Mapping and connecting parliamentary research services around the world

Dr Vicky Ward, University of St Andrews, & POST
vlw4@st-andrews.ac.uk   wardv@parliament.uk   @VLWard
Dr Mark Monaghan, Loughborough University & POST
m.monaghan@lboro.ac.uk   monaghanm@parliament.uk   @mpmon

Research and parliaments: some trends and assumptions

Research and policy	Research and parliament
Focus on decision- and policy-making rather than deliberative processes and policy scrutiny	Around 90% of legislatures lack science and technology advisory bodies. The majority are found in northern European democracies (Tyler & Akerlof, 2019)
Dominance of Western-centric EIPP thought influences the settings, questions and interventions of EIPP research	There is a binary distinction between on-demand legislative research services and proactive LSTABs. In-depth, long-range advice is beyond the capacity of on-demand services and demands skills of distillation and impartiality (Tyler & Akerlof, 2019)
Emphasis on evidence use which has many meanings, is difficult to assess and measure and leads to a focus on individuals as evidence users. Mechanisms for accessing evidence at an institutional level are rarely studied	Research and policymaking are generally elite activities. In most of the Global South resources for policy research are captured by a small number of organisations and individuals with close and long-term connections with Northern research communities and funding agencies. (Mendizabal, 2022)

About our project

- Parliamentary Academic Fellowship with the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST)

- Commissioned call focusing on 'legislative science advice'

- Aims
  - Explore and map the mechanisms parliaments across the world use to access and source research evidence
  - Understand how these parliamentary research mechanisms are structured, how they function and what their relationship is to the academic community
  - Facilitate connections between different mechanisms and the wider research community
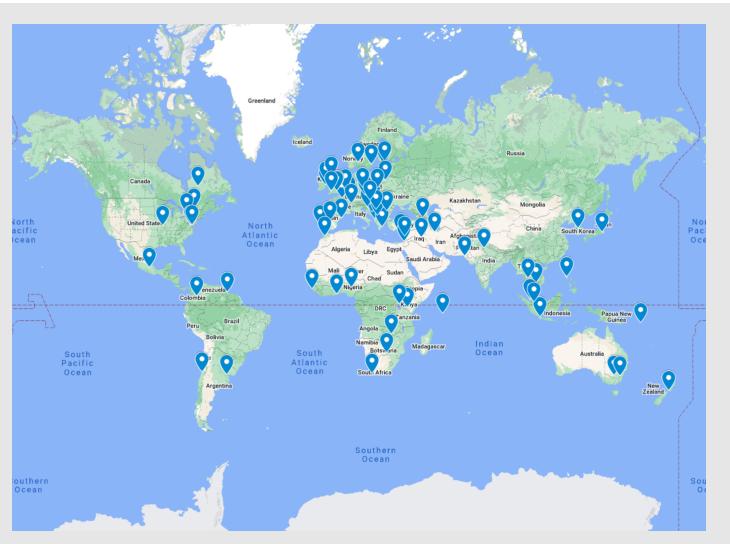
What did we do?

Phase 1 - Mapping exercise (September 2021 – January 2022)	Phase 2 – Document gathering (January to September 2022)	Phase 3 – Interviews (October 2022 to January 2023)

Scope mechanisms in the field
 	
Invited submissions through professional networks
 	
Web searches of 192 National Parliament/ Assembly/Congress and other websites
 	
181 potential mechanisms across 125 countries
 	
Challenges include terminology and the size of the landscape
 	
Decision to focus on 'pull' mechanisms
 	
Output = Interactive global map v1
	Sample = Commonwealth parliaments
	
	Email survey requesting information and documentation (N= 41)
	
	73% response rate (N=30)
	
	Challenges include obtaining responses and clarifying range of activities being undertaken
	
	Outputs = Typology of mechanisms (tiers 1-3); Interactive global map v2
		Sample = email survey respondents (N=27)
		
		13 interviews conducted with representatives from 12 mechanisms
		
		Interviews focused on
		
		    History and aims
		
		    Core activities and outputs
		
		    Processes for accessing academic research (including relationships with the academic community)
		
		    Impact and how this is assessed
		
		Output = TBC!

Output: Global map of parliamentary research mechanisms

Where next?

- Networking event for parliamentary research practitioners, organisations and networks (email us for an invite!)

- Your suggestions please
  - What is missing from the map?
  - Is the map useful/will you use it?
  - How could it be improved?