

Overview



Transparency:

4 /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public
Participation:

9 /100



Budget Oversight:

44 /100

About the survey

Government budget decisions – what taxes to levy, what services to provide, and how much debt to take on – affect how equal a society is and the well-being of its people, including whether the most disadvantaged will have real opportunities for a better life. It is critical that governments inform and engage the public on these vital decisions that impact their lives.

The Open Budget Survey (OBS) is the world's only independent, comparative and fact-based research instrument that uses internationally accepted criteria to assess public access to central government budget information; formal opportunities for the public to participate in the national budget process; and the role of budget oversight institutions such as the legislature and auditor in the budget process.

The survey helps local civil society assess and confer with their government on the reporting and use of public funds. This 7th edition of the OBS covers 117 countries.

*In the Open Budget Survey 2019, this country is being assessed for the first time.

Visit www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey ↗ for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2019 Global Report, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.



Transparency

This part of the OBS measures public access to information on how the central government raises and spends public resources. It assesses the online availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale of 0 to 100. A transparency score of 61 or above indicates a country is likely publishing enough material to support informed public debate on the budget.

The Gambia has a transparency score of 4 (out of 100).

Transparency in The Gambia compared to others



Global Average		45
Ghana		54
Senegal		46
Sierra Leone		39
Liberia		38
Nigeria		21
The Gambia		4

0 Insufficient 61 Sufficient 100

Public availability of budget documents in The Gambia

-  Available to the Public
-  Published Late, or Not Published Online, or Produced for Internal Use Only
-  Not Produced

Document	2019
Pre-Budget Statement	
Executive's Budget Proposal	
Enacted Budget	
Citizens Budget	
In-Year Reports	
Mid-Year Review	
Year-End Report	
Audit Report	

How comprehensive is the content of the key budget documents that The Gambia makes available to the public?

- 61-100 / 100
- 41-60 / 100
- 1-40 / 100

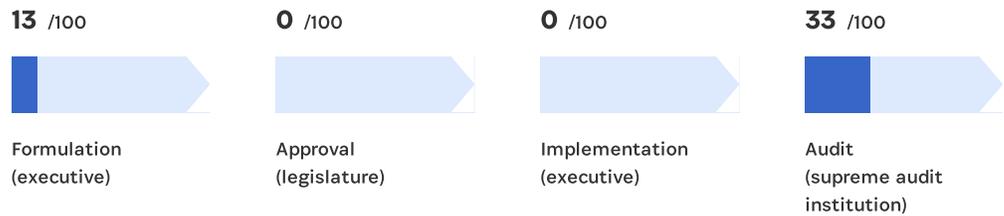
Key budget document	Document purpose and contents	Fiscal year assessed	Document content score
Pre-Budget Statement	Discloses the broad parameters of fiscal policies in advance of the Executive's Budget Proposal; outlines the government's economic forecast, anticipated revenue, expenditures, and debt.	2019	Internal Use
Executive's Budget Proposal	Submitted by the executive to the legislature for approval; details the sources of revenue, the allocations to ministries, proposed policy changes, and other information important for understanding the country's fiscal situation.	2019	9
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2019	Hard Copy
Citizens Budget	A simpler and less technical version of the government's Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, designed to convey key information to the public.	2018	Hard Copy
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2017 & 2018	Internal Use
Mid-Year Review	A comprehensive update on the implementation of the budget as of the middle of the fiscal year; includes a review of economic assumptions and an updated forecast of budget outcomes.	2018	Internal Use
Year-End Report	Describes the situation of the government's accounts at the end of the fiscal year and, ideally, an evaluation of the progress made toward achieving the budget's policy goals.	2017	Internal Use
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2016	Internal Use

Recommendations

The Gambia should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Publish the Pre-Budget Statement, Enacted Budget, Citizens Budget, In-Year Reports, Mid-Year Review, Year-End Report, and Audit Report online in a timely manner.
- Include in the Executive's Budget Proposal expenditure and revenue information. This can be accomplished by publishing the Budget Book (Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure) on the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs' website prior to it being approved by the legislature.

Extent of opportunities for public participation in the budget process



few: 0 - 40; limited: 41 - 60; adequate: 61 - 100

Recommendations

The Gambia's Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has established public consultations during budget formulation but, to further strengthen public participation in the budget process, should also prioritize the following actions:

- Pilot mechanisms to monitor budget implementation.
- Expand mechanisms during budget formulation that engage any civil society organization or member of the public who wishes to participate.
- Actively engage with vulnerable and underrepresented communities, directly or through civil society organizations representing them.

The Gambia's National Assembly should prioritize the following actions:

- Allow members of the public or civil society organizations to testify during its hearings on the budget proposal prior to its approval.
- Allow members of the public or civil society organizations to testify during its hearings on the Audit Report.

The Gambia's National Audit Office has established mechanisms to contribute to relevant audit investigations. It should prioritize the following actions to improve public participation in the budget process:

- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to assist in developing its audit program.



Budget Oversight

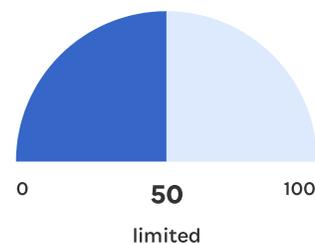
The OBS also examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information on independent fiscal institutions (see Box).

The legislature and supreme audit institution in The Gambia, together, provide limited oversight during the budget process, with a composite oversight score of **44** (out of 100). Taken individually, the extent of each institution's oversight is shown below:

Legislative oversight



Audit oversight



weak: 0 - 40; limited: 41 - 60; adequate: 61 - 100

Recommendations

The Gambia's National Assembly provides limited oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and weak oversight during the implementation stage. To improve oversight, the following actions should be prioritized:

- The legislature should debate budget policy before the Executive's Budget Proposal is tabled and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- The Executive's Budget Proposal should be submitted to legislators at least two months before the start of the budget year.
- Legislative committees should examine the Executive's Budget Proposal and publish reports with their analysis online.

- A legislative committee should examine in-year budget implementation and publish reports with their findings online.
- In practice, ensure the legislature is consulted before the executive shifts funds specified in the Enacted Budget between administrative units or reduces spending due to revenue shortfalls during the budget year.
- A legislative committee should examine the Audit Report and publish a report with their findings online.

To strengthen its independence and improve audit oversight by The Gambia's National Audit Office, the following actions are recommended:

- Require legislative or judicial approval to appoint and remove the head of the supreme audit institution.
- Ensure the supreme audit institution has adequate funding to perform its duties, as determined by an independent body (e.g., the legislature or judiciary).

The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions

The Gambia does not have an independent fiscal institution (IFI). IFIs are increasingly recognized as valuable independent and nonpartisan information providers to the Executive and/or Parliament during the budget process.

**These indicators are *not* scored in the Open Budget Survey.*

Methodology

- Only documents published and events, activities, or developments that took place through 31 December 2018 were assessed in the OBS 2019.
- The survey is based on a questionnaire completed in each country by an independent budget expert:
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- To further strengthen the research, each country's draft questionnaire is also reviewed by an anonymous independent expert, and in The Gambia by a representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.