PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Presentation:

Strategy execution - the role of Committees and support thereto

Feb 2022

Scope of presentation
Strategy execution

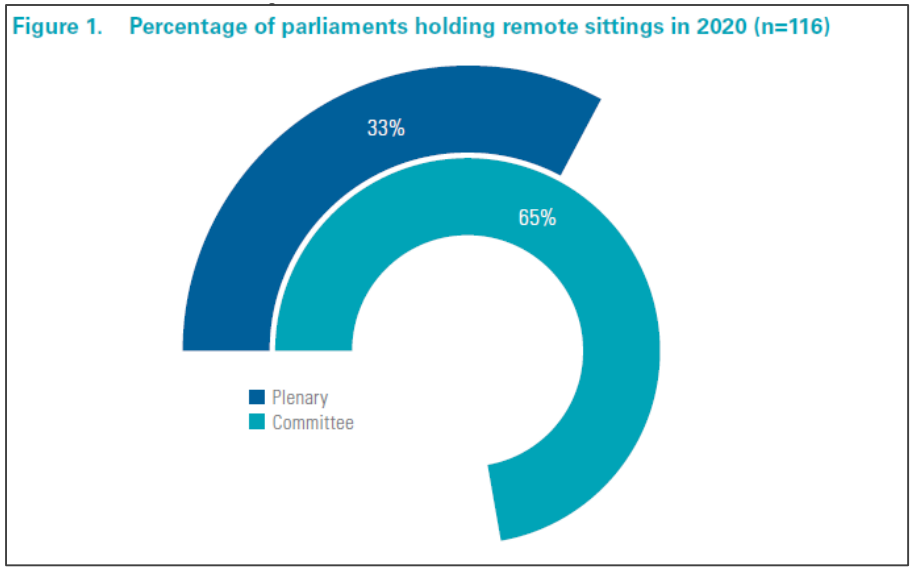
1. Role of Committees in parliaments
2. 6th Parliament strategy execution
3. Role of Committees in implementing the strategy
4. Structure of committees (super committees)
5. Information services provided to Committees

Strategy execution

Role of Committees - IPU

IPU reports elaborate on the importance of committees:

- *'In its modern form, the committee is probably the single most significant and agile instrument of parliamentary oversight'.* - *2017 Global Parliamentary Report, (IPU/UNDP).*
- 65% of parliaments held committee proceedings through virtual or hybrid meetings. – *2020 e-Parliament report (IPU)*



Strategy execution

Key elements of execution – 2022/23 APP

'In conjunction with other legislation, the budget is the most powerful instrument by which government can implement its priorities and effect change in order to eliminate poverty, and to reduce unemployment and inequality. If Parliament then wants to effect more responsive and accountable government, it must improve the quality of its budget oversight and recommendations. The key focus here would be on how Parliament can improve the quality of its scrutiny of money bills and budgetary recommendations'. – *6th Parliament Policy Priorities, 2020*

'Improving committee scrutiny and oversight is seen as the **key activity** for the 6th Parliament. In this regard, committee oversight activities will need to produce deeper scrutiny of executive action, ensure more effective involvement and public engagement, and deliver more effective recommendations'.

- *2022/23 APP*

Figure 6: Key elements of budget oversight. (Practical guide for Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures, 2019, Legislative Sector of South Africa)

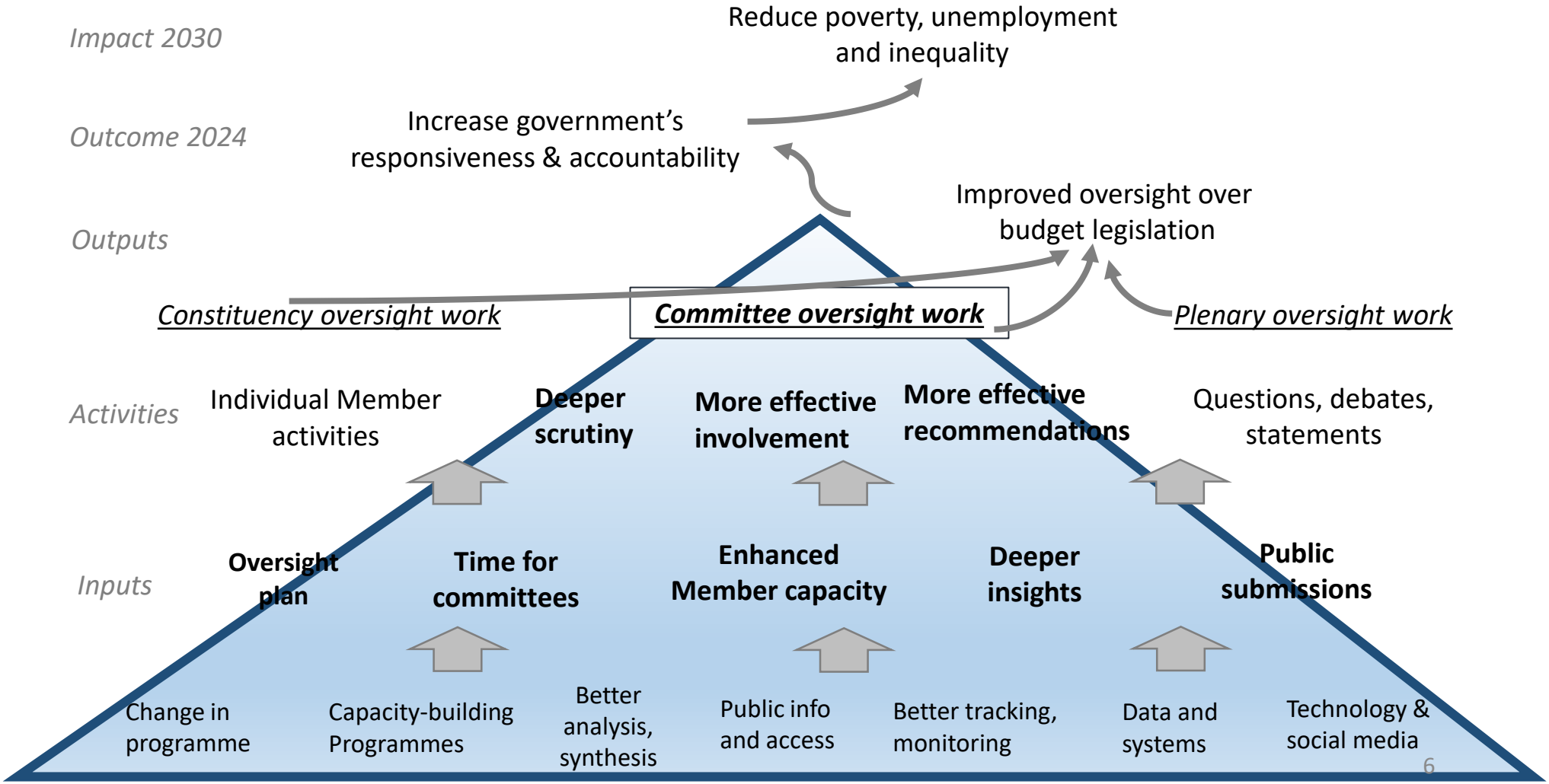
Strategy execution

Role of Committees in strategy execution

1. Committees shoulder more than 80% of the responsibility for the successful implementation of the 6th Parliament strategy;
2. Crucial strategy areas include ensuring:
   - deeper scrutiny of executive action;
   - greater involvement of the public and other role-players;
   - more effective recommendations and monitoring.
3. Key changes required to support Committee oversight:
   - Changes in the parliamentary programme to allow more time for committee oversight work;
   - More effective capacity-building programmes to ensure enhanced Member capacity;
   - Improved analysis and research to ensure deeper insights;
   - Improved public information and access to participate;
   - Better tracking and monitoring of resolutions;
   - Improved support through digital technology and skills.

Strategy map

Role of Committees in strategy execution



Strategy Execution
Role of Committees

- Super-committees
  - Considerable powers are vested in Committees through the Rules, as extensions of the House.
  - The House relies on the validity and thoroughness of Committee processes and the quality of Committee reports, including recommendations, to determine House resolutions on matters before the House.
  - Committee oversight usually takes an **inquisitorial** approach. This includes independent validation and verification of Government's service delivery reports on specific matters or reports on pre-determined objectives indicated in Departmental APPs and budgets.
  - Recent experiences (Eskom, SABC) have highlighted the potential for Committees to conduct "**investigative** oversight" – so-called "super-committees"

Strategy Execution
Role of Committees

- Super-committees
  - Investigative committees usually have a sharper focus and might require additional expertise and support for deep-dive, often complex investigations.
  - While such an approach to Committee oversight allows committees to flex their oversight muscle, it places greater onus on committees to ensure the authenticity, correctness of information and findings in Committee reports and the feasibility and appropriateness of recommendations to the House.

Strategy Execution
Role of Committees

- Oversight value chain (continuum)
  - Members of Parliament conduct their work in Constituencies, Committees and Plenary – each containing peculiar oversight mechanisms.
  - To leverage the maximum benefit, Members should be equipped with appropriate tools and products to provide feedback to constituencies from their Committee work, responses to Questions put to the Executive and debates in the House, thus ensuring a continuum of oversight on a particular matter.
  - This would also apply to particular interests of constituents, which a Member may table at his/her Committee for consideration or propose for a debate in the House.
  - Formal mechanisms for the latter, as well as Parliamentary support to Members' constituency work require particular attention and resources.

Strategy Execution
Role of Committees

- Parliament determined its 2024 outcome goal: **to increase government's responsiveness and accountability.** This will be achieved by strengthening parliamentary oversight over the Executive by 2024 – work of Committees and the Houses
- Institutional strategic initiatives:

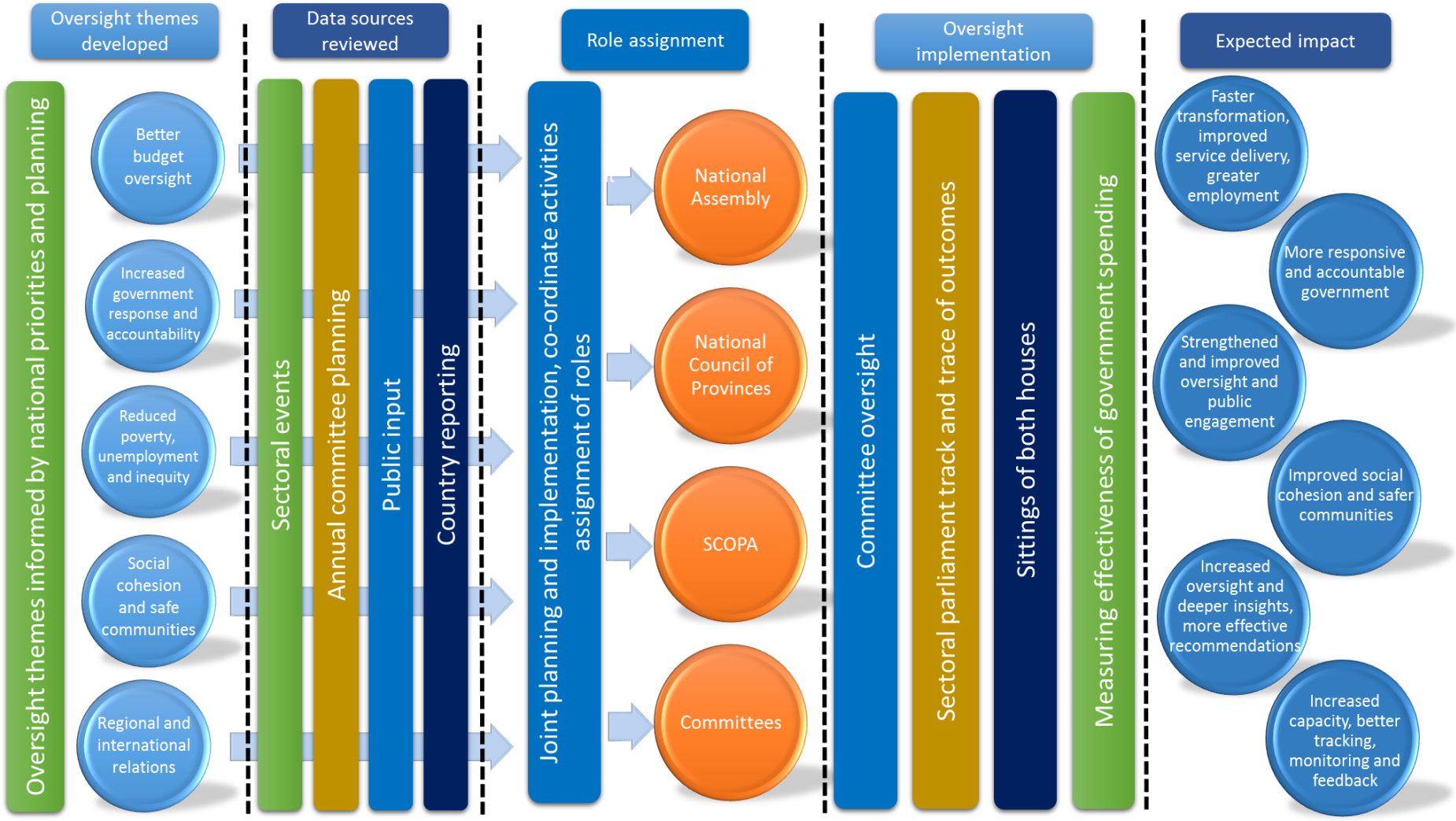
  (a) Oversight Plan to coordinate oversight priorities and activities of Committees, Houses, and Legislatures;

  (b) Public participation strategy to enhance public information, access and participation;

- The proposed **Oversight Plan** is also closely integrated with the Oversight and Accountability Model under development, as well as the current annual financial cycle of Parliament to further attempt to retain as much of the current and planned operational aspects of parliamentary oversight.

Strategy Execution

Oversight Plan - *Role of Committees*

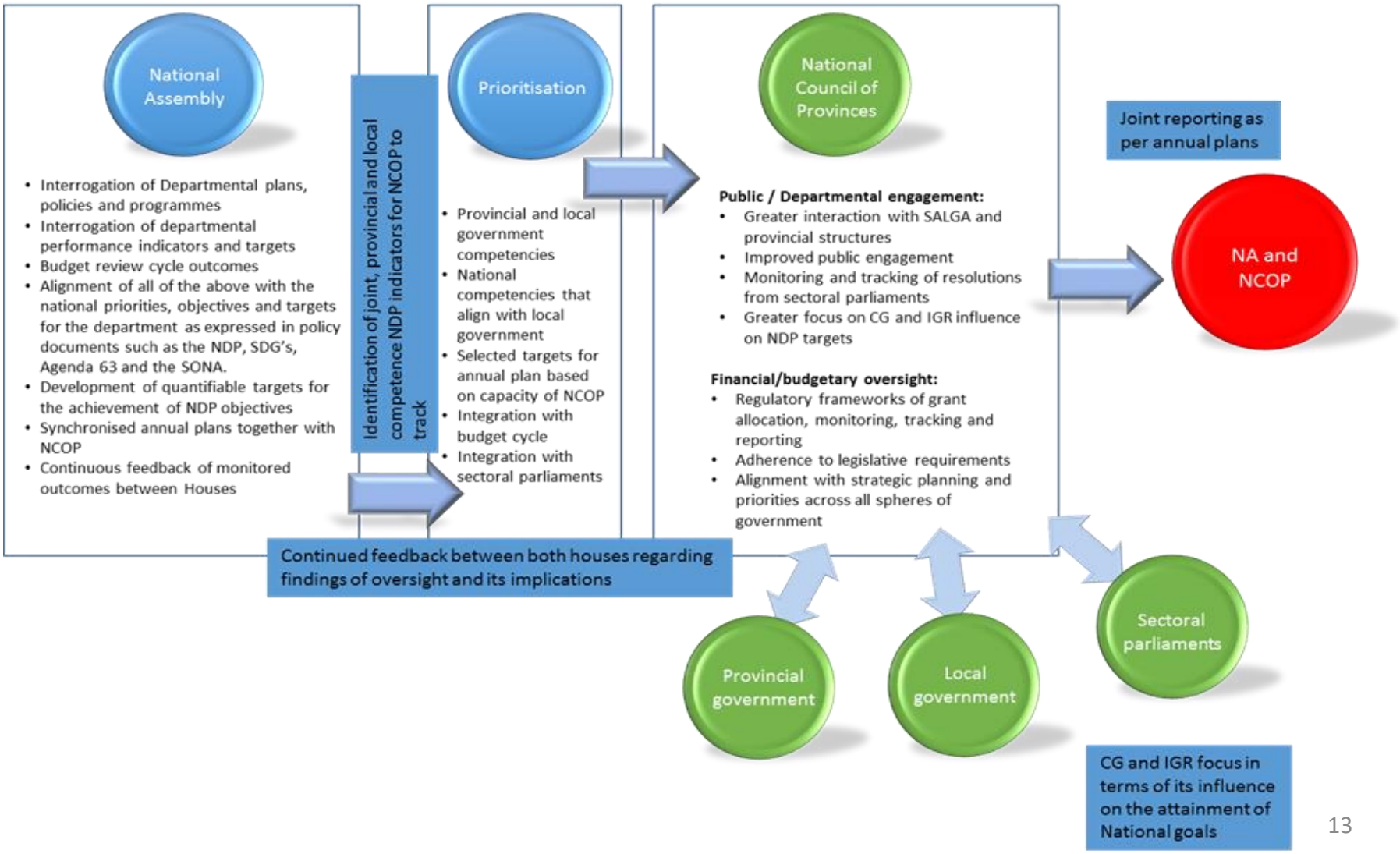


Strategy Execution
Role of Committees

Five themes are proposed for the oversight implementation plan. The themes are:

1. Better Budgetary oversight;
2. Increased Governmental Response and Accountability;
3. Reduce poverty, unemployment and inequity; and
4. Social cohesion and Safe Communities, incorporating the GBVF Framework.
5. Regional and International Relations

Strategy Execution
Role of Committees



Strategy Execution

Services supporting Committee work

Indicator	Overall Member Satisfaction (%)	Ease of Access	Timeousness	Reliability	Fairness	Usefulness
ICT Services	**81**	79,63	81,85	82,69	NA	81,11
Facilities Management Services	**71**	72,00	71,63	72,44	N/A	71,11
Capacity Building Services	**67**	68,33	68,57	67,22	N/A	67,43
Research Services	**79**	79,13	79,56	79,11	80,00	80,44
Content Advice	**75**	76,33	76,73	75,92	75,83	75,10
Procedural Advice	**77**	78,22	77,21	77,33	76,82	77,73
Legal Advice	**77**	76,67	77,56	77,62	77,14	76,67
Committee Support Services	**81**	81,92	82,40	81,96	81,57	81,20
Public Participation Support	**71**	71,43	72,38	71,43	71,43	70,95

** 3rd Quarter Members' satisfaction survey, 2021/22*