

Overview



Transparency:

35 /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public
Participation:

9 /100



Budget Oversight:

52 /100

About the survey

Government budget decisions – what taxes to levy, what services to provide, and how much debt to take on – have important consequences for all people in society. When governments provide information and meaningful channels for the public to engage in these decisions, we can better ensure public money is spent on public interests.

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 legislatures and national audit offices, 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 8th edition of the OBS covers 120 countries.

Visit www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2021 Global and Regional Reports, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

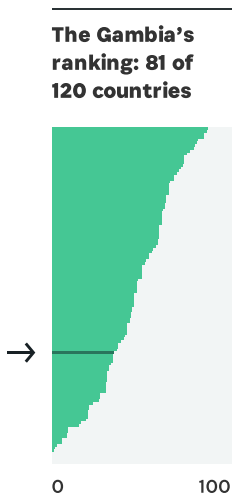


Transparency

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 **35** (out of 100).

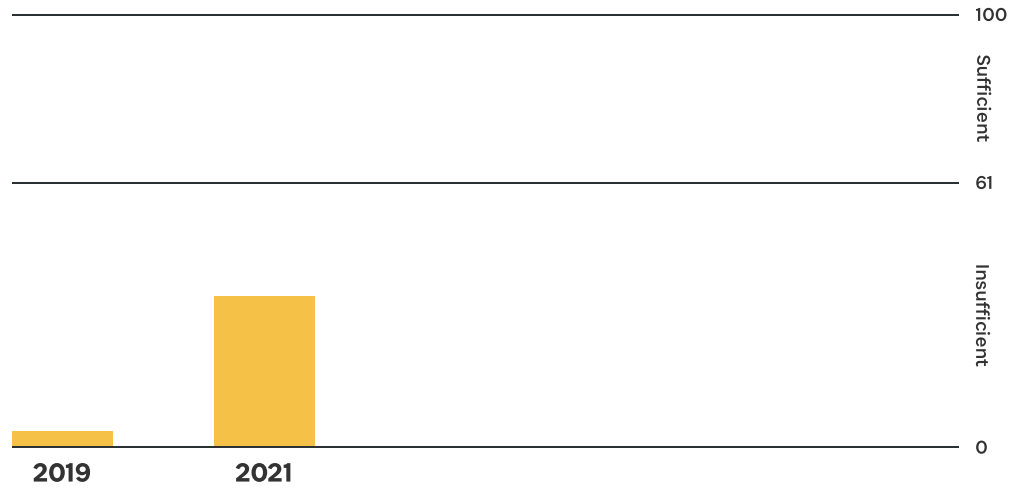
Transparency in The Gambia compared to others



Global Average	45
Ghana	56
Liberia	46
Sierra Leone	46
Nigeria	45
Senegal	40
The Gambia	35

0 Insufficient 61 Sufficient 100

How has the transparency score for The Gambia changed over time?



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	2021
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.	2021	56
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.	2021	44
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2021	89
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.	2020	50
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2019 & 2020	26
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.	2020	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.	2019	Internal Use
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2018	Internal Use

The Gambia's transparency score of **35** in the OBS 2021 is substantially higher than its score in 2019.

What changed in OBS 2021?

The Gambia has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Pre-Budget Statement, Enacted Budget, Citizens Budget and In-Year Reports online.
- Increasing the information provided in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Recommendations

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

- Publish the Mid-Year Review, Year-End Report and Audit Report online in a timely manner. The Mid-Year Review should be published within three months of the mid-point of the fiscal year, while the Year-End Report should be published within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year. The Audit Report should be published within 18 months of the end of the fiscal year.
- Include in the Executive's Budget Proposal data on the macroeconomic forecast and information on performance and policy. This includes publishing information on interest rates and an analysis of how different macroeconomic assumptions affect estimates of expenditures, revenue, and debt (i.e., sensitivity analysis). Additionally, the Executive's Budget Proposal should include information on how new policy proposals affect expenditures and revenue, as well as information on the link between the budget and all of the government's stated policy goals for the budget year and future years.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the Citizens Budget and In-Year Reports.

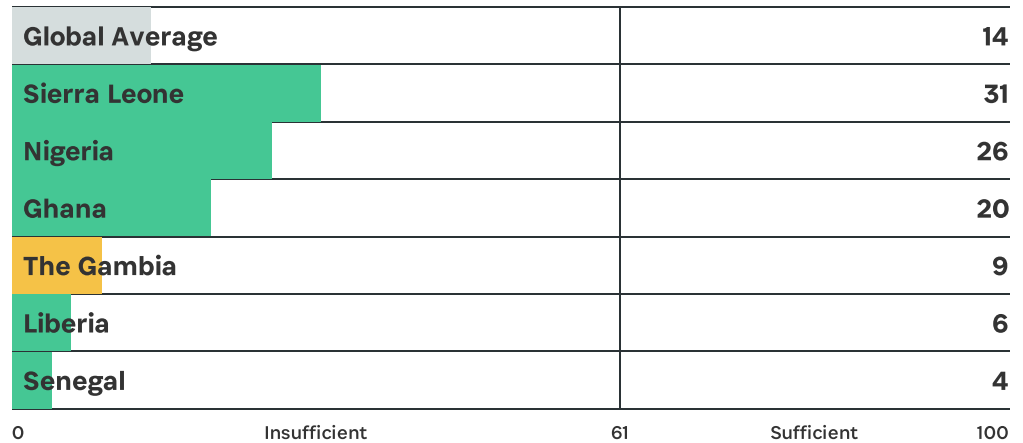


Public Participation

The OBS assesses the formal opportunities offered to the public for meaningful participation in the different stages of the budget process. It examines the practices of the central government's executive, the legislature, and the supreme audit institution (SAI) using 18 equally weighted indicators, aligned with the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency's [Principles of Public Participation in Fiscal Policies](#) ⁷, and scores each country on a scale from 0 to 100.

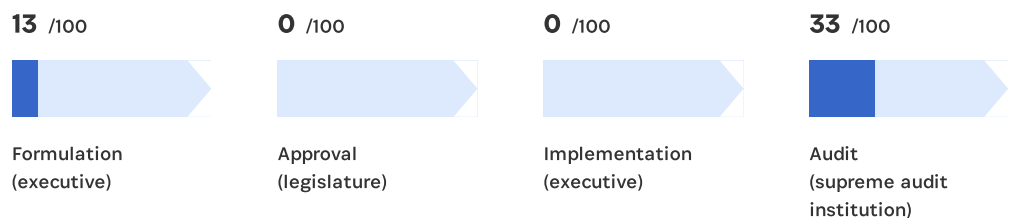
The Gambia has a public participation score of **9** (out of 100).

Public participation in The Gambia compared to others



For more information, see [here](#) ⁷ for innovative public participation practices around the world.

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:

- Engage and collect inputs from citizens and civil society on the Executive's Budget Proposal before its approval, and document how the inputs are used.
- 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.

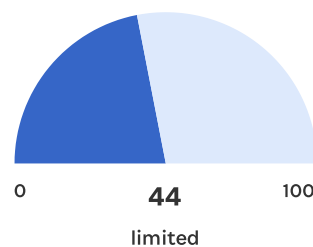


Budget Oversight

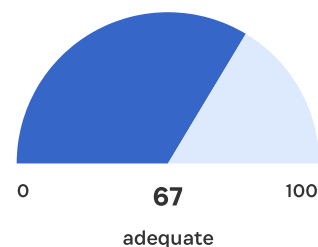
The OBS examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information 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 **52** (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. This could be accomplished by amending the Financial Regulation 2016, Section 19 (3a and 3b), to ensure there is proper legislative oversight.
- A legislative committee should examine the Audit Report and publish a report with their findings online.

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

- Require legislative or judicial approval to appoint 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 2020 were assessed in the OBS 2021.
- 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.