**E-learning strategy note**
**29 November 2019**

**Introduction**

This note offers a roadmap for the development of e-learning courses for and by parliamentary actors, as part of the peer-to-peer exchanges facilitated by INTER PARES. It outlines the program objectives and builds on the feedback captured during partner consultations on AGORA, the Portal for Parliamentary Development, which will host the courses. The note proposes a design-thinking approach for the development of a comprehensive e-learning package, tailored to INTER PARES' focus on core professional skills to effectively support the law-making, oversight, representation and budgetary roles of parliament. Thematic priorities would be mainstreamed across each course.

## I.  INTER PARES: Program Objectives

Given the global scope of the programme and the significant potential of e-learning for parliaments across continents, INTER PARES looks to complement its in-person peer-to-peer exchange activities with online learning opportunities.  Thus, the e-learning is to be integrated as closely as possible with the country partnerships being developed (activity 1.5), enabling participants to obtain a certificate in parliamentary development through completion of the e-learning trainings. The activities will also support activity 3.3; development of e-learning tools on specific themes and publication of action-related knowledge products through AGORA.

## II.  Content: A focus on core professional skills to effectively support the law-making, oversight, representation and budgetary roles of parliament.

In total, the INTER PARES e-learning package would comprise four courses focusing on the core functions of Parliament. A fifth course will focus on the Role of Parliament in Environmental Protection and Climate Change.

1. Law-making: legislative drafting, including gender-responsive law-making, harmonisation and codification of laws, policy analysis, legal research, inter-party relations (to focus on staff non-partisanship and professionalism in supporting committees, members and overall institutional management);
2. Oversight: research; parliament-executive relations, staff roles in parliamentary hearings, policy and legislative scrutiny, etc.;
3. Representation: constituency outreach and relations, citizen engagement with parliamentary procedures, youth parliaments, methods of consultation, women's substantive and descriptive representation, minority representation, etc.
4. Budgetary roles: budget analysis and drafting, gender budgeting, budget execution oversight, etc.
5. Environmental Protection and Climate Change.

*Streamlining thematic areas*

In line with the thematic priorities identified in the INTER PARES programme, following areas would be streamlines across each course: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; Human Rights; Digital Technology for Development; and Citizens' engagement and Civil Society.

*Pilot learning trajectories to strengthen the political participation and representation of youth*

International IDEA will explore innovative ways to engage with youth. A separate learning trajectory will be developed and piloted for and with young people. International IDEA will (amongst other innovative approaches) look at the potential of action-oriented hackathons to develop new strategies and courses to strengthen the political participation and representation of youth. A separate document will be designed to define the objectives, strategies and modalities of this learning trajectories

**Approach: Design Thinking – Putting partner parliaments first**
To ensure that the e-learning courses respond to the needs of Parliaments, International IDEA proposes a **design thinking approach**. This involves actively engaging parliamentary actors in all stages of the process: design, development, dissemination and evaluation. Design thinking is time-intensive, but it is a tried and tested method that has proven to secure greater uptake and more effective learning.

The identification of preferred learning styles (text, audio or video materials; adaptive or facilitated learning; web-based or mobile and so on) should be guided by the users, in this case the partner parliaments.  Naturally, available options will be limited to those that fall within the time and resource constraints of INTER PARES and the contributing EU MSPs (see below).

Noting that user needs change over time, it is suggested that the courses are built in a manner that allows for quick and easy updates.  This will enable learnings from INTER PARES peer-to-peer exchanges to be integrated where possible, both throughout the program and beyond.

Bearing in mind the need to offer a strong value proposition to potential learners, each course will come with its own certificate of completion. Learners who complete the full INTER PARES e-learning package (all five courses – see below) will receive a separate commendation.  Partner parliaments may also wish to consider offering the course package as part of their professional development offering to MPs and staff.

### III.      Development: Partnerships with EU MSPs

**Management and coordination**

For each course, INTER PARES will engage the services of a consultant with expertise in the subject area and, where possible, experience delivering (online) learning materials for parliamentary actors.  The consultant will coordinate both content development and liaison with EU MSPs.

Course development will be done in close consultation with the contributing EU MSPs.  In the interest of consistency and quality, it is proposed that course structures follow (flexible) templates and that course content is developed through a partnership between INTER PARES, EU MSPs, and relevant thematic partners.

Development of the first course can take place as of February 2020, once the course package is validated and the portal and templates are available.  Courses can be developed in parallel, allowing INTER PARES to produce the e-learning package with 5 e-learning modules by September 2020.

**Annex 1: Description of the Action**

***A.1.5–Conducting peer-to-peer professional development for staff of parliaments on enhancement of institutional systems and parliamentary functions, development and implementation of relevant follow-up action plans***

1. *Description*: This activity consists of peer-to-peer exchanges directed to staff of the partner parliaments' secretariats. It focuses on core professional skills to effectively support the law-making, oversight, representation and budgetary roles of parliament, as well as on the core administrative and institutional systems needed to improve performance. Skills addressed may include, inter alia:

   1) Law-making:  legislative drafting, including gender-responsive law-making, harmonisation and codification of laws, policy analysis, legal research, inter-party relations (to focus on staff non-partisanship and professionalism in supporting committees, members and overall institutional management);

   2) Oversight: research; parliament-executive relations, staff roles in parliamentary hearings, policy and legislative scrutiny, etc.;

   3) Representation: constituency outreach and relations, citizen engagement with parliamentary procedures, youth parliaments, methods of consultation, women's substantive and descriptive representation, minority representation, etc.

   4) Budget: budget analysis and drafting, gender budgeting, budget execution oversight, etc

   5) Institutional systems, procedures and structures: strategic planning; archiving and record management; personnel management; codes of conduct and ethics, financial management, transparency and communication (media relations, publication of session records, websites; etc); rules and procedures; management of motions, resolutions and summons; etc.

   A standardised and simplified *Parliamentary Support Request Procedure* and *Request Tool* (i.e. application format) will be developed, and alongside an information package, be provided to all identified eligible parliaments (see A.1.2). The tool will aggregate request details into a simple Terms of Reference (ToR) format. Timing for request processes will be established at the inception phase (e.g. rolling basis open during needs assessment phase, periodic following analysis of baseline data, etc.). In cases where requests are accepted, matching rules/criteria will be applied to pair the requesting parliament with a potential partner EUMSPs based on ToR and EUMSP baseline survey results on expertise (and related geographical, thematic, historic, language, parliamentary system, etc.

factors). The Action shall consider the inclusion of an additional non-EU parliament in the peer-to-peer exchange when the inclusion best serves the purpose of the Action. Feedback from matched EUMSPs will be considered.

Specific peer-to-peer modalities (see Methodology) will be based on needs, the participants (e.g. committee staff, library staff), and other established criteria. Partner parliaments may, as part of their expression of interest, request a specific EUMSP and exchange modality, to be examined by the Implementation Task Force. Upon final approvals, peer-to-peer exchange materials (e.g. agenda, background notes, documentation, briefs, presentations, comparative examples, etc.) will be developed. This will be bilaterally supported (through translations, templates, background briefings, and other material contained in the Guidance Notes and repository, see A.1.3), and quality assured. EUMSP peers will implement exchanges based on agreed ToRs. Implementation of Outcome Reports and Follow-up Action Plans developed by the participating parliaments will be supported through further exchanges on condition of progress. The project will facilitate the close involvement of EUMSPs in the implementation, to support the sustainability of relations and exchange outcomes. Follow-up Action Plans and Outcome Reports will be collected in the repository to support monitoring and evaluation, sustainability of outcomes, and follow up tracking.

2. _Roles_**:** International IDEA will coordinate with the EC in developing the draft Parliamentary Support Request Procedure and Request Tool, including the web-interface. These tools will be piloted, validated and approved by the Implementation Task Force. Partner parliaments will initiate requests via the Tool, with remote assistance provided by the International IDEA. The Implementation Task Force will review the requests and recommend a line of action. The European Commission will approve in writing the implementation of each operation. Under the supervision of the Implementation Task Force, International IDEA will draft the Terms of Reference (ToRs), liaise with the EUMSPs and make logistical arrangements for each operation. The EUMSPs will conduct the peer-to-peer operations with support and quality assurance from International IDEA in coordination with the EC as appropriate. International IDEA will manage and maintain the web repository of outcome materials.

***A.3.3- Development of e-learning tools on specific themes and publication of action-related knowledge products through AGORA***

3. <u>*Description:*</u>  This activity will be fully defined in consultation with AGORA partners. Both the EC and International IDEA are implementing partners of the AGORA Portal (www.agora-parl.org). AGORA is a platform designed as a flexible tool and a meeting space for members of parliament, parliamentary staff and the broader parliamentary assistance community. The platform seeks to facilitate information exchange and learning and has the potential to be a coordination platform for partners on parliamentary development. Based on these elements, International IDEA and the EC will partner with the AGORA's Secretariat, define governance and managerial arrangements, and establish a sub-portal to host the knowledge resources produced by the Action. In analysing the needs assessment baseline, the Action shall identify a number of themes (A.1.5) and skills (A.1.4) that are on high-demand. Themes may include one or several of the following topics related to the 2030 Agenda:

    a. *Open parliaments*: innovative tools to allow engagement between parliaments and citizens, civil society organisations, including women, youth, and marginalised and vulnerable groups.

    b. *Youth parliaments*: a platform for experience-sharing targeting young politicians and parliamentarians, as one of 'critical agents of change' to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda. This option could involve the IPU and use *gamification* as e-learning strategy.

    c. *LGTBI representation and participation*: targeting the impacts of discriminatory politics, laws and projects are felt by LGTBI communities in partner countries.

    d. *Budgets*: A platform for ministries of finance, parliamentary committees and supreme audit institutions to promote that oversight practices build upon international expertise on accountable, inclusive and transparent public financial management.