted internally by, for example, members and staff, or externally, by, for example, the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, consultants, or women's organisations, and whether or not it will reflect a cooperative effort between internal members and staff and external academics and organisations. External assessors, may come with subject/area knowledge and best practices from other jurisdictions/environments whereas internal assessors may proceed with a more intimate knowledge of the institution.

The timeframe for the review is also decided at this stage and whether the work will be completed over, say, three months, six months, or a year or more. The time frame depends on the scope of and method for the GSP review. For example, in terms of scope, less time is needed if the focus of the GSP review falls to one chamber, elected members, and one jurisdiction, whereas more time is needed if the focus falls to more than one chamber, elected members, parliamentary

staff, and party staff.

In terms of methods, more time should be allotted if using multiple methods. For example, more time is needed if the assessment includes interviews, surveys, checklists, and/or other data collection methods, and less time is needed if only using a customised GSP Checklist.

The timeframe also depends on other factors such as the GSP review remit, available resources, and political will, as well as institutional factors, including the parliamentary cycle. Consider if it is better to undertake a GSP assessment when the house(s) is sitting or when it rises for a break – when deciding this think of the availability of members and staff – they may have little time when sitting and they may not be available when the house(s) rise. Furthermore, where a parliament may be looking to undertake a CPA Benchmarking Exercise, it may also wish to simultaneously explore a gender sensitivity audit

The timing of the next election also factors into the time frame. While undertaking a GSP review is always encouraged, there are some scenarios that warrant caution – for example, undertaking an extensive GSP review immediately before an election. Moreover, be aware that if an election is called or triggered, a new government may not wish to proceed with the review. If this is a possibility, it may be all the more useful to secure internal support for a GSP review from senior parliamentary staff – with some security of tenure – such as the clerk. Thus, deciding the timing of a GSP review also involves evaluating if the political will and commitment to undertake one is connected to a particular speaker's or clerk's support. Scope, method, team, and timeline considerations may be tracked by filling in Table 7 (Worksheet 2). The Worksheet questions are designed to generate an initial discussion as to how to proceed with a GSP review and does not require one to know all the details related to the scope, method, team, and timeline.

Table 4: (Worksheet 2) - Scope, Method, Team, & Timeline

Scope	Notes
Is your GSP review focussing on elected members and appointed members, or on elected members or appointed members only.	
Is your GSP review looking at professional staff, and if so, which staff?	
In bi-cameral systems, is your GSP review looking at both houses in the legislative branch (lower and upper houses) or one house?	
Is your GSP review examining one jurisdiction, and if so, which jurisdiction? For example, in federal or devolved political systems, you can look at national and sub-regional jurisdictions.	
Methods	
Have you reviewed the Checklist to get an initial sense of your parliament's 'readiness' to undertake a GSP review? Note – the template Checklist is below.	
What information are you going to collect for your review? How are you going to evaluate it?	
Are you going to conduct interviews, and if so, who do you plan on interviewing? Note – the sample interview questions are below.	
Are you thinking of sending a survey? If so, who do you want to survey – members or staff? Note – the survey template is below.	
Are you considering other methods, such as focus groups, observing house/committee work, or analysing text/discourse of house or committee proceedings?	
In terms of data analysis and write up, who is going to do this? Who has the resources and the capacity to collect, analyse, and write up the data, including interviews? How long do you think you will need for this?	
Team	
Decide if you need a team to undertake a GSP review. To consider is the size of your parliament and the resources of your parliament. GSP reviews can be conducted by one person – if this is your preference, consider striking a small working committee of advisors – this can include a combination of members, staff, academics, and organisations.	
If you are planning on a team, who might be on it?	
If you have a team in mind, will there, be a lead member? This could be a woman's caucus, committee chair, CWP chair, or administrative staff.	





Self-assessment, Internal GSP Reviews or External GSP Review	Notes
Do you anticipate the GSP review to be led internally, for example, by parliamentary member(s) (cross-party) or staff? Alternatively, do you anticipate the GSP review to be led externally, for example, by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, academics, or women's or democratic organisations?	
Do you anticipate co-operation between internal and external assessors?	
<b>Timeline/ Work Plan</b>	
When do you anticipate the GSP review to commence?	
Are there reporting responsibilities? If so, what are they, and who will write the report?	
How long do you think the GSP review will take? Is there a deadline? Here, consider the scope and methods.	
Do you anticipate your review to take some or all 'Seven Steps' in the Field Guide?	
If you are not planning on taking all Seven Steps, which of steps do you anticipate prioritising? Here, consider your timeframe and resources.	
Do you think the GSP review is going to take place whilst the house(s) is sitting or when it rises?	
Do you anticipate the GSP review to begin at the beginning, middle, or end of the election cycle?	

## Step 4: Performing Initial Diagnostics: The GSP Checklist

Step 4 involves developing a GSP Checklist consistent with the four dimensions of a GSP presented earlier. The Checklist is used to take a snapshot of what is known and unknown about a Commonwealth's parliamentary data, structures, processes, and actors. The first stage is to identify who can best provide Checklist information – ideally people with access to institutional knowledge about data collection and availability, for example, professional staff working in the clerk's office.

Developing the GSP Checklist requires scanning the parliamentary website for available data, for example, on the number of women members of the legislature or committees. The core Checklist uses universal terms, but it can be customised to fit any parliament: uni- and bi-cameral systems, or federal or unitary systems. Parliamentary staff and local academic experts can offer valuable institutional advice.

The GSP Checklist enables assessors to “identify how able they are to initiate and secure gender sensitive parliamentary reform” and pinpoint “who has the authority, powers, and resources to lead on a gender [and diversity] sensitive parliament”. Checklist questions focus on five areas: (1) institutional leadership (e.g., gender equality plans or laws referring to gender equality in political representation), (2) data collection (e.g., collection and publication of sex aggregated data on parliamentarian diversity and participation); (3) reviews (e.g.,

gender equality/gender sensitive reviews in the last three years); (4) gender expertise (e.g., presence of gender experts and gender equality policies), and; (5) women's parliamentary bodies (e.g., presence of gendered parliamentary bodies such as a women's committee).

The GSP Checklist further recommends “what new roles and processes need to be established” to facilitate reform and ensure sensitivity becomes a permanent governance feature. It is important to note that the Checklist alone does not constitute a GSP review, rather, it is a step to help assessors perform a GSP review. The Checklist supports the work of an initial gender sensitive review in that it assists in identifying the capacity for a Commonwealth parliament to undertake an assessment in terms of having in place the available resources, necessary data, and political will.

A GSP Checklist maps information gaps while increasing the reviewers' institutional knowledge. Refining a GSP Checklist to fit the specificities of a parliament may require assessors to first interview parliamentary members, staff, and experts for question phrasing and content.

The template GSP Checklist can be found at Annex 1 at the end of this publication.



## Step 5: Collecting Interview and Survey Data

Step 5 includes designing interviews and survey questions for parliamentary members and staff to evaluate how well the parliament meets the CPA's GSP Standards. This step may further involve assessors reviewing relevant literature, subjecting a range of parliamentary publications to a gendered analysis, and gathering data from various sources, including election returns, Standing Orders, motions, bills, and codes of conduct. Activities during Step 5 include those listed below.

### Gendered Analysis

Gender analysis refers to a range of methods for understanding the relationships between men and women and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with other characteristics, is vital when appreciating the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in relevant legal and social structures.

- ✓ Creating an online survey for past and present members and/or staff
- ✓ Identifying members and/or staff to interview and survey regarding their work experiences
- ✓ Interviewing/surveying past and current members and/or staff, including those with dependents
- ✓ Observing/interviewing/surveying women's caucuses
- ✓ Gathering and analysing descriptive diversity data
- ✓ Identifying proceedings and committees to observe
- ✓ Gender analyses of the Standing Orders, bills, legislation, and codes of conduct
- ✓ Reviewing websites and virtual tours to assess gender history inclusion
- ✓ Evaluating the gender and diversity inclusivity of artwork and other parliament spaces
- ✓ Surveying groups who visit the parliament, and reviewing visitor feedback

### Interviews

Annex 2 includes sample interview questions suitable to ask members and staff. It is advised, when asking for their participation, to send information about GSPs and the review, as well as some sample questions to help them prepare for the interview. Before the interview itself, ask participants if they would like to know more about GSPs and/or about the assessment. The number of questions

depends on the interview length and the GSP review scope – generally, a thirty-minute interview will allow for six to eight questions and in-depth answers. It is advised to reserve interview time to ask questions to which answers cannot be found online – thus, do not ask questions such as 'how long have you been a member' as this information is easily accessible via a simple search. It is advised that the first question be a 'warm up' question as starting with a personal or sensitive question may create an awkward rapport. The questions are designed to allow participants to reflect and expand on their experiences working in parliamentary institutions, and can be asked of women, men, and non-binary members and staff.

Undertaking interviews with senior stakeholders can be difficult in terms of accessing parliamentary members and senior staff, and in terms of scheduling. Several circumstances may make in-person interviews difficult to conduct, and it is advised, where possible, to conduct interviews over the phone or over appropriate video-conferencing platforms. If conducting in-person interviews, consider in advance arranging for a comparably quiet and private location agreed to by the participant. Offer participants a choice in advance. Assessors must plan on proposing flexible interviewing scheduling options to accommodate members' and/or staffs' parliamentary schedules. When planning interviews,



determine the number of interviews to conduct and with whom, know that interviews take time to plan, schedule, conduct, transcribe/write up, and analyse. In making this decision, balance the number of interviews needed for a GSP analysis with the resources available to undertake them; the number of interviews and who to interview will depend on the GSP's assessment scope. When undertaking interviews, plan how to gain access to members and staff. Identify if there are internal parliamentary actors who can make introductions to key stakeholders and/or help organise interviews, and/or if there is someone influential who can encourage members' and staffs' participation. Again, this could be a Member of the CWP Steering Committee representing the parliament's Region and/or member of the CPA Executive Committee, CPA Branch or Regional Secretary and chairs of women's caucuses and other caucuses. As with surveys, it is important to interview members and/or staff from diverse backgrounds, for example, in terms of gender, Indigeneity, ethnicity, ability, age, and sexual orientation.

The information shared during interviews may be politically sensitive, and with this in mind, consider how to guarantee participants' confidentiality and anonymity. This may include a written or verbal statement before proceeding with an interview and a commitment that all related notes and recording will not be shared and will be destroyed upon the assessment's completion.

In thinking about interview questions and the number of questions, focus on the interviewees' time and comfort. Be sensitive to the time demands of senior individuals; to increase participation, consider stating the length of the interview. If they do not have a good deal of time, ask key questions up front.

In terms of type of questions, decide if they will be fixed questions, open questions, or a mix of both, and decide if all participants will be asked the same questions or some of the same questions. During interviews, while it is important to get answers to key questions – which in itself can be difficult, it is also important to allow participants the space to tell their stories. Often answers to questions concerning members' and staffs' experiences will be shared in the form of anecdotes which are sources of invaluable insight – often more so than answers prompted by fixed questions.

As a reminder, in Step 3 Preparing Team and

Strategy, you are encouraged to identify who is responsible for data input and interview transcription. If using electronic surveys, the data is automatically entered and charts/tables/figures easily generated, but this is not the case for hard copy surveys. Data input can be time consuming and will add to the time frame. In terms of interviews, there are plenty of programs with voice transcription options. Not all participants will agree to being recorded, and prefer instead, note taking – in such cases someone will need to write up the interviews.



## Surveys

Surveys may be used for some GSP reviews and are best for gathering less detailed information from a high number of people. Accordingly, for those smaller parliaments with fewer individuals, surveys may not be as necessary. Larger institutions, meanwhile, will need to determine the scope of their surveys and potentially dedicate significant resources to the exercise. Sending a survey requires additional considerations, such as timing. For example, whether members and staff have more time to fill out a survey whilst parliament is sitting or when it is adjourned, noting when parliament is adjourned members may wish to spend their time doing non-parliamentary related work. Further considerations may relate to survey sending strategies. There have been considerable advances in electronic survey technology –

overall they are less expensive to send than mailed surveys and they can generate higher response rates. Given this, it is encouraged, where available, to send surveys electronically via email rather than via post. Keep in mind that electronic surveys require assessors have access to survey software – noting different survey software offers different sending options, user friendliness, data capabilities, chart/table generators, and security features.

Surveys can be distributed internally by, for example, the clerk's office, the speaker's office, or by a party leader, house leader, or whip. Or the survey could be sent externally by an academic, consultant, or an independent women's or democracy organisation. Additionally, the response rate may increase if a survey is accompanied by an introductory letter of support from the CPA Secretary General, CWP Chairperson, speaker,

clerk, party leaders and/or from an external women's organisation or from a notable feminist leader(s). Surveys should be kept as short as possible as too many questions may reduce the overall response rates and risk participants submitting incomplete questionnaires. It is important to test GSP surveys for length and validity and to ensure all questions directly relate to assessing gender sensitivity. It is key to involve parliamentary gender experts or other key parliamentary actors to ensure

the most pertinent questions are being asked. When designing the survey, think about the survey results and data analysis, and whether the goal is to present simple descriptive statistics or more sophisticated data analysis. In both cases, assessors not familiar or comfortable with survey design and/or with data collection and data analysis may consider consulting an academic or parliamentary researcher during the design and analysis.

Additional survey considerations include the survey period and survey reminders, for example, how long the survey will be in the field (1 month, 2 months, 3 months or longer), and how many reminders will be sent (two, three, four or more), and at what intervals (weekly, every 10 days, bi-monthly). Keeping a survey in the field for only a week with no reminders may yield a low response rate compared to keeping a survey in the field for two months with two reminders a month.

A GSP Review Survey Questions template is included at Annex 2 at the end of this publication and, like the Checklist and the interview questions, can easily be amended to suit the specificities of different parliaments and parliamentary systems. This survey template is for appointed and elected members, but most questions can be easily adjusted to also include parliamentary staff and members' staff – suggestions for this are included in parentheses (e.g., For Staff...).

In terms of context for some of the questions, it is expected that women experience more incidences of gender incentive behaviours, such as, but not limited to intimidation, bullying, verbal, and physical assault. It is also expected they have had more grounds to file complaints than men. Questions do not explicitly ask about sexual harassment and sexual assault as these can trigger feelings of being assaulted all over again. Rather, the survey design takes a participant-led approach and provides space for participants to share their experiences if they wish to do so.

Some questions assess members' and staffs' levels of job satisfaction on the basis that women who have experienced gender insensitivities (e.g., heckling, harassment) are less likely to 'reoffer' for another term or stay with their employer for a longer period.



# Step 6: Analyzing Data and Making Recommendations

Data analysis and recommendations reflect information collected through previous steps and are key to moving ahead with making a Commonwealth parliament more gender sensitive in the short, medium, and longer term. Data analysis includes compiling, considering, and making sense of all collected checklist, interview, survey and other information with good research explaining the story these data tell in terms of how women and intersectional parliamentary participants are faring in their workplaces. Recommendations build on this story with an eye to how their workplaces might be best improved and how a more gender sensitive story might be told by the data in the next GSP assessment.

### Analysing Data

Once data are collected, it is recommended that the Red-Amber-Green (RAG) analysis is used to assess the gender diversity sensitivity of a parliament during a particular point in time or over a period of time. The RAG technique, 'Red-Amber-Green', or 'Poor-Improved-Good', analysis is based on traffic light colours and can be used to document gender insensitivities and signal if a Parliament is doing badly ('Red'), well ('Green'), or if it has "shown some improvement but considerably more needs to be done" (Amber').

The RAG analysis of a Commonwealth parliament involves gathering the information collected during Step 4, Performing Initial Diagnostics ('Checklist') and Step 5, Preparing the Review, Collecting Interview and Survey Data. Using the Checklist information, RAG analysis can be used to determine how ready a parliament is to undertake a GSP review. For example, if a parliament already collects a considerable amount of data and has in place gender based policies it could be assessed as 'Green' – it is doing well. However, there are areas where data could still be collected, and policies implemented could be assessed as 'Red' – it is not doing well. If another GSP review is performed in two years time and the updated Checklist reveals that more data is being collected and more gender-based policies have been implemented, then it could, for example, change from 'Red' to 'Amber'.

The RAG analysis could be used to mark the increasing ('Green'), decreasing ('Red'), or stalled ('Amber') diversity of a Parliament. Along the same lines, RAG can be used to assess women members' participation in parliamentary committees and in leadership positions. The RAG analysis can also be applied to the presence of equality and diversity provisions in the Standing Orders and in legislation. Further, it can be used to track explicit institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion, as well as to examine how parliament 'feels' for Members from different backgrounds.

Table 5: Example of RAG Analysis

Dimension	Measure			
Equality of Participation	Diversity of MPs	Red	Amber	Green
	Women's House Leadership Positions	Red	Amber	Green
	Women's Participation	Amber	Amber	Green
Infrastructure	Standing Orders	Amber	Amber	Green
	Calendar & Sitting Hours	Red	Amber	Green
	Equalities & Diversity Body (policy)	Amber	Amber	Green
	Equalities & Diversity Body (Institutional)	Red	Amber	Green
	Parliamentary Buildings & Spaces	Amber	Amber	Green
	Child Care & Child Friendly Provisions	Amber	Amber	Green
	Maternity & Parental Leave	Red	Amber	Green
Culture	House Commitment & Action Plan	Red	Amber	Green
	Chamber Culture (e.g., PM's Question Period)	Red	Amber	Green



An alternative method is to assess the gender sensitivity of a parliament overtime and from one parliament to the next.

This approach looks at a range of GSP indicators – all of which can be collected in Step 4, Performing Initial Diagnostics and Step 5, Preparing the Review of the Field Guide, and classifies them into several straight-forward categories, ‘equality of participation’ (e.g., the number of women present), ‘infrastructure’ (e.g., onsite childcare), and ‘policies and legislation’ (e.g., sexual harassment policy).

By allowing for a comparison from one year to the next and between different governments within a single country, as well

as for comparisons between jurisdictions, this approach can measure gender sensitising parliamentary progress or decline and identify which gender sensitive indicators need attention.

Looking to table 6, each indicator is given a score of “1” when conditions have improved from one year to the next or from one parliament to the next, “-1” when conditions have declined, and “0” for no change. Overall, this approach reveals that the 2015-2019 parliament is more gender sensitive than the previous, but there is still a lot of room for improvement, especially along measures in the infrastructure and policies legislation categories.

Table 6: Example of Assessing GSP Indicators Over Time

Dimension	Indicator	2013 - 2017	2017 - 2021	Change
Equality of Participation	Women MPs	25%	27%	1
	Women in Cabinet	26%	13%	-1
	Women Committee Chairs	30%	30%	0
	Committees with at least 50% Women	10%	5%	-1
	Women Presiding Officers	2	1	-1
Total				-2

## Making Recommendations

Where analysis is undertaken by a single or small team of people, recommendations, based on the Field Guide steps, should involve consultations with key parliamentary players such as the Speaker, the Clerk, Ministers, and working groups of members or staff. The consultations provide information needed to direct specific individuals or groups to take the lead in implementing the GSP review’s recommendations.

As stated, a Commonwealth parliament must think of itself as an institution responsible for gender sensitivity and appropriately respond to all identified gender insensitivities. In doing so, GSP assessment recommendations provide solutions to address the gender insensitivities and assign responsibility for implementing necessary changes.

Importantly, GSP reforms should be linked to a ‘responsible decision maker’ who is tasked with implementation, for example, the Speaker, a ministry of women’s equality (or equivalent), house leader, or a body, such as a procedures committee.

Additionally, institutions should think of recommendations as SMART undertakings (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound). Key here is that goals are achievable, and should aim towards real institutional change as, otherwise, there will be a set of unrealistic aspirations setting the legislature up for demotivating failure. Tied to this is the importance of maintaining a reasonable number of recommendations and appropriate prioritisation of these recommendations. Parliaments should consider the findings of the gender audit and pinpoint the most pressing issues that are frustrating the gender sensitising process. Similarly, parliaments should have due consideration to their resource limitations and set their aspirations accordingly. Well-resourced parliaments with dedicated teams will be better placed to address a larger number of recommendations than a smaller legislature with an already stretched administration.

Table 7: Examples of Gender Sensitive Recommendations

Responsible Decision Maker	Equality of Participation
The Speaker	Secure cross-party support for a comprehensive anti-harassment policy.
Workplace Equality Networks (WENs)/Diversity and Inclusion Bodies	Produce a House statement on maternity, paternity, parental adoption and caring leave; Vote remotely (off parliamentary estate); appoint a proxy from amongst fellow MPs, be formally and transparently paired so that any absence does not affect the balance of party representativeness in divisions; permit infants in the Chamber and committees.
Parliamentary Facilities Management	Provide for inclusionary parliamentary spaces for members.
Committee Chairpersons	Collect comprehensive and systematic diversity data in respect to select committee witnesses, establish annual rolling targets for witness representativeness.



## Step 7: Monitoring Progress

Step 7 is essential to ensure ongoing implementation of gender sensitivity measures. Monitoring is ongoing and is specific to the idiosyncrasies of each Commonwealth parliament, but also an important step toward ensuring identified gender sensitive recommendations are 'institutionalised'. Successful institutionalisation involves not only identifying necessary gender sensitive reforms and the actors responsible for implementing them, but as shown throughout the Field Guide, involves following up on the implementation status of gender sensitive reforms and if gender sensitive standards are being maintained.

Toward this, there should be a permanent actor or body responsible for monitoring the implementation of GSP recommendations and for maintaining GSP reforms from one parliament to the next, and for ensuring GSP assessments be undertaken on a regular basis. One possible approach is to create a small but permanent reference group responsible for gender-based representation and inclusion. A useful reference when considering the development of parliamentary bodies looking to build and maintain diversity and equality, the CPA Headquarters Secretariat has published a Handbook on **Parliamentary Workplace Equality & Diversity Networks: Case Studies from the Commonwealth** ([https://www.cpahq.org/media/o0xht5kl/2022\\_wedns\\_final.pdf](https://www.cpahq.org/media/o0xht5kl/2022_wedns_final.pdf)).

It is recommended that a GSP assessment be conducted every 3-5 years to track new gender sensitive data that may come with a change in government and that can reveal a more or a less gender sensitive institution. This involves revisiting the Field Guide's Seven Steps, from updating the Checklist, to resending member and staff Surveys, and to conducting new members and staff Interviews. Monitoring is needed to note the institutional changes over time in a parliament's capacity to deliver on GSP reforms. Changes over time may be seen in a parliament's gender expertise and in its processes, norms, and behaviour. Monitoring can flag gender sensitive stagnation and gender roll back, and the appropriate GS policies to address such circumstances. The RAG and longitudinal GSP Assessment methods are useful for noting changes in gender sensitive indicators reflected in the CPA's Guidelines and across the Four Dimensions. As noted, COVID-19 has presented some Commonwealth parliaments with new institutional opportunities, many of which increase women's political recruitment and retention. It is vital that the effect of the pandemic's institutional disruptions be closely monitored in these parliaments as they could serve as case models for other Commonwealth parliaments.

## Field Guide Tips

Commonwealth parliaments are diverse workplaces for an array of political and professional staff, who, like the people they represent, increasingly expect them to be inclusive and gender sensitive institutions not just in theory but in practice. No Commonwealth parliament is a fully GSP, but all Commonwealth parliaments will benefit from undertaking a GSP review following the seven-steps laid out in this Field Guide.

Steps 1 and 2, should not present insurmountable challenges as Commonwealth parliaments are already committed to GSPs and making a case to undertake a GSP review has already been made in various CPA-CWP reports and studies, including this Field Guide, and by various other international organisations.

With the support of the CPA HQ Secretariat and the CWP, GSP assessors are advised to look for windows of opportunity where the political and administrative willingness to undertake a GSP review are aligned. Ultimately, it is up to individual parliaments to foster GSP leadership and find resources to undertake a GSP assessment.



For more ways in which the CPA and CWP can support individual parliaments toward undertaking a GSP see the CPA GSP Guidelines. Below are some tips to consider when moving ahead with your own GSP review:

- **Engage relevant stakeholders.** Establish, for example, a small working group of members and staff with expertise in GSP; call on them for advice on the Checklist and Survey and for suggestions on interview participants. Keep the GSP work non-partisan as it involves working across parties (interviews and surveys) and with non-partisan professional staff. Identify and connect with other CPA focal people – these people could include, in addition to yourself, the CWP Regional representative, CPA Executive Committee Member, CPA Regional or Branch Secretary/Chair/Advisor, Speaker and/or Clerk to secure support and resources for undertaking a GSP review. Contact and secure support from women's representatives, committees, and caucuses. Get external letters of support from women's organisations, democracy organisations, feminist academics and activists. Think and act like a GSP 'advocate' – develop a brief written and verbal 'pitch' explaining the scope and work plan for the GSP review, and the resources needed.
- **Customise the templates.** Change the language in the Field Guide's Checklist, Survey, and Interview templates to reflect your parliament's specificities. For example, some countries refer to the upper house as the Senate and in others it is referred to as the House of Lords, some countries refer to childcare centres as crèches, and some countries refer to pharmacies as chemists. Adjust the length of the GSP review's Checklist, Survey, and Interviews to fit the members' and staffs' time and resources.
- **Prepare for potential changes.** Political and administrative actors may change and an election may result in a new Speaker, Clerk, new government, and new minister/parliamentary secretary responsible for women and gender equality. In such situations, engaged stakeholders can play a critical role in supporting the continuation of a GSP review.
- **Plan the checklist.** Allow parliamentary staff sufficient time, for example, at least one month, to fill in and send back the Checklist. You may need to send a reminder after two weeks. Ensure the Checklist questions are 'valid', that is, they are assessing your institution's GSP readiness and not something else. Get parliamentary staff, for example, from the clerks' office, and GSP experts to review and test the Checklist questions.
- **Plan the interviews and surveys.** Schedule interviews for 30-minutes – this will increase the number of participants. Note, often interviewees will speak longer if they are engaged and not interrupted. Ask important questions sooner rather than later if you sense an interviewee is in a hurry. Send the GSP survey electronically rather than through the mail – electronic surveys are more convenient for the participant and the data are automatically entered thus errors are reduced. Keep the survey short; it may be tempting to ask more questions but doing so could reduce the completion rate. Avoid making questions mandatory as this could also reduce the response rate. As with the Checklist, ensure the GSP Survey questions are 'valid' and ask parliamentary staff and MPs to review and test the questions before you send it into the field. Keep the Survey in the field for 1-2 months, and consider sending 3-5 reminders, every 10 days to 2 weeks as this may increase the response rate.
- **Making sense of the data.** Start the GSP review with some descriptive statistics, for example, the number and percentage of women MPs and committee chairs, or the percentage of women who are harassed and who need childcare, as this might be all the analyses needed. Ask for help, if needed, for other statistical analyses.
- **Monitoring.** Create a permanent small working group responsible for monitoring GSP, maintaining any GSP reforms, and ensuring future GSP assessments, otherwise, a change in the Speaker or in the Government Body, may result in GS stagnation or even roll back.

Commonwealth parliaments undertaking GSP assessments will add to the collective knowledge in the area of gender equality and politics and will lead Commonwealth parliaments to more closely reflect the diversity of the people they represent.

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# Annex 1: GSP Checklist

**GENDER SENSITISING PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW CHECKLIST**

Please indicate to which jurisdiction this checklist pertains:

Please provide a main contact name and details for follow up questions (write in):

**1. Do any of the bodies and individuals listed below have formal responsibility for gender equality within your Parliament?** If more than one applies, please rank, with ‘1’ being the most important, and then in descending order to the least important. Note: Gender equality might be phrased in terms of ‘gender sensitising the Parliament’ or ‘gender sensitive’ or ‘gender equal’ or ‘gender equity’, amongst other terms.

	Yes	No	Rank
The Governing body/bodies			
The Government			
The Speaker			
The Chief Administrative Operating Officer (or equivalent)			
Parliamentary Clerks			
Other Parliamentary body or official			
Comments:			

**2. Does your Parliament have an institutional ‘gender equality plan’?** Note: this might be phrased in terms of ‘gender sensitivity’, ‘gender equality’, ‘gender mainstreaming’, amongst other terms.

	Yes	No
Comments:		

**3. If you answered ‘yes’ to question 2 (your Parliament has an institutional gender equality plan) please answer the following questions (question 3). If you answered ‘no’ to question 2, please skip this question and proceed to question 4.**

**Does your Parliament’s ‘gender equality plan’ address any of the following?**

	Yes	No
The procedures of the House		
The culture of the House		
Parliamentary facilities (infrastructure)		
The ‘political work’ (or ‘outputs’) of Parliament, such as legislation, scrutiny of Government, representation of interests etc.		
Comments:		

4. Does your Parliament have any of the following 'gendered parliamentary bodies'?	Yes	No
A formal parliamentary Women's Caucus, in receipt of parliamentary resources		
A formal Women's Committee, in receipt of parliamentary resources		
An informal Parliamentary Women's Caucus, or Network, without parliamentary resources		
Formal, party-specific Women's Networks or organizations		
Informal, party specific Women's Networks or organizations		
Other – please write in		
Comments:		

5. For each of the following bodies listed below, please indicate if they have a formal or an informal role in your Parliament's efforts to 'gender sensitize' the institution? You may select both informal and formal if relevant.	Formal	Informal	None
A formal parliamentary Women's Caucus			
A formal Women's Committee			
A formal Equalities Committee			
An informal Parliamentary Caucus or Women's network			
A formal, party specific Women's Networks or organization			
An informal, party specific Women's Networks or organization			
Other – please write in			
Comments:			

6. If your Parliament has a formal Women's Committee, what are the roles within its official remit? Please select all that apply from the listed roles below:	Tick Box
Scrutinize the work ('outputs') of Parliament, e.g., laws, scrutiny, representation	
Monitor and evaluate Parliament as a gender sensitive institution	
Hold to account the responsible Government Minister/Department dealing with women's issues/gender equality	
Other - please write in	
Comments:	

7. Has your Parliament undertaken a 'gender sensitive review' of any of the following? If 'yes', please indicate the year in which the last (most recent) review was conducted.	Yes	If 'Yes', Date?	Not Applicable
Electoral law			
Standing Orders			
Parliamentary Behavioural Codes of Conduct			
Informal norms & conventions, e.g., the use of masculine language			
The Parliamentary dress code			
Facilities (e.g., washrooms, artwork, social spaces, and other amenities).			

	Yes	If 'Yes', Date?	Not Applicable
Heckling			
Sexual harassment and bullying (whether from MPs and/or fellow parliamentary workers)			
Violence against women in politics' (whomever it is from, i.e., including the public and online)			
Whether rules and/or laws regarding Parliamentary privilege/immunity can be used by parliamentarians to protect a parliamentary accused of harassment or violence			
Human Resources Complaints			
Non-disclosure Agreements			
Existing Gender Equality Legislation			
Members' pay and expenses schemes			
Provision for Members childcare costs			
The Parliamentary gender pay gap for Members			
The Parliamentary gender pay gap for parliamentary staff			
The Parliamentary gender pay gap for Members' staff			
Parliamentary sitting hours (in relation to availability of childcare)			
Other – please write in			
Comments:			

8. Please indicate below whether your Parliament formally collects data on the following characteristics of (a) Parliamentary Candidates and (b) Members (c) Parliamentary staff (e.g., Clerks/officials) and (d) Members' staff	Data collected for Parliamentary Candidates	Data collected for Members	Data Collected for Parliamentary Staff	Data published for Members' Staff
Gender				
Ethnicity				
Education				
Profession				
Motherhood				
Fatherhood				
Age				
Disability				
Sexual Orientation				
Gender Expression & Identity				
Other (e.g., military service, notable "firsts" such as the first woman elected to the House of Commons & family ties in Parliament)				
None collected				
Comments:				



9. Does the Constitutional Law or an equivalent legal framework directly refer to gender equality in political representation?	Yes	No
If 'yes', please specify:		

10. For each of the activities listed below please indicate whether your Parliament (1) collects and (2) publishes (makes publicly available) sex/gender & diversity (ethnicity) disaggregated data, & LGBTQ+ People. Select all that apply:						
	Parliament collects sex/gender data	Parliament publishes sex/gender data	Parliament collects race/ethnicity data	Parliament publishes race/ethnicity data	Parliament collects LGBTQ data	Parliament publishes LGBTQ data
Members' participation in Plenary Debates						
Members' participation in formal 'question time'						
Members' participation in Committee proceedings						
Members' participation in delegation travel						
Members in leadership positions in the Parliament						
Parliamentary staff (Clerks, officials, other workers), in leadership positions						
Parliamentary staff participation in Members' delegation travel						
Witnesses coming before Committees						
External 'specialist advisers' attached to Committees						

	Parliament collects sex/gender data	Parliament publishes sex/gender data	Parliament collects race/ethnicity data	Parliament publishes race/ethnicity data	Parliament collects LGBTQ data	Parliament publishes LGBTQ data
The gender pay gap amongst Members						
The gender pay gap amongst parliamentary staff						
The gender pay gap amongst Members' staff						
Rates of promotion of women members (e.g., women members assigned additional roles such as House Leaders, Whips, Committee Chairs etc.,)						
Rates of promotion for women clerks/officials, & other non-partisan staff						
The percentage of women journalists amongst media personnel given privileged access to the Parliament (sometimes called 'press gallery members'/lobby journalists)						
Comments:						



11. Please indicate below if your Parliament has consulted with any of the below about gender equality/gender sensitising parliamentary issues in the last three years?		
	Yes	No
Members, former Members, other elected officials		
Members' Staff		
Parliamentary Staff		
No consultation has taken place		
Comments:		

12. Please indicate if your Parliament has consulted with any of the below to identify the specific needs of parents in the last three years?		
	Yes	No
Members, former Members, other elected officials		
Members' Staff		
Parliamentary Staff		
No consultation has taken place		
Comments:		

13. Please indicate if your Parliament has consulted with any of the below regarding violence against women in politics in the last three years?		
	Yes	No
Members, former Members, other elected officials		
Members' Staff		
Parliamentary Staff		
No consultation has taken place		
Comments:		

14. For whom in Parliament is 'job share' [where two staff share the job] lawful? Please select all that apply.	
	Tick Box
Members	
Members' Staff	
Parliamentary Staff	
Other	
No job sharing is permitted	
Comments:	

15. Please indicate whether there is gender expertise (gender equality experts present, and gender equality policies in place) in the following parliamentary departments and services. If 'no', leave unchecked.	Gender Equality Experts present	Gender Equality Policies in place
The Clerks' Dept (i.e., the administrative department supporting Committees)		
Parliamentary outreach teams		
Parliamentary education teams		
The Digital Service		
Social media teams		
Security teams		
The Human Resources team		
Comments:		

16. Thinking about the gender expertise available in your Parliament: How often does your parliament provide sex/gender disaggregated data relating to policy?	
	Tick Box
Always	
Often	
Rarely	
Never	
Comments:	

17. Please indicate below the nature of the relationships your Parliament has with the following groups. Please select all links that apply for each group. If there are 'no relationships', leave unchecked.						
	Formal	Informal	Permanent	Ad hoc	In Person/ Oral	Written communication
Academic gender experts						
Women's movement/civil society representatives/groups						
Women in the media/social media						
Other- please write in						
Comments:						



18. Is there a law requiring all Government policy and legislation to be reviewed with regard to:				
	Yes	No	Don't No	If 'yes', specify
Gender equality impacts				
Gender budgeting				
Compatibility with obligations under relevant international conventions, e.g., CEDAW, UNCHR, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights.				
Comments:				

19. Please indicate below if training exists for each of the following groups out of the options listed and write in if it is 'optional' or 'mandatory'. Please tick all that apply:						
	Gender Equality	Gender Mainstreaming	Gender Budgeting	Sexual Harassment & Bullying	Leadership	None
Members						
Ministers						
Committee Chairs						
Parliamentary clerks						
Other Parliamentary officials						
Members' private staff						
Comments:						

20. Please indicate below the training your Parliament provides Please select all that apply:			
	MPs	Parliamentary Staff	Does not provide this training
Gender equality			
Gender mainstreaming			
Gender budgeting			
Sexual harassment and bullying			
Leadership			
None of the above			
Comments:			

21. Please indicate if your Parliament collects sex/gender-disaggregated data for participation in its gender training:	Yes	No
Comments:		

22. For which of the following groups are mentoring programmes run within Parliament? Please select all that apply.			
	No Programmes Run	Yes, Run by Parliament	Yes, Run by political parties
Women Members (women specific training)			
Women parliamentary staff (women specific training)			
All Members (men and women)			
All Staff (men and women)			
Comments:			

23. Please indicate if any of the following provisions exist to support the participation of women standing as candidates for your Parliament. If 'yes', please specify in the comments section.		
	Yes	No
Electoral Law requirement		
Party Regulation requirement		
Legislative quota		
Party quota		
Extra funding (monetary)		
Extra support (non-monetary, e.g., additional election broadcasts)		
Employment leave (either paid or unpaid) for candidates during election campaigns		
Comments:		

24. Please indicate if there are any formal rules requiring a set level of women's participation as Committee Chairs or Committee Members and, if so, what percentage this rule is set at.			
	Yes	No	Percentage
Rule setting level of women's participation as Committee Members			
Rule setting level of women's participation as Committee Chairs			
Comments:			



25. What kind of provisions are made for Members and Staff who have just had children? Please indicate for each whether there is no provision, the same provision as national law, or Parliament-specific provision.			
	No provision	Same as national or provincial/state/territorial law – please write in details	Parliament specific – please write in details
Maternity Leave for Members			
Paternity Leave for Members			
Parental Leave for Members			
Maternity Leave for Staff			
Paternity Leave for Staff			
Parental Leave for Staff			
Other – please write in			
Comments:			

26. Please indicate the kind of provisions which are made for Members on maternity, paternity, or parental leave for each of the following types of work.				
	Proxy vote	Surrogate Member	Other arrangement	No arrangement
How is Members' <b>voting</b> 'covered' during maternity/paternity/parental leave absences?				
How is Members' <b>committee work</b> 'covered' during maternity/paternity/parental leave absences?				
Comments:				

27. Are provisions made for the cost of childcare for Members? If yes, please add details about these provisions.	Yes	No
Details:		

28. Please indicate if any of the facilities below are provided on the Parliamentary site.			Yes	No
Full time childcare facilities providing permanent care (sometimes referred to as a nursery). If 'yes', how many spaces? Write in:				
Ad hoc childcare facilities providing care (sometimes referred to as a crèche). If 'yes', how many spaces? Write in:				
A Pharmacy				
Gender neutral washroom(s)				
Hairdressers/barbers				
Bars or restaurants selling alcohol				
Menstrual product dispensary machines				
Breast-feeding/Infant feeding rooms				
Women only lounge/space				
Family room				
Highchairs in dining spaces – if so, how many? (write in):				
'Safe-walk' program (walking/driving teams to accompany women from point 'A' to 'B')				
Any others - please write in, for example, parking spots for pregnant women, infants in the House/legislature floor allowed (strangers on the floor), a bus system:				

29. Is breastfeeding formally permitted in the following areas?			Yes	No
The Chamber				
Committees				
Special women's, family and/or infant-feeding rooms				
Comments:				

30. In your Parliament, please indicate if the listed behavioural codes exist to govern the relations between Members, between Members and parliamentary staff, and between Members and their staff. If they do, please provide details in the space below.			
	Between Members	Between Members & Parliamentary staff	Between Members & their staff
A behavioural code of conduct that refers to sexist language and sexist behaviour			
A Parliamentary sexual harassment code of conduct or policy			
Details:			
Comments:			



31. Prior to the global pandemic, COVID-19, did your Parliament allow for any of the following?		
	Yes	No
Members' video/teleconferencing		
Members' electronic voting		
Other – please write in:		
If 'yes' to any of the above, please write in the details:		
If 'yes' to any of the above, did your Parliament collect data on gender/sex participation rates?		
Comments:		

32. During the pandemic, has your Parliament been tracking data on gender/sex for virtual participation rates for any of the following?		
	Yes	No
Members (e.g., committees, question period, house proceedings)		
Parliamentary staff (e.g., Clerks, officials, other workers)		
Other – please write in:		
If 'yes' to any of the above, please provide details:		
Comments:		

Please use this space to include any other information you think might be relevant for understanding gender sensitivity in your parliament (there is no word limitation):

## Annex 2: GSP Review Survey Questions

Please indicate if you are an elected Member or an appointed Member, or if you are Parliamentary Staff or Party Staff (select one) (logic applied):

Appointed Member	
Elected Member	
Parliamentary Staff	
Party Staff	

### Background Information

1. Please indicate the name of the jurisdiction in which you serve (write in): (For Staff, 'Please indicate the name of the jurisdiction in which you work')

--

2. Is this your (select one): (For Staff, 'How many years have you been employed – write in')

First term	
Second term	
Third term or more	

3. How likely or unlikely are you to recommend this job to someone else? (select one): (For Staff, the question is the same)

Very unlikely	
Somewhat unlikely	
Neither likely nor Unlikely	
Somewhat likely	
Very likely	

4. How likely are you to stand in the next election? (select one): (For Staff: 'How likely are you to be with your current employer in three years from now?')

Very unlikely	
Somewhat unlikely	
Neither likely nor unlikely	
Somewhat likely	
Very likely	

5. How important are the following reasons in your decision to stand or to not stand in the next election? (please answer all categories): (For Staff: 'How important are the following reasons in your decision to remain with your current employer over the next three years?')

	Not at all Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Childcare availability					
Eldercare availability					
Parental leave availability					
Level of Remuneration					
Number of legislative sitting days					
Number of legislative sitting hours per day					



	Not at all Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Competing employment opportunities					
Promotion					
Required travel					
Ability to have your voice 'heard'					
Plans to retire					
Ability to influence policy					
Worried about losing the next election					
Behaviour of members and staff					
Personal safety considerations					
Harassment					
Other – write in:					

**Your Experiences**

6. Has another member or parliamentary staff ever done the following? (select all that apply): (For Staff, the question is the same)

	Elected Member	Legislative Staff
Heckled you (Members only)		
Intimidated you		
Bullied you		
Harassed you		
Other – please write in:		

7. As a 'Member' have you experienced any of the following by members of the public? (select all that apply): (For Staff, 'As parliamentary staff, have you experienced any of the following by members of the public?')

	Yes	No
Physical threats or abuse		
Unwanted approaches		
Followed by someone		
Had office or property damaged		
Received harassing, abusive, or intimidating letters, calls, or emails		
Targeted by harassing, abusive, or intimidating social media posts		
Other, please write in:		

8. Have you ever had a reason to bring forth a complaint to the house leader or party whip about a colleague's behavior (e.g., intimidation, bullying, harassment) directed at you or at someone else? (select one): (For Staff, the question is the same)

Yes	
No	
If yes, please provide details if you wish:	

**Policies**

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (note – this question may be expanded to include other underrepresented groups such ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ People, and People Living with a Disability (PLWD)):

(For Staff, 'Parliaments should have in place hiring practices that ensure greater diversity of women parliamentary staff', and 'Parliaments should have in place hiring practices that ensure greater diversity of women party staff')

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Governments should <u>ensure</u> the proportion of <u>cabinet positions</u> secured by women matches the women's proportion of the general population					
Governments should bring in <u>legislation</u> to ensure the proportion of <u>seats</u> secured by women matches women's proportion of the general population					
Political parties should bring in rules to ensure the proportion of <u>candidacies</u> secured by women matches women's proportion of the general population					

10. Please indicate with which one approach to legislative sittings you most strongly agree, going forward when COVID-19 is no longer a threat (select only one): (For Staff, the question is the same)

Our legislature should move <u>fully online</u> whereby members and/or staff attend all meetings virtually	
Our legislature should use the <u>hybrid model</u> whereby members and/or staff can attend meetings in person or virtually	
Our legislature should be <u>fully in-person</u> whereby all meetings are face-to-face	





**11. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following policies: (For staff, the question is the same)**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
No heckling					
No banging on chamber desks					
Predictable, set sitting schedule					
No night sittings					
Updated and inclusive dress code allowing for contemporary and professional attire					
No formal dress code					
Allowing infants on the floor of the legislature					
Other – please write in:					

**12. During the Coronavirus period which, if any, of the below ‘virtual parliament’ measures did you make use of?**

	Used Frequently	Used Occasionally	Did not use	Not Applicable
Remote (virtual) participation in <u>chamber debates</u>				
Remote (virtual) participation in <u>oral questions</u>				
Remote (virtual) participation in <u>committee meetings</u>				
Remote (electronic) <u>voting</u>				
Other, please write in:				

**13. To what extent do you support or oppose the following measures:**

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neither Oppose nor Support	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support
Remote (virtual) participation in <u>Chamber debates</u>					
Remote (virtual) participation in <u>oral questions</u>					
Remote (virtual) participation in select <u>committee meetings</u>					
Remote (electronic) <u>voting</u>					
Online <u>submission of questions</u>					

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neither Oppose nor Support	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support
Advanced notice of questions and statements					
Paired voting - an informal arrangement between the government & opposition parties whereby one member is designated by the party whip to abstain from voting when a member from another party needs to be absent from the chamber because of, for example, childbirth, childcare, eldercare, or illness					
Proxy voting (a formal agreement whereby members absent from parliament because of, for example, reason of baby leave, or illness can get another member to cast a vote on their behalf)					
Other (please specify)					

**Demographics (all questions in this section the same for members and staff)**

**14. Please indicate the gender with which you identify (select one):**

Female	
Male	
Non-binary	
Prefer not to say	
Or please specify your gender:	

**15. Do you identify as being a part of the LGBTQ2S+ community? (select one):**

Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say	

**16. Please indicate your marital status (select one):**

Never legally married	
Legally married (and not separated)	
Common-law (living together but not legally married)	
Separated, but still legally married	
Divorced	
Widowed	
Prefer not to say	

**17. Please write-in the year in which you were born:**



**18. Do you identify as a person living with a disability? (select one):**

Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say	

**19. What are the ethnic or cultural origins of your ancestors?** (Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, or origins that refer to different countries, or other origins that may not refer to different countries). Please write in:
**20. With which ethnicity or race do you identify? Write in:**

**21. Please indicate the highest level of education you've completed (select one):**

Did not complete high school	
High school or equivalent	
Apprenticeship or trades certificate/diploma	
University or college certificate/ diploma below a bachelor level	
Bachelor's Degree	
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry	
Master's Degree	
Earned Doctorate (e.g., PhD)	
Prefer not to say	
Other, please specify (write in):	

**22. Do you have eldercare or childcare responsibilities? (select all that apply):**

	Elder Care	Childcare
Yes		
No		
Prefer not to say		

**Additional survey comments:** please use this space to write any other experiences or observations during your time as an elected member that you think may be valuable to understanding the institution as a workplace.









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