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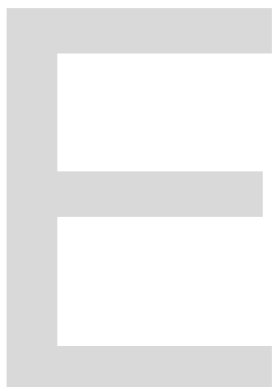
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15 February 2017

## Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021

### (a) Project proposal on the establishment of a Centre for innovation in Parliament

#### Consultation paper

*Digitally-enabled parliaments are necessary institutions for the modern world. Yet the speed of both digital and societal change creates challenges for parliaments. From 2006 to 2013 a joint IPU-UN initiative, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments, served as platform for sharing good practices, developing practical guides for parliaments, providing expert advice and fostering networks of expertise. Since 2013, IPU has continued this work alone, within the limited resources available. Building on past experience, this proposal is to create a new platform for inter-parliamentary cooperation, the Centre for Innovation in Parliament. The Centre's objective is to maximize the potential that parliaments can derive from the use of digital tools in their business processes, communication and citizen engagement. Parliaments would be able to partner with the Centre at different levels, for example by becoming regional or thematic hubs.*



#IPU136

## 1. Overview of the Project

Title	Centre for Innovation in Parliament
Location	Geneva (secretariat) with hubs distributed virtually and at partner parliaments globally.
Duration	Three years (2017-2019)
Objective/s of the Project	<p>Digitally-enabled parliaments are necessary institutions for the modern world. The project, through research, capacity-building and networking, will support parliaments in becoming ever more transparent, accountable and effective institutions through the innovative use of digital tools and services.</p> <p>The starting point for this initiative is recognition of 1) the significant and strategic contribution that digital tools make to supporting innovation in core parliamentary processes and parliamentary openness and 2) the different challenges that parliaments face in adapting to the digital era and 3) the movement towards greater parliamentary openness and collaboration with civil society organisations. The project also recognises that the best way to support parliaments is by drawing on the skills and expertise of other parliaments.</p> <p>The project will focus on maximising the potential that parliaments can derive from the use of digital tools in their business processes, communication and citizen engagement. Using peer learning it will deliver direct and tangible value to parliaments by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) supporting the capture and wide dissemination of good practices on the innovative use of digital tools and services in parliaments;</li> <li>(2) producing practical guides for parliaments;</li> <li>(3) providing expert advice on capacity building</li> <li>(4) providing access to networks of expertise.</li> </ol>
Partners	<p>The project is led by the IPU, who actively seeks partners from parliaments and organisations working in strengthening parliaments.</p> <p>This proposal presents the concept for the Centre and invites partners to join the project and help to shape it.</p>
Purpose	<p>The Centre will provide a platform for parliaments to develop and share good practices in digital implementation strategies, and practical methods for building capacity in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning of digital tools and services</li> <li>• Parliamentary openness, open standards and open data</li> <li>• Digital tools for parliamentarians</li> <li>• Citizen engagement in the work of parliament</li> <li>• Internet and social media</li> <li>• Electronic document and records management</li> <li>• Digital library and research services</li> </ul> <p>Evidence from the 2016 World e-Parliament Report<sup>1</sup> shows that there is a strong desire amongst parliaments to share and receive support within mentioned areas. The final evaluation of the <i>Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments</i><sup>2</sup> noted that Centre</p>

<sup>1</sup> World e-Parliament Report (2016). Geneva: IPU <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/eparl16-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament was a joint initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and IPU from 2006 to 2013 <http://www.ictparliament.org/>

	<p>had provided a much-needed platform for connecting parliamentary work on the use of digital tools and that, without it or something similar, many parliaments risked losing touch with rapidly emerging technologies and would be unable to harness them effectively.</p> <p>The latest World e-Parliament Report confirms that this situation is still very real and needs to be urgently addressed.</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>The Centre will target parliaments, as well as organisations that support parliamentary development. It will be of relevance to parliaments at all levels of technology adoption, but will have a strong focus on those parliaments that need the most support to adapt to the digital era. The Centre will actively collaborate with a wide range of organisations, including Parliamentary Monitoring Organisations (PMO), but its primary focus is delivering leadership and sustainable, effective technology-led transformation for parliaments by parliaments.</p> <p>Specific target groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of parliament</li> <li>• Parliamentary staff, notably:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Management responsible for strategic planning</li> <li>○ ICT</li> <li>○ Communications</li> <li>○ Outreach and education</li> <li>○ Library and research services</li> <li>○ Staff using ICT to support their work</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Civil Society Organisations working with and on parliaments</li> <li>• Multinational agencies supporting parliamentary strengthening.</li> </ul>
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliaments (especially the parliamentary administration) who are seeking trusted, independent, and reliable sources of information and advice on how to introduce and manage information technologies for a stronger and more relevant institution</li> <li>• Parliaments who wish to develop strategic approaches and build capacity to make innovative use of digital tools</li> <li>• Parliaments who see value in inter-parliamentary exchange and peer learning</li> <li>• Parliamentary staff who would like to increase their knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Organizations working with parliaments who wish to source, develop, and share good practices</li> <li>• Citizens who are more able to understand and interact with their parliament, and who benefit from stronger parliamentary institutions</li> </ul>
<p>Project outputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical guides related to good practices in parliaments in the digital era</li> <li>• Timely expert advice to parliaments on the cost-effective deployment and use of digital tools in order to improve their strategic and operational capabilities</li> <li>• Peer to peer exchange of experience, strategies and good practice</li> <li>• Interactive debates on 'Parliaments in the digital era' at the IPU Assembly</li> <li>• Regional and specialist hubs, located in host parliaments, that would develop good practices and facilitate parliamentary exchange and training</li> <li>• A small core secretariat, that would co-ordinate the demand for and mobilization of expertise and resources, and would take the lead in organising and evolving the biennial World e-Parliament Report and World e-Parliament Conference.</li> </ul>

<p>Project outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity and skills within parliaments to make innovative use of digital tools</li> <li>• Improved networking, knowledge sharing and peer learning between parliaments and the wider network of parliamentary development practitioners and civil society organizations</li> <li>• Enhanced links and exchange between parliaments and citizens</li> <li>• Greater opportunities for parliamentary exchange and inter-parliamentary cooperation</li> <li>• Easier access to knowledge and good practices</li> <li>• Improved capacity building support to parliaments</li> </ul>
<p>Main activities</p>	<p>The Centre’s main activities would be research, capacity-building and networking. These activities would be mutually reinforcing.</p> <p>Through the development of regional and specialist hubs, the Centre would support peer learning and knowledge exchange, which would feed into its research and capacity building activities.</p> <p>The Centre would take the lead in organizing existing strategic activities, such as the biennial World e-Parliament Report and the associated World e-Parliament Conference.</p> <p>The Centre would develop guides to digital good practice for parliaments, based on the experiences of parliaments around the world. It would take responsibility for relevant and timely review of existing guides, on subjects such as parliamentary websites and social media.</p> <p>The Centre would provide advisory services to parliaments about ways to plan for, and build their capacity to use, digital services and tools. The Centre’s approach to capacity building would be based on parliamentary exchange and inter-parliamentary cooperation.</p> <p>The Centre would use online platforms to improve sharing of information, lessons learned and good practices in parliamentary innovation in the use of digital tools.</p> <p>Overall, the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments<sup>3</sup> will guide the work of the Centre. The Common Principles emphasize that support must be guided by parliaments’ needs and owned by parliaments themselves; sustainable outcomes; and the preferred use of locally and regionally available expertise.</p>

## 2. Situation Analysis

The first Global Parliamentary Report<sup>4</sup> showed how citizens’ expectations of their parliament and their representatives are changing. Public trust in parliament is very low in many countries. But parliaments are resilient and constantly adapt to society’s needs. Yet the speed of both digital and societal change experienced over the last few years creates challenges for parliaments as they try to not simply keep up but improve. The advent of digital media has very obviously changed the way that we all consume news and information and it has transformed people to become not simply consumers but creators of content. It is this paradigmatic shift in the relationship between ordinary citizens and media and information that is now transforming the relationship between democratic institutions and citizens. Citizens now have the ability not just to access but to harness public data for their own use. It is important that we define our relationship to this data in new, more thoughtful

<sup>3</sup> Common principles for support to parliaments (2014). Geneva: IPU. [http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/principles\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/principles_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Global Parliamentary Report: The changing nature of parliamentary representation (2012). Geneva: IPU and UNDP <http://www.ipu.org/gpr>

and considered ways. To participate in the information society, citizens must be able to access and understand this sea of information and parliaments (and other public services) must be encouraged to publish, share and to make their data accessible.

The findings of the 2016 World e-Parliament Report show how digital and social technologies have led to and supported deep changes in the operational environment and cultural landscape of parliaments. They show that the digital parliament is now a living entity, directly linked to those it serves in ways that were hard to imagine in the first World e-Parliament Report, in 2008.

Compared to the picture painted in that first report, parliaments are now more open and outward-facing. The internal systems within parliaments are stronger and the processes they use, while still challenged, continue to evolve. The digital parliament mirrors the world around it, so it is no surprise to see that social networks are now important tools, allowing citizens to connect more often and more easily with members and parliaments. Making documentation and content more available is a critical trend too, whether this is through web-based technologies or through open data.

However, the 2016 World e-Parliament Report found significant divergence in parliamentary openness and transparency based on income levels and the inherent digital enablement. Parliaments in developing and low-income countries were found to be making less progress in utilizing information technologies to become more open and transparent. A consistent explanation points to lack of internal capacities and access to expertise / resources. For mid-to-higher income countries the opposite was found, where parliaments with higher skilled in-house capacity and better access to technical expertise, have deployed technologies that have enabled them to become more open, transparent and, as a result, more connected with citizens.

Research undertaken for the 2016 World e-Parliament Report shows that increasing digital complexity and the rapid emergence of new tools and methods has left parliaments in low-income countries consistently less likely or able to keep pace with change. This highlights findings elsewhere in the report that suggests that parliaments in low income countries are significantly disadvantaged and could disproportionately benefit from external support.

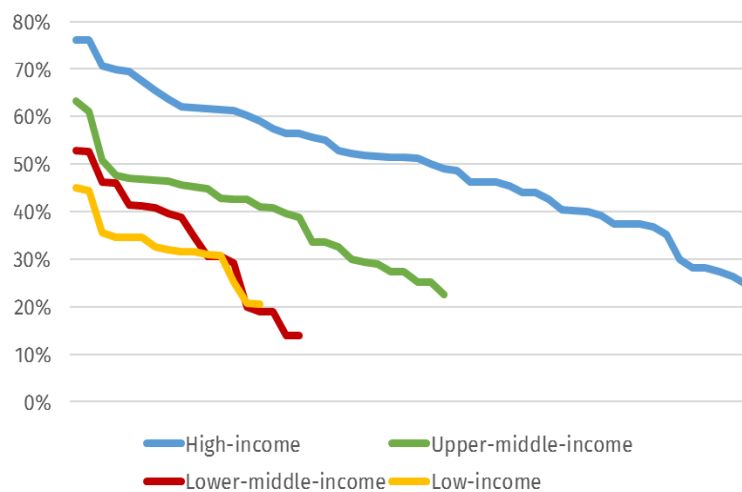


Figure 1 - Digital maturity of parliaments by income level (source: WePR2016).

The challenges parliaments face go beyond the simple adoption of technology: many are strategic and need to be addressed at a systemic level, requiring political as well as institutional commitment. Digital processes are too often seen as a technical function, where ICT management or technical staff predominate. For ICT to be transformative for parliaments, MPs must provide political leadership in favour of greater openness and citizen participation. Too few parliaments are fully implementing end-to-end strategic planning processes, and when they do, too few value the counsel of their senior ICT staff in terms of the overall leadership and direction of change.

Parliaments are unique institutions and yet they share many common attributes. Experience tells us that enabling inter-parliamentary support is a both an effective and efficient way to build capacity.

The IPU and many others recognise the critical importance of assisting parliaments worldwide and parliamentary support partners to work together with enhanced relevance, sensitivity and effectiveness. They wish to enable partners and parliaments to share good practice approaches to the design and implementation of digital tools and services and to foster greater understanding of the strategic processes that lead to effective use.

At the same time, they recognize the limits to the capacity of many parliaments to evolve their ways of working and adopt new digital tools, which is why the first Common Principle for Support to Parliaments - that support must be guided by the needs of parliament - is so fundamental.

### 3. Rationale

Effective parliaments are essential to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and economic and social development. To be effective, they require access to high quality knowledge and support. Increasingly, too, they are working with new actors and with partners across civil society.

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments (active from 2006 to 2013) acted as a catalyst for peer learning. The final evaluation noted that the centre had provided a much-needed platform for connecting parliamentary work on the use of digital tools. The evaluation noted with concern that, without the Global Centre or a similarly focussed resource, parliaments risked losing touch with rapidly emerging technologies and would be unable to harness them effectively. The centre's demise has created a gap that is not being filled effectively – particularly in emerging fields such as open data and social media.

Since 2013, IPU has taken on the organization of the World e-Parliament Report and Conference, and supports a limited number of capacity-building activities in parliaments. Many organizations provide support to parliaments in a range of areas related to digital tools and services, and work with civil society organizations on innovative approaches to civil tech. A number of parliaments are participating in initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP)<sup>5</sup> to further their commitment to parliamentary openness, based around key principles that all participants in OGP must sign up to:

- Increase the availability of information about governmental activities.
- Support civic participation.
- Implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administrations.
- Increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability.

The 2016 World e-Parliament Report confirms the capacity gap that still exists for many parliaments and which needs to be urgently addressed, particularly for, but not limited to, parliaments in developing and low-income countries.

This proposal for a Centre in Innovation in Parliament is a forward-looking initiative to ensure that all parliaments can harness the potential of new technologies in a sustainable. Evidence from parliaments demonstrates the value of peer-based networks offering support and bringing with them a deep knowledge of the parliamentary environment. Parliaments are clear that they benefit from support and the sharing of knowledge and good practice at two levels:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Established in 2011 as a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative, OGP aims to secure concrete and ambitious commitments that relate to the openness and transparency of public services. It now consists of over 80 countries and, increasingly, the parliaments of those countries are becoming involved in developing open parliament action plans. <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments (2013). End-of-term programme evaluation. New York: UNDESA; World e-Parliament Report (2016). Geneva: IPU

1. At the strategic (planning) level, parliaments must be better able to plan their use of ICT and identify emerging good practice in areas such as open data/transparency, document management, parliamentary reporting, social media and library and research services.
2. At the operational level, networks and missions support less-resourced parliaments to implement this good practice and to build their own internal capabilities.

The Centre would coordinate and enhance this, becoming a trusted source of, and benchmark for, emerging good practice through the activities, research and publications that it supports. It would do this by supporting collaboration with and between parliaments and external partners. In turn, this would help parliaments build their own internal cases for the more advanced use of digital tools and demonstrably support democratic strengthening and effective inclusion in the information society.

### 3.1. Background

The vision for the Centre is inextricably linked to the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>7</sup>, which place a strong focus on effective, transparent and accountable institutions, as well as participative and inclusive decision-making. Digitally-enabled parliaments are institutions for the modern world and they contribute strongly to these goals.

Research for the 2016 World e-Parliament Report shows there is both a demand for and a willingness to offer support between parliaments in specific areas relating to digital tools and services. Around one-in-five parliaments are providing this type of support and a further 25 per cent state that they would be willing to in the future. One-in-five parliaments receive support directly from other parliaments and 26 per cent from external non-parliamentary organisations, such as the IPU and UNDP. More parliaments (42 per cent) report that they would like this type of support but do not receive any. This requires co-ordination to ensure that limited resources are used effectively.

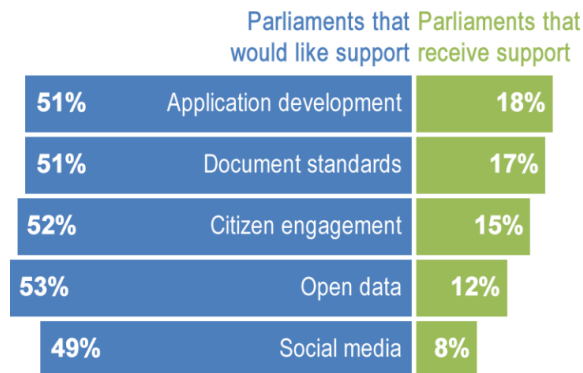


Figure 2 - Support wanted versus support offered (source: WePR 2016)

Support is most likely to be provided around the legislative process and parliamentary procedures or for enhancing the administrative capacity of parliaments. However, parliaments report that the emerging areas of open data, citizen engagement and outreach, application development, document standards and social media are where support is required but not available. Many parliaments are not able to adopt new digital methods because they lack the internal resources, including the staff, skills or funding, but are equally unable to find support from outside, whether from other parliaments or other agencies.

## 4. Methodology

The project would build on existing initiatives, and would also develop new forms of cooperation. It would reinforce the work already being done by the IPU, parliaments, partner organizations and existing regional networks.

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

The Centre would be based around a light-weight core secretariat, located at the IPU in Geneva, whose global membership brings significant added value. The Secretariat would be responsible for the co-ordination of the activities of the Centre, for the overall strategic direction and for the management of certain activities.

The Centre's work would be focused on parliaments, which would be the main contributors and beneficiaries of all activities. It would make use of participative approaches, involving extensive consultation with experts in parliaments and partner organizations, as was done with previous editions of the World e-Parliament Report and Conference, practical guides and other tools. This approach is intended to ensure that project activities are grounded in parliamentary needs and practice.

The existing model for capacity-building, based on inter-parliamentary exchange and cooperation, would be scaled up.

The Centre would strengthen existing contacts among specialists in parliament to develop a global network of experts and advisers who could contribute to the Centre on a more informal, per-project basis, focussing on direct delivery of capacity building.

In a new development, key activities of the Centre would be distributed to regional and specialist hubs, located within parliaments. Effectively, they would act as franchises within the network. These hubs would be resourced by staff seconded from supporting parliaments. This model not only minimises the ongoing operational costs of the Centre but maximises the local knowledge, parliamentary expertise and up-to-date skillsets of the Centre's team.

This model allows hubs to focus on agile ways of working to deliver rapidly and meet the requirements of the parliaments that they are serving. It presents a resource efficient low-cost model where project funding can be focussed on the core strategic development of the parliamentary digital sector and on building good practice.

In addition, the IPU Assembly, which twice a year brings together parliamentarians from 120-150 countries, would be used as a platform to disseminate project outputs and engage parliamentarians and Secretaries General. A regular session on "parliaments in the digital era" is now scheduled in the Assembly programme.

The Centre would make extensive use of off-the-shelf digital networking and co-working tools to connect Centre staff across locations and to reduce the need for physical co-location. Internally, communication between the Secretariat and the hubs can be managed electronically using low-cost off-the-shelf digital tools; Centre communications flow through advanced 'chat' applications, communications can use internet-based video and voice telephony and collaborative documents can be hosted in standard applications such as Google Docs. Externally, there would be a virtual platform that can provide a space for networking, conversations and exchange of information and ideas, as well as hosting publications and reports.

As such, this proposal creates a flexible, agile and distributed Centre and offers a more efficient use of resources, focused on distributed partnerships with parliaments and global and regional institutions interested in strengthening and enhancing the digital capacity of parliaments.

## **5. Project implementation**

The IPU-based secretariat would act as a co-ordinating and enabling hub that would facilitate the flow of information between parliaments, experts, partners and other relevant organizations, as well as the hubs that contribute to the Centre's work. The secretariat would also initiate work on research, capacity-building and networking.

These initiatives would be developed in consultation with parliaments and would be demand-driven. They would be supported by a virtual network of people engaged and working in digital parliaments, to act as a conduit for knowledge sharing and connectivity.



To support the scale and reach necessary for impact, the Centre would grow several regional and specialist hubs, providing project-based resources and supporting the active projects within the Centre. The hubs would develop specialist virtual networks with specific regional or thematic knowledge, in order to gather and share good practices and provide advisory services in their area of expertise.

These hubs would be established within supportive parliaments or other organisations. They would be resourced through in-kind contributions and staffed by the secondment of staff from the host parliaments (or other supporting parliaments or organizations). This allows staff to be made available by parliaments on a time-limited or per-project basis to support the activities of the Centre. Whilst the make-up of these hubs is flexible, it could involve providing office space and a co-ordinator to lead the hub's operations.

Benefits for parliaments hosting hubs include: building the skills and experience of their staff through enhanced contact with other parliaments; being involved in the development of good practices that can be used in their parliament as well as others; and contributing to inter-parliamentary cooperation in an area of increasing importance for all parliaments.

Each hub would have an explicit regional or specialist focus and the exact scale and nature of resourcing would depend on this function, making this proposal eminently flexible. It is envisaged that hubs would act as a conduit for communication and information exchange with other parliaments.

Using this model, it is possible to scale the Centre's operations in terms of resourcing and function to include non-parliamentary organisations (which would include other project partners) and Parliamentary Monitoring or other civil society organisations.

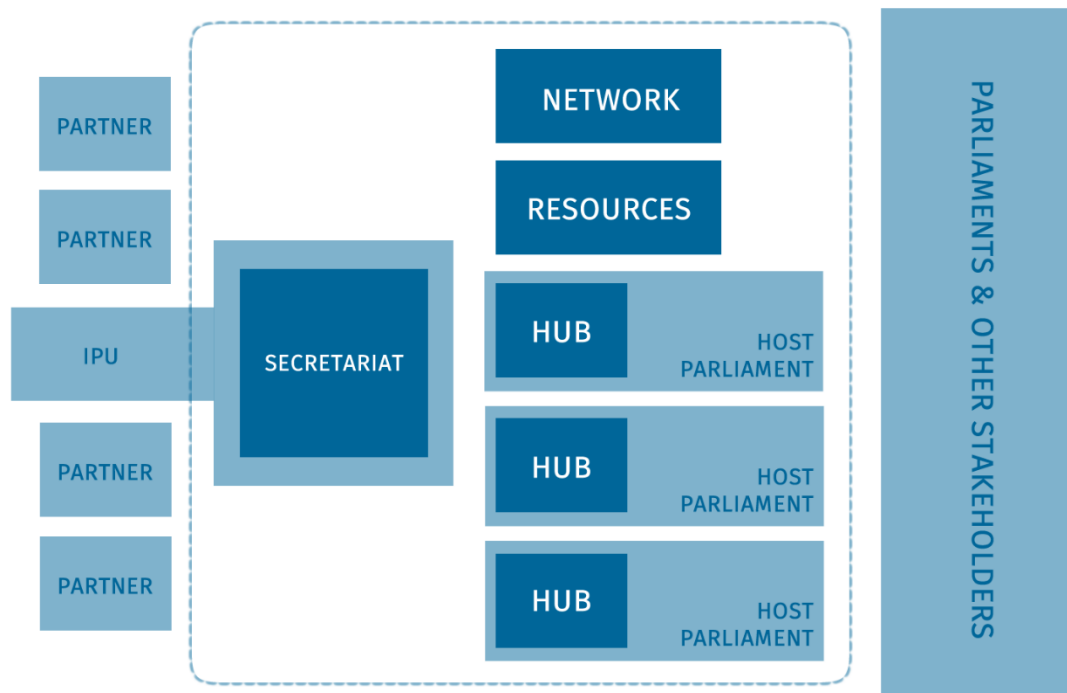


Figure 3 – Conceptual model for Centre for Innovation in Parliament

### 5.1. Examples of Potential Hubs

Though by no means exhaustive, the following exemplars have been proposed as possible hubs contained within the new centre.

### 5.1.1. Strategy and Infrastructure Planning

Research and experience shows that parliaments often require very specific and concrete guidance in terms of systems planning and specifying new technological components. They require support in understanding good practice, how users will potentially interact with these new systems and how services will be delivered to MPs, staff and the public. This is especially the case for those parliaments in the early stages of developing their ICT infrastructure and building capacity in their internal services. The World e-Parliament Report 2016 highlights both the value of external expert guidance and the critical importance of well a mature and well-connected strategic approach to ICT. Yet for parliaments that do not have previous experience it is challenging for them to envision effective use and to develop specifications for new systems, they are less aware of internal policies, guidelines and rules which need to be adapted, and how to transform operational processes to maximise the benefits of new systems.

This is where the experience from other parliaments has proven to be critical. Mobilizing knowledge exchange and support through virtual networks and short missions, where experienced parliamentary staff visit the parliament in need, are highly valuable ways of providing guidance, developing the early ICT implementation planning documents, system requirements and technical specifications. Missions and their associated networks help ensure effective and sustainable solutions which are cost-effective for the parliament and they build skills, knowledge and capacity not only with the host parliament but for the supporting parliaments too.

A dedicated hub within the Centre could support a more strategic and coordinated approach to technical assistance missions, based around practical support and a range of tool-kits and resources, including support for:

- Baseline assessments and ICT strategic plans, including promoting a culture of effective ICT strategic planning and embedding good practice.
- Legislative document management systems, allowing for document workflow management, and tracking of legislative performance.
- Digital archives, for supporting parliamentary documentation, archiving needs
- Intranet and websites
- Systems for capturing and recording proceedings e.g. conference management systems, e-voting systems etc

### 5.1.2. Open Parliament Innovation

Parliaments need institutional portals and publishing channels that reflect their changing roles and relationship with citizens in the new digital age. As these portals evolve to become the main vehicle for transparency and - in many cases - engagement in lawmaking, parliaments need to further adapt the way they relate to and interact with citizens. To do this, parliaments, working in more collaborative ways with partners and civil society, have to start considering the use of new technologies such as open data, open standards, cloud storage, blockchain and big data. These new models of parliamentary portal demand higher levels of accessibility, interaction and must focus on providing a user-friendly experience. All of this requires innovative tools and new ways of organizing and visualizing legislative information that have not yet been implemented.

Crowdsourcing ideas becomes an integral part of the way parliaments of the future design their user experience and deploy their digital assets. Parliamentary institutional portals require new models of development based in co-creation and crowdsourcing. Parliaments can and must share resources to deploy crowdsourcing experiments in the development of public access to data and documents. Apps contests, hacking marathons and other crowdsourcing activities are effective ways to create data visualizations and to explore radical new methods of interactivity. Harnessing these innovative approaches to service design and delivery increases the accessibility, transparency and communication of the parliaments and makes their work more visible and relevant to citizens. This is a core building block in building public trust.

Co-creation happens within and between parliaments too. Often the focus on co-creation is with outside people and organisations but parliaments can support each other, sharing ideas and approaches to new and innovative practices, through a network innovation hub. This matters

because, as the latest World e-Parliament Report shows, many parliaments struggle to gather sufficient resources to build innovative public-facing portals and, when they do, they often share similar features. More co-construction and collaborative development applied to parliaments across the same region and scaled up across a global perspective is a solution to this problem. For example, a legislative portal model can be co-created as a common core platform to save resources and increase the quality of innovation in the projects. To do this the Centre could develop a hub of multi-disciplinary top-level specialists, created and hosted by parliaments and who share common projects and principles that they can adapt and evolve to support the development of a core common framework and customised portals accordingly to the specific features and needs.

### **5.1.3. Social media and the Web**

The internet and with it social media has changed the public face of parliament. Yet many we know from research that many parliaments struggle to harness these new tools effectively. The web and social media cover everything from publishing through to education and engagement through to data repositories. They are complex, complicated and using these new tools effectively requires parliaments to become agile and responsive to the needs of their users and stakeholders – supporting members, empowering staff to be responsive and promoting greater public understanding and education. The IPU has published guidelines for parliamentary websites, but these are now outdated, there are also guidelines to support parliaments in using social media, but again these need a review. It is proposed that a hub within the Centre would take ownership for web-based assets and support the updating and dissemination of good practice guidelines and support for knowledge exchange and inter-parliamentary support.

### **5.1.4. Research and Good Practice**

The IPU (and previously also the Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments) has established the World e-Parliament Report as a baseline publication for measuring, mapping and tracking the growth of digital within the parliamentary context. Now in its fourth edition, this report is a benchmark for the digital parliament. It is further supported by previous 'good practice' guides that have been developed on an 'as and when' basis, such as for strategic planning, websites and social media. The Centre will act as a focal point for driving research into parliamentary technology and innovation, using its hubs, projects and networks to sense the shifting priorities and emerging trends and co-ordinating the production of new material to support parliaments. Initially, research is likely to focus on three key areas of interest:

- World e-Parliament Report
- Open data
- Web and social media

## **6. Partners and Funding**

A Centre that can be responsive to emerging technologies and have true global reach must itself be open to building a range of partners and supporters.

National parliaments who wish to support and resource the Centre will help to shape the scope, scale and strategic focus of the Centre and its hubs. Potential key partner organizations could include UNDP and NDI, which have accumulated a wealth of experience in supporting parliaments around the world.

Funding is sought to cover the cost of hosting the secretariat of the Centre (three persons); associated but limited overhead costs; and core activities of the Centre on research, capacity-building and networking, including preparation of the World e-Parliament Report and Conference. The costs of operating the hubs within the network are anticipated to be met by in-kind contributions of facilities and staff by host parliaments or other institutions.

Initial operation would be for a three-year period.

We propose seeking financial and in-kind support at four levels:

### **6.1. Keystone partners**

A keystone partner will be a core-funding partner who wishes to also be directly involved in the strategic governance and direction of the Centre. The IPU is the founding Keystone Partner. Keystone partners will be actively involved in supporting the direction and shaping the work of the Centre over the initial three-year period. They will be publicly identified as strategic funders and supporters.

### **6.2. Funding partners**

A funding partner wishes to contribute to and support the work of the Centre at a core level, in terms of supporting the work of the Secretariat or a specific hub or hubs. The levels of support and commitment will be less than that of founding partner and, whilst the Centre welcomes their active involvement and support, funding partners will take a more background role in terms of governance and day-to-day management.

### **6.3. Supporting Partners**

A supporting partner will provide in-kind support, which could be in form of a physical premises for components of the Centre, such as a hub or hubs, secondment of staff to participate in the work of the Centre for a period of time, whether this is operationally within a hub, on a per-project basis or for short-term assignments, such as for inter-parliamentary support. In-kind support can also be provided in terms of digital infrastructure and resources, for examples the provision of tools and capacity to host and run a virtual network or knowledge base.

### **6.4. Project Partners**

Funders and operational partners will be sought for individual projects within the Centre.