

Update on preparation of the *Guide to digital transformation in parliaments*

7 March 2023

Purpose of this document

ASGP and IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP) have agreed to develop a *Guide to digital transformation in parliaments*. The target is to publish the Guide in October 2023. The steps taken so far are summarized below.

This document updates the proposed project by providing a scope of digital transformation in parliaments, including a definition of some key terms and clarity around the purpose of the Guide itself; namely that it will support SGs and senior parliamentary staff to conceive, plan and implement good practices in digital transformation. It provides a proposed structure for the Guide, which is to be agreed before proceeding with its development.

Steps taken so far

- A Concept note and timeline for the Guide were agreed in September 2022 between the ASGP steering group and CIP.
- An outline of the project was presented at the ASGP meeting in Kigali in October 2022 and the project received the formal go-ahead.
- A survey has been distributed to ASGP members to solicit information and practices regarding digital transformation in the various parliaments. The survey will support an evidence-based approach to developing the Guide
- The CIP team has begun additional research for the Guide, along with data from the World e-Parliament Report and CIP networks.
- An online meeting of the ASGP working group for the Guide and the IPU took place on 2 March 2023 and agreed the scope of the Guide.

About the Guide

The Guide to digital transformation in parliaments is intended to inform and educate senior parliamentary staff with regard to the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation, an inevitable and important process as technology is increasingly woven into all aspects of modern life, parliaments included. The Guide will provide good practice examples, support and guidance to parliaments wishing to embark on a digital transformation programme helping them to take control of the process and maximise the benefits. It is envisaged that this Guide will describe the leadership roles that SGs may assume in the digital transformation of their respective parliaments, building blocks that can be offered by parliaments that are more advanced in digital technology, as well as inter-parliamentary partnerships around common approaches to solutions.

The Guide will be evidence-based, drawing on parliamentary examples and case studies, and research undertaken by the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament to offer flexible and non-prescriptive guidance to help parliaments to create a well governed, properly structured and

sustainable digital transformation programme that can support their modernisation through a solid understanding of a parliament’s unique characteristics, culture and requirements. It will set out clear processes and good practices to support digital transformation, including leadership, governance, design and implementation, whilst addressing different levels of digital and organisational maturity.

The Guide will explore the role and requisites of leadership, both institutionally and politically, and examine internal and external challenges and risks and potential points of failure.

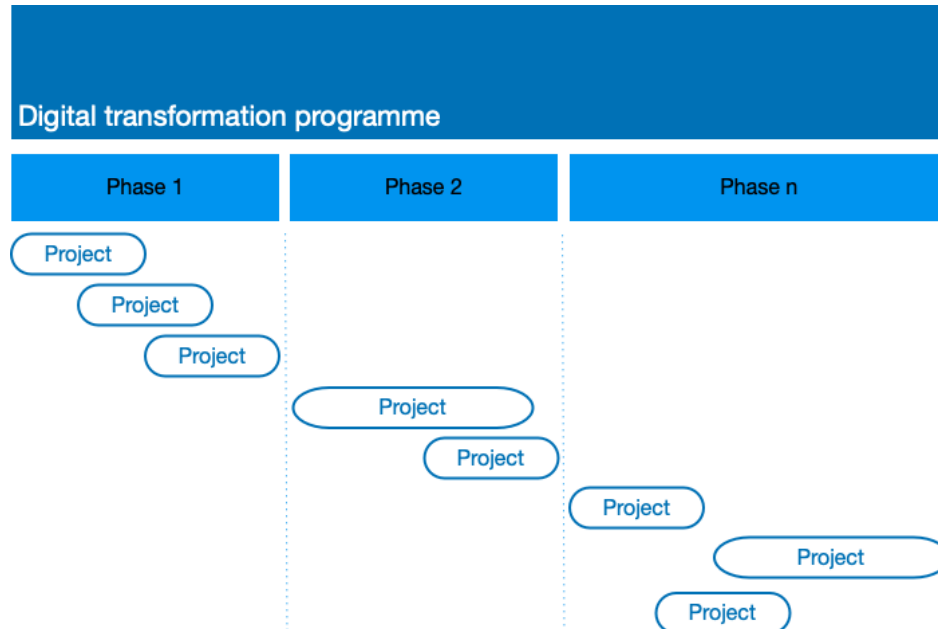
What is meant by ‘digital transformation’ for parliaments

Digital transformation is the action of applying new digital-based tools and technologies to parliamentary processes and culture in order to transform and improve them, making the organisation more efficient and effective, and delivering a more optimised and user-centric service (where ‘users’ can be members, staff and the wider public).

Digital transformation, and indeed the parliamentary modernisation it supports, describes a journey of innovation, modernisation and renewal. Each parliament starts from a different place, moves forward at its own pace and travels as far as it feels able at that time. Whilst ambition is encouraged, it will always be limited by perceptions of risk and the realities of culture, cost and resourcing.

The Guide will view digital transformation as a programme of work over an extended period of time, happening across manageable and measurable phases and involving multiple, discrete but potentially inter-related, projects:

Figure: Components of a digital transformation programme



Audience for the Guide

Senior parliamentary staff, particularly secretaries general, senior management, particularly senior digital/ICT staff, and members. It will also be of value to staff involved in working on digital transformation projects, external collaborators, suppliers and donor agencies.

Survey findings

A survey on digital transformation was distributed to ASGP members in October 2022. Responses were received from 52 parliaments between early December 2022 and the end of January 2023.

The importance of digital transformation to parliaments is reflected in the 83% of respondents who see digital tools as critical to the functioning of their parliament, the 75% who agree that they improve the legislative process and 69% who agree that digital tools make parliaments more accountable.

Of the parliaments responding, 73% have a multi-year strategic plan for the institution, 82% a multi-year digital (or ICT) strategy and 85% have made a formal commitment to advance digital transformation. Seventy five percent of respondents have a clearly identified Digital/ICT leader (e.g. a CIO or CTO) and 87% a formally defined ICT department.

In terms of ICT governance, this is overseen by a range of roles but most often will include the Secretary General (93%) whereas members are only involved in just under half of the parliaments surveyed.

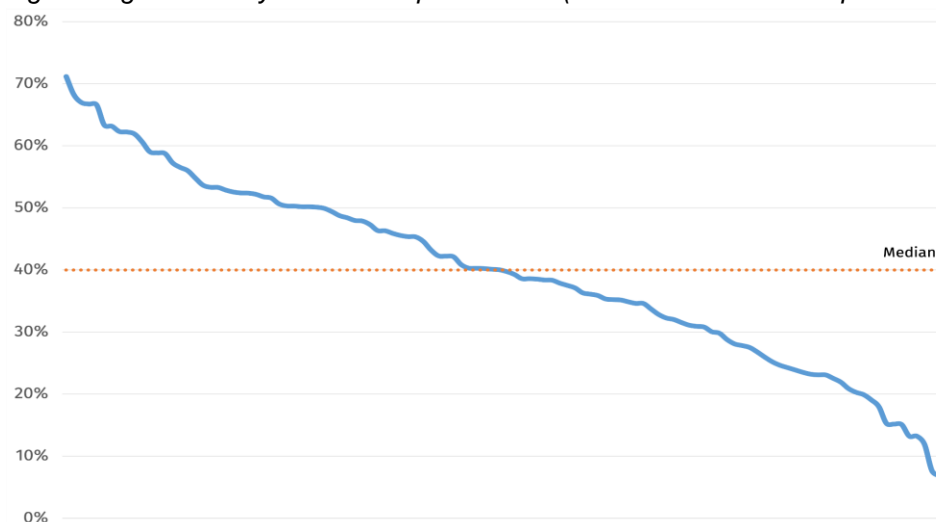
Table: The governance of digital/ICT within parliament is overseen by:

Speaker/President	66%
Members	46%
Secretary General	93%
Other senior management	84%
At an operational or project level	72%
External consultants	44%
Special committee or management group responsible for digital transformation	53%

The majority of parliaments responding already use formal methodologies for their internal projects; 71% report using a formalised method for determining a 'business case', 93% use a project management methodology and the same percentage have a methodology in place for project delivery.

The survey shows many parliaments to be strongly digitised already, 96% of respondents have some form of financial management system, 73% have digital tools for bill tracking and 64% systems for communicating with the public, for example. However, the World e-Parliament Report 2020 also highlights that many parliaments lag behind and often lack the skills and resources to deliver on digital transformation. As the graphic below shows, digital maturity exists on a continuum from the highly developed to those parliaments with a minimal use of technology; this Guide will support parliaments at all stages of digital maturity.

Figure: Digital maturity across 123 parliaments (World e-Parliament Report 2022)



Structure of the Guide

Introduction

1. Role and purpose of this Guide
2. Current status of digital transformation in parliament
3. Components of the 'e-Parliament', which can include:
 - a. Digitisation of process, resources and skills
 - b. Tools and accelerators for digitisation of specific business areas.
 - c. Digital applications for parliamentary functions
 - d. Information security
 - e. Structural realignment of ICT management and resources
 - f. Digital communication with the public
4. Emerging trends in parliamentary technologies (will discuss how parliaments are innovating and provide an horizon scan of new technologies and uses for them, such as virtual parliaments and artificial intelligence).
5. Role of members in digital transformation

Strategic planning

6. What is digital transformation
 - a. Why is it important
 - b. Means to an end
 - c. Transformation means changing systems, processes and culture, often at the deepest level
7. Institutional readiness
 - a. If the process is to be transformational it needs leadership from the top
 - b. Cultural changes and willingness for risk
 - c. Governance capabilities and current report structures
 - d. Developing a shared vocabulary
8. Project risks and challenges (internal and external)

Project instantiation

9. Establishing a digital transformation programme
 - a. Governance requirements

- b. Define hierarchies of the programme, its phases and projects
 - c. Communications
 - d. Change management
10. Where are you?
- a. An 'as is' assessment is vital
 - b. Position yourself on a continuum of organisational modernisation and governance
11. Where do you want to go?
- a. Start to define your vision for the future parliament (this is iterative and should be revisited at key stages)
 - b. Understand the components of digital transformation
12. Develop a roadmap to take you to where you want to go
- a. Define priorities and dependencies (workplan) for phases and projects.
 - b. Secure budgets and get buy in (budget)
 - c. Key roles (management), project ownership (leadership) and oversight (steering group)

Implementation

13. Getting support for the programme and projects within it
14. Implementing the programme
- a. Agree priorities
 - b. Using a phased, iterative approach (method)
 - c. Set measurables (KPIs)
15. Review, revise and refresh

Appendices

16. Tools and guides