

Open Budget Survey 2019

Questionnaire

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

April 2020

Country Questionnaire: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

PBS-1. What is the fiscal year of the PBS evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2019-20

Source:

Comment:

There is no PBS as such. This is a change from previous surveys and results from the UK changing its Budget timetable. For the coming financial year there is a Budget that takes place the previous Autumn, well in advance of the financial year.

There is a Spring Statement that takes place roughly mid-way between Budgets (and therefore around the start of the financial year). This updates the economic and fiscal forecasts and announces consultations in advance of the coming Budget.

In such a framework it is far from clear that a PBS is needed. Essentially the early Budget (relative to the start of the financial year) and the Spring Statement, between them, fulfill all the necessary roles in two events. (One could argue that the Spring Statement is the PBS and that the Autumn Budget fulfills the role of being both the Budget and also providing a Mid-Year Review, but the OBS methodology does not allow for this.)

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: FY 2018-19.

Comments: In last years survey, you judged that Autumn Statement was a PBS. Therefore the only thing that has changed is the timing of the events, as now Spring Statement has replaced a Spring Budget and Autumn Budget has replaced an Autumn Statement

IBP Comment

IBP finds the researchers response to be consistent with IBP methodology. But IBP acknowledges the government reviewer's point that in previous rounds what was the Autumn Statement was accepted as a Pre-Budget Statement (and a Mid-Year Review), as it preceded the Spring Budget, which was released just prior to the start of the new fiscal year. But with the new budget calendar, the UK budget documents do not line up in the same way. The Autumn Budget 2017 was released roughly 5 months in advance of the start of the fiscal year. The Spring Statement 2018 was released after the Budget was made public, but before the start of the fiscal year. The new process is designed around the Autumn Budget being "a single fiscal event." Further, in 2018, the Spring Statement was a speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, without the detailed document that Treasury had released with past statements. The accompanying "Economic and Fiscal Outlook" by the Office of Budget Responsibility provided an updated economic and fiscal forecast, but did not look ahead to the next budget (for instance, it did not extend the forecast out an additional year to cover the full multi-year period that would be in the next Budget, a feature of past statements). IBP therefore treats the Spring Statement (and the accompanying OBR report) as a MYR, a document whose primary purpose is to provide an update during the budget cycle. Finally, while consultations can be launched at the time of the Spring Statement, as was the case with the Spring Statement 2018, these consultations are assessed in Section 5 (public participation) of the OBS, not as part of the assessment of budget documents.

PBS-2. When is the PBS made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for a PBS to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the legislature for consideration. If the PBS is not released to the public at least one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is submitted to the legislature for consideration, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the PBS.

Answer:

d. The PBS is not released to the public, or is released less than one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is introduced to the legislature

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree with the researcher comment from the previous question - there is no formal 'Pre Budget Statement' but a combination of the Spring Statement and Autumn Budget provides a reasonable degree of coverage of what the OBS expects from a PBS. Nevertheless, the researcher is right that within the options provided above this is a 'technical' d-score, although that seems overly harsh for the level of PBS-style information that the UK provides.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: c. Less than two months in advance of the budget year, but at least one month before the Executive's Budget Proposal is introduced in the legislature

Comments: Spring Statement was released in march, less than one month before the start of the fiscal year.

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-3a. If the PBS is published, what is the date of publication of the PBS?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: As noted, although there is no formal PBS much of the required information is contained in the Spring and Autumn statements; or indeed the Spending Review documentation that covers a medium-term perspective.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: 13/03/2018

Comments: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the PBS.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: The date of publication is stated on the government website alongside the documents

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-4. If the PBS is published, what is the URL or weblink of the PBS?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-5. If the PBS is published, are the numerical data contained in the PBS available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the PBS is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

d. Not applicable

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: b. Yes, some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Comments: The data is published by the OBR which provides tables alongside the commentary: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-6a. If the PBS is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the PBS is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question PBS-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question PBS-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

d. Not produced at all

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: As above, this is technically true but much of the information expected in a PBS is provided through other means (e.g. Spring Statement, Autumn Budget, spending review documents etc)

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question PBS-6a, please specify how you determined whether the PBS was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a","b," or "e" was selected in question PBS-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

It is not produced as it is not needed in the UK's new budgetary timetable.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Disagree
Suggested Answer: n/a

IBP Comment
IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-7. If the PBS is produced, please write the full title of the PBS.

For example, a title for the Pre-Budget Statement could be "Proposed 2019 State Budget" or "Guidelines for the Preparation of Annual Plan and Budget for 2018/19."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Disagree
Suggested Answer: Spring Statement 2018

IBP Comment
IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in PBS-1.

PBS-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the PBS?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

EBP-1a. What is the fiscal year of the EBP evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2018-19

Source:

The Autumn 2017 Budget (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>) contains some measures that have effect from fiscal year 2018-19

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: The guidance for the OBS says that the cut-off point for documentation is 31 December 2018. It also says that the documents selected for review do not all have to be part of the same budget cycle. On that basis, Budget 2018 published on 29 October 2018 would be the most latest - and therefore the most relevant - document to consider as the EBP; unless there is a specific reason to select Budget 2017 (I would assume that the latest year is more relevant than previous years) Budget 2018 sets out policies primarily for the 2018/19 fiscal year, which is beyond the scope of the cut off point but Budget 2018 document itself is not. This would mean that the other documents for review (e.g. PBS, MYR) would relate to the previous fiscal year; but this appears to be within the OBS guidelines.

Comments: It is worth noting that UK fiscal years and budget timetable do not coincide easily with the OBS format. The latest 'full' fiscal year covered by the 31st December 2018 cut-off point would be the 17/18 fiscal year (ending in March 2018); but the EBP for this would either be the Budget 2016 or the Autumn Statement 2016 (although in many cases it is spending review material that sets out expenditure plans and these work to a different timetable to Budget/Autumn statement documents). Having reviewed the guidance I can see that the documents for review do not need to come from the same fiscal cycle or budget year. On this basis, the Autumn

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

IBP Comment

IBP agrees that the Autumn Budget 2017 is the appropriate document to use for purposes of responding to the survey. The peer reviewer is correct that the Autumn Budget 2018 was published prior to the end of the research cut-off date. But in considering an EBP, the survey also looks at supporting documents. A key supporting document for the EBP is the Main Supply Estimates, and the Main Supply Estimates for the Budget 2018 were not released until 2019, after the end of the research period. In order to assess an EBP with all of its supporting documents, IBP agrees with using the Autumn Budget 2017 and the Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019 to respond to EBP-related questions in the survey, as this best accommodates some of the timing changes in the new UK budget process.

EBP-1b. When is the EBP submitted to the legislature for consideration?

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

22/11/2017

Source:

The Chancellor's Autumn 2017 Budget speech was given to parliament on Wednesday 22nd November 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/autumn-budget-2017-philip-hammonds-speech>

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, were released on 19 April 2018. They were released after the start of the fiscal year (1 April), but before the appropriations bill was enacted (19 July). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: I have mentioned in the previous answer that the most recent EBP document for review should be Budget 2018, as this is within the cut-off date and more recent than the 2017 document listed above. Budget 2018 was released to Parliament on 29th October 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-2018>). The most recent Main Supply Estimate is indeed the 2018 document cited above, released on 19th April 2018. This part of the EBP relates to an earlier budget/expenditure year. As noted, I think the OBS guidelines allow reviewers to select the most recent key documents for review, even if they come from different fiscal/budget years.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-2. When is the EBP made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an EBP to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public while the legislature is still considering it and before the legislature approves (enacts) it. If the EBP is not released to the public before the legislature approves it, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the EBP.

The OBS definition of an Executive's Budget Proposal is a document(s) that (i) the executive submits to the legislature as a formal part of the budget approval process and (ii) the legislature either approves or on which it approves proposed amendments.

The OBS will treat the Executive's Budget Proposal as "Not Produced," in the following cases:

- *The executive does not submit the draft budget to the legislature; or*
- *The legislature receives the draft budget but does not approve it or does not approve recommendations on the draft budget;*
- *The legislature rejects the draft budget submitted by the executive, but the executive implements it without legislative approval; or*
- *There is no legislature, or the legislature has been dissolved.*

Answer:

a. At least three months in advance of the budget year, and in advance of the budget being approved by the legislature

Source:

The Autumn 2017 Budget was published on Wednesday 22nd November 2017. The 2018-19 financial year will begin on Monday 1st April 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/autumn-budget-2017-philip-hammonds-speech>

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, were released on 19 April 2018. They were released after the start of the fiscal year (1 April), but before the appropriations bill was enacted (19 July). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: a. At least three months in advance of the budget year, and in advance of the budget being approved by the legislature

Comments: As noted in previous questions, I think the EBP for review according to the OBS guidelines should be Budget 2018. However, Budget 2018 was submitted to Parliament in October 2018; and the fiscal year it predominantly refers to is 2019/20, which begins in April 2019 and therefore is longer than the three months. I agree with the reviewer that the Main Estimates introduced to Parliament for approval (which reflect Budget 2017 - the EBP to which the reviewer refers) were set out three months before Parliament approved them, according to the dates the reviewer sets out above.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-3a. If the EBP is published, what is the date of publication of the EBP?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

In the comment boxes below, researchers should also list any supporting documents to the EBP and their date of publication.

Answer:

22/11/2017

Source:

The Autumn 2017 Budget was published on the same day that the Budget speech was given by the Chancellor to parliament. This was on Wednesday 22nd November 2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/autumn-budget-2017-philip-hammonds-speech>

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: As discussed earlier, I think the correct EBP would be Budget 2018, according to the OBS guidance that the most recent document should be selected prior to the 31 December 2018 cut off point. This would make the date of publication 29 October 2018.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the EBP.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

The announcement & publication date was announced in advance, and kept to.

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/autumn-budget-2017-philip-hammonds-speech>

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-2018> This is the government web-page for Budget 2018, containing the 29th October 2018 date.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-4. If the EBP is published, what is the URL or weblink of the EBP?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

In the comment boxes below, researchers should also list any supporting documents to the EBP and their URL or weblink.

Answer:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>

Source:

HM Treasury document is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>

The independent Office for Budget Responsibility, which produces economic and fiscal forecasts that were adopted by the Chancellor as the Government's own published its Economic and Fiscal Outlook on the same day: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: As above, I think the EBP for consideration should be the budget of the following year, which has the link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-2018> The OBR link for the same period (which the reviewer is right should form part of the EBP package given that the government takes the OBR forecasts as its own) is: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/> I agree with the reviewer that a further part of the EBP package is the Main Supply Estimates for the previous year (as they fall within the cut-off period) and the web-link provided by the researcher provided earlier covers that issue.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-5. If the EBP is published, are the numerical data contained in the EBP or its supporting documents available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>.

Option "d" applies if the EBP is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

a. Yes, all of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

With regards to the Treasury Budget document the Treasury provides the key tables in excel format - plus details of all other data sources - here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>

The Office for Budget Responsibility provides spreadsheets containing the data in every table and figure in their report. Here: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: b. Yes, some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Comments: The Main Estimates documents are only available in PDF (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>). If it is agreed that they form part of the EBP - and it is an open question if they do, given that the UK's Budget process and appropriations process are not directly linked in the same event - then not all numerical data is available in a machine readable format. I will leave it up to the reviewer/OBS to determine if the Main Estimates 'count' as part of the EBP and therefore whether the answer is A or B

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-6a. If the EBP is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the EBP is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question EBP-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question EBP-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

EBP-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question EBP-6a, please specify how you determined whether the EBP was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a", "b", or "e" was selected in question EBP-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EBP-7. If the EBP is produced, please write the full title of the EBP.

For example, a title for the Executive's Budget Proposal could be "Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for BY 2018-19, produced by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development."

If there are any supporting documents to the EBP, please enter their full titles in the comment box below.

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Autumn Budget 2017

Source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661480/autumn_budget_2017_web.pdf

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: As mentioned before, I think the Budget 2018 would be the best candidate for the EBP within the time limit of the survey. The title of this document is 'Budget 2018'. If the definition of EBP is expanded to include the OBR and Main Estimates documents mentioned in previous answers then the titles of these documents are "Economic and Fiscal Outlook - October 2018" (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/>) and "Central Government Supply Estimates 2018-19; Main Supply Estimates" https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/701014/main_estimates_2018-19_web.pdf

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, as explained in more detail in EBP-1a.

EBP-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the EBP?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

There is, however, a non-technical summary of the major announcements in the budget which is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-budget-2017-25-things-you-need-to-know>

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-1a. What is the fiscal year of the EB evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
FY 2018-19

Source:
Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/17/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>

Finance Act 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/3/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financen2.html>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-1b. When was the EB approved (enacted) by the legislature?

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:
15/3/2018

Source:
Finance Act 2018 was enacted on the 15th March 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/3/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financen2.html>

Note that the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 was enacted on the 19th July 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/17/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-2. When is the EB made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an EB to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public three months after the budget is approved by the legislature. If the EB is not released to the public at least three months after the budget is approved by the legislature, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the EB.

Answer:

a. Two weeks or less after the budget has been enacted

Source:

The Finance Act 2018 was first introduced to Parliament on the 1st December 2017 and was amended prior to being enacted on the 15th March 2018

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financeno2/documents.html>

The Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 was first made available to Parliament on the 2nd July 2018 and was not amended prior to being enacted on the 19th July 2018.

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2/documents.html>

Comment:

The latest version of all UK bills and acts are available to the public, and is kept up to date, here: <https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/>

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

EB-3a. If the EB is published, what is the date of publication of the EB?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

15/03/2018

Source:

The Finance Act 2018 was first introduced to Parliament on the 1st December 2017 and was amended prior to being enacted on the 15th March 2018

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financeno2/documents.html>

Note: the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 was first made available to Parliament on the 2nd July 2018 and was not amended prior to being enacted on the 19th July 2018.

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2/documents.html>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the EB.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
From
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financeno2/documents.html>
and
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2/documents.html>
Source:
Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-4. If the EB is published, what is the URL or weblink of the EB?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/3/contents>
Source:
Finance Act 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/3/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financeno2.html>
Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/17/contents>
<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>
Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-5. If the EB is published, are the numerical data contained in the EB available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data

found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the EB is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:
c. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-6a. If the EB is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the EB is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question EB-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question EB-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:
e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question EB-6a, please specify how you determined whether the EB was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question EB-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

EB-7. If the EB is produced, please write the full title of the EB.

For example, a title for the Enacted Budget could be "Appropriation Act n. 10 of 2018."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Finance Act 2018

Source:

Finance Act 2018

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/3/pdfs/ukpga_20180003_en.pdf

See also Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/17/pdfs/ukpga_20180017_en.pdf

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

EB-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the EB?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

There is a lot of information made available in a reasonably accessible form (see - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/finance-bill-2018-19> - and the links on that page). But this is not a "citizens version".

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

CB-1. What is the fiscal year of the CB evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, for each CB please indicate the document the CB simplifies/refers to, and the fiscal year.

Answer:
FY 2018-19

Source:
There is a non-technical guide to the Budget (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-budget-2017-25-things-you-need-to-know>). But this is not a fully fledged Citizens Budget - for example it does not contain a graph showing revenues by source or spending by area.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

CB-2a. For the fiscal year indicated in CB-1, what is the public availability status of the CB?

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document (Executive's Budget Proposal or Enacted Budget) you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its public availability status.

Remember that publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

*Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology
Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.*

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

Answer:
d. Not produced at all

Source:
n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

CB-2b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question CB-2a, please specify how you determined whether the CB was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question CB-2a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

I feel confident that if one had been produced then it would have been published.

Source:

n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree - HMT is not likely to produce a citizens budget for its own internal use (it defeats the point).

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

CB-3a. If the CB is published, what is the date of publication of the CB?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

If more than one Citizens Budget is published, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its dates of publication.

Answer:

Source:

n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

CB-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the CB.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:
n/a

Source:
n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

CB-4. If the CB is published, what is the URL or weblink of the CB?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

If more than one Citizens Budget is published, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and its URL or weblink.

Answer:

Source:
n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

CB-5. If the CB is produced, please write the full title of the CB.

For example, a title for the Citizens Budget could be "Budget 2018 People's Guide" or "2019 Proposed Budget in Brief: A People's Budget Publication."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, for the other CB, indicate the document the CB refers to and, next to it, its full title.

Answer:
n/a

Source:
n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

CB-6. If the CB is produced, please indicate which budget document it corresponds to.

If more than one Citizens Budget is produced, please complete this question for one of them, specifying in the comment box below which document you are referring to, and – in the same comment box – which other Citizens Budget is produced and which budget document it simplifies.

Answer:

n/a

Source:

n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IYRs-1. What is the fiscal year of the IYRs evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2018-19

Source:

The Office for National Statistics publishes in-year data on spending and receipts on a monthly basis. The most recent one as of the end of December 2018 was published in December 2018 and contains the first data from November 2018.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

HM Treasury publishes in-year spending data on a quarterly basis. The most recent one as of the end of December 2018 was published in December 2018 and contains the first data on the second quarter of 2018-19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: The question asks specifically for the date of the fiscal year, which would be FY 2018-19 according to the format requested.

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Researcher Response
Have added FY to the date.

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the quarterly reviews by UK Debt Management Office are also considered as in-year reports for purposes of the OBS. See <https://www.dmo.gov.uk/publications/?offset=0&itemsPerPage=20&parentFilter=1275&childFilter=1275|1277&startMonth=1&startYear=1998>

IYRs-2. When are the IYRs made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for IYRs to be considered publicly available, IYRs must be made available to the public no later than three months after the reporting period ends. If at least seven of the last 12 monthly IYRs, or at least three of the last four quarterly IYRs are not released to the public at least three months after the reporting period ends, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the IYRs.

Answer:

a. At least every month, and within one month of the period covered

Source:

The ONS publishes in year data on spending and receipts on a monthly basis. The most recent one as of the end of December 2018 was published in December 2018 and contains the first data from November 2018.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

HM Treasury publishes in year spending data on a quarterly basis. At the time of writing the latest release was published in December 2018 and contains the first data on the second quarter of 2018-19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: c. At least every quarter, and within three months of the period covered

Comments: The picture is complicated. The ONS releases highlighted above are indeed every month, and within one month of the period covered (so an A score). However, the HM Treasury OSCAR releases are released every quarter, and are roughly a quarter behind the data (i.e. within three months of the period covered, so a C score). I think it's up to the OBS if they want to score the UK high because aggregate public spending information is every month within a month; or whether to score lower because detailed ministry-by-ministry spending is every quarter, within a quarter. This scoring takes a conservative position.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher. The peer reviewer is correct in noting that we have to choose between the monthly and quarterly In-Year Reports. Under the OBS methodology, IBP gives credit for the document that produces the highest score, so in this case the monthly IYRs.

IYRs-3a. If the IYRs are published, what are the dates of publication of the IYRs?

Specifically: if quarterly In-Year Reports are published, indicate the dates of publication of at least three of the last four IYRs that were publicly available. If monthly IYRs are published, indicate the dates of publication of at least seven of the last 12 IYRs that were publicly available.

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD Month YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05 September 2018. If the document is not published or not produced, please mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

The ONS publishes in year data on spending and receipts on a monthly basis:

21 December 2018

21 November 2018

19 October 2018
21 September 2018
21 August 2018
20 July 2018
21 June 2018
22 May 2018
24 April 2018
21 March 2018
21 February 2018
23 January 2018

HMT Oscar data provide more details on spending and are published quarterly:

21 December 2018
21 September 2018
21 June 2018
21 March 2018

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the IYRs.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Publication dates are shown on the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

And on the HMT website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-4. If the IYRs are published, what is the URL or weblink of the IYRs?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Researchers should provide the weblink to the most recent In-Year Report in the space below, and – in the comment box underneath – the weblinks to older IYRs.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>
and
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-5. If the IYRs are published, are the numerical data contained in the IYRs available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the IYRs are not published or not produced, therefore their machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

a. Yes, all of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

The December 2018 release, containing data up to November 2018 is available here:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/november2018>

All underlying data can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/datasets/publicsectorfinancesappendixatables110/current>

The latest OSCAR data publication (December 2018) is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oscar-publishing-data-from-the-database-december-2018> and the underlying data can be downloaded from a link on the same page.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-6a. If the IYRs are not publicly available, are they still produced?

If the IYRs are not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question IYRs-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see

Question IYRs-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question IYRs-6a, please specify how you determined whether the IYRs were produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question IYRs-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

IYRs-7. If the IYRs are produced, please write the full title of the IYRs.

For example, a title for the In-Year Report could be "Budget Monitoring Report, Quarter 1" or "Budget Execution Report January-March 2018."

If In-Year Reports are not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Researchers should provide the full title of the most recent In-Year Report in the space below, and - in the comment box underneath - the full titles of older IYRs.

Answer:

Public sector finances, UK: November 2018

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/november2018>

HMT OSCAR: publishing from the database

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IYRs-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the IYRs?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-1. What is the fiscal year of the MYR evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:

FY 2018-19

Source:

The March 2018 Spring Statement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>), published on the 13 March 2018, and the accompanying Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>) provided details of developments over the period since the October 2017 Budget and updated the economic and fiscal forecasts in the light of these.

Comment:

The Spring Statement is being used following consultations with the IBP. It is not published in the midpoint of the financial year, but it is published in the mid point (roughly) in the Budget cycle. (An alternative could have been to count the actual Budget as both the Budget and the MYR, but the IBP methodology does not allow for this.)

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

MYR-2. When is the MYR made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an MYR to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than three months after the reporting period ends (i.e., three months after the midpoint of the fiscal year). If the MYR is not released to the public at least three months after the reporting period ends, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the MYR.

Answer:

a. Six weeks or less after the midpoint

Source:

The Spring Statement 2018 was published on the 13th March 2018.

The Autumn Budget 2018 was published on 29th October 2018.

The fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

Comment:

The 2018 Spring Statement was published (roughly) in the midpoint between the Autumn 2017 Budget and the Autumn 2018 Budget. This was less than six weeks after the midpoint between these two reports.

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP also notes that the outturn data in the Spring Statement go through the end of January 2018, so cover the period that ends less than six weeks before the statement was published.

MYR-3a. If the MYR is published, what is the date of publication of the MYR?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

13/03/2018

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: The question asks for the date in a specific format, which would be 13/03/2018. This is also the date that the Spring OBR EFO is published <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/> which is also (as the research argues I think correctly) part of the MYR package

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

Date has been adjusted to reflect the preferred format.

MYR-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the MYR.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

I remember it being published. Date is confirmed here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: To note - the OBR EFO was also published on the same day (not by coincidence, it's the system) <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-4. If the MYR is published, what is the URL or weblink of the MYR?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>
See also <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-5. If the MYR is published, are the numerical data contained in the MYR available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>.

Option "d" applies if the MYR is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

a. Yes, all of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

Details of the economic and fiscal forecasts are provided in the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>). They make all the data underlying their charts and tables available to download.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-6a. If the MYR is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the MYR is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question MYR-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question MYR-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>
<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question MYR-6a, please specify how you determined whether the MYR was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question MYR-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

MYR-7. If the MYR is produced, please write the full title of the MYR.

For example, a title for the Mid-Year Review could be "Semi-annual Budget Performance Report, FY 2017/18" or "Mid-Year Report on the 2018 National Budget."

If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Spring Statement 2018

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/spring-statement-2018>

See also <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

MYR-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the MYR?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

There is a non-technical version of the Spring Statement here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-statement-2018-what-you-need-to>

know. But it does not contain a full "citizen's budget".

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

YER-1. What is the fiscal year of the YER evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
FY 2017-18

Source:
See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:
OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Departmental annual reports and accounts are published within six months of the budget year ending. To give three examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree
Comments: See also
:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757231/PSS_November_2018.pdf

IBP Comment
Note that this PSS release was the first to show the 2017-18 outturn: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-spending-statistics-release-july-2018>

YER-2. When is the YER made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an YER to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than one year after the fiscal

year to which it corresponds. If the YER is not released to the public within one year after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the YER.

Answer:

a. Six months or less after the end of the budget year

Source:

See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:

OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

YER-3a. If the YER is published, what is the date of publication of the YER?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

19/07/2018

Source:

See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:

OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

YER-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the YER.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 was first published on the 19th July 2018.

Source:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

YER-4. If the YER is published, what is the URL or weblink of the YER?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018>

Source:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018>

See also:
<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

YER-5. If the YER is published, are the numerical data contained in the YER available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the YER is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:
a. Yes, all of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:
See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:
OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

YER-6a. If the YER is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the YER is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question YER-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question YER-2)

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:

OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

YER-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question YER-6a, please specify how you determined whether the YER was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a", "b", or "e" was selected in question YER-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion:

Government Reviewer
Opinion:

YER-7. If the YER is produced, please write the full title of the YER.

For example, a title for the Year-End Report could be "Consolidated Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2018" or "Annual Report 2017 Published by the Ministry of Finance and Planning." If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018

Source:

See: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2018#history>), first published on 19th July 2018 (but updated on 8th February 2019)

See also:

OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

YER-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the YER?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

n/a

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

AR-1. What is the fiscal year of the AR evaluated in this Open Budget Survey questionnaire?

Please enter the fiscal year in the following format: "FY YYYY" or "FY YYYY-YY."

Answer:
2016-17 and 2017-18

Source:
Whole of Government Accounts, 2016 to 2017, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>)

See also:
NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

For other examples of individual departmental annual reports and accounts (from major spending departments) see:
Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)
Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)
DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree that the Whole of Government Accounts and the individual departmental reports are examples of the Audit Report that the OBS asks for in this section. The second document - the NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18 - is the audit report for the SAI itself (it is not their comprehensive audit report on government spending, which does not exist in one form and is split as the reviewer suggests between WGA and the individual departmental reports and accounts). So, strictly speaking I think the second document is not within the boundary of what the OBS is asking for in this section.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the researcher has provided the NAO Annual Report as an example of an individual departmental report, not as a comprehensive audit report of government spending.

AR-2. When is the AR made available to the public?

Publicly available budget documents are defined as those documents that are published on the website of the public authority issuing the document within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology and that all citizens are able to obtain free of charge. (See the Open Budget Survey Guidelines on Public Availability of Budget Documents.) This is a change from previous rounds of the Open Budget Survey: now at minimum documents must be made available on the Internet and free of charge to be considered publicly available.

The OBS methodology requires that for an AR to be considered publicly available, it must be made available to the public no later than 18 months after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds. If the AR is not released to the public at least 18 months after the end of the fiscal year to which it corresponds, option "d" applies. Option "d" should also be chosen for documents that are produced for internal purposes only (that is, produced but never released to the public) or are not produced at all. Some governments may publish budget documents further in advance than the latest possible dates outlined above. In these instances, researchers should choose options "a" or "b," depending on the date of publication identified for the AR.

Answer:
a. Six months or less after the end of the budget year

Source:
Departmental annual reports and accounts are published within six months of the budget year ending. See:
NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:
Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)
Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)
DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

See also:
Whole of Government Accounts, 2016 to 2017, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>)

accounts-2016-to-2017)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that if two or more reports are acceptable, then the one released first (and thus scores the highest) can be used to respond to this question. The Whole of Government Accounts, 2016-2017, is published less than 18 months after the end of the fiscal year covered, so meets the criteria for an AR. But the departmental annual reports and accounts are published six months or less after the end of the budget year, so they are the relevant documents to use for responding to this question.

AR-3a. If the AR is published, what is the date of publication of the AR?

Note that the date of publication is not necessarily the same date that is printed on the document.

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late.

Please enter the date in the following format: "DD/MM/YYYY." For example, 5 September 2018 should be entered as 05/09/2018. If the document is not published or not produced, leave this question blank.

Answer:

26/06/2018

Source:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

See also:

Whole of Government Accounts, 2016 to 2017, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: The NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18 is not the same as the SAI audit report. The NAO Annual Report and Accounts is the accounts/audit of the SAI itself as an institution. It would be more accurate to put the date of the first or last, or mid-point, of the departmental reports (as these contain accounts audited by the NAO in its role as SAI); or to include the WGA date of publication (as these are also audited by the SAI). The date listed is not the date of the SAI audit report into government spending - it's the date of the SAI audit report into itself as an institution (and the audit of NAO is done by a different body).

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

Given the large number of departmental reports, the researcher has used the date of the NAO report as an illustrative example of when these departmental reports were published. IBP accepts this approach for assigning a publication date.

AR-3b. In the box below, please explain how you determined the date of publication of the AR.

If the document is not published at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

The date is published here:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>

Source:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

See also:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: See previous comment

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

See IBP comment for AR-3a.

AR-4. If the AR is published, what is the URL or weblink of the AR?

Researchers should respond to this question if the document is published either within the time frame accepted by the OBS methodology or too late. If the document is not published at all, researchers should leave this question blank.

Answer:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>

Source:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

See also:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree
Suggested Answer: See previous answer

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment
See IBP comment for AR-3a.

AR-5. If the AR is published, are the numerical data contained in the AR available in a machine readable format?

Material (data or content) is machine readable if it is in a format that can be easily processed by a computer, such as .csv, .xls/.xlsx, and .json. Numerical data found in PDFs and Word (.doc/.docx) files do not qualify as machine readable. See more at: <http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/machine-readable/>

Option "d" applies if the AR is not published or not produced, therefore its machine readability cannot be assessed.

Answer:

b. Yes, some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Source:

The Whole of Government Accounts are not available in a machine readable format.

But the individual department accounts do publish some of their tables in spreadsheet format. See, for example:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)
Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: b. Yes, some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format

Comments: I would argue that if the WGA is not machine readable, but the individual departmental reports are machine readable, then this means B - some of the numerical data are available in a machine readable format.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Researcher Response

Have changed from (c) to (b)

AR-6a. If the AR is not publicly available, is it still produced?

If the AR is not considered publicly available under the OBS methodology (and thus the answer to Question AR-2 was "d"), a government may nonetheless produce the document.

Option "a" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public online but not within the time frame specified in the OBS methodology (see Question AR-2).

Option "b" applies if the document is produced and made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology but only in hard copy (and is not available online). Option "b" also applies if the document is made available to the public within the time frame specified by the OBS methodology in soft electronic copy but is not available online.

Option "c" applies if the document is produced for internal purposes only and so is not made available to the public.

Option "d" applies if the document is not produced at all.

Option "e" applies if the document is publicly available.

If a document is not released to the public, researchers may need to write to or visit the relevant government office in order to determine whether answer "c" or "d" applies.

Answer:

e. Not applicable (the document is publicly available)

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>

See also:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: See previous comments that the second document cited is not an SAI audit report looking at government spending

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

AR-6b. If you selected option "c" or "d" in question AR-6a, please specify how you determined whether the AR was produced for internal use only, versus not produced at all.

If option "a," "b," or "e" was selected in question AR-6a, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion:

Government Reviewer

Opinion:

AR-7. If the AR is produced, please write the full title of the AR.

For example, a title for the Audit Report could be "Annual General Reports of the Controller and Auditor General." If the document is not produced at all, researchers should mark this question "n/a."

Answer:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18;

Whole of Government Accounts, 2016 to 2017

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>

See also:

NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, published on 26th June 2018 (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>)

To give three other examples from major spending departments:

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: The NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18 is not correct - see previous answers. The WGA cited is probably the closest thing to the SAI audit report that the OBS asks for, alongside the numerous departmental reports also listed.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

The NAO Annual Report and Accounts is cited only as an illustrative departmental report. See IBP comments for AR-1 and AR-3a.

AR-8. Is there a "citizens version" of the AR?

While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle. While it is recognized that it may be unreasonable to expect that a citizens version is produced for each and every one of those key documents, it seems acceptable to expect that according to good practice, the executive releases a citizens version of key budget documents for each of the four stages of the budget process to allow citizens to be aware of what is happening, in terms of public financial management, throughout the entire budget cycle. For more information on Citizens Budget see: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/opening-budgets/citizens-budgets/>.

Answer:

b. No

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

GQ-1a. Are there one or more websites or web portals for disseminating government fiscal information? If yes, please provide the necessary links in the comment/citation.

GQ-1a asks the researcher to list any government websites or portals where fiscal information can be found. For example, in New Zealand the Treasury website (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/>) hosts important budget-related information, including the Pre-Budget Statement, the Executive's Budget Proposal, the Citizens Budget, In-Year Reports, the Mid-Year Review, and the Year-End Report. In addition, New Zealand's Parliamentary Counsel Office (<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>) posts the Enacted Budget while the Controller and Auditor-General website (<http://www.oag.govt.nz/>) publishes the annual Audit Report. The New Zealand researcher would provide the links to each of these sites. Other countries have developed portals that include fiscal information, though not in the "documents" format. For example, these portals have been created by Mexico

(<https://www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/>) and Brazil (<http://www.portaltransparencia.gov.br/>). Some countries have both a website and a portal. The Brazilian government, for example, apart from the Transparency Portal, has a dedicated website for the federal budget, where all key documents and other information can be found (www.orcamentofederal.gov.br). Researchers should include details about all of the relevant websites and/or portals that they can be used to access budget information.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:
<https://www.gov.uk/>
<https://obr.uk/>
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>
<https://www.nao.org.uk/>
<https://www.parliament.uk/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

GQ-1b. On these websites/portals, can revenue and/or expenditure data for the current fiscal year be downloaded as a consolidated file (or set of files)? If yes, please provide the necessary links in the comment/citation.

GQ-1b, GQ-1c, and GQ-1d ask about whether governments publish specific types of content on their websites/portals: (a) consolidated files that contain revenue and/or expenditure information for the current fiscal year; (b) consolidated files that contain revenue and/or expenditure information for multiple years in consistent formats; and (c) infographics/visualizations or other similar tools used to simplify data access and analysis. Researchers should provide the links to relevant webpages and some explanations of what they contain.

Answer:
a. Yes, both revenue and expenditure data can be downloaded as a consolidated file

Source:
<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/>
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/december2018>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-revenue-customs-receipts>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

GQ-1c. On these websites/portals, can consolidated revenue and/or expenditure data be downloaded for multiple years in consistent formats? If yes, please provide the necessary links and details in the comment/citation.

Answer:
a. Yes, both revenue and expenditure data can be downloaded for multiple years in consistent formats

Source:

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-october-2018/>
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/december2018>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-pesa>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-revenue-customs-receipts>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

GQ-1d. On these websites/portals, are infographics/visualizations or other similar tools used to simplify data access and analysis? If yes, please provide the necessary links and details in the comment/citation.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:
<https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/brief-guides-and-explainers/public-finances/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/december2018>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

GQ-2. Are there laws in place guiding public financial management and/or auditing? If yes, please provide the necessary details and links in the comment/citation, and specify whether and where the law(s) contains specific provisions for budget transparency and/or participation.

GQ-2 asks about the existence of any national laws governing public financial management and auditing. These may include a public finance act, a section of the constitution, or an organic budget law. In some countries, fiscal responsibility legislation may also be relevant. For example, the Kenya researcher may include the link to its Public Finance Management Act, 2012 (<http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xhtml?actid=No.%2018%20of%202012>), and the Macedonian researcher may include a link to its State Audit Law (<https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u11/Audit%20law.pdf>). Researchers should provide links to websites where such laws are published, if possible, or an electronic copy of the law itself. They should also indicate if and where (e.g. which article) these laws include specific provisions for budget transparency and citizen participation in budget processes.

Answer:
a. Yes

Source:
Charter for Budget Responsibility: autumn 2016 update
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charter-for-budget-responsibility-autumn-2016-update>

Plus the legislation cited here:
<https://www.nao.org.uk/freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: a. Yes

Comments: The answer is indeed 'yes' as there are laws and rules about management of public funds. I think the reviewer has cited the government's "policy" with regards to fiscal and economic management; but this is not quite what the question is asking for. It is asking for the legal framework by which public funds are managed (i.e. financial management rules across the public sector, not just the government's fiscal policy). Also, the Freedom of Information law and rules are not specifically about financial management or auditing - they apply to the whole of government and cover all aspects of government business. I don't now off-hand the primary legislation, Acts, or other instruments that officially set out the laws and rules by which public funds and their audit are handled in the UK. The UK tradition puts less emphasis on primary legislation and more emphasis on secondary regulation. The HM Treasury publication 'Managing Public Money' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money>) is one of the core documents setting out the rules; and it makes some reference itself to other documents (e.g. 'Consolidated Budgeting Guidance') which also govern these issues. I think these are more like the kind of documents the question is aiming at, rather than the ones the reviewer has highlighted here.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

GQ-3. Are there additional laws regulating: (1) access to information; (2) government transparency; or (3) citizens participation? If yes, please provide the necessary details and links in the comment/citation, and specify whether and where these laws contain specific provisions for budget transparency and/or participation.

The third and last question asks researchers to list any additional laws regulating access to information, transparency, or citizens' participation that are relevant for the promotion of budget transparency and citizen participation in budget processes. These might include legislation related to access to information, to planning processes, or to public administration more generally. India's Right to Information Act of 2005 (<https://www.ncess.gov.in/facilities/central-public-information-officer/rti-act-details.html>) is an example of this type of law. More information on access to information legislation (constitutional provisions, laws, and regulations), including examples of model laws, can be found here: <http://www.right2info.org/laws/constitutional-provisions-laws-and-regulations#section-1>.

Answer:

a. Yes

Source:

Freedom of Information Act 2000

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

1. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year that are classified by administrative unit (that is, by ministry, department, or agency)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 1 addresses the presentation of expenditure by administrative unit. This information indicates which government entity (ministry, department, or agency, or MDAs) will be responsible for spending the funds and, ultimately, held accountable for their use.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all administrative units, accounting for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the administrative units shown individually, in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation, must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures in the budget year. In other words, the sum of the expenditures assigned to the individual MDAs (education, health, infrastructure, interior, defense, etc.) must account for at least two-thirds of the total expenditure budgeted for that particular year. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents administrative units that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by administrative unit.

Answer:

a. Yes, administrative units accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Source:

Departmental spending, by department, is set out in Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, are organized by administrative unit. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

a. Yes, administrative units accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Comments: I will mention this once, as it will be relevant for many of the subsequent questions, but as noted before I think the best example of the EPB is Budget 2018. This is the latest EBP available within the period specified by the OBS (i.e. up to December 31 2018). I think the responses to the following questions will be basically the same for Budget 2017 and Budget 2018 as the same information is presented each year, often in the same set of tables.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher's use of Budget 2017. As discussed in more detail in question EBP-1, the EBP consists of both the Budget and its supporting documents, including the Main Supply Estimates. To ensure that both are for the same budget year requires using Budget 2017 and the Main Supply Estimates 2018-19, as both focus on fiscal year 2018-19. Although Budget 2018 was available before the end of the OBS research period, the associated Main Supply Estimates were not.

2. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year by functional classification?

GUIDELINES:

Question 2 addresses the presentation of expenditure by functional classification. This classification indicates the programmatic purpose, sector, or objective for which the funds will be used, such as health, education, or defense. Administrative units are not necessarily aligned with functional classifications. For instance, in one country all functions connected with water supply (which fall into the "Housing" function) may be undertaken by a single government agency, while in another country they may be distributed across the Ministries of Environment, Housing, and Industrial Development. In the latter case, three ministries have programs addressing water supply, so three ministries contribute to one function. Similarly, some administrative units may conduct activities that cut across more than one function. For instance, in the example above, some programs of the Ministry of Environment would also be classified in the "environmental protection" function.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for the budget year organized by functional classification.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditures are presented by functional classification.

Source:

This is shown in Chart 1 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents/autumn-budget-2017>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

3. If the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation presents expenditures for the budget year by functional classification, is the functional classification compatible with international standards?

GUIDELINES:

Question 3 asks whether a country's functional classification meets international standards. To answer "a," a country's functional classification must be aligned with the OECD and the UN's Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), or provide a cross-walk between the national functional presentation and COFOG.

The OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency can be viewed at <http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Best%20Practices%20Budget%20Transparency%20-%20complete%20with%20cover%20page.pdf>

COFOG can be viewed at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_84E.pdf or at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/ch6ann.pdf>.

Answer:

a. Yes, the functional classification is compatible with international standards.

Source:

Pages 2 to 3 of the accompanying "Budget 2017 data sources" document available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661469/AB2017_data_sources_web.pdf

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

4. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the budget year by economic classification?

GUIDELINES:

Question 4 asks whether the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents expenditures for the budget year organized by economic classification. Economic classification provides information on the nature of the expenditure, such as whether funds are being used to pay for wages and salaries, capital projects, or social assistance benefits.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for the budget year organized by economic classification.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditures are presented by economic classification.

Source:

See Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>), and in supporting documents (supplementary fiscal tables, including Table 2.37, Breakdown of expenditure forecast by sector and economic category).

Table C.6 of the main Budget document provides a split of spending into current and capital spending and provides other details (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

5. If the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation presents expenditures for the budget year by economic classification, is the economic classification compatible with international standards?

GUIDELINES:

Question 5 asks whether a country's economic classification meets international standards. To answer "a," a country's economic classification must be consistent with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2001 Government Finance Statistics (GFS). The GFS economic classification is presented here: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/app4.pdf>. To learn more about Government Finance Statistics also refer to the entire IMF 2001 GFS manual (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/all.pdf>).

Answer:

a. Yes, the economic classification is compatible with international standards.

Source:

Para 4.94 of OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

See also the IMF's 2016 Fiscal Transparency Evaluation (<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2016/12/31/United-Kingdom-Fiscal-Transparency-Evaluation-44395>). On page 26 this states "The common chart of accounts for central government units is based on IFRS standards, but is sufficiently detailed to allow its bridging to the economic classifications of international statistical standards, such as GFSM 2014 or ESA 2010."

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

6. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 6 asks whether expenditures are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should treat the term "program" as meaning any level of detail below an administrative unit – that is, any programmatic grouping that is below the ministry, department, or agency level. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures in the budget year. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Budget decisions for the upcoming year can also affect the parameters of future budgets. It is therefore useful to estimate revenues and expenditures for multi-year periods, understanding that these estimates might be revised as circumstances change. Sometimes referred to as a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), a three-year period – that is, the budget year plus two more years – is generally considered an appropriate horizon for budgeting and planning.

Answer:

a. Yes, programs accounting for all expenditures are presented.

Source:

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, provide subhead detail (Part II) below the level of the main administrative unit. This meets the OBS requirements. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

Departmental spending, by department, is set out in Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

7. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditure estimates for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 7 asks if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications for at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "b," multi-year expenditure estimates must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if multi-year expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

b. Yes, multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Spending by function is only presented for one year.

Administrative and economic splits are provided for multiple years. See Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>), and in supporting documents (supplementary fiscal tables, including Table 2.37, Breakdown of expenditure forecast by sector and economic category).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

7b. Based on the response to Question 7, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications have estimates for a multi-year period in the Executive's Budget Proposal?

Answer:

Administrative classification
Economic classification

Source:

Spending by function is only presented for one year.

Administrative and economic splits are provided for multiple years. See Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>), and in supporting documents (supplementary fiscal tables, including Table 2.37, Breakdown of expenditure forecast by sector and economic category).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

8. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditure estimates for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year) by program?

GUIDELINES:

Question 8 asks if multi-year expenditure estimates are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures over the multi-year period. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents multi-year estimates for programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if multi-year estimates are not presented by program.

Revenues generally are separated into two major categories: "tax" and "non-tax" revenues. Taxes are compulsory transfers that result from government exercising its sovereign power. The largest sources of tax revenue in some countries are taxes on personal and business income and taxes on goods and services, such as sales or value-added taxes. The category of non-tax revenues is more diverse, ranging from grants from international institutions and foreign governments to funds raised through the sale of government-provided goods and services. Note that some forms of revenue, such as contributions to social security funds, can be considered either a tax or non-tax revenue depending on the nature of the approach to these contributions. Particularly because different revenues have different characteristics, including who bears the burden of paying the tax and how collections are affected by economic conditions, it is helpful when estimates for revenues are disaggregated and displayed based on their sources.

For more information, please refer to the 2001 GFS manual, in particular Appendix 4 (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/app4.pdf>).

Answer:

c. Yes, multi-year estimates for programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures are presented.

Source:

A breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" - including a decomposition of welfare spending by programme - is provided in Section 4 of the OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>). But this accounts for less than two-thirds of spending.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: I choose not to review this question

9. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present the individual sources of tax revenue (such as income tax or VAT) for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 9 assesses the degree to which the individual sources of "tax" revenue are disaggregated in the budget. The largest sources of tax revenue in some countries are taxes on personal and business income and taxes on goods and services, such as sales or value-added taxes.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all individual sources of tax revenue for the budget year, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all tax revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present individual sources of tax revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all tax revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents individual sources of tax revenue that account for less than two-thirds of tax revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of tax revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of tax revenue accounting for all tax revenue are presented.

Source:

Revenues, by tax, are published in Table C5 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

10. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present the individual sources of non-tax revenue (such as grants, property income, and sales of government-produced goods and services) for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 10 assesses the degree to which the individual sources of "non-tax" revenue are disaggregated in the budget. The category of non-tax revenues is diverse, and can include revenue ranging from grants from international institutions and foreign governments to funds raised through the sale of government-provided goods and services.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all individual sources of non-tax revenue for the budget year, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all non-tax revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present individual sources of non-tax revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all non-tax revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents individual sources of non-tax revenue that account for less than two-thirds of non-tax revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of non-tax revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of non-tax revenue accounting for all non-tax revenue are presented.

Source:

Revenues, by individual source, are published in Table C5 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

11. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax) for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 11 evaluates whether revenue estimates are presented for a multi-year period (at least two years beyond the budget year) by "category," that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of revenues classified by category for at least two years following the budget year in question.

Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year estimates of revenue are presented by category.

Source:

Revenues are published in Table C5 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)
Further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

12. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates for individual sources of revenue presented for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 12 evaluates whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented for a multi-year period (at least two years beyond the budget year). The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present multi-year estimates of individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents multi-year estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented for a multi-year period.

Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year estimates for individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented.

Source:

Revenues are published in Table C5 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)
Further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

13. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 13 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt that the budget should include:

- the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;
- the central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and
- the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens and banks and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies no information on borrowing and debt is presented for the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, all three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are presented.

Source:

All can be found in the main Budget document – borrowing in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3, Debt in Table 1.4 and Debt interest in Table C.6 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with much more detail provided in the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

13b. Based on the response to Question 13, check the box(es) below to identify which estimates of government borrowing and debt are presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

The amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year
The central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year
The interest payments on outstanding debt for the budget year

Source:

All can be found in the main Budget document – borrowing in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3, Debt in Table 1.4 and Debt interest in Table C.6 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with much more detail provided in the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

14. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information related to the composition of the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year?

(The core information must include interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 14 focuses on the composition of government debt at the end of the budget year, asking whether "core" information related to its composition is presented. These core components include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

The interest rates affect the amount of interest that must be paid to creditors. The maturity profile indicates the final payment date of the loan, at which point the principal (and all remaining interest) is due to be paid; government borrowing typically includes a mix of short-term and long-term debt. As discussed in Question 13, domestic debt is held by a country's citizens, banks, and businesses, while external debt is held by foreigners. These factors related to the composition of the debt give an indication of the potential vulnerability of the country's debt position, and ultimately whether the cost of servicing the accumulated debt is affordable.

Beyond these core elements, a government may also provide additional information related to the composition of its debt, including for instance: whether interest rates are fixed or variable; whether debt is callable; the currency of the debt; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); an analysis of the risk associated with the debt; and where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to the composition of government debt at the end of the budget year as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the composition of government debt is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the composition of the debt outstanding at the end of the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the composition of the total debt outstanding.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>) contains information on the outlook for gilt rates and the government's financing requirements.

Further details are provided by the Debt Management Office in a report that they publish alongside the Budget. For the one that accompanied the 2017 Budget see <https://www.dmo.gov.uk/media/15197/pr221117.pdf>

In addition, the Debt Management Report 2018-19 is recognized as a supporting document for the Autumn Budget 2017. It was released on 13 March 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt-management-report-2018-to-2019>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

14b. Based on the response to Question 14, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the composition of the total debt outstanding are presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

Interest rates on the debt

Maturity profile of the debt

Information beyond the core elements (please specify)

Whether the debt is domestic or external

Source:

Gilt rates: Chart 3.10 of <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Maturity of new issuance: Annex A of <https://dmo.gov.uk/media/15388/sa190318.pdf>

The DMO's annual debt management report also provides a breakdown into whether the new issuance will be index linked or not, and whether the debt is external or domestic. <https://dmo.gov.uk/media/15381/dmr1819.pdf>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

15. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget projections are based?"

(The core information must include a discussion of the economic outlook with estimates of nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 15 focuses on the macroeconomic forecast that underlies the budget's revenue and expenditure estimates, asking whether "core" information related to the economic assumptions is presented. These core components include a discussion of the economic outlook as well as estimates of the following:

- *nominal GDP level;*
- *inflation rate;*
- *real GDP growth; and*
- *interest rates.*

While the core macroeconomic information should be a standard feature of the Executive's Budget Proposal, the importance of some types of macroeconomic assumptions may vary from country to country. For example, the budget estimates of some countries are particularly affected by changes in the price of oil and other commodities.

Beyond these core elements, some governments also provide additional information related to the economic outlook, including for instance: short and long-term interest rates; rate of employment and unemployment; GDP deflator; price of oil and other commodities; current account; exchange rate; and composition of GDP growth.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to the macroeconomic forecast as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the macroeconomic forecast is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the macroeconomic forecast is presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the macroeconomic forecast.

Source:

Table C1 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) provides much detail on the economic forecast underpinning the fiscal forecasts. Further details are provided in Section 3 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

15b. Based on the response to Question 15, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the macroeconomic forecast are included in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

Nominal GDP level

Inflation rate

Real GDP growth

Interest rates

Information beyond the core elements (please specify)

Source:

Table C1 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) provides much detail on the economic forecast underpinning the fiscal forecasts. Further details are provided in Section 3 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

16. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation show the impact of different macroeconomic assumptions (i.e., sensitivity analysis) on the budget?

(The core information must include estimates of the impact on expenditures, revenue, and debt of different assumptions for the inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 16 focuses on the issue of whether the Executive's Budget Proposal shows how different macroeconomic assumptions affect the budget estimates (known as a "sensitivity analysis"). It asks whether "core" information related to a sensitivity analysis is presented, estimating the impact on expenditures, revenue, and debt of different assumptions for:

- *inflation rate;*
- *real GDP growth; and*
- *interest rates.*

A sensitivity analysis shows the effect on the budget of possible changes in some macroeconomic assumptions, and is important for understanding the impact of the economy on the budget; for instance, what would happen to revenue collections if GDP growth were slower than what is assumed in the budget proposal? Or what would happen to expenditure if inflation were higher than estimated? Or how will revenue be affected by a decrease in the price of oil?

As noted for Question 15, changes in certain macroeconomic assumptions, such as the price of oil and other commodities, can have a significant impact on the budget estimates. As a result, some sensitivity analyses may also examine the impact on the budget estimates of changes in assumptions such as the price of oil that are beyond the core elements of the inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to a "sensitivity analysis" as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to a "sensitivity analysis" is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on "sensitivity analysis" is presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented to show the impact of different macroeconomic assumptions on the budget.

Source:

Section 5 of the OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>) provides fiscal forecasts under two alternative economic scenarios.

In addition forecasts for GDP and the deficit are presented with fancharts indicating the degree to which we might be confident in the forecasts given previous errors in official forecasts. And the OBR also publishes a set of ready reckoners for how different economic factors might typically be expected to affect the public finances (<https://obr.uk/faq/where-can-i-find-ready-reckoners-for-how-the-public-finances-could-be-affected-by-different-assumptions-about-growth-inflation-or-other-factors/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

17. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information for at least the budget year that shows how new policy proposals, as distinct from existing policies, affect expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 17 and 18 ask about new policy proposals in the budget. In any given year, most of the expenditures and revenues in the budget reflect the continuation of existing policies. However, much of the attention during the budget debate is focused on new proposals – whether they call for eliminating an existing program, introducing a new one, or changing an existing program at the margins. Typically, these new proposals are accompanied by an increase, a decrease, or a shift in expenditures or revenues. Because these changes may have different impacts on people's lives, the budget proposal should present sufficient detail about new policies and their budgetary impact.

Question 17 asks about new expenditure policies, and Question 18 asks about new revenue policies. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how all new policy proposals affect expenditures (for Question 17) or revenues (for Question 18) and a narrative discussion of the impact of these new policies. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show the impact of all new policy proposals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show the impact of only some, but not all, policy proposals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the impact of new policy proposals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how all new policy proposals affect expenditures are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

A costing for each budget measure, for each year of the forecast horizon, is presented in Table 2.1 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>). Further details of the sources for the costing are presented in the Treasury's "Policy Costings Document" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>). Even more detail is provided by the OBR in Annex A of the Economic and Fiscal Outlook, including a qualitative assessment of how certain they feel about each costing given the available data and knowledge (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

18. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information for at least the budget year that shows how new policy proposals, as distinct from existing policies, affect revenues?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 17 and 18 ask about new policy proposals in the budget. In any given year, most of the expenditures and revenues in the budget reflect the continuation of existing policies. However, much of the attention during the budget debate is focused on new proposals – whether they call for eliminating an existing program, introducing a new one, or changing an existing program at the margins. Typically, these new proposals are accompanied by an increase, a decrease, or a shift in expenditures or revenues. Because these changes may have different impacts on people's lives, the budget proposal should present sufficient detail about new policies and their budgetary impact.

Question 17 asks about new expenditure policies, and Question 18 asks about new revenue policies. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how all new policy proposals affect expenditures (for Question 17) or revenues (for Question 18) and a narrative discussion of the impact of these new policies. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show the impact of all new policy proposals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show the impact of only some, but not all, policy proposals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the impact of new policy proposals.

Prior-year information constitutes an important benchmark for assessing the proposals for the upcoming budget year. Estimates of prior years should be presented in the same formats (in terms of classification) as the budget year to ensure that year-to-year comparisons are meaningful. For example, if the budget proposes shifting responsibility for a particular program from one administrative unit to another – such as shifting responsibility for the training of nurses from the health department to the education department – the prior-year figures must be adjusted before year-to-year comparisons of administrative budgets can be made.

Typically, when the budget proposal is submitted, the year prior to the budget year (BY-1), also known as the current year, has not ended, so the executive will provide estimates of the anticipated outcome for BY-1. The soundness of these estimates is directly related to the degree to which they have been updated to reflect actual expenditures to date, legislative changes that have occurred, and anticipated changes in macroeconomic, caseload, and other relevant factors for the remainder of the year.

The first year that can reflect actual outcomes, therefore, is generally two years before the budget year (BY-2). Thus the OECD recommends that data covering at least two years before the budget year (along with two years of projections beyond the budget year) are provided in order to assess fully the trends in the budget.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how all new policy proposals affect revenues are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

A costing for each budget measure, for each year of the forecast horizon, is presented in Table 2.1 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>). Further details of the sources for the costing are presented in the Treasury's "Policy Costings Document."

Also see HM Revenue and Customs tax related documents (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/autumn-budget-2017-tax-related-documents>)

Additional detail is provided by the OBR in Annex A of the Economic and Fiscal Outlook, including a qualitative assessment of how certain they feel about each costing given the available data and knowledge (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

19. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 19 asks if expenditure estimates for the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) are presented by one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. (See Questions 1-5 above.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates for BY-1 by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates for BY-1 must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates for BY-1 are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates for BY-1 are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

b. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-1 are presented by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Spending by function is only presented for one year.

Administrative and economic splits are provided for multiple years. See Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>), and in supporting documents (supplementary fiscal tables, including Table 2.37, Breakdown of expenditure forecast by sector and economic category).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

20. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 20 asks if expenditure estimates for the year before the budget year (BY-1) are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for BY-1. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures for BY-1. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Answer:

a. Yes, programs accounting for all expenditures are presented for BY-1.

Source:

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, provide subhead detail (Part II) below the level of the main administrative unit for BY-1 (2017-18). This meets the OBS requirements. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

A breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" - including a decomposition of welfare spending by programme - is provided in Section 4 of the OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>). But this accounts for less than two-thirds of spending.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

21. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, have expenditure estimates of the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) been updated from the original enacted levels to reflect actual expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Question 21 asks whether the expenditure estimates for the year before the budget year (BY-1) have been updated from the original enacted levels. Updates can reflect actual experience to date; revised estimates due to shifting of funds by the executive, as permitted under the law; enactment of supplemental budgets; and revised assumptions regarding macroeconomic conditions, caseload, and other relevant factors for the remainder of the year.

Answer "a" applies if the estimates have been updated; answer "b" applies if the original estimates are still being used.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-1 have been updated from the original enacted levels.

Source:

Departmental spending, by department, is set out in Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the main Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>)

Further analysis of spending, including a breakdown of "annually managed expenditure" is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

22. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of expenditure for more than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years) by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 22 asks if expenditure estimates for more than one year prior to the budget year (BY-2 and prior years) are presented by any of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. (See Questions 1-5 above.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are not presented by any of the three classifications

Answer:

b. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the Budget provide spending, by department. This is split into current and capital spending. Table 1.6 provides details of annually managed expenditure, again split into current and capital spending. No split by function is provided.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>

Further details - for example including a breakdown of annually managed expenditure - can be found in the OBR's Economic and Fiscal Outlook, for example in Table 4.16. and in supporting documents (supplementary fiscal tables, including Table 2.37, Breakdown of expenditure forecast by sector

and economic category).

Note that spending by function is available in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2017, which was first published in July 2017, and therefore available at the time of the Autumn 2017 Budget. But this was not published alongside the Budget.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2017>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

b. Yes, expenditure estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Comments: I think the answer is correct but not for the reason cited. The researcher is assuming that Budget 2017 is the EBP for the fiscal year 2018-19 (as noted above, I think that Budget 2018 is a better candidate as it is released later within the OBS period). However, the documents are essentially the same format and contain the same information. Tables 1.7 and 1.8 do not contain BY-1 and BY-2 information - they only contain BY-1 (i.e. 2017-18 mid-year projections). They don't contain BY-2 (which would be 2016-17 outturn). However, the Main Estimates document that the researcher has cited before does contain 2016-17 outturn and 2017-18 'provisional' figures - i.e. BY-1 and BY-2 by programme and administrative classification. So the correct source to cite for this answer is the Main Estimates, not the Budget 2017 document. I agree that there is no BY-1 and BY-2 split by function. There is an issue with the wording of the question 'BY-2 and other years'. None of the documents listed here include 'and other years' (i.e. BY-3 or BY-4). At the risk of being a lawyer with the wording, if you interpret the 'BY-2 and other years' to mean 'BY-2 and at least one more year' then the answer is D - no expenditure estimates are produced any where for BY-3 or any further back.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the peer reviewer is correct that the Main Supply Estimates should be cited as a source. In addition, the supplementary OBR EFO Table 2.37 should be cited for the economic classification. IBP agrees with the researcher's use of Budget 2017 (see EBP-1 and Q1 for additional discussion), and also clarifies that providing BY-2 information is the minimum criteria, and that information covering prior years is not required. Therefore, IBP concurs with the "b" response.

22b. Based on the response to Question 22, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications have estimates for more than one year prior to the budget year in the Executive Budget Proposal:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Economic classification

Source:

Note that spending by function is available in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2017, which was first published in July 2017, and therefore available at the time of the Autumn 2017 Budget. But this was not published alongside the Budget.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-expenditure-statistical-analyses-2017>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: As mentioned, I think the evidence for this is the Main Estimates document rather than the Budget 2017 document; along with the OBR EFO

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

See IBP comment to Q22.

23. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present expenditures for individual programs for more than one year preceding the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 23 asks if expenditure estimates for more than one year before the budget year (BY-2 and prior years) are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department. For example, the Ministry of Health's budget could be broken down into several subgroups, such as "primary health care," "hospitals," or "administration." These subgroups should be considered programs even if they could be, but are not, broken down into smaller, more detailed units.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as *le plan comptable* or *le plan comptable detaillé*. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures, for BY-2 and prior years. To answer "b," the programs shown individually in the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation must account for at least two-thirds of all expenditures for BY-2 and prior years. A "c" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or its supporting documentation presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program.

Answer:

c. Yes, programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures are presented for BY-2 and prior years.

Source:

Table 4.23 of the Office for Budget Responsibility Economic and Fiscal Outlook contains a breakdown of welfare spending by programme (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>).

DWP's benefit expenditure tables, published a few weeks after the Budget, contain spending by individual benefit going all the way back to 1948-49. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/benefit-expenditure-tables>

Comment:

Spending by programme of other spending departments are not updated alongside the Budget. However their previous annual reports will contain a breakdown of their spending into individual programmes - and for BY-2 and earlier years these will, in most cases, remain the latest best estimate of actual spending.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Comments: Two possible answers here: 1) If you consider the question phrasing of 'BY-2 and other years' to mean 'BY-2; BY-3 and more' then the answer is D. No expenditures are presented for 'BY-2 AND prior years', except the DWP statistics bulletin mentioned (which is not part of the EBP). 2) If you consider the question phrasing of 'BY-2 and other years' to mean 'BY-2 at least, and possibly but not necessarily others' then the answer is A (or pretty much) since the Main Estimates plus the OBR EFO contain programme-level information for pretty much all expenditure for 2016-17 outturn (BY-2) and 2017-18 provisional (BY-1).

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Researcher Response

The Autumn 2017 Budget is the one that is relevant for FY2018-19. The peer reviewer is correct that the main Budget document does not contain data for 2016-17 (which I take to be BY-2). The associated Budget document do contain some spending breakdown for 2016-17. But certainly not more than two-thirds of spending. For example Table 4.16 of the OBR's Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Further details are provided in some areas - for example Table 2.23 of the supplementary expenditure data tables. In addition the DWP tables - published within a few weeks of the Budget and produced on the same basis - contains details of spending by benefit going many years back.

IBP Comment

See Q22. BY-2 information is the minimum criteria, and information covering prior years is not required.

24. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which all expenditures reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Question 24 asks for which year the actual outcomes for expenditures are shown. In most cases, the most recent year for which budget data on actual outcomes are available will be BY-2, as BY-1 is generally not yet finished when the budget proposal is drafted. So a government that has updated all its expenditure data for BY-2 to reflect what actually occurred, as opposed to estimating the outcome for that year, shows good public financial management practice.

For an "a" answer, a country must meet the good practice of having the figures for BY-2 reflect actual outcomes.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

Estimated out-turns for 2016-17 are contained in the Autumn 2017 Budget <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017> and the OBR economic and fiscal outlook <https://cdn.obr.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf>.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

25. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue by category (such as tax and non-tax) for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-1 are presented by category.

Source:

These are contained in Table C5 of the Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

26. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present individual sources of revenue for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented for BY-1.

Source:

These are contained in Table C5 of the Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

27. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, have the original estimates of revenue for the year prior to the budget year (BY-1) been updated to reflect actual revenue collections?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-1 have been updated from the original enacted levels.

Source:

These are contained in Table C5 of the Budget document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with further analysis of receipts is provided in Section 4 of the accompanying OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

28. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax) for more than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates for BY-2 and prior years are presented by category.

Source:

Table C5 of the Budget document contains this information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>).

These can also be downloaded from the ONS website. They are also made available in a very accessible form by the OBR in their excellent "public finances databank" - <https://obr.uk/data/> - see the sheet "Receipts (£bn)".

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: To note on this one - the same issue about the meaning of the phrase 'BY-2 and prior years' comes up. If this is taken to mean 'at least BY-3 and further' (i.e. BY-2 AND prior years must logically mean BY-3 at least) then the answer is No, the figures for BY-3 (which would be 2015-16) are not presented. If the phrase 'BY-2 and prior' is taken to mean 'at least BY-2 and anything else is a bonus' then the answer is correct.

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

The intent of the question is to assess whether revenue estimates are provided for BY-2 and for prior years. Providing BY-2 information is the minimum criteria; information covering prior years is not required. Therefore, IBP concurs with the "a" response.

29. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present individual sources of revenue for more than one year prior to the budget year (that is, BY-2 and prior years)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Yes, individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue are presented for BY-2 and prior years.

Source:

Table C5 of the Budget document contains this information for BY-2 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>).

For earlier years these can be downloaded from the ONS website. They are also made available in a very accessible form by the OBR in their excellent "public finances databank" - <https://obr.uk/data/> - see the sheet "Receipts (£bn)".

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: See previous point about whether/if 'BY-2 and prior years' means 'at least BY-3' or not. If not, then the answer is correct. If it means BY-3 and beyond, then the answer is D.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

See Q28.

30. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which all revenues reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 25 through 30 cover the same topics about prior-year information as the previous six questions, only they ask about information provided for revenues rather than expenditures.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

Estimated revenues for 2016-17 are contained in the Autumn 2017 Budget <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017> and the OBR economic and fiscal outlook <https://cdn.obr.uk/Nov2017EFOwebversion-2.pdf>.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

31. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1)?"

(The core information must include the total debt outstanding at the end of BY-1; the amount of net new borrowing required during BY-1; interest payments on the debt; interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 31 focuses on prior-year debt information, rather than on prior-year expenditures or revenues, asking whether "core" information is provided on government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the year preceding the budget year (BY-1).

The "core" information includes:

- *total debt outstanding at the end of BY-1;*
- *amount of net new borrowing required during BY-1;*
- *interest payments on the debt;*
- *interest rates on the debt instruments;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether it is domestic or external debt.*

This core information for BY-1 is consistent with the budget year information for borrowing and debt, which is examined in Questions 13 and 14.

In addition, some governments provide information beyond the core elements, such as gross new borrowing required during BY-1; currency of the debt; whether the debt carries a fixed or variable interest rate; whether it is callable; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for BY-1 as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to government borrowing and debt, including its composition, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on government borrowing and debt for BY-1.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for government debt.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility Economic and Fiscal Outlook (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>) contains information on the outlook for gilt rates and the government's financing requirements.

Further details are provided by the Debt Management Office in a report that they publish alongside the Budget. For the one that accompanied the 2017 Budget see <https://www.dmo.gov.uk/media/15197/pr221117.pdf>

In addition, the Debt Management Report 2018-19 is recognized as a supporting document for the Autumn Budget 2017. It was released on 13 March 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt-management-report-2018-to-2019>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

32. In the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation, what is the most recent year presented for which the debt figures reflect actual outcomes?

GUIDELINES:

Question 32 asks for which year the actual outcome for debt is shown. In most cases, the most recent year for which budget data on actual outcomes are available will be BY-2, as BY-1 is generally not yet finished when the budget proposal is drafted. So a government that has updated its debt data for BY-2 to reflect what actually occurred, as opposed to estimating the outcome for that year, shows good public financial management practice.

For an "a" answer, a country must meet the good practice of having the figures for BY-2 reflect actual outcomes.

It is essential that all government activities that may have an impact on the budget – in the current budget year or in future budget years – be fully disclosed to the legislature and the public in budget documents. In some countries, for instance, entities outside central government (such as public corporations) undertake fiscal activities that could affect current and future budgets. Similarly, activities that can have a significant impact on the budget, such as payment arrears and contingent liabilities, sometimes are not properly captured by the regular presentations of expenditure, revenue, and debt.

Answer:

a. Two years prior to the budget year (BY-2).

Source:

These are available in Table C3 of the Budget (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>).

A longer time series is available in the OBR's public finances databank <https://obr.uk/data/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

33. "Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on extra-budgetary funds for at least the budget year?"

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the extra-budgetary fund; and complete income, expenditure, and financing data on a gross basis.)"

GUIDELINES:

Question 33 focuses on extra-budgetary funds, asking whether "core" information related to these funds, which exist outside the budget, are presented. These core components include:

- a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the extra-budgetary fund (i.e., why was a particular fund set up? what is it used for?); and
- estimates of its income, expenditure, and financing. (These estimates should be presented on a gross basis so that it is possible to tell how much money flows through each extra-budgetary fund.)

In most countries, governments engage in certain budgetary activities that are not included in the central government's budget. Known as extra-budgetary funds, they can range in size and scope. For example, countries frequently set up pension and social security programs as extra-budgetary funds, where the revenues collected and the benefits paid are recorded in a separate fund outside the budget. Another example of an extra-budgetary fund can be found in countries dependent on hydrocarbon/mineral resources, where revenues from producing and selling those resources are channeled through systems outside the annual budget.

In some cases, the separation engendered by an extra-budgetary fund serves a legitimate political purpose, and the finances and activities of these funds are well documented. In other cases, however, this structure is used for obfuscation, and little or nothing is known about a fund's finances and activities.

The availability of information related to extra-budgetary funds is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the government's true fiscal position. In addition to the core information, other information about extra-budgetary funds is also desirable. Such information includes a discussion of the risks associated with the extra-budgetary fund; expenditures classified by economic, functional, or administrative unit; and the rules and procedures that govern the operations and management of the extra-budgetary fund.

For more information about extra-budgetary funds, see the Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>) and Principle 2.1.1 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to extra-budgetary funds as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. A "b" answer applies if the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation presents all of the core information. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to extra-budgetary funds is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on extra-budgetary funds.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all extra-budgetary funds.

Source:

National Insurance contributions are scored as revenues and payments of National Insurance benefits are scored as spending.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I am not an expert on the total range of UK government extra-budgetary funds. On the one hand, the UK public sector has 38,000 separate entities within it. Most of these will be identifiable institutions, but some might be 'extra-budgetary' funds by this definition. It is simply not possible to review every one of them to determine if it is an extra-budgetary fund; and then whether the right information is presented for it. Based on the 2016 IMF Fiscal Transparency Assessment, the UK's Public Sector Finances report is noted to be in accordance with international standards, and ONS have often classified and re-classified various financial entities (e.g. student loans, National Rail debt) as either public sector or not public sector. I can't off hand think of any obvious off-budget funds (e.g. in the UK public sector pensions, social security benefits, and infrastructure funds are all on-budget as far as I am aware). So the score seems justified, with the note that this done without going through a exhaustive exercise to categorise all quasi-public sector financial entities that might exist in the UK

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

34. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present central government finances (both budgetary and extra-budgetary) on a consolidated basis for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 34 asks whether the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documents present the finances of the central government on a consolidated basis, showing both its budgetary and extra-budgetary activities. Virtually all of the questions in the OBS questionnaire focus on budgetary central government – the activities of the ministries, departments, or agencies of central government. In addition, Question 33 asks about extra-budgetary funds, such as social security funds that are not included in the budget.

Coverage is an important aspect of fiscal reporting. Budget documents should cover the full scope of government's financial activity. In many countries, extra-budgetary activities are substantial, and can represent a sizable share of the central government's activities. To get a full picture of the central government's finances, therefore, it is necessary to examine both activities that are included in the budget and those that are extra-budgetary. This question asks whether such a consolidated presentation of central government finances is provided.

The central government is only one component of the overall public sector. The public sector also includes other levels of government, such as state and local government, and public corporations. (See Box 2.1 under Principle 1.1.1 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018): <https://www.eibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>. For the purpose of answering this question, please consider only the central government level.

In order to answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present central government finances (both budgetary and extra-budgetary) on a consolidated basis for at least the budget year.

Answer:

a. Yes, central government finances are presented on a consolidated basis.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility November 2017 EFO presents the UK public sector finances on a consolidated basis. Chapter 4 of the EFO focuses mainly on the overall public sector position. The supplementary tables published on the OBR's website provide receipts and spending, by economic category, for central government, local government, non-financial public corporations and the Bank of England (see Tables 2.37 and 2.38). <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: In addition, as the reviewer has noted before, the OBR, IMF and UK government all note that their classifications of financial information are consistent with various international standards, and these tend to require presentation of public sector figures on a consistent basis.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

35. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of intergovernmental transfers for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 35 asks about intergovernmental transfers. In many cases, the central government supports the provision of a good or service by a lower level of government through an intergovernmental transfer of funds. This is necessary because, independent from the level of administrative decentralization that exists in a given country, the capacity for revenue collection of a local government is unlikely to be sufficient to pay for all its expenses. However, because the activity is not being undertaken by an administrative unit of the central government, it is unlikely to receive the same level of review in the budget. Thus it is important to include in the budget proposal a statement that explicitly indicates the amount and purposes of these transfers.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all intergovernmental transfers and a narrative discussing these transfers. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all intergovernmental transfers are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, intergovernmental transfers (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of intergovernmental transfers are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all intergovernmental transfers are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the Budget document set out spending by Government department (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) with some narrative around those tables.

In addition Tables 2.37 and 2.38 of the supplementary tables to the November 2017 EFO presents receipts and spending, by economic category, for central government, local government, non-financial public corporations and the Bank of England. This current and capital grants to, and income from, other parts of the public sector.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

The main document also presents some of these data (see, in particular Table 4.19 of the EFO) and provides some narrative.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

36. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present alternative displays of expenditures (such as by gender, by age, by income, or by region) to illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens, for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 36 asks about "alternative displays" of expenditures that highlight the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens. As discussed above, expenditures are typically presented by at least one of three classifications – administrative, functional, and economic classifications (see Questions 1-5) – and by individual program (Question 6). In addition, governments can provide alternative displays to emphasize different aspects of expenditure policies and to show who benefits from these expenditures.

For the purpose of answering this question, the alternative presentation must differ from the presentations (such as administrative, functional, or economic classifications or presentation by program) used to answer other questions. The alternative display can cover all expenditures or only a portion of expenditures. For instance, it can show how all expenditures are distributed according to geographic region or it can show how selected expenditures (such as the health budget or the agriculture budget) are distributed to different regions. But such a geographic display must be something different than the presentation of intergovernmental transfers used to answer question 35. One exception is when a country includes a special presentation of all policies intended to benefit the most impoverished populations (and is used to answer Question 52) then that can be considered an alternative display for purposes of answering this question as well. Finally, brief fact sheets showing how proposals in the budget benefit particular groups would be insufficient; only more detailed presentations would be considered.

The IBP Budget Brief, "How Transparent are Governments When it Comes to Their Budget's Impact on Poverty and Inequality?"

(<https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/government-transparency-of-budgets-impact-on-poverty-inequality-ibp-2019.pdf>) includes a discussion of the importance of alternative displays of budget information and provides a number of examples. For instance,

- Bangladesh in its 2017-18 Budget included a detailed supplementary Gender Budgeting Report, which presents the spending dedicated to advancing women across various departments. (<https://mof.portal.gov.bd/site/page/3bb14732-b5b1-44df-9921-efedf1496295>).
- The UK's 2017 budget included a supplementary analysis that provided a distributional analysis of the budget by households in different income groups (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661465/distributional_analysis_autumn_budget_2017.pdf)
- South Africa's 2017 Budget Review goes beyond the standard presentation of intergovernmental transfers, discussing the redistribution that results from national revenue flowing to the provinces and municipalities and presenting the allocations on a per capita basis (see chapter 6, <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2017/review/FullBR.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must include at least three different presentations that illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens for at least the budget year. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must include at least two different alternative displays of expenditures. A "c" applies if only one type of alternative display of expenditure is presented. Answer "d" applies if no alternative display of expenditure is presented.

Answer:

c. Yes, one alternative display of expenditures is presented to illustrate the financial impact of policies on different groups of citizens.

Source:

The document "Impact on households: distributional analysis to accompany Budget 2017" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>) presents the estimated impact of Budget measures on households, by income decile, split into the impact of tax changes, the impact of benefit changes and the impact of changes to public-service spending.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I think the selected answer is correct but not for the reasons listed. The document cited does indeed provide a breakdown of tax, expenditure, and some measures of public spending by (i) household income decile; and (ii) individual income in 5 percentage point increments (Chart 1.F). So, this is two separate measures, which meets the OBS question requirements. The OBS question is about how expenditure impacts are split/analysed in different ways; not about how (i) tax changes; (ii) benefit changes; (ii) public spending are split along the SAME distributional scale (in my interpretation).

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Researcher Response

Chart 2A shows the estimated overall impact of tax/welfare/public service spending as a share of income (including the imputed value of public services) by income decile. Charts 2B and 2C split out just the more recent measures and show the estimated impact in both cash terms and as share of income, again by income decile.

IBP Comment

IBP notes that both sets of charts cited present income by income decline. So while they present different information, the distributional display is the same. For cross-country consistency, it counts as only one alternative display. Accordingly, IBP adjusted the score from a "b" to a "c."

36b. Based on the response to Question 36, select the box(es) below to identify which types of alternative displays are included in the Executive's Budget Proposal:

Answer:

Policy impacts based on income
Other displays of expenditure (please specify)

Source:

The estimated impact is split into tax, benefits and public service spending.
"Impact on households: distributional analysis to accompany Budget 2017" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

37. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of transfers to public corporations for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 37 asks about transfers to public corporations. It is often the case that governments have a stake in enterprises that manage resources that are particularly relevant for the public good (such as electricity, water, and oil). While these public corporations can operate independently, in some cases the government will provide direct support by making transfers to these corporations, including to subsidize capital investment and operating expenses.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all transfers to public corporations and a narrative discussing the purposes of these transfers. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all transfers to public corporations are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, transfers to public corporations (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "c" also applies if estimates of transfers to public corporations are presented as a single line item. Answer "d" applies if no estimates of transfers to public corporations are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all transfers to public corporations are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The "Main Supply Estimates 2018-19" published on the 19th April 2018 contains details of all transfers to public corporations.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

Tables 2.37, 2.38 and 2.40 of the supplementary tables to the November 2017 EFO presents receipts and spending, by economic category, for central government, local government, non-financial public corporations and the Bank of England. This current and capital grants to, and income from, other parts of the public sector.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

The main document also presents some of these data (see, in particular Table 4.19 of the EFO) and provides some narrative.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

38. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on quasi-fiscal activities for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for the quasi-fiscal activity and the intended beneficiaries.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 38 focuses on quasi-fiscal activities, asking whether "core" information related to such activities is presented. These core components include:

- *A statement of purpose or policy rationale for the quasi-fiscal activity (i.e., what is the reason for engaging in this activity?);*
- *The identification of intended beneficiaries of the quasi-fiscal activity.*

The term "quasi-fiscal activities" refers to a broad range of activities that are fiscal in character and could be carried out through the regular budget process but are not. For example, a quasi-fiscal activity could take place if, instead of providing a direct subsidy through the budget for a particular activity, a public financial institution provides an indirect subsidy by offering loans at below-market rates for that activity. Similarly, it is a quasi-fiscal activity when an enterprise provides goods or services at prices below commercial rates to certain individuals or groups to support the government's policy goals.

The above examples are policy choices that may be approved by the government and legislature. However, quasi-fiscal activities can also involve activities that violate or circumvent a country's budget process laws or are not subject to the regular legislative approval process for expenditures. For example, the executive may issue an informal order to a government entity, such as a public commercial enterprise, to provide the executive with goods and services that normally would have to be purchased with funding authorized by the legislature. All quasi-fiscal activities should be disclosed to the public and subject to

public scrutiny.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about quasi-fiscal activities, including for example: the anticipated duration of the quasi-fiscal activity; a quantification of the activity and the assumptions that support these estimates; and a discussion of the fiscal significance and potential risks associated with the activity, including the impact on the entity carrying out the activity. Principle 3.3.2 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>) provides examples of quasi-fiscal activities that can be consulted as needed. And more details on quasi-fiscal activities can be found in the Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to all quasi-fiscal activities for at least the budget year as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to quasi-fiscal activities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on quasi-fiscal activities.

If quasi-fiscal activities do not represent a significant problem in your country, please mark "e." However, please exercise caution in answering this question.

Answer:

c. Yes, information is presented, but it excludes some core elements or some quasi-fiscal activities.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility's November 2017 EFO sets out in Chapter 4 the impact on the public finances of loans and repayments. This includes interventions such as: the share holdings in RBS, the treatment of student loans, the Asset Purchase Facility of the Bank of England and the Bank of England's Term Funding Scheme.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

But this discussion focuses entirely on the impact on the public finances of these interventions and does not, for example, set out the Government's rationale.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

39. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on financial assets held by the government for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a listing of the assets, and an estimate of their value.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 39 focuses on financial assets held by the government, asking whether "core" information related to these assets is presented. These core components include:

- A listing of the financial assets; and
- An estimate of their value.

Governments own financial assets such as cash, bonds, or equities. Unlike private sector businesses, however, few governments maintain balance sheets that show the value of their assets and liabilities.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about financial assets, including for example: a discussion of their purpose; historical information on defaults; differences between reported values and market values; and a summary of financial assets as part of the government's balance sheet.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year all of the core information related to all financial assets held by the government as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to financial assets is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on financial assets held by the government.

Answer:

c. Yes, information is presented, but it excludes some core elements or some financial assets.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility's November 2017 EFO sets out in Chapter 4 the impact on the public finances of loans and repayments. This includes interventions such as: the share holdings in RBS, the treatment of student loans, the Asset Purchase Facility of the Bank of England and the Bank of England's Term Funding Scheme.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

But this is not a comprehensive list. Details of these in aggregate can be found in the Whole of Government Accounts. And the individual assets will be valued in the relevant department's annual report. But this information is not provided alongside the EBP.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

40. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on nonfinancial assets held by the government for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a listing of the assets by category.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 40 focuses on nonfinancial assets held by the government, asking whether "core" information related to these assets is presented. The core information is a listing of nonfinancial assets, grouped by the type (or category) of asset.

Nonfinancial assets are things of value that the government owns or controls (excluding financial assets) such as land, buildings, and machinery. The valuation of public nonfinancial assets can be problematic, particularly in cases where the asset is not typically available on the open market (such as a government monument). In these cases, it is considered acceptable to provide summary information in budget documents from a country's register of assets. But, in some cases, governments are able to value their nonfinancial assets; some present a summary of nonfinancial assets as part of their balance sheets. For an example of how nonfinancial assets are presented in one of the many supporting documents to the New Zealand Executive's Budget Proposal, see the Forecast Financial Statement 2011, Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued), Note 14, accessible here: <https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2011-05/befu11-pt6of8.pdf>.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year a listing by category of all nonfinancial assets held by the government as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to nonfinancial assets is presented, but some nonfinancial assets are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on nonfinancial assets held by the government.

Answer:

d. No, information related to nonfinancial assets is not presented.

Source:

Details of public sector non-financial assets in aggregate can be found in the Whole of Government Accounts. And comprehensive information on the individual assets will be valued in the relevant department's annual report. But this information is not provided alongside the EBP.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

41. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of expenditure arrears for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 41 asks about estimates of expenditure arrears, which arise when government has entered into a commitment to spend funds but has not made the payment when it is due. (For more information see sections 3.49-3.50 of the IMF's GFS Manual 2001, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/qfs/manual/pdf/all.pdf> (page 29)). Though equivalent to borrowing, this liability is often not recorded in the budget, making it difficult to assess fully a government's financial position. Moreover, the obligation to repay this debt affects the government's ability to pay for other activities.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all expenditure arrears and a narrative discussing the arrears. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all expenditure arrears are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, expenditure arrears (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of expenditure arrears are presented.

If expenditure arrears do not represent a significant problem in your country, please mark "e." However, please exercise caution in answering this question. Public expenditure management laws and regulations often will allow for reasonable delays, perhaps 30 or 60 days, in the routine payment of invoices due. Expenditure arrears impacting a small percentage of expenditure that are due to contractual disputes should not be considered a significant problem for the purpose of answering this question.

Answer:

e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Source:

The Budget is done on an accruals basis so, implicitly, all expenditure arrears are covered.

The OBR also provides a narrative around the difference between the accruals measure of government borrowing and the cash measure.

See Section 4 of <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP's understanding is that the UK does not have expenditure arrears. For cross-country consistency, the response has been changed from "a" to "e."

42. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on contingent liabilities, such as government loan guarantees or insurance programs, for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each contingent liability; the new guarantees or insurance commitments proposed for the budget year; and the total amount of outstanding guarantees or insurance commitments (the gross exposure) at the end of the budget year.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 42 focuses on contingent liabilities, asking whether "core" information related to these liabilities is presented. These core components include:

- a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each contingent liability;
- the new contingent liabilities for the budget year, such as new guarantees or insurance commitments proposed for the budget year; and
- the total amount of outstanding guarantees or insurance commitments at the end of the budget year. This reflects the gross exposure of the government in the case that all guarantees or commitments come due (even though that may be unlikely to occur).

Contingent liabilities are recognized under a cash accounting method only when the contingent event occurs and the payment is made. An example of such liabilities is the case of loans guaranteed by the central government, which can include loans to state-owned banks and other state-owned commercial enterprises, subnational governments, or private enterprises. Under such guarantees, government will only make a payment if the borrower defaults. Thus a key issue for making quantitative estimates of these liabilities is assessing the likelihood of the contingency occurring.

In the budget, according to the OECD, "[w]here feasible, the total amount of contingent liabilities should be disclosed and classified by major category reflecting their nature; historical information on defaults for each category should be disclosed where available. In cases where contingent liabilities cannot be quantified, they should be listed and described."

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about contingent liabilities, including for example: historical default rates for each program, and likely default rates in the future; the maximum guarantee that is authorized by law; any special financing associated with the guarantee (e.g., whether fees are charged, whether a reserve fund exists for the purpose of paying off guarantees, etc.); the duration of each guarantee; and an estimate of the fiscal significance and potential risks associated with the guarantees.

For more details on contingent liabilities, see Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp/>)

[content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf](https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml)) and page 59 (Box 11) and Principle 3.2.3 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year all of the core information related to contingent liabilities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to contingent liabilities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on contingent liabilities.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for all contingent liabilities.

Source:

The Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019, a supporting document, provide information on contingent liabilities (see Part III, Note K) by administrative unit. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2018-to-2019>

The Office for Budget Responsibility presents information on the change in contingent liabilities in the Economic and Fiscal Outlook that is published alongside the Budget. See Paras 4.18 to 4.19 of <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>

Although not part of the EBP, Whole of Government Accounts provides information on contingent liabilities (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>), published separately by each department in their own annual reports. Furthermore an excellent discussion is provided in the biennial OBR Fiscal Risks Report (<https://obr.uk/frr/fiscal-risk-report-july-2017/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

c. Yes, information is presented, but it excludes some core elements or some contingent liabilities.

Comments: This is open to judgement, but the OBS question is quite specific. In order to score a full A the EBP must include the following for each and every contingent liability: 1) a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each contingent liability; 2) the new contingent liabilities for the budget year, such as new guarantees or insurance commitments proposed for the budget year; and 3) the total amount of outstanding guarantees or insurance commitments at the end of the budget year. This reflects the gross exposure of the government in the case that all guarantees or commitments come due (even though that may be unlikely to occur). The budget documents presented don't cover all this information for every last contingent liability. Personally, I think it's not appropriate for the EBP to do this - it would run to hundreds of pages given the number of formal (and informal) contingent liabilities the government is carrying around. On that basis, without going through each and every one in detail I think C is more appropriate - information is presented in the documents that the researcher cites; but they lack some of the core elements and not each and every last contingent liability is presented. In the IMF Fiscal Transparency Assessment, the UK performed a mixture of 'not met' 'basic' and 'good/advanced' for a number of categories that relate to contingent liabilities, suggesting there is some work to do. Again, this is a judgement and I don't think it is clear either way.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

For cross-country consistency, IBP agrees with the researcher, given the information on contingent liabilities provided in Note K of the Main Supply Estimates and in the Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

43. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present projections that assess the government's future liabilities and the sustainability of its finances over the longer term?

(The core information must cover a period of at least 10 years and include the macroeconomic and demographic assumptions used and a discussion of the fiscal implications and risks highlighted by the projections.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 43 focuses on government's future liabilities and the sustainability of its finances over the longer-term, asking whether "core" information related to these issues is presented. These core components must include:

- Projections that cover a period of at least 10 years.
- The macroeconomic and demographic assumptions used in making the projections.
- A discussion of the fiscal implications and risks highlighted by the projections. Good public financial management calls for budgets to include fiscal sustainability analyses.

The IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>) recommends that governments regularly publish the projected evolution of the public finances over the longer term (see Principle 3.1.3.). Future liabilities are a particularly important element when assessing the sustainability of public finances over the long term. Future liabilities are the result of government commitments that, unlike contingent liabilities, are virtually certain to occur at some future point and result in an expenditure. A typical example consists of government obligations to pay pension benefits or cover health care costs of future retirees. Under a cash accounting system, only current payments associated with such obligations are recognized in the budget. To capture the future impact on the budget of these liabilities, a separate statement is required.

Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about the sustainability of their finances, including for example: projections that cover 20 or 30 years; multiple scenarios with different sets of assumptions; assumptions about other factors (such as the depletion of natural resources) that go beyond just the core macroeconomic and demographic data; and a detailed presentation of particular programs that have long time horizons, such as civil service pensions.

For more details on future liabilities, see Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core information related to future liabilities and the sustainability of government finances over the longer term as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to future liabilities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on future liabilities and the sustainability of government's finances

Answer:

d. No, information related to future liabilities and the sustainability of finances over the longer term is not presented.

Source:

The UK does much better: it has a biennial report dedicated to examining projections for the UK public finances over the next fifty years. But this is not published alongside the Budget, hence the score here.

The most recent report was in July 2018: <https://obr.uk/fsr/fiscal-sustainability-report-july-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree - the UK should get an A+ for doing this; but it happens outside the EBP process so perhaps is not allowable in the OBS methodology.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Researcher Response

I agree that really the UK deserves an A+ for this. Not sure why the UK should be penalised for publishing analysis in different documents at different times - in many cases it is more transparent not to publish everything at once.

IBP Comment

IBP acknowledges the comments of both the researcher and peer reviewer, and notes the Office of Budget Responsibility's "Fiscal Sustainability Report." While it does include the type of long-term projections asked about in this question, because it is not released alongside the Budget, it cannot be taken into account for purposes of responding, under OBS methodology.

44. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of the sources of donor assistance, both financial and in-kind, for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 44 asks about estimates of donor assistance, both financial and in-kind assistance. Such assistance is considered non-tax revenue, and the sources of this assistance should be explicitly identified. In terms of in-kind assistance, the concern is primarily with the provision of goods (particularly those for which there is a market that would allow goods received as in-kind aid to be sold, thereby converting them into cash) rather than with in-kind aid like advisors from a donor country providing technical assistance.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all donor assistance and a narrative discussing the assistance. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all donor assistance are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, donor assistance (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "c" also applies if the sources of donor assistance are not presented, but the total amount of donor assistance is presented as a single line item. Answer "d" applies if no estimates of donor assistance are presented. Select answer "e" if your country does not receive donor assistance.

Answer:

e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Source:

The UK is not a recipient of foreign aid.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

45. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on tax expenditures for at least the budget year?

(The core information must include a statement of purpose or policy rationale for each tax expenditure, the intended beneficiaries, and an estimate of the revenue foregone.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 45 focuses on tax expenditures, asking whether "core" information related to these tax preferences is presented. These core components must include for both new and existing tax expenditures:

- a statement of purpose or policy rationale;
- a listing of the intended beneficiaries; and
- an estimate of the revenue foregone.

Tax expenditures arise as a result of exceptions or other preferences in the tax code provided for specified entities, individuals, or activities. Tax expenditures often have the same impact on public policy and budgets as providing direct subsidies, benefits, or goods and services. For example, encouraging a company to engage in more research through a special tax break can have the same effect as subsidizing it directly through the expenditure side of the budget, as it still constitutes a cost in terms of foregone revenues. However, expenditure items that require annual authorization are likely to receive more scrutiny than tax breaks that are a permanent feature of the tax code.

*Beyond the core information, some governments may also provide other information about tax expenditures, including for example: the intended beneficiaries by sector and income class (distributional impact); a statement of the estimating assumptions, including the definition of the benchmark against which the foregone revenue is measured; and a discussion of tax expenditures as part of a general discussion of expenditures for those program areas that receive both types of government support (in order to better inform policy choices). For more details on tax expenditures, see *Guide to Transparency in Public Finances: Looking Beyond the Core Budget* (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Looking-Beyond-the-Budget.pdf>) and Principle 1.1.4 of the IMF's *Fiscal Transparency Handbook* (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).*

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, all of the core information related to tax expenditures as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to tax expenditures is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on tax expenditures.

Answer:

c. Yes, information is presented, but it excludes some core elements or some tax expenditures.

Source:

The Budget documentation contains estimates of any new policy measures that affect tax expenditures. But the Budget does not routinely contain a costing for all tax expenditures, and certainly does not contain this alongside the rationale for the policy.

HMRC provides an estimate of the cost of each individual tax expenditure (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>) - but these are not necessarily updated at the time of the Budget.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

46. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of earmarked revenues for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 46 asks about estimates of earmarked revenues, which are revenues that may only be used for a specific purpose (for example, revenues from a tax on fuel that can only be used for building roads). This information is important in determining which revenues are available to fund the government's general expenses, and which revenues are reserved for particular purposes.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present for at least the budget year both estimates covering all earmarked revenues and a narrative discussing the earmarks. If a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all earmarked revenues are presented, then a "b" answer is appropriate. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, earmarked revenues (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no estimates of earmarked revenues are presented. An "e" response applies if revenue is not earmarked or the practice is disallowed by law or regulation.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all earmarked revenues are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The UK has very few taxes where there is binding hyphenation. (Some taxes are claimed to be spent on a particular item, but cases where the revenue from a particular tax must be equal to the amount spent on a particular item is rare.) The one obvious exception to this is the TV licence fee and the Economic and Fiscal Outlook, published alongside the Budget, mentions both BBC licence fee income and BBC current spending (see Para 4.160 of the EFO and Table 2.32 of the Supplementary Fiscal Tables: Expenditure, <https://obr.uk/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I am afraid I simply don't know off hand a full exhaustive list of all hypothecated taxes (i.e. actually 'hard' hypothecated, like the BBC licence fee example). It is the only one I can think of. It's possible that there are other very small and/or obscure hypothecated taxes that are not well known but without going through each and every UK tax/levy and identifying it, it's hard to know for sure. I think this answer is reasonable and it certainly catches the one that most commentators and citizens would immediately identify.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

47. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on how the proposed budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 47 and 48 ask about information that shows how the budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to the government's policy goals. The budget is the executive's main policy document, the culmination of the executive's planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, it should include a clear description of the link between policy goals and the budget – that is, an explicit explanation of how the government's policy goals are reflected in its budget choices. For an example of a discussion of a government's policy goals in the budget, see pages 13-18 of New Zealand's 2011 Statement of Intent (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/abouttreasury/soi/2011-16>), one of the many documents supporting its budget.

In some countries the government prepares strategic/development plans. These plans include all the policies the government is planning to implement for the budget year and very often cover a multi-year perspective. In some cases, these plans do not match the budget documentation, and it is possible that they are completely disconnected from the Executive's Budget Proposal. So the question is examining whether government policy plans are "translated" into revenue and expenditure figures in the actual budget documents.

Question 47 asks about the information covering the budget year, and Question 48 asks about the period at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how the budget is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year (for Question 47) or for a multi-year period beyond the budget year (for Question 48) and a narrative discussion of how these policy goals are reflected in the budget. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show how the budget is linked to government's policy goals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show how the budget is linked to some, but not all, of the government's policy goals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on how the budget is linked to government's policy goals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how the proposed budget is linked to all the government's policy goals for the budget year are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

Discussion of the Government's objectives is presented alongside the Budget measures in the Budget document <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017> and is also set out by the Chancellor in his Budget speech.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

48. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present information on how the proposed budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to government's policy goals for a multi-year period (for at least two years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 47 and 48 ask about information that shows how the budget (both new proposals and existing policies) is linked to the government's policy goals. The budget is the executive's main policy document, the culmination of the executive's planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, it should include a clear description of the link between policy goals and the budget – that is, an explicit explanation of how the government's policy goals are reflected in its budget choices. For an example of a discussion of a government's policy goals in the budget, see pages 13-18 of New Zealand's 2011 Statement of Intent (<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/abouttreasury/soi/2011-16>), one of the many documents supporting its budget.

In some countries the government prepares strategic/development plans. These plans include all the policies the government is planning to implement for the budget year and very often cover a multi-year perspective. In some cases, these plans do not match the budget documentation, and it is possible that they are completely disconnected from the Executive's Budget Proposal. So the question is examining whether government policy plans are "translated" into revenue and expenditure figures in the actual budget documents.

Question 47 asks about the information covering the budget year, and Question 48 asks about the period at least two years beyond the budget year. To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present both estimates of how the budget is linked to government's policy goals for the budget year (for Question 47) or for a multi-year period beyond the budget year (for Question 48) and a narrative discussion of how these policy goals are reflected in the budget. To answer "b" for either question, the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present estimates that show how the budget is linked to government's policy goals, but no narrative discussion is included. A "c" response applies if the presentation includes only a narrative discussion, or if it includes estimates that show how the budget is linked to some, but not all, of the government's policy goals (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on how the budget is linked to government's policy goals.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates that show how the proposed budget is linked to all the government's policy goals for a multi-year period are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

Measures are often announced in advance of them being implemented, so the objectives are naturally framed in terms of the Government's medium-term objectives. Costings for each measure are provided for each of the five following fiscal years. <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-budget-2017>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

49. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present nonfinancial data on inputs to be acquired for at least the budget

year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 49 asks about the availability of nonfinancial data on inputs for the budget year. (Nonfinancial data on outputs and outcomes are addressed in Question 50.)

The budget should disclose not only the amount of money that is being allocated on a program but also any information needed to analyze that expenditure. Nonfinancial data and performance targets associated with budget proposals are used to assess the success of a given policy. For example, even when allocated funds are spent according to plan, there remains the question of whether the policy delivered the results that it aimed to achieve.

Nonfinancial data can include information on:

Inputs - These are the resources assigned to achieve results. For example, in regards to education, nonfinancial data on inputs could include the number of books to be provided to each school or the materials to be used to build or refurbish a school.

Outputs - These are products and services delivered as a result of inputs. For example, the number of pupils taught every year; the number of children that received vaccines; or the number of beneficiaries of a social security program.

Outcomes - These are the intended impact or policy goals achieved. For example, an increase in literacy rates among children under 10, or a reduction in rates of maternal mortality.

In addition, governments that set performance targets must use nonfinancial data for outputs and outcomes to determine if these targets have been met.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, nonfinancial data on inputs for each individual program within all administrative units (ministries, departments, and agencies). It is also acceptable if nonfinancial data on inputs for each individual program is organized by functions. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present nonfinancial data on inputs for all administrative units or all functions, but not for each individual program (or even for any programs) within those administrative units or functions. A "c" response applies if nonfinancial data on inputs are presented only for some programs and/or some administrative units or some functions. Answer "d" applies if no nonfinancial data on inputs is presented.

Answer:

d. No, nonfinancial data on inputs are not presented.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility projects General Government Employment. For the 2017 Economic and Fiscal Outlook this is discussed on page 78. No other information on non-financial inputs is provided in the Budget documentation.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP finds that because only total government employment figures are provided, not by program or administrative unit, the appropriate response is a "d" (rather than a "c"), under OBS methodology.

50. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present nonfinancial data on results (in terms of outputs or outcomes) for at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 50 asks about the availability of nonfinancial data on results for the budget year. Nonfinancial data on results can include data on both outputs and outcomes, but not on inputs (which are addressed in Question 49).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present, for at least the budget year, nonfinancial data on results for each individual program within all administrative units (ministries, departments, and agencies). It is also acceptable if nonfinancial data on results for each individual program is organized by functional classification. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must present nonfinancial data on results for all administrative units or all functional classifications, but not for each individual program (or even for any programs) within those administrative units or functions. A "c" response applies if nonfinancial data on results are presented only for some programs and/or some administrative units or some functions. Answer "d" applies if no nonfinancial data on results is presented.

Answer:

d. No, nonfinancial data on results are not presented.

Source:
Non-financial data on results are not presented in the EBP.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

51. Are performance targets assigned to nonfinancial data on results in the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation?

GUIDELINES:

Question 51 asks about performance targets assigned to nonfinancial data on results for the budget year. The question applies to those nonfinancial results shown in the budget, and that were identified for purposes of Question 50.

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must assign performance targets to all nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget for at least the budget year. To answer "b," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must assign performance targets to a majority (but not all) of the nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget. A "c" response applies performance targets are assigned only to less than half of the nonfinancial data on results. Answer "d" applies if no performance targets are assigned to nonfinancial data on results shown in the budget, or the budget does not present nonfinancial results.

Answer:

d. No, performance targets are not assigned to nonfinancial data on results, or the budget does not present nonfinancial data on results.

Source:

Non-financial data on results are not presented in the EBP.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Comments: The Budget speech and some elements of the Budget document and supporting documents provide some examples of 'good news stories' where government policies have succeeded and/or when indicators are going in the right direction; but this is not the same as a real 'performance/results framework' so I agree with the researcher here.

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

52. Does the Executive's Budget Proposal or any supporting budget documentation present estimates of policies (both new proposals and existing policies) that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations in at least the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 52 asks whether the budget highlight policies, both new and existing, that benefit the poorest segments of society. This question is intended to assess only those programs that directly address the immediate needs of the poor, such as through cash assistance programs or the provision of housing, rather than indirectly, such as through a stronger national defense. This information is of particular interest to those seeking to bolster government's commitment to anti-poverty efforts. For purposes of answering this question, a departmental budget (such as for the Department of Social Welfare) would not be considered acceptable. In general, this question is asking whether the EBP includes a special presentation that pulls together estimates of all the relevant policies in one place. However, if the country uses "program budgeting," where programs are presented as expenditure categories with specific and identified objectives, and it identifies anti-poverty programs within each administrative unit, then that is also acceptable for this question.

The IBP Budget Brief, "How Transparent are Governments When it Comes to Their Budget's Impact on Poverty and Inequality?" (<https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/government-transparency-of-budgets-impact-on-poverty-inequality-ibp-2019.pdf>) includes a discussion of countries that have provided information on how its policies affect the poor.

For instance, Pakistan provides a detailed breakdown of pro-poor expenditure as part of its 2017-18 budget proposal. In one document, the government sets out policy priorities, expected outputs, and estimates of past and future spending for several programs aimed at poverty alleviation. Another supporting

document provides a comprehensive overview of ongoing policies, including a chapter on social safety nets, covering both financial and performance information of poverty alleviation schemes over a period of eight years. (http://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/mtbf_2018_21.pdf and http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey_1718.html).

To answer "a," the Executive's Budget Proposal or supporting documentation must for at least the budget year both present estimates covering all policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations and include a narrative discussion that specifically addresses these policies. (For countries using program budgeting that breaks out individual anti-poverty programs, there should be a separate narrative associated with each such program.) Answer "b" if a narrative discussion is not included, but estimates for all policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations are presented. Answer "c" if the presentation includes estimates covering only some, but not all, policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations (regardless of whether it also includes a narrative discussion). Answer "d" if no estimates of policies that are intended to benefit the most impoverished populations are presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of all policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The Budget documentation includes a publication looking specifically at the distributional impact of Budget measures, and this includes analysis by (for example) decile of the income distribution. Some narrative - and context - is also included. See "Impact on households: distributional analysis to accompany Budget 2017" <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>

In addition Table 4.23 of the Office for Budget Responsibility Economic and Fiscal Outlook contains a breakdown of welfare spending by programme (<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-november-2017/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with an "a" response based on the presentations around welfare spending, including the detailed tables presenting welfare spending both inside and outside the caps and the accompanying narrative.

53. Does the executive release to the public its timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal (that is, a document setting deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 53 asks about the budget timetable. An internal timetable is particularly important for the executive's management of the budget preparation process, in order to ensure that the executive accounts for the views of the different departments and agencies in the proposed budget. The timetable would, for instance, set deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation. So that civil society is aware of the various steps in the budget formulation process, and when opportunities may exist to engage the executive, it is essential that this timetable be made available to the public.

To answer "a," the executive must prepare a detailed budget timetable and release it to the public. A "b" answer applies if the timetable is made public, but some details are not included. A "c" response applies if the timetable is made public, but many important details are excluded, reducing its value for those outside government. Answer "d" applies if no timetable is made available to the public. As long as a timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal is released, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Executive's Budget Proposal is not made publicly available.

Answer:

b. Yes, a timetable is released, but some details are excluded.

Source:

A broad outline of the timetable is provided here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process>

The Chancellor usually announces the date of the Budget a few months ahead of time: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-budget-2017-date-confirmed>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I would also add it's not really necessary for HMT to release to the public its own internal coordination schedule for pulling the budget together - it's an internal government coordination exercise and not necessarily of great interest to the public.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

54. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget projections are based?

(The core information must include a discussion of the economic outlook with estimates of nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 54 focuses on the macroeconomic forecast that underlies the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to the economic assumptions is presented. These core components include a discussion of the economic outlook as well as estimates of the following:

- *nominal GDP level;*
- *inflation rate;*
- *real GDP growth; and*
- *interest rates.*

Beyond these core elements, some governments also provide additional information related to the economic outlook, including for instance: short- and long-term interest rates; the rate of employment and unemployment; GDP deflator; price of oil and other commodities; current account; exchange rate; and composition of GDP growth.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core information related to the macroeconomic forecast as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the macroeconomic forecast is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the macroeconomic forecast is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the macroeconomic forecast is not presented.

Source:

There is no PBS.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the macroeconomic forecast.

IBP Comment

As discussed in more detail in PBS-1, IBP agrees with the researcher that there is no pre-budget statement in the new UK budget process.

55. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the government's expenditure policies and priorities that will guide the development of detailed estimates for the upcoming budget?

(The core information must include a discussion of expenditure policies and priorities and an estimate of total expenditures.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 55 focuses on the government's expenditure policies and priorities in the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to these policies is presented. These core components include:

- a discussion of expenditure policies and priorities; and
- an estimate of total expenditures.

Although a Pre-Budget Statement is unlikely to include detailed programmatic proposals (such detailed information is typically only presented in the budget itself), it should include a discussion of broad policy priorities and a projection of at least total expenditures associated with these policies for the budget year. The Pre-Budget Statement can include some detail, for instance, estimates provided by any of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present for the upcoming budget year all of the core information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above for the upcoming budget year. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the government's expenditure policies and priorities is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the government's expenditure policies and priorities is not presented.

Source:

There is no PBS.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the government's expenditure policies and priorities.

IBP Comment

As discussed in more detail in PBS-1, IBP agrees with the researcher that there is no pre-budget statement in the new UK budget process.

56. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present information on the government's revenue policies and priorities that will guide the development of detailed estimates for the upcoming budget?

(The core information must include a discussion of revenue policies and priorities and an estimate of total revenues.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 56 focuses on the government's revenue policies and priorities in the Pre-Budget Statement, asking whether "core" information related to these policies is presented. These core components include:

- a discussion of revenue policies and priorities; and
- an estimate of total revenue.

Although a Pre-Budget Statement is unlikely to include detailed revenue proposals, it should include a discussion of broad policy priorities and a projection of at least the total revenue associated with these policies for the budget year. The Pre-Budget Statement can also include more detail, for instance, with estimates provided by revenue category – tax and non-tax – or some of the major individual sources of revenue, such as the Value Added Tax or the income tax.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present for the upcoming budget year all of the core information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all of the core components noted above for the upcoming budget year. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information on the government's revenue policies and priorities is presented.

Answer:

d. No, information related to the government's revenue policies and priorities is not presented.

Source:
There is no PBS.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Disagree
Suggested Answer:

- a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the government's revenue policies and priorities.

IBP Comment

As discussed in more detail in PBS-1, IBP agrees with the researcher that there is no pre-budget statement in the new UK budget process.

57. Does Pre-Budget Statement present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 57 asks whether the Pre-Budget Statement includes three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- *the amount of net new borrowing needed in the upcoming budget year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at the end of the upcoming budget year; and*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the upcoming budget year.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens, banks, and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Pre-Budget Statement must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt for at least the upcoming budget year. For a "b" answer, the Pre-Budget Statement must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the PBS must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in the PBS.

Answer:

d. No, none of the three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are not presented.

Source:
There is no PBS.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Disagree
Suggested Answer:

- a. Yes, all three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are presented.

IBP Comment

As discussed in more detail in PBS-1, IBP agrees with the researcher that there is no pre-budget statement in the new UK budget process.

58. Does the Pre-Budget Statement present estimates of total expenditures for a multi-year period (at least two-years beyond the budget year)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 58 asks about multi-year expenditure estimates in the Pre-Budget Statement.

To answer "a," expenditure estimates for at least two years beyond the upcoming budget year must be presented. The estimates must be for at least total expenditures, but could include more detail than just the aggregate total.

Answer:

b. No, multi-year expenditure estimates are not presented.

Source:

There is no PBS.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

a. Yes, multi-year expenditure estimates are presented.

IBP Comment

As discussed in more detail in PBS-1, IBP agrees with the researcher that there is no pre-budget statement in the new UK budget process.

59. Does the Enacted Budget present expenditure estimates by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 59 asks if expenditure estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates must be presented by two of the three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Enacted Budget presents expenditure estimates by only one of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

The Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 (<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>) provides a split by government department and, within this, into departmental expenditure limits and annually managed expenditure. But no split by function or by economic classification is provided.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

b. Yes, the Enacted Budget presents expenditure estimates by two of the three expenditure classifications.

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, noting that the split between current and capital expenditure in the estimates is not sufficient to qualify as a full economic classification, under OBS methodology.

59b. Based on the response to Question 59, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Enacted Budget:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Source:

The Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 (

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>) provides a split by government department and, within this, into departmental expenditure limits and annually managed expenditure. But no split by function or by economic classification is provided.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

60. Does the Enacted Budget present expenditure estimates for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 60 asks if expenditure estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all programs, which account for all expenditures, in the budget year. To answer "b," the Enacted Budget must present expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if the Enacted Budget presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program in the Enacted Budget.

Answer:

d. No, the Enacted Budget does not present expenditure estimates by program.

Source:

The Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2018 (

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/supplyandappropriationmainestimatesno2.html>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

61. Does the Enacted Budget present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 61 asks whether revenue estimates in the Enacted Budget are presented by "category"— that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

b. No, the Enacted Budget does not present revenue estimates by category.

Source:

In practice amendments by parliament to the Finance Bill are extremely uncommon. Therefore a new forecast of revenues, by category, is not necessary as the official Budget forecast still stands.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

62. Does the Enacted Budget present individual sources of revenue?

GUIDELINES:

Question 62 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Enacted Budget. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all individual sources of revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Enacted Budget must present individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Enacted Budget presents individual sources of revenue that account for less than two-thirds of revenues. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, the Enacted Budget does not present individual sources of revenue.

Source:

In practice amendments by parliament to the Finance Bill are extremely uncommon. Therefore a new forecast of revenues, by each individual source, is not necessary as the official Budget forecast still stands.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

63. Does the Enacted Budget present three estimates related to government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year; the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year; and interest payments on the debt for the budget year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 63 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- *the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *the total debt outstanding at the end of the budget year;*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens, banks, and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," the Enacted Budget must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, the Enacted Budget must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, the Enacted Budget must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in the Enacted Budget.

Answer:

d. No, none of the three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are not presented.

Source:

These are not provided in the Enacted Budget.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: This is open to debate. The Enacted Budget (in this case, the Finance Act) does not contain this information - it is not supposed to, and contains a long list of legal changes to tax rates etc. The EBP that gives rise to the Finance Act does indeed have all this information. So the Enacted Budget might be considered to 'present' all this information through the accompanying Budget 2017 document. I will agree with the reviewer here, but it's open to interpretation about whether, in the UK system, the Enacted Budget (i.e. the Finance Act and/or Main Estimates legislation) is even supposed to do this. Certainly it is well covered in other documents.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, noting that information in the EBP can only be considered as part of the EB if it is specifically cited in the legislation, under OBS methodology.

64. What information is provided in the Citizens Budget?

(The core information must include expenditure and revenue totals, the main policy initiatives in the budget, the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget is based, and contact information for follow-up by citizens.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 64 focuses on the content of the Citizens Budget, asking whether "core" information is presented. These core components include:

- *expenditure and revenue totals;*

- the main policy initiatives in the budget;
- the macroeconomic forecast upon which the budget is based; and
- contact information for follow-up by citizens.

To answer "a," the Citizens Budget or supporting documentation must present all of the above core information as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," the Citizens Budget must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if the Citizens Budget includes some of the core components above, but other core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if a Citizens Budget is not published.

Answer:
d. The Citizens Budget is not published.

Source:
There is no CB.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

65. How is the Citizens Budget disseminated to the public?

GUIDELINES:

Question 65 asks how the Citizens Budget is disseminated to the public. Citizens Budgets should be made available to a variety of audiences. Therefore paper versions and an Internet posting of a document might not be sufficient.

To answer "a," the executive must use three or more different types of creative media tools to reach the largest possible share of the population, including those who otherwise would not normally have access to budget documents or information. Dissemination would also be pursued at the very local level, so that the coverage is targeted both by geographic area and population group (e.g., women, elderly, low income, urban, rural, etc.). Option "b" applies if significant dissemination efforts are made through a combination of two means of communications, for instance, both posting the Citizens Budget on the executive's official website and distributing printed copies of it. Option "c" applies if the Citizens Budget is disseminated through only posting on the executive's official website. Option "d" applies when the executive does not publish a Citizens Budget.

Answer:
d. A Citizens Budget is not published.

Source:
There is no CB.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

66. Has the executive established mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information prior to publishing the Citizens Budget?

GUIDELINES:

Question 66 asks whether the executive has established mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information before publishing a Citizens Budget. What the public wants to know about the budget might differ from the information the executive includes in technical documents that comprise the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget; similarly, different perspectives might exist on how the budget should be presented, and this may vary

depending on the context. For this reason the executive should consult with the public on the content and presentation of the Citizens Budget.

To answer "a," the executive must have established mechanisms to consult with the public, and these mechanisms for consultation are both accessible and widely used by the public. Such mechanisms can include focus groups, social networks, surveys, hotlines, and meetings/events in universities or other locations where people gather to discuss public issues. In countries where Citizens Budgets are consistently produced and released, it may be sufficient for the government to provide the public with contact information and feedback opportunities, and subsequently use the feedback to improve its management of public resources.

Option "b" applies if the executive has established mechanisms for consultation that are accessible to the public, but that the public nonetheless does not use frequently. That is, the public does not typically engage with the executive on the content of the Citizens Budget, even though the executive has created opportunities for such consultation. Option "c" applies if the executive has established mechanism for consultation with the public, but they are poorly designed and thus not accessible to the public. Option "d" applies if the executive has not created any mechanisms to seek feedback from the public on the content of the Citizens Budget.

Answer:
d. No, the executive has not established any mechanisms to identify the public's requirements for budget information in the Citizen's Budget.

Source:
There is no CB.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

67. Are "citizens" versions of budget documents published throughout the budget process?

GUIDELINES:

Question 67 asks if "citizens" versions of budget documents are published throughout the budget process. While the Citizens Budget was initially conceived as a simplified version of the Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, good practice is now evolving and suggests that a "citizens" version of key budget documents should be produced during each of the four phases of the budget cycle. This would serve to inform citizens of the state of public financial management throughout the entire budget cycle.

To answer "a," a citizens version of at least one budget document is published for each of the four stages of the budget process (budget formulation, enactment, execution, and audit) – for a total of at least four citizens budget documents throughout the process. Option "b" applies if a citizens version of a budget document is published for at least two of the four stages of the budget process. Option "c" applies if a citizens version of a budget document is published for at least one of the four stages of the budget process. Select option "d" if no "citizens" version of budget documents is published.

Answer:
d. No citizens version of budget documents is published.

Source:

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

68. Do the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 68 asks if expenditure estimates in In-Year Reports are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above.

Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," actual expenditures must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if actual expenditures are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if actual expenditures are not presented by any of the three classifications in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

b. Yes, the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures by two of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

Expenditure is available by economic and administrative classification.

The ONS in year data on spending provides a breakdown into current and capital spending, while the HMT data provides a split by administrative activity.

No in year data are available on spending by function.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that both the ONS report and the OSCAR dataset provide economic classification information beyond just current and capital spending.

68b. Based on the response to Question 68, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the In-Year Reports:

Answer:

Administrative classification

Economic classification

Source:

Expenditure is available by economic and administrative classification.

The ONS in year data on spending provides a breakdown into current and capital spending, while the HMT data provides a split by administrative activity.

No in year data are available on spending by function.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

69. Do the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 69 asks if expenditure estimates in In-Year Reports are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present actual expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if actual expenditures are not presented by program in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

c. Yes, the In-Year Reports present actual expenditures for programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures.

Source:

The OSCAR data, published quarterly by HMT, contains a line for most items of spending - recorded within departments by organisation, month and economic category. Not quite all spending is included as it excludes spending by the Security and Intelligence Agencies.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

The OSCAR data below the departmental level is primarily presented by economic category, which IBP does not accept as a proxy for program detail. Some program-type information is presented, so a "c" response is more appropriate. Accordingly, IBP adjusted the score from a "b" to a "c."

70. Do the In-Year Reports compare actual year-to-date expenditures with either the original estimate for that period (based on the enacted budget) or the same period in the previous year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 70 asks whether In-Year Reports compare actual expenditures to-date with either the enacted levels or actual expenditures for the same period in the previous year.

The OECD recommends that the reports contain the total year-to-date expenditures in a format that allows for a comparison with the budget's forecast expenditures (based on enacted levels) for the same period.

To answer "a," comparisons must be made for expenditures presented in the In-Year Reports

Answer:

a. Yes, comparisons are made for expenditures presented in the In-Year Reports.

Source:

The ONS Public Sector Finances releases, which are published monthly, explicitly make comparisons between (a) the latest month and the same month in the previous financial year and (b) the financial year to date compared to the same period last year.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

71. Do In-Year Reports present actual revenue by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Questions 71 asks whether In-Year Reports present actual revenues by "category"— that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, In-Year Reports present actual revenue by category.

Source:

This is provided in the monthly ONS Public Sector Finances releases.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

72. Do In-Year Reports present the individual sources of revenue for actual revenues collected?

GUIDELINES:

Question 72 asks whether In-Year Reports present actual collections of individual sources of revenue (such as income taxes, VAT, etc.). The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present actual collections for all individual sources of revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present actual collections for individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue collected, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if In-Year Reports present individual sources of actual revenue that account for less than two-thirds of all revenue collected. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of actual revenue are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, In-Year Reports present individual sources of actual revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

This is provided in the monthly ONS Public Sector Finances releases.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

73. Do the In-Year Reports compare actual year-to-date revenues with either the original estimate for that period (based on the enacted budget) or the same period in the previous year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 73 asks whether In-Year Reports compare actual revenues to-date with either the enacted levels or actual revenues for the same period in the previous year.

The OECD recommends that the reports contain the total year-to-date revenues in a format that allows for a comparison with the budget's forecast revenues (based on enacted levels) for the same period.

To answer "a," comparisons must be made for revenues presented in the In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, comparisons are made for revenues presented in the In-Year Reports.

Source:

The ONS Public Sector Finances releases, which are published monthly, explicitly make comparisons between (a) the latest month and the same month in the previous financial year and (b) the financial year to date compared to the same period last year.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

74. Do In-Year Reports present three estimates related to actual government borrowing and debt: the amount of net new borrowing; the total debt outstanding; and interest payments?

GUIDELINES:

Question 74 asks about three key estimates related to borrowing and debt:

- *the amount of net new borrowing so far during the year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at that point in the year; and*
- *the interest payments to-date on the outstanding debt.*

Debt is the accumulated amount of money that the government borrows. The government can borrow from its citizens and banks and businesses within the country (domestic debt) or from creditors outside the country (external debt). External debt is typically owed to private commercial banks, other governments, or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Net new borrowing is the additional amount of new borrowing that is required for the budget year to finance expenditures in the budget that exceed available revenues. Net new borrowing adds to the accumulated debt. It is distinct from gross borrowing, which also includes borrowing needed to repay existing debt that matured during the budget year; debt that is replaced (or rolled over) does not add to the total of accumulated debt.

Interest payments on the debt (or debt service costs) are typically made at regular intervals, and these payments must be made on a timely basis in order to avoid defaulting on the debt obligation. Interest payments are separate from the repayment of principal, which occurs only when the loan has matured and must be paid back in full.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present all three estimates of borrowing and debt. For a "b" answer, In-Year Reports must present two of those three estimates. For a "c" answer, IYRs must present one of the three estimates. Answer "d" applies if no information on borrowing and debt is presented in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, all three estimates related to government borrowing and debt are presented.

Source:

The monthly ONS Public Sector Finances releases contain this information.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/previousReleases>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

75. Do In-Year Reports present information related to the composition of the total actual debt outstanding?

(The core information must include interest rates on the debt instruments; maturity profile of the debt; and whether it is domestic or external debt.)

GUIDELINES:

Question 75 focuses on the composition of government debt, asking whether "core" information related to its composition is presented. These core components include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

The interest rates affect the amount of interest that must be paid to creditors. The maturity profile indicates the final payment date of the loan, at which point the principal (and all remaining interest) is due to be paid; government borrowing typically includes a mix of short-term and long-term debt. As discussed in Question 74, domestic debt is held by a country's citizens and banks and businesses, while external debt is held by foreigners. These factors related to the composition of the debt give an indication of the potential vulnerability of the country's debt position, and ultimately whether the cost of servicing the accumulated debt is affordable.

Beyond these core elements, a government may also provide additional information related to the composition of its debt, including for instance: whether interest rates are fixed or variable; whether debt is callable; the currency of the debt; a profile of the creditors (bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, commercial banks, Central Bank, etc.); an analysis of the risk associated with the debt; and where appropriate, what the debt is being used to finance.

To answer "a," In-Year Reports must present all of the core information related to the composition of government debt to-date as well as some additional information beyond the core elements. To answer "b," In-Year Reports must present all of the core components noted above. Answer "b" is also accepted if one of the core elements is not presented but additional information beyond the core elements is presented. A "c" answer applies if some information related to the composition of government debt is presented, but some of the core pieces of information are not included. Answer "d" applies if no information is presented on the composition of the debt outstanding in In-Year Reports.

Answer:

a. Yes, information beyond the core elements is presented for the composition of the total actual debt outstanding.

Source:

Detailed information is provided quarterly in the Debt Management Office Quarterly Review

<https://www.dmo.gov.uk/publications/?offset=0&itemsPerPage=20&parentFilter=1275&childFilter=1275|1277&startMonth=1&startYear=1998>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

76. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include an updated macroeconomic forecast for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 76 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes an updated macroeconomic forecast for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

Refer to Question 15 for the components of the macroeconomic forecast presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include an updated macroeconomic forecast and explain all of the differences between the initial forecast presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal and the updated forecast. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the macroeconomic forecast must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated forecasts are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes an updated macroeconomic forecast, but does not provide an explanation for the revisions. A "d" response applies if the macroeconomic forecast has not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, the estimates for the macroeconomic forecast have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated forecasts is presented.

Source:

The 2018 Spring Statement - and more specifically the accompanying Economic and Fiscal Report published by the Office for Budget Responsibility - contains a fresh set of economic and fiscal forecasts covering the subsequent five year period, with a clear explanation of what has changed since the previous forecasts were produced.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

77. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated expenditure estimates for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 77 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of expenditure for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include updated expenditure estimates and explain all of the differences between the initial levels presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or the Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. The expenditure estimates must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated expenditure estimates, but does not provide an explanation for the revisions. A "d" response applies if the expenditure estimates have not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, expenditure estimates have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated expenditure estimates is presented.

Source:

The 2018 Spring Statement - and more specifically the accompanying Economic and Fiscal Report published by the Office for Budget Responsibility - contains a fresh set of economic and fiscal forecasts covering the subsequent five year period, with a clear explanation of what has changed since the previous forecasts were produced.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

78. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present expenditure estimates for the budget year underway by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 78 asks if expenditure estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. To answer "b," expenditure estimates must be presented by two of these three classifications. A "c" answer applies if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" applies if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents expenditure estimates by only one of the three expenditure classifications.

Source:

See <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Supplementary Table 2.38 provides spending by central government split into broad economic category.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

78b. Based on the response to Question 78, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Mid-Year Review:

Answer:

Economic classification

Source:

See <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Supplementary Table 2.38 provides spending by central government split into broad economic category.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

79. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present expenditure estimates for the budget year underway for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 79 asks if expenditure estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditures for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. To answer "b," the Mid-Year Review must present expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. A "c" answer applies if the Mid-Year Review presents programs that account for less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" applies if expenditures are not presented by program in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents estimates for programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures.

Source:

The OBR's March 2018 Economic and Fiscal Outlook (https://cdn.obr.uk/EFO-MaRch_2018.pdf) contains details of welfare spending, by benefit, in Table 4.23.

No other details of program spending were provided.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

80. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated revenue estimates for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 80 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of revenue for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include updated revenue estimates and explain all of the differences between the initial levels presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or the Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the revenue estimates must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated revenue estimates, but no explanation for the revisions is provided. A "d" response applies if the revenue estimates have not been updated.

Answer:

a. Yes, revenue estimates have been updated, and an explanation of all of the differences between the original and updated revenue estimates is presented.

Source:

The 2018 Spring Statement - and more specifically the accompanying Economic and Fiscal Report published by the Office for Budget Responsibility - contains a fresh set of economic and fiscal forecasts covering the subsequent five year period, with a clear explanation of what has changed since the previous forecasts were produced.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

81. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present revenue estimates for the budget year underway by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 81 asks whether revenue estimates in the Mid-Year Review are presented by "category"— that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents revenue estimates by category.

Source:

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

82. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget present individual sources of revenue for the budget year underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 82 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Mid-Year Review. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must present all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenues, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. To answer "b," the Mid-Year Review must present individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. A "c" answer applies if the Mid-Year Review presents estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" applies if individual sources of revenue are not presented in the Mid-Year Review.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Mid-Year Review presents individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

83. Does the Mid-Year Review of the budget include updated estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the budget year

underway?

GUIDELINES:

Question 83 asks whether the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the budget year, and provides an explanation of the update.

Refer to Question 13 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal of borrowing and debt. Key estimates related to borrowing and debt include:

- *The amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *The central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and*
- *The interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Refer to Question 14 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the composition of the debt. Core information related to the composition of government debt include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

To answer "a," the Mid-Year Review must include an updated estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, and explain all of the differences between the initial estimates presented in the Executive's Budget Proposal (or Enacted Budget) and the updated estimates. The explanation must include at least estimates of all differences; a narrative discussion is desirable but not required if estimates of all the differences are provided. To answer "b," the estimates of borrowing and debt must be updated, but only some of the differences between the initial and updated estimates are explained. The explanation would be more limited, such as only a narrative discussion of the differences or estimates covering only some of the differences. A "c" response applies if the Mid-Year Review includes updated estimates, but no explanation for the revisions is provided. A "d" response applies if the estimates of borrowing and debt have not been updated.

Answer:

b. Yes, estimates of government borrowing and debt have been updated, and information on some of the differences between the original and updated estimates is presented.

Source:

The 2018 Spring Statement - and more specifically the accompanying Economic and Fiscal Report published by the Office for Budget Responsibility - contains a fresh set of economic and fiscal forecasts covering the subsequent five year period, with a clear explanation of what has changed since the previous forecasts were produced.

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2018/>. See particularly Chapter 4.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I think that the document cited - the Spring EFO from the OBR - needs to be combined with the quarterly Debt Management Office update for all this information to be available; but if these two documents count as part of the 'In-Year Report' (as they have been in previous questions) then all this information is provided.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

While much of the information on the change in borrowing and debt estimates between the EBP and the MYR is provided in the OBR report, IBP notes that estimates of the change in the composition of the debt for 2018-19 were not available with the MYR, which was the case in previous rounds of the OBS. With the new budget process, the government did not release the usual Spring Statement document, which typically would have included such a table in Annex A (showing changes in the "financing arithmetic"). While IBP accepts the Debt Management Report, 2018-19, as both a supporting EBP and MYR document (because it cites both the Autumn Budget 2017 and the OBR March 2018 economic and fiscal outlook), the "financing arithmetic" table does not show the changes between November 2017 and March 2018. Updates of this financing information are provided during the year as part of the Debt Management Quarterly Review, but that report is considered an In-Year Report and so cannot be used for responding to this MYR question. Based on this information, IBP finds an "b" response is appropriate.

84. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted levels (including in-year changes approved by the legislature) and the actual outcome for expenditures?

GUIDELINES:

Question 84 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and actual expenditures for the year, and

whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all expenditures, along with a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if estimates of the differences for all expenditures are presented, but a narrative discussion is not included. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences are presented for some, but not all expenditures, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. Answer "d" if no estimates of the differences are presented in the Year-End Report

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all expenditures are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

At the departmental level much detail is provided in each departments annual report, in particular in the section on "Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report". For example in the Department of Health and Social Care's 2017-18 annual report (published on July 12 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>) this can be found on pages 107 to 117.

For annually managed expenditure a detailed discussion is provided in the OBR's forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP finds that, for cross-country consistency, an "a" response (rather than a "b") is appropriate, given the information provided in the departmental annual report and accounts and the OBR Forecast Evaluation Report.

85. Does the Year-End Report present expenditure estimates by any of the three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, or functional classification)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 85 asks if expenditure estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by any one of the three expenditure classifications – by administrative, economic, and functional classifications – which were addressed in Questions 1-5 above. Each of the classifications answers a different question: administrative unit indicates who spends the money; functional classification shows for what purpose is the money spent; and economic classification displays what the money is spent on. Unlike classification by administrative unit, which tends to be unique to each country, functional and economic classifications for government budgeting have been developed and standardized by international institutions. Cross-country comparisons are facilitated by adherence to these international classification standards.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present expenditure estimates by all three of the expenditure classifications. Answer "b" if expenditure estimates are presented by two of these three classifications. Answer "c" if expenditure estimates are presented by one of the three classifications. Answer "d" if expenditure estimates are not presented by any of the three classifications in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents expenditure estimates by all three expenditure classifications (by administrative, economic, and functional classification).

Source:

These are provided in <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-statistics-release>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

85b. Based on the response to Question 85, check the box(es) to identify which expenditure classifications are included in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

Administrative classification
Economic classification
Functional classification

Source:

These are provided in <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-statistics-release>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

86. Does the Year-End Report present expenditure estimates for individual programs?

GUIDELINES:

Question 86 asks if expenditure estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by program. There is no standard definition for the term "program," and the meaning can vary from country to country. However, for the purposes of answering the questionnaire, researchers should understand the term "program" to mean any level of detail below an administrative unit, such as a ministry or department.

A note for francophone countries: "Program" level detail is sometimes referred to as le plan comptable or le plan comptable detaillé. (These data are typically coded in the financial management database, following the chart of budgetary accounts, so that they can be organized by administrative and functional classification.)

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present expenditure estimates for all individual programs, accounting for all expenditures. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents expenditures for individual programs that when combined account for at least two-thirds of expenditures, but not all expenditures. Answer "c" if the Year-End Report presents programs that account for only less than two-thirds of expenditures. Answer "d" if expenditures are not presented by program in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

c. Yes, the Year-End Report presents estimates for programs accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures.

Source:

The Office for Budget Responsibility Forecast Evaluation Report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) published on the 4th December 2018 contains both previous forecasts and estimated outturns for welfare benefit programmes.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: The Central Government Supply Estimates document

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/701014/main_estimates_2018-19_web.pdf) contains spending information in quite some detail with outturn for the completed year, current year and expectations for the coming budget year.

This is not consistently presented on a 'program' basis but some of the detail could be considered a program. This would take the score up to a B perhaps if enough of the detail could be considered a 'program' for the OBS. However, it is open to judgement so I will leave this up the reviewer, and no doubt HMT will have a view as well.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher. The Central Government Supply Estimates document noted by the peer reviewer provide outturn data for FY 2016-17,

not for FY 2017-18.

87. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted levels (including in-year changes approved by the legislature) and the actual outcome for revenues?

GUIDELINES:

Question 87 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and actual revenues for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all revenues, along with a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if estimates of the differences for all revenues are presented, but a narrative discussion is not included. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences are presented for some, but not all revenues, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. Answer "d" if no estimates of the differences are presented in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of the differences between the enacted levels and the actual outcome for all revenues are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outturns for revenues (by component, including individual taxes) against their most recent forecast. Where subsequent policy changes have occurred (which in the UK is typically very rare) the estimated effect of this will be accounted for in the analysis.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

88. Does the Year-End Report present revenue estimates by category (such as tax and non-tax)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 88 asks whether revenue estimates in the Year-End Report are presented by "category"—that is, whether tax and non-tax sources of revenue are shown separately.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present revenue estimates classified by category.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents revenue estimates by category.

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outturns for revenues (by component, including individual taxes) against their most recent forecast.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

89. Does the Year-End Report present individual sources of revenue?

GUIDELINES:

Question 89 asks whether revenue estimates for individual sources of revenue are presented in the Year-End Report. The question applies to both tax and non-tax revenue.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present all sources of revenue individually, accounting for all revenue, and "other" or "miscellaneous" revenue must account for three percent or less of all revenue. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents individual sources of revenue that when combined account for at least two-thirds of all revenue, but not all revenue. Answer "c" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of individual revenue sources that account for less than two-thirds of revenue. Answer "d" if individual sources of revenue are not presented in the Year-End Report.

Answer:

a. Yes, the Year-End Report presents individual sources of revenue accounting for all revenue.

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outturns for revenues (by component, including individual taxes) against their most recent forecast.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

90. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 90 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates and the actual outcome for the fiscal year for borrowing and debt, including its composition, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 13 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal of borrowing and debt. Key estimates related to borrowing and debt include:

- *the amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year;*
- *the central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year; and*
- *the interest payments on the outstanding debt for the budget year.*

Refer to Question 14 for details on estimates in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the composition of the debt. Core information related to the composition of government debt include:

- *interest rates on the debt;*
- *maturity profile of the debt; and*
- *whether the debt is domestic or external.*

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt, including its composition, for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

c. Yes, estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of government borrowing and debt for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented.

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outturns for borrowing, debt and debt interest to the most recent official forecast.

The Debt Management Office's Quarterly Reviews provide some information on how the composition of borrowing has changed. But not all details of the composition of borrowing and debt is included.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

90b. Based on the response to Question 90, check the box(es) to identify which estimates of government borrowing and debt, including its composition, have the differences between the original forecast and the actual outcome for the year presented in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

The amount of net new borrowing required during the budget year
The central government's total debt burden at the end of the budget year
The interest payments on outstanding debt for the budget year

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outturns for borrowing, debt and debt interest to the most recent official forecast.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I think that the quarterly DMO publication does track changes in the interest rates, maturity profile, domestic/external status etc but this is not done systematically against the original government policy forecast for the year (i.e. it's a statistical release of raw information rather than an assessment of debt outturns compared to government plans). I am not that familiar with debt data issues like this so the reviewer or HMT will need to check in details.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

The quarterly debt report noted by the peer reviewer is considered an IYR, so cannot be used to respond to YER questions.

91. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original macroeconomic forecast for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year?

GUIDELINES:

Question 91 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original macroeconomic forecast for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 15 for the components of the macroeconomic forecast in the Executive's Budget Proposal. Core components include estimates of the nominal GDP level, inflation rate, real GDP growth, and interest rates, although the importance of other macroeconomic assumptions, such as the price of oil, can vary from country to country.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of the differences between all of the original macroeconomic assumptions for the fiscal year and the actual outcome for that year are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The OBR forecast evaluation report 2018 (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares the latest estimated outcome for the macroeconomic variables and how this compares to their previous forecast.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

91b. Based on the response to Question 91, check the box(es) to identify which elements of the macroeconomic forecast have the differences between the original forecast and the outcome for the year presented in the Year-End Report:

Answer:

Nominal GDP level

Inflation rate

Real GDP growth

Interest rates

Information beyond the core elements

Source:

<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

92. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 92 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 49 for the nonfinancial data on inputs included in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on inputs and the actual outcome are not presented.

Source:
Forecasts for nonfinancial data are not produced.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

93. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 93 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion. Nonfinancial data on results can include data on both outputs and outcomes, but not on inputs (which are addressed in Question 92).

Refer to Question 50 for the nonfinancial data on results included in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

d. No, estimates of the differences between the original estimates of nonfinancial data on results and the actual outcome are not presented.

Source:

Estimates of outcomes are contained in departmental reports, but are not compared to previous estimates.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

94. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the enacted level of funds for policies (both new proposals and existing policies) that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 94 asks whether the Year-End Report includes estimates of the differences between the enacted level of funds for policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 52 for assistance to the most impoverished populations in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must present estimates of the differences between the enacted level for all policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between the enacted level for all policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between the enacted level for some but not all of the policies that are intended to benefit the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented.

Answer:

a. Yes, estimates of the differences between the enacted level for all policies that are intended to benefit directly the country's most impoverished populations and the actual outcome are presented, along with a narrative discussion.

Source:

The OBR's forecast evaluation report publishes a decomposition of changes in welfare spending, much of which is targeted at disadvantaged groups (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>).

The equivalent is not done for spending on individual public services.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP finds that the presentations around welfare spending, including the detailed tables presenting welfare spending both inside and outside the caps and the accompanying narrative, are sufficient for an "a" (rather than a "c") response.

95. Does the Year-End Report present the differences between the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome?

GUIDELINES:

Question 95 asks whether the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome for the year, and whether these estimates are accompanied by a narrative discussion.

Refer to Question 33 for estimates of extra-budgetary funds in the Executive's Budget Proposal.

To answer "a," the Year-End Report must include estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome, including a narrative discussion. Answer "b" if the Year-End Report presents estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome, but does not include a narrative discussion. Answer "c" if estimates of the differences between some but not all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome are presented, regardless of whether a narrative discussion is included. A "d" response applies if estimates of the differences are not presented

Answer:

b. Yes, estimates of the differences between all of the original estimates of extra-budgetary funds and the actual outcome are presented, but a narrative discussion is not included.

Source:

The OBR's Forecast Evaluation Report (<https://obr.uk/fer/forecast-evaluation-report-december-2018/>) compares receipts of National Insurance Contributions with the level previously forecast, and contains some narrative on this.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: I choose not to review this question

Comments: As with the previous questions on extra-budgetary funds, I am simply not sure how to approach this in the UK's context with tens of thousands of public sector financial entities that could potentially be considered 'extra-budgetary funds' of some kind. If the reviewer is right and National Insurance is the only one, then the answer is correct. As noted, the IMF considered that the UK's budget coverage was quite comprehensive, suggesting there are very few (if any) extra-budgetary funds of any significant in the UK.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP recommends a "b" (rather than an "a") consistent with past treatment.

96. Is a financial statement included as part of the Year-End Report or released as a separate report?

GUIDELINES:

Question 96 asks whether a financial statement is included as part of the Year-End Report, or whether it is released as a separate report. The financial statement can include some or all of the following elements: a cash flow statement, an operating statement, a balance sheet, and notes on accounting. For purposes of responding to this question, the financial statement in question does not need to be audited. For an example of a financial statement, see the document "Financial Statements of the Government of New Zealand 2013" (<https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2013-10/fsgnz-year-jun13.pdf>)

To answer "a," a financial statement must either be included in the Year-End Report or must be released as a separate report. Answer "a" applies if a financial statement is released as a separate report, even if the Year-End Report is not publicly available. Answer "b" applies if no financial statement is released either as part of the Year-End Report or as a separate report.

Answer:

a. Yes, a financial statement is part of the Year-End Report or is released as a separate report.

Source:

The Whole of Government Accounts contains a financial statement
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-to-2017>

Individual departmental reports also contain a financial statement. See, for example, :

Department of Health annual report and accounts, published on 12th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 20th July 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

DWP annual report and accounts 2017 to 2018, published on 28th June 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

97. What type of audits (compliance, financial, or performance) has the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) conducted and made available to the public?

GUIDELINES:

Question 97 asks about the types of audits conducted by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). There are three basic types of audits:

- Financial audits are intended to determine if an entity's financial information is accurate (free from errors or fraud) and presented in accordance with the applicable financial reporting and regulatory framework. See ISSAI 200 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more detail.
- Compliance audits look at the extent to which the relevant regulations and procedures have been followed. See ISSAI 400 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more details.
- Performance audits assess whether activities are adhering to the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. See ISSAI 300 (<http://www.issai.org/issai-framework/3-fundamental-auditing-principles.htm>) for more details. ≈

Financial and compliance audits are more common than performance audits, which usually occur only once a performance framework has been agreed upon. In some countries, the SAI's mandate limits the type of audit it can conduct.

To answer "a," the SAI must have conducted all three types of audit – financial, compliance, and performance – and made all of them available to the public. A "b" response applies if the SAI has conducted two of the three audit types, and a "c" applies if it has conducted only one type of audit. Answers "b" and "c" may be selected even if the Audit Report is not publicly available, as long as the SAI has conducted compliance or performance audits and made them available to the public. A "d" response applies if the SAI has not conducted any of the three types of audits, or has not made them available to the public.

Answer:

a. The SAI has conducted all three types of audits (compliance, financial, or performance) and made them available to the public.

Source:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: The NAO's own audit and annual report - which the reviewer has cited before - would be a good example of the SAI's coverage as it lists in some detail the kinds of work they do, and how many reports they have produced overall.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

98. What percentage of expenditures within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited?

GUIDELINES:

Question 98 focuses on the coverage of audits by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), asking what percentage of expenditures within the SAI's mandate has been audited.

The SAI's mandate is typically defined in statute. Only expenditures related to budgetary central government (ministries, departments, and agencies) that are within the SAI's mandate should be considered for this question. (Question 99 addresses audits of extra-budgetary funds.) Further, the question does not apply to "secret programs" (for example, security-related expenditures that are confidential). Further, if the mandate gives the SAI the authority to outsource some audits, then those audits count for purposes of this question.

Only the Audit Report identified in Section 1 should be used to answer this question. Financial audits and compliance audits, or a hybrid of the two, can be taken into account to answer this question. Performance audits should not be considered for this question.

To answer "a," all expenditures within the SAI's mandate must be audited. A "b" response applies if at least two-thirds, but not all, expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "c" response is appropriate when less than two-thirds of expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "d" response applies when no expenditures have been audited.

Answer:

a. All expenditures within the SAI's mandate have been audited.

Source:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: As noted, I think the source cited is NOT the SAI report into the entire UK public sector or government accounts. This comes from WGA plus the individual departmental reports (and no doubt from a number of other institutions that are not covered by a sponsoring department but which nevertheless have their accounts audited by NAO or someone else). I find it hard to believe that the NAO would somehow be mandated to undertake a financial audit of an institution but decide they either don't want, or can't, actually get around to doing it. On that basis I would agree with the reviewer that the SAI/NAO have almost certainly completed their mandate for financial audit. Perhaps their annual report - which the reviewer cites above - explicitly and positively states that this is the case. It would require a close reading to do so, which is probably not necessary given the point above about NAO's likely ability to fulfill their mandate.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, and notes the discussion in Section 1 confirming that the researcher is citing the NAO annual report and accounts as an example of a departmental report rather than a consolidated, government-wide report.

99. What percentage of extra-budgetary funds within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited?

GUIDELINES:

Question 99 focuses on audits of extra-budgetary funds, asking what percentage of extra-budgetary funds within the mandate of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has been audited. These funds, although technically outside the budget, are governmental in nature and thus should be subject to the same audit requirement as other government programs.

The SAI's mandate is typically defined in statute. Only expenditures related to extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate should be considered for this question. (Question 98 addresses audits of budgetary central government.) Further, if the mandate gives the SAI the authority to outsource some audits, then those audits count for purposes of this question.

To answer "a," all extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate must be audited. A "b" response applies if extra-budgetary funds accounting for at least two-thirds of, but not all, expenditures associated with extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "c" response applies if extra-budgetary funds accounting for less than two-thirds of expenditures associated with extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited. A "d" response applies if extra-budgetary funds have not been audited.

Answer:

a. All extra-budgetary funds within the SAI's mandate have been audited.

Source:

The NAO's remit includes auditing the Whole of Government Accounts
<https://www.nao.org.uk/press-release/whole-of-government-accounts-2016-17/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: I choose not to review this question

Comments: As above, I think it's very difficult to know how many extra-budgetary funds there are in the UK (given the size of the public sector and the looseness of the definition). It could be zero, or it could be several hundred. I would probably say I agree with the reviewer's rating simply because I think it's highly unlikely that NAO would be mandated to audit an extra-budgetary fund and then say that they can't or won't do it for some reason.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

100. Does the annual Audit Report(s) prepared by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) include an executive summary?

GUIDELINES:

Question 100 asks whether the annual Audit Report includes an executive summary. Only the Audit Report identified in Section 1 should be used to answer this question. The Audit Report can be a fairly technical document, and an executive summary of the report's findings can help make it more accessible to the media and the public.

To answer "a," the Audit Report must include at least one executive summary summarizing the report's content. Answer "b" applies if the Audit Report does not include an executive summary, or the Audit Report is not made publicly available.

Answer:

a. Yes, the annual Audit Report(s) includes one or more executive summaries summarizing the report's content.

Source:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/nao-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree that a combination of the departmental reports and the WGA contain useful narrative summaries and not simply a collection of figures and this scores an A. As noted before, however, I think that the document cited by the reviewer is not the SAI's report on public sector accounts in aggregate that does this - instead, it is their report on their own performance, accounts, and audit.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher, and notes the discussion in Section 1 confirming that the researcher is citing the NAO annual report and accounts as an example of a departmental report rather than a consolidated, government-wide report.

101. Does the executive make available to the public a report on what steps it has taken to address audit recommendations or findings that indicate a need for remedial action?

GUIDELINES:

Question 101 asks whether the executive reports to the public on the steps it has taken to address audit recommendations made by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). The ultimate purpose of audits is to verify that the budget was executed in a manner consistent with existing law, and to hold the government accountable for this execution and its future improvement. The extent to which audits achieve the latter depends on whether there is adequate and timely follow-up on the recommendations provided in the SAI's audit reports.

To answer "a," the executive must report publicly on the steps it has taken to address all audit findings. A "b" response applies if the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address most, but not all, audit findings. A "c" response applies if the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address only some audit findings. As long as the executive reports publicly on the steps it has taken to address audit finding, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Audit Report is not made publicly available. A "d" response applies if the executive does not report at all on its steps to address audit findings.

Answer:

a. Yes, the executive reports publicly on what steps it has taken to address audit findings.

Source:

The Government responds to all recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and biannually publishes a report on how they are doing against all recommendations made (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/treasury-minutes-progress-on-implementing-recommendations-of-public-accounts-committee>). (Although technically this is published by the Government, not the SAI or the legislature.)

In addition the NAO can decide to publish a follow-up report on an issue.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

102. Does either the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) or legislature release to the public a report that tracks actions taken by the executive to address audit recommendations?

GUIDELINES:

Question 102 asks whether the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) or the legislature track actions by the executive to address audit recommendations. After audit results and recommendations are discussed and validated by the legislature, the executive is normally asked to take certain actions to address the audit findings. For accountability purposes, the public needs to be informed about the status of those actions, and steps the executive has taken to address audit recommendations. In addition to the executive reporting on its actions (see Question 101), the SAI and legislature – as the key oversight institutions – have a responsibility to keep the public informed by tracking the executive's progress in addressing audit recommendations.

To answer "a," the SAI or legislature must report publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address all audit findings. A "b" response applies if the SAI or legislature reports publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address most, but not all, audit findings. A "c" response applies if the SAI or legislature reports publicly on what steps the executive has taken to address only some audit findings. As long as the SAI or legislature reports publicly on the steps the executive has taken, answer "a," "b," or "c" may be selected, even if the Audit Report is not made publicly available. A "d" response applies if neither the SAI nor the legislature reports on the executive's steps to address audit findings.

Answer:

d. No, neither the SAI nor legislature reports on steps the executive has taken to address audit recommendations.

Source:

These are given to the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons and published here: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/publications/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP finds that the appropriate response is "d" (rather than "a"). The report released on the Public Accounts Committee website is prepared by the executive ("Treasury minutes") and so under OBS methodology is not considered a separate report prepared by either the legislature or the auditor tracking executive action. Rather it is effectively the same information prepared by the executive cited in response to Q101.

103. Is there an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) that conducts budget analyses for the budget formulation and/or approval process?

GUIDELINES:

Question 103 examines whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) exists that contributes budget analyses to the budget formulation and/or approval process. According to the Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions, adopted by the OECD Council in 2014, "independent fiscal institutions are publicly funded, independent bodies under the statutory authority of the executive or the legislature which provide non-partisan oversight and analysis of, and in some cases advice on, fiscal policy and performance", and with "a forward-looking ex ante diagnostic task". In practice, they come in two main forms:

- *Parliamentary budget offices (also known as PBOs) such as the Congressional Budget Office in the United States (<https://www.cbo.gov/>), the Parliamentary Budget Office in South Africa (<https://www.parliament.gov.za/parliamentary-budget-office>), and the Center for Public Finance Studies in Mexico (Centro de Estudios de las Finanzas Públicas, <http://www.cefp.gob.mx/>); or*
- *Fiscal councils such as the Office for Budget Responsibility in the United Kingdom (<https://obr.uk/>), the Fiscal Policy Council in Sweden (Finanspolitiska Rådet, <http://www.finanspolitiskaradet.com/>), and the High Council for Public Finances in France (Haut Conseil des finances publiques, <https://www.hcfp.fr/>).*

For more information, see von Trapp et al. 'Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions and Case Studies', OECD Journal on Budgeting 15:2 (special issue, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1787/budget-15-5jm2795tv625>.

To answer "a," there must be an IFI, and its independence must be set in law. In addition, it must have sufficient staffing and resources, including funding, to carry out its tasks. Answer "b" applies if an IFI exists, but either its independence is not set in law or its staffing and resources are insufficient to carry out its tasks. Answer "c" applies if an IFI exists, but its independence is not set in law and it lacks sufficient staffing and resources. Answer "d" applies if no IFI exists.

If the answer is "a," "b," or "c," please specify in the comments the name and type of IFI that exists (e.g., parliamentary budget office or fiscal council). If the answer is "a" or "b," identify the law that guarantees its independence, and provide evidence in support of the assessment of the adequacy of its staffing and resources. This can include the IFI's total budget allocation over recent years, any press reports that discuss perceived funding shortfalls, assessments by international organizations, and/or information from interviews with staff of the IFI.

Answer:

a. Yes, there is an IFI, its independence is set in law, and it has sufficient staffing and resources, including funding, to carry out its tasks.

Source:

The UK has an IFI - the Office for Budget Responsibility (<https://obr.uk/>).

The legislation establishing the OBR can be found here: <https://obr.uk/topics/legislation-and-related-material/#legislation>

The same webpage also links to an external review of the OBR which, rightly, was favourable about the work that the OBR is doing.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

104. Does the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) publish macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasts?

GUIDELINES:

Question 104 assesses whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) has a role in producing the macroeconomic forecast (e.g., GDP growth, inflation, interest rates, etc.) and/or the fiscal forecast (revenues, expenditure, deficits, and debt), and if so, what kind of role it has. Macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasting is a typical core function across IFIs, but their role in forecasting takes several forms (von Trapp et al. 2016, p. 17 and Table 2). Some IFIs produce just a macroeconomic forecast, while others produce a complete fiscal forecast (which also typically requires an underlying macroeconomic forecast). In some cases, the fiscal forecast reflects continuation of current budget policies; such forecasts can be used by the legislature, the media, or the public to assess the projections in the executive's budget reflecting the government's policy proposals.

Some IFIs produce the official macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts used in the executive's budget. In other cases, IFIs do not prepare their own independent forecasts, but rather produce an assessment of the official estimates, or provide an opinion on, or endorsement of, the government's forecasts. Some others have no role at all in forecasting.

To answer "a", there must be an IFI that publishes both its own macroeconomic AND fiscal forecasts. Answer "b" applies if an IFI publishes its own macroeconomic OR fiscal forecast (but not both). Answer "c" applies if the IFI does not publish a macroeconomic or fiscal forecast, but rather publishes an assessment of the official forecasts produced by the executive and used in the budget. Choose option "d" if there is no IFI; or if there is an IFI that neither publishes its own macroeconomic and/or fiscal forecasts, nor a commentary on the official forecasts for the budget.

Macroeconomic forecasts may include indicators relating to economic output and economic growth, inflation, and the labor market, amongst others. Fiscal forecasts may include estimates of revenues, expenditures, the budget balance, and debt. If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify which indicators and estimates are included in the forecasts and whether the forecast is used by government as the official forecast. If the answer is "c," please describe the nature and depth of the assessment (e.g., the length of the commentary, or whether it covers both economic and fiscal issues).

Answer:

a. Yes, the IFI publishes its own macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts.

Source:

The OBR produces economic and fiscal forecasts twice a year in its "Economic and Fiscal Outlooks". Since the inception of the OBR in 2010 the Chancellor has on every occasion chosen to adopt these forecasts as the Government's own official forecasts.

<https://obr.uk/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

105. Does the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) publish its own costings of new policy proposals, to assess their impact on the budget?

GUIDELINES:

Question 105 assesses whether an Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) has a costing function that involves assessing the budgetary implications of new policy proposals for both revenues and expenditures, and if so, what kind of role it has. Many IFIs have a costing role, but with substantial diversity in the nature and extent of this work (von Trapp et al 2016, pp. 17-18 and Table 2). Some assess virtually all new policy proposals, while others cost only a selection of new policy proposals. Others only publish opinions on, or scrutinize the costings of, budget measures produced by the executive.

To answer "a," the IFI must publish its own costings of all (or virtually all) new policy proposals. Answer "b" applies if the IFI publishes its own costings, but only for major new policy proposals – for instance, only those proposals that cost or save above a certain amount. Answer "c" applies if the IFI publishes its own costings, but only on a limited number of proposals. This could occur, for instance, if the IFI lacked the capacity to assess proposals dealing with certain sectors. Instead of producing a cost estimate, it can also publish an assessment of the estimates produced by the executive. Answer "d" applies if there is no IFI; or if the IFI does not publish its own costings of new policy proposals or provide an assessment of the official costings of new policy proposals.

Answer:

a. Yes, the IFI publishes its own costings of all new policy proposals.

Source:

Government departments produce the costings. But the OBR interrogates these and states whether it deems them to be reasonable or central. It also indicates qualitatively how confident it is possible to be about the costing of each measure. On a small number of occasions measures have been announced at a Fiscal Event and the OBR has stated that these were made available to it at too late a stage for it to be able to sign off the costing. But these cases are not the norm and, in any case, these costings are then revisited at the subsequent Fiscal Event. In the vast majority of cases the IFI is signing off the costings, and accepting them into its own forecasts which are intended to be a central estimate.

Details are here: <https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/policy-costings/> . In my view the OBR is accepting the vast majority of costings as its own (and then publishing them).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment
IBP defers to the researcher, who indicates that, even though the government departments produce costings, this work is done under the supervision of the OBR and the OBR takes ownership of the costings and publishes them.

106. In the past 12 months, how frequently did the head or a senior staff member of the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) take part and testify in hearings of a committee of the legislature?

GUIDELINES:

Question 106 concerns the interaction between two important oversight actors and assesses how frequently the Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) made high-level inputs to the work of legislative committees. Almost all IFIs interact with the legislature in some form (von Trapp et al 2016, p. 18), but the intensity of the interaction varies. This question assesses this aspect by asking, with reference to the past 12 months, how frequently the head or a senior staff member of the IFI took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature. The intent is to assess the extent to which the IFI staff member in question was not only present at a meeting of a legislative committee, but was an active participant (as opposed to a passive observer, serving only as a resource when called upon). As evidence to support your answer, you can refer to official records of legislative committees, websites and annual reports of the IFI, press releases and media coverage, for example. Choose answer "a" if this occurred five times or more; "b" for three times or more, but less than five times; and "c" for once or twice. Answer "d" should be selected if the head or a senior staff member of the IFI never took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature, or if there is no IFI.

Answer:

b. Sometimes (i.e., three times or more, but less than five times).

Source:

In calendar year 2018 the OBR gave evidence to:
Treasury Select Committee after the March 2018 Spring Statement
Treasury Select Committee after the October 2018 Budget

In addition evidence was given to devolved administrations:
National Assembly for Wales in November 2018
Scottish Parliament in January 2018

<https://obr.uk/topics/evidence-to-parliaments/>
<http://senedd.assembly.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=440&MId=5132&Ver=4>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment
IBP accepts all of the testimony listed, so a "b" response is appropriate (rather than a "c").

107. Does the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 107 asks whether the legislature debates budget policies prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal. In general, prior to discussing the Executive's Budget Proposal for the coming year, the legislature should have an opportunity to review the government's broad budget priorities and fiscal parameters. Often times this information is laid out in a Pre-Budget Statement, which the executive presents to the legislature for debate. (See Questions 54-58.)

A number of countries conduct a pre-budget debate in the legislature around six months before the start of the budget year. In some cases, they adopt laws that guide the upcoming budget, for example the Budget Guidelines Law in Brazil and the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill in Sweden. A pre-budget debate can serve two main purposes: 1) to allow the executive to inform the legislature of its fiscal policy intentions by presenting updated reports on its annual and medium-term budget strategy and policy priorities; and 2) to establish "hard" multi-year fiscal targets or spending ceilings, which the government must adhere to when preparing its detailed spending estimates for the upcoming budget year.

To answer "a," the full legislature must debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.

Answer "b" applies if a legislative committee (but not the full legislature) debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, and approves recommendations for the budget. Option "b" also applies if, in addition to the action by the committee, the full legislature also debates budget policy in advance of the budget, but does not approve recommendations.

Answer "c" applies if the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, but does not approve recommendations for the budget. Answer "d" applies if neither the full legislature nor any legislative committee debate budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal.

In your comment, please indicate the dates of the budget debate, and if both the full legislature and a legislative committee held a debate. Note that a debate does not need to be open to the public, but a public record of the meeting or a public notice that the meeting occurred is required. In addition, please indicate whether the budget debate was focused on a Pre-Budget Statement published by the Executive. If the Executive did not publish a Pre-Budget Statement, then please indicate what served as the focus of the legislature's debate (for instance, a report released by an IFI or some other institution).

Answer:

c. Yes, the full legislature and/or a legislative committee debates budget policy prior to the tabling of the Executive's Budget Proposal, but it does not approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.

Source:

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee published a report on the 2018 Spring Statement in advance of the Autumn 2018 Budget <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/spring-statement-2018-17-19/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the cited report contains only oral evidence, but not recommendations. Therefore, a "c" response is more appropriate than the original "b" response.

108. How far in advance of the start of the budget year does the legislature receive the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 108 examines how far in advance of the start of the budget year the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal. International good practice recommends that the Executive's Budget Proposal should be submitted to the legislature far enough in advance to allow the legislature time to review it properly, or at least three months prior to the start of the fiscal year. (See, for instance, Principle 2.2.2 of the IMF's Fiscal Transparency Handbook (2018) (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/IMF069/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859/24788-9781484331859.xml>).

For the purposes of responding to this question, if – and only if – the most recent budget submission occurred later than usual as a result of a particular event, such as an election, please use a more normal year as the basis for the response. If, however, delays have been observed for more than one budget year, and the legislature has not received the Executive's Budget Proposal in a timely manner on more than one occasion in the last three years, then "d" will be the appropriate answer.

To answer "a," the legislature must receive the Executive's Budget Proposal at least three months in advance of the start of the budget year. Answer "b" applies if the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least two months, but less than three months, before the start of the budget year. Answer "c" applies if the legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month, but less than two months, before the start of the budget year. Answer "d" applies if the legislature does not receive the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month prior to the start of the budget year, or does not receive it at

all.

Answer:

a. The legislature receives the Executive's Budget Proposal at least three months before the start of the budget year.

Source:

The Chancellor presented his Budget to parliament on the 29 October 2018, which is more than three months before the start of the 2019-20 fiscal year (which starts on 1 April).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

109. When does the legislature approve the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 109 examines when the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal. International good practice recommends that the Executive's Budget Proposal should be approved by the legislature before the start of the fiscal year the budget proposal refers to. This gives the executive time to implement the budget in its entirety, particularly new programs and policies.

In some countries, the expenditure and revenue estimates of the Executive's Budget Proposal are approved separately; for purposes of this question, at least the expenditure estimates must be approved. Further, approval of the budget implies approval of the full-year budget, not just a short-term continuation of spending and revenue authority.

To answer "a," the legislature must approve the Executive's Budget Proposal at least one month before the start of the budget year. Answer "b" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal less than one month in advance of the start of the budget year, but at least by the start of the budget year. Answer "c" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal less than one month after the start of the budget year. Answer "d" applies if the legislature approves the Executive's Budget Proposal more than one month after the start of the budget year, or does not approve the budget.

Answer:

b. The legislature approves the budget less than one month in advance of the start of the budget year, but at least by the start of the budget year.

Source:

The 2018 Finance Act received Royal Assent on the 15th March 2018, which is a couple of weeks before the start of the financial year 2018-19 <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/financen2.html>

This is a change from previously where the Finance Act, when holding the Budget in the Spring would lead to the Finance Act being passed later in the process.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

c. The legislature approves the budget less than one month after the start of the budget year.

Comments: The reviewer has mentioned previously that the Main Estimates for 2018 were actually passed after the start of the financial year (I think it was 18th July). It will depend on whether the Finance Bill and/or the Estimates are taken together as the 'EBP'. The score is correct for the Finance Bill, which was passed in good time. The Estimates were not passed in good time (and would score a D). Perhaps this averages out to a B or C? This is something that the OBS could comment on perhaps.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher. The UK budget is enacted in two bills: the Supply and Appropriation Act and the Finance Act. For purposes of responding to this question, OBS methodology allows for the one that is enacted first to be considered, which in this case is the Finance Act. This is consistent with the response to EB-3a.

110. Does the legislature have the authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 110 examines the legislature's power to amend—as opposed to simply accept or reject—the budget proposal presented by the executive. This question is about legal authority rather than actions the legislature takes in practice. The legislature's powers to amend the budget can vary substantially across countries.

The "a" response is appropriate only if there are no restrictions on the right of the legislature to modify the Executive's Budget Proposal, including its right to change the size of the proposed deficit or surplus. The "b" response would be appropriate if, for instance, the legislature is restricted from changing the deficit or surplus, but it still has the power to increase or decrease funding and revenue levels. The more limited "c" response would apply if, for instance, the legislature can only re-allocate spending within the totals set in the Executive's Budget Proposal or can only decrease funding levels or increase revenues. Finally, response "d" would apply if the legislature may not make any changes (or only small technical changes), or if amendments must first be approved by the executive. In these cases, the legislature is essentially only able to approve or reject the budget as a whole. If the answer is "b" or "c", please indicate the nature of the amendment powers available to the Parliament and how they are limited.

Answer:

c. Yes, the legislature has authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal, but its authority is very limited.

Source:

"only the Crown (in practice, the Government) can make proposals for spending or taxation – this is known as the financial initiative of the Crown"
"Money bills can't start in the Lords and the Lords can't amend them."
<https://beta.parliament.uk/collections/C6pm6WK1>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

111. During the most recent budget approval process, did the legislature use its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 111 assesses whether any formal authority of the legislature to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal is used in practice. The responses to this question should be determined based on action by the legislature related to the Enacted Budget used in the OBS. Choose answer "a" if the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal during the most recent budget approval process, and amendments were adopted (all, or at least some of them). Answer "a" also applies if the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal, but the amendments were rejected by executive veto. Answer "b" applies if the legislature used its authority in law to propose amendments to the Executive's Budget Proposal, but none of these amendments were adopted. Answer "c" applies if the legislature has the authority in law to amend the budget, but no amendments were proposed during its consideration. Answer "d" applies when the legislature does not have any authority to amend the budget (that is, Question 110 is answered "d").

If the answer is "a" or "b", please specify in the comments the number of amendments introduced by the legislature (and in the case of an "a" response, the number adopted, or if applicable, information about an executive veto) and describe their nature. For example, did the amendments result in an increase or decrease of the deficit? What were the most significant amendments to revenues and to expenditures in terms of the sums involved? How did amendments affect the composition of expenditures? If the answer is "a," please specify which amendments were adopted, and provide evidence for it.

Answer:

a. Yes, the legislature used its authority in law to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal, and (at least some of) its amendments were adopted.

Source:

Changes were made to the Finance Bill 2018 as it progressed through Parliament. Full details of the changes are available here:
<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financeno2/documents.html> - this includes a "tracked changes" version out explicitly what amendments were made to the original bill.

While the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act was not amended prior to being enacted, subsequent changes were implemented through the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Act 2019. Details are available here:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/6/schedule/1/paragraph/1>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

112. During the last budget approval process, did a specialized budget or finance committee in the legislature examine the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

Question 112 assesses the role of a specialized budget or finance committee during the budget approval stage. Effective committee involvement is an essential condition for legislative influence in the budget process. Specialized committees provide opportunities for individual legislators to gain relevant expertise, and to examine budgets and policy in depth. Yet, the involvement of committees differs across legislatures. Some legislatures have separate committees to examine spending and tax proposals, while others have a single finance committee. Not all legislatures have a specialized budget or finance committee to examine the budget. In addition, there can be differences in the time available for the committee's analysis of the budget.

A report with the committee's findings and recommendations is intended to inform the debate in the full legislature, therefore it must be published before the legislature has adopted the budget.

Response "a" requires that, in the last budget approval process, a specialized budget or finance committee had one month or more to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and it published a report with findings and recommendations prior to the budget being adopted. Response "b" applies where such a committee examined the draft budget and published a report, but within a shorter timeframe of less than one month. Response "c" applies if a committee examined the budget (without regard to the time period), but did not publish a report prior to the adoption of the budget. Response "d" applies where a specialized budget or finance committee did not examine the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Please specify in your comment the name of the committee and the number of days it had available to examine the budget and to publish a report. For bicameral legislatures where one house or chamber has greater constitutional authority in budgetary matters, the question applies to the house or chamber (usually the upper or second one) that is decisive. For bicameral legislatures with co-equal houses or chambers, the question should be answered with reference to the one that achieves the higher score for this question. In the case of bicameral legislatures, please note the relevant arrangements in each house or chamber. If applicable, provide a copy of the report. Please note also if a report is published, but only after the budget has been adopted.

Answer:

a. Yes, a specialized budget or finance committee had at least one month to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and it published a report with findings and recommendations prior to the budget being adopted.

Source:

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee report into the 2017 Budget was published on 22 January 2018, which was more than one month before the 2018 Finance Bill was enacted.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-autumn-2017-17-19/>

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financen2/documents.html>

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/financen2.html>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

113. During the last approval process, did legislative committees, responsible for particular sectors (e.g., health, education, defense, etc.), examine spending in the Executive's Budget Proposal related to the sector for which they are responsible?

GUIDELINES:

Question 113 assesses the role of committees of the legislature that are responsible for particular sectors (e.g., health, education, defense, etc.) during the budget approval stage. The role of sectoral committees differs across legislatures. Some legislatures do not involve them in the budget approval process, while others do. In addition, the time available for committee analysis differs.

A report with the committee's findings and recommendations is intended to inform the debate in the full legislature, so therefore must be published before the legislature has adopted the budget. Response "a" requires that sector committees had one month or more to examine the Executive's Budget Proposal, and published a report with findings and recommendations prior the budget being adopted. Response "b" applies where such committees examined the draft budget and published a report, but within a shorter timeframe of less than one month. Response "c" applies if sectoral committees examined the budget (without regard to the time period), but did not publish a report prior to the adoption of the budget. Response "d" applies where sectoral committees did not examine the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Please provide in the comments a brief overview of the committee structure and specify the number of days that sectoral committees had available to examine the budget and to publish their reports. For bicameral legislatures where one house or chamber has greater constitutional authority in budgetary matters, the question applies to the house or chamber (usually the upper or second one) that is decisive. For bicameral legislatures with co-equal houses or chambers, the question should be answered with reference to the one that achieves the higher score for this question. In the case of bicameral legislatures, please note the relevant arrangements in each house or chamber. If applicable, provide a sample copy of at least one of the reports. Please note if a report is published, but only after the budget has been adopted.

For purposes of responding to this question, use those sectoral committees that are best performing – that is, the ones that examine the budget the longest and that publish reports.

Answer:

d. No, sector committees did not examine the Executive's Budget Proposal.

Source:

The main change to previously set spending plans for the financial year 2018-19 that was announced in the Autumn 2017 Budget was an increase in planned day-to-day spending on the NHS. But I don't see any evidence this was specifically examined by the House of Commons Health and Social Care committee.

(There were, however, a set of Estimates Days debates in the House of Commons, including one on NHS spending:
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2018/february/estimates-day-debates-2017-18/>).

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

114. In the past 12 months, did a committee of the legislature examine in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget during the relevant budget execution period?

GUIDELINES:

Question 114 is about legislative oversight of budget execution. It assesses whether and how often a committee examined the implementation of the budget during the budget execution period (i.e., financial year) for which it was approved, and whether this resulted in an official report with findings and recommendations. This question does not apply to the ex post review of implementation following the end of the budget year as part of the audit stage, which is assessed separately. Nor does it apply to the legislature's review of the budget that it may undertake as part of the process of considering a supplemental budget during the year. In-year monitoring by the legislature will be affected by the frequency that the executive publishes In-Year Reports.

To answer "a," a committee must have examined in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget at least three times during the course of the relevant budget year and published reports with findings and recommendations. Answer "b" applies where this occurred only once or twice during the year.

Exception: If a legislature is in session only twice during the year, and it examines the implementation of the budget during both sessions, then it would be eligible for an "a" response.

Choose "c" if a committee examined in-year implementation (without regard to frequency), but did not publish any report with findings and recommendations. Answer "d" applies where no committee examined in-year implementation.

If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation, and provide a copy of its report(s). If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation.

For purposes of responding to this question, if more than one committee holds in-year reviews of the budget, use the committee that is best performing – that is, the one that examines in-year implementation the most times and that publishes a report.

Answer:

b. Yes, a committee examined in-year implementation on one or more occasion (but less than three times), and it published a report with findings and recommendations.

Source:

The Treasury Select Committee conducted an inquiry into the Autumn 2018 Budget. While the focus of the report was on the Budget policy decisions it did look at, for example, developments in the economy and public finances so far in 2018-19.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-2018-17-19/>

A smaller inquiry was conducted for the Spring Statement (<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/spring-statement-2018-17-19/>)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

115. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units that receive explicit funding in the Enacted Budget, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 115 examines whether the executive seeks approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units, and whether it is legally required to do so.

In some countries, the executive has the power in law to adjust funding levels for specific appropriations during the execution of the budget. This question examines rules around shifting funds between administrative units (ministries, departments, or agencies) or whatever funding unit (or "vote") is specified in the Enacted Budget.

The conditions under which the executive may exercise its discretion to shift funds should be clearly defined in publicly available regulations or law. In addition, the amount of funds that the executive is allowed to transfer between administrative units should not be so excessive as to undermine the accountability of the executive to the legislature.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before shifting funds between administrative units, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive obtains legislative approval before shifting funds between administrative units, but is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to receive legislative approval before shifting funds, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to shift funds between administrative units and the executive does not obtain legislative approval in practice. Answer "d" also applies if the executive is authorized to shift an amount considered so excessive as to undermine accountability (roughly equal to 3 percent of total budgeted expenditures). A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the shifting of funds after it has already occurred.

In the comments, please indicate any law or regulation that provides the executive with standing authority to shift funds between administrative units and, if so, describe that authority. Similarly, legislative approval for shifting funds between administrative units typically occurs with the adoption of legislation such as a supplemental budget. But if other formal procedures for gaining approval from the legislature exist, then please provide information about that approval process.

Answer:

a. The executive is required by law or regulation to obtain approval from the legislature prior to shifting funds between administrative units, and it does so in practice.

Source:

Such changes are made via Supplementary Supply Estimates which are made towards the end of the relevant financial year. This was done in February 2018 with respect to the financial year 2017-18.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/commons/house-of-commons-supply-estimates/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

116. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenue (that is, amounts higher than originally anticipated) that may become available during the budget execution period, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 116 examines whether the executive receives approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenue, and whether it is legally required to do so. Good practice requires the legislature to approve changes in revenue or expenditure relative to the Enacted Budget. For example, if additional revenue is collected unexpectedly during the year, which often happens in oil/mineral-dependent countries, and it was not accounted for in the Enacted Budget, there should be a procedure in place to ensure that the legislature approves any proposed use of these "new" funds. If such requirements are not in place, the executive might deliberately underestimate revenue in the budget proposal it submits to the legislature, in order to have additional resources to spend at the executive's discretion, with no legislative control.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before spending any funds resulting from higher-than-expected revenues, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive obtains legislative approval before spending excess revenue, but is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to receive legislative approval before spending excess revenue, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if prior legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to spend excess revenue and the executive does not obtain legislative approval in practice. A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the additional spending after it has already occurred.

Typically, legislative approval of additional spending beyond what was reflected in the Enacted Budget would occur with the adoption of a supplemental budget. But other formal procedures for getting approval from the legislature in advance of it adopting the supplemental budget may exist. If that is the case, then please provide information about that approval process.

Answer:

a The executive is required by law or regulation to obtain approval from the legislature prior to spending excess revenues, and it does so in practice.

Source:

Such changes are made via Supplementary Supply Estimates which are made towards the end of the relevant financial year. This was done in February 2018 with respect to the financial year 2017-18.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/commons/house-of-commons-supply-estimates/>

(An exception to this is where funds have been previously allocated to a contingency fund.)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

117. Does the executive seek approval from the legislature prior to reducing spending below the levels in the Enacted Budget in response to revenue shortfalls (that is, revenues lower than originally anticipated) or other reasons during the budget execution period, and is it legally required to do so?

GUIDELINES:

Question 117 examines whether the executive receives approval from the legislature prior to cutting spending below the levels in the Enacted Budget in response to revenue shortfalls or for any other reason, and whether it is legally required to do so. Good practice requires the legislature to approve changes in revenue or expenditure relative to the Enacted Budget. For example, if less revenue is collected unexpectedly during the year, the legislature should approve or reject any proposed reductions in expenditures that are implemented as a result. If such requirements are not in place, the executive might substantially change the composition of the budget at the executive's discretion, with no legislative control.

Typically, legislative approval of proposals to reduce spending below the levels reflected in the Enacted Budget would occur as part of the supplemental budget. But other formal procedures for getting approval from the legislature in advance of it adopting the supplemental budget may exist. If that is the case, then please provide information about that approval process.

To answer "a," the executive is required by law or regulation to obtain prior legislative approval before implementing spending cuts in response to revenue shortfalls or for other reasons, and it does so in practice. Answer "b" applies if the executive received legislative approval before implementing such cuts, but

is not legally required to do so. Answer "c" applies if the executive is legally required to obtain legislative approval before implementing such cuts, but does not do so in practice. Answer "d" applies if legislative approval is not legally required for the executive to implement such cuts and the executive does not obtain such approval in practice. A "d" response applies if the legislature only approves the spending cuts after they have already occurred.

Answer:

d. There is no law or regulation requiring the executive to obtain approval from the legislature prior to reducing spending below enacted levels, and in practice the executive implements these spending cuts before seeking prior approval from the legislature.

Source:

Underspending of departmental budgets is a fairly common occurrence as budgets are ceilings rather than targets.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

118. Did a committee of the legislature examine the Audit Report on the annual budget produced by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 118 is about ex post oversight following the implementation of the budget. It probes whether a committee examined the Audit Report on the annual budget produced by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), and whether this resulted in an official report with findings and recommendations. A key issue is how soon after the SAI releases the report does it legislature review it. This question does not apply to the legislative scrutiny of in-year implementation of the Enacted Budget during the relevant budget execution period, which is assessed separately. Also, the question is asking specifically about the SAI's annual report on the execution of the budget, not about other audit reports that the SAI may produce. (This is the Audit Report used for responding to Question 98.)

To answer "a," a legislative committee must have examined the annual Audit Report within three months of it being released by the SAI, and then published a report (or reports) with findings and recommendations. (Note that the three-month period should only take into account time when the legislature is in session.)

Answer "b" applies when the committee examines it within six months of it being released (but more than three months), and then published a report with its findings and recommendations. Choose "c" if a committee examined the annual Audit Report more than six months after it became available or it did not publish any report with findings and recommendations. Answer "d" applies where no committee examined the annual Audit Report.

If the answer is "a" or "b," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed the Audit Report, and provide a copy of its report(s). If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the committee and when it reviewed budget implementation. Answers "a," "b," or "c" may be selected if the Audit Report is produced by the SAI but not made publicly available.

Answer:

a. Yes, a committee examined the Audit Report on the annual budget within three months of its availability, and it published a report with findings and recommendations.

Source:

There is no single audit report. But the National Audit Office's annual report for 2017-18, published on June 26 2018 (so within 3 months of the end of 2017-18) states that "during the year we certified 370 accounts, published 65 reports and 32 guides on a wide range of public expenditure issues, supported 51 evidence sessions of the Committee of Public Accounts".

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer: e. Not applicable/other (please comment).

Comments: This is open to judgement. The WGA is perhaps the closest to a formal UK public sector audit report; but as far as I know it is not subject to a full Treasury Committee or PAC hearing and follow up report. So the answer might be D - no examination of the WGA, and no audit report.

However, this misses the point of the UK system of accounts where in reality the detail is delegated to individual departments who would answer to their Select Committees in Parliament if there was a problem (or at least a serious one) with their audit report contained within their annual report. I would probably agree with A as the UK system provides the level of assurance that this answer implies, but it is not delivered the way that the A score suggests.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

119. Was the process of appointing (or re-appointing) the current head of the SAI carried out in a way that ensures his or her independence?

GUIDELINES:

Question 119 concerns the appointment process of the current head of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). Appointment procedures vary greatly across countries, as well as across different types of SAIs. Moreover, conventions and informal practices can greatly affect the de facto independence of the head of the SAI. While these factors make it difficult to devise a single metric against which all SAIs can be assessed with regard to this particular aspect, this question focuses on whether the legislature or judiciary must appoint or approve the appointment of the head of the SAI as a way to ensure the SAI's independence from the executive. However, if the appointment is carried out in another way that nonetheless ensures the independence of the SAI head, then that approach could be also considered.

To answer "a," the legislature or judiciary must appoint (or re-appoint) the head of the SAI, or approve the recommendation of the executive, as a way that ensure his or her independence from the executive. (As noted above, alternative approaches may also be acceptable.) Choose "b" if the appointment process does not ensure the independence of the head of the SAI, e.g. the executive may appoint the head of the SAI without the final consent of the legislature or judiciary.

Irrespective of which answer you selected, provide a description of how the head of the SAI is appointed.

Answer:

a. Yes, the head of the SAI may only be appointed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before the appointment takes effect.

Source:

The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 sets out the process, which requires the Prime Minister having the agreement of the chair of the Committee of Public Accounts before obtaining the consent of the House of Commons.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

120. Must a branch of government other than the executive (such as the legislature or the judiciary) give final consent before the head of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) can be removed from office?

GUIDELINES:

Question 120 covers the manner in which the head or senior members of the SAI may be removed from office. This question draws on best practices identified in the Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/LimaDeclaration.pdf>), including measures intended to guarantee the office's independence from the executive.

To answer "a," the head of the SAI may only be removed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before the head of the SAI is removed. For example, the legislature or judiciary may give final consent following a certain external process, such as a criminal proceeding. So while the executive may initiate a criminal proceeding, the final consent of a member of the judiciary – or a judge – is necessary to render a verdict of wrongdoing that may lead to the removal from office of the head of the SAI. Answer "b" applies if the executive may remove the head of the SAI without the final consent of the judiciary or legislature.

Answer:

a. Yes, the head of the SAI may only be removed by the legislature or judiciary, or the legislature or judiciary must give final consent before he or she is removed.

Source:

Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 states that both Houses of Parliament need to give consent to remove the Comptroller and Auditor General. (He or she is able to resign.)

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

121. Who determines the budget of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI)?

GUIDELINES:

Question 121 asks who determines the budget of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). To ensure objective audits of government budgets, another important component of the SAI's independence from the executive is the extent to which the SAI's budget is determined by a body other than the executive, and whether the SAI has adequate resources to fulfill its mandate.

Answer "a" applies if the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate, AND either the SAI determines its own budget and then submits it to the executive (which accepts it with little or no change) or directly to the legislature, or the budget of the SAI is determined directly by the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body). Answer "b" applies if the SAI's budget is determined by the executive (absent a recommendation from the SAI), and the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Answer "c" applies if the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body) determines the SAI's budget, but the funding level is not consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Answer "d" applies if the executive determines the SAI's budget, and the funding level is not consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate. Please provide evidence in support of the assessment that the funding level is or is not broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate.

Answer:

a. The SAI determines its own budget (i.e., submits it to the executive, which accepts it with little or no change, or directly to the legislature), or the budget of the SAI is determined by the legislature or judiciary (or some independent body), and the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs to fulfill its mandate.

Source:

Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/4/contents/enacted>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

122. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) have the discretion in law to undertake those audits it may wish to?

GUIDELINES:

Question 122 explores the scope of the investigative powers of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) as prescribed in law.

Question 97 asks which of the three types of audits – financial, compliance, and performance – the SAI conducts. This question asks if the SAI is constrained by law (rather than by a lack of capacity or an inadequate budget) from undertaking any form of audit or investigating irregularities in any program or activity.

There are numerous examples of limitations. For instance, some SAIs are not permitted by their legal mandate to audit joint ventures or other public-private arrangements. Others are only allowed to undertake financial audits, precluded from conducting performance or value-for-money audits. The SAIs in some countries do not have the legal mandate to review arrangements involving oil or stabilization funds, or other types of special or extra-budgetary funds. The SAI may also not have the ability to audit commercial projects involving the public and private sector.

To answer "a," the SAI must have full discretion in law to decide which audits to undertake. Answer "b" applies if some limitations exist, but the SAI enjoys significant discretion to undertake those audits it wishes to. Answer "c" applies if the SAI has some discretion, but significant legal limitations exist. Answer "d" applies if the SAI has no power at all to choose which audits to undertake

Consulting the Lima Declaration of Guidelines on Auditing Precepts (<http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/LimaDeclaration.pdf>) may be useful in answering this question as its provisions serve to define the appropriate scope of a SAI's legal mandate and jurisdiction.

Answer:

a. The SAI has full discretion to decide which audits it wishes to undertake.

Source:

The legislation makes clear that the Comptroller and Auditor General is able to do the audits that it wants to do. Auditing of many accounts of departments and public bodies are required by law, and therefore the Comptroller and Auditor General is not free to choose not to do some audits.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/4/pdfs/ukpga_20110004_en.pdf

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

123. Are the audit processes of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) reviewed by an independent agency?

GUIDELINES:

Question 123 assesses whether and to what extent the audit processes of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) are subject to review by an independent agency. The latter could be a peer SAI, an international organization, an academic institution with relevant expertise, or an independent domestic agency with quality assurance functions in the area of financial reporting.

To answer "a," an independent agency must conduct and publish a review of the audit processes of the SAI on an annual basis. Answer "b" applies if a review was carried out within the past five years, and published, but it is not conducted annually, but. Choose answer "c" if the SAI has an internal unit that reviews the audit processes of the SAI on a regular basis, but an independent agency does not conduct such a review. Answer "d" applies if the audit processes of the SAI are reviewed neither by an independent agency nor by a unit within the SAI.

If the answer is either "a" or "b," please specify the name of the independent agency and when last it conducted such a review, and provide a copy of the published report. If the answer is "c," please specify the name of the unit within the SAI that is tasked with conducting such reviews.

Answer:

c. No, but a unit within the SAI conducts a review of the audit processes of the SAI on a regular basis.

Source:

The National Audit Office publishes a "Transparency Report" each year

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NAO-Transparency-Report-2017-18.pdf>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

124. In the past 12 months, how frequently did the head or a senior staff member of the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) take part and testify in hearings of a committee of the legislature?

GUIDELINES:

Question 124 concerns the interaction between two important oversight actors and assesses how frequently the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) made high-level inputs to the work of legislative committees. Many SAIs interact with the legislature in some form, but the nature and intensity of the interaction varies.

This question probes this aspect by asking, with reference to the past 12 months, how frequently the head or a senior staff member of the SAI took part and testified in hearings of a committee of the legislature. The intent is to assess the extent to which the SAI representative in question was not only present at a meeting of a legislative committee, but was an active participant (as opposed to a passive observer, serving only as a resource when called upon). You can refer to official records of legislative committees, websites and annual reports of the SAI, press releases and media coverage, for example. Choose answer "a" if this occurred five times or more; "b" for three times or more, but less than five times; "c" for once or twice, and "d" for never.

Answer:

a. Frequently (i.e., five times or more).

Source:

As stated in the NAO annual report "We supported 51 Committee of Public Accounts evidence sessions through a combination of written and oral briefings. We seconded nine NAO staff to various select committees."

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

125. Does the executive use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during the formulation of the annual budget (prior to the budget being tabled in parliament)?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf.

Please consider only participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency designated by the government to implement participation mechanisms ("the executive") is currently using to allow the public to participate in the formulation of the annual budget, including annual pre-budget discussions. Participation mechanisms used only by line ministries should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one mechanism used by the executive, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the formulation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as spending and tax policy, funding and revenue levels, and macro-fiscal planning.

To answer "a," the executive must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the formulation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government officials. Examples include public meetings and online deliberative exchanges.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input in the formulation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which the executive seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include surveys, focus groups, report cards, published policy consultation exercises, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if the executive has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to participate in the budget formulation phase, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured and happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) The executive consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the executive determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", there should be some sort of public record (held in public, minutes of meetings released to public) so that the all CSOs and individual members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

Examples of mechanisms that might qualify as a "c" response include hotlines, Facebook announcements, and one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

b. Yes, the executive uses open participation mechanisms through which members of the public provide their inputs on the budget.

Source:

The new Budget timetable is designed so that a Spring Statement can launch consultations which are then responded to in the autumn Budget in time for changes to come into affect at the start of the next financial year (which is the following spring). Longer consultations are also possible. This also occurs with other department's policies. In general when following up on consultation the department provides some summary statistics on the responses received.

An example from the March 2018 Spring Statement is the consultation on "Tackling the plastic problem".

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-the-plastic-problem>

In addition members of the public - and advocacy groups - can submit budget representations. See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-representations-guidance/guidance-for-submitting-your-budget-or-autumn-statement-representation>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

126. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 125, does the executive take concrete steps to include vulnerable and under-represented parts of the population in the formulation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle of "Inclusiveness", and examines the executive's effort to actively reach out to citizens who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes. The emphasis here is on the executive's efforts to seek out the views of members of the public from socially vulnerable groups and/or who are underrepresented in the process.

To answer "a," the executive must actively seek out individuals from vulnerable and underrepresented communities and/or civil society organizations representing vulnerable and underrepresented individuals and communities. The researcher must provide evidence to show the government's efforts and actions. The researcher must speak with the relevant government official(s), and subsequently double check with an alternative source, such as representatives of vulnerable/underrepresented groups.

Answer "b" applies if the executive does not take concrete steps to incorporate vulnerable/underrepresented individuals, or organizations representing them, into participation mechanisms or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

Advocacy groups will be particularly likely to make budget representations and to respond to consultations. And in many cases the Treasury - or other departments, where relevant - might encourage relevant organisations to reply. But I have not found evidence that this is done in a concrete way in all cases.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

127. During the budget formulation stage, which of the following key topics does the executive's engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Macroeconomic issues
2. Revenue forecasts, policies, and administration
3. Social spending policies
4. Deficit and debt levels
5. Public investment projects
6. Public services

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider all of the mechanisms currently used by the executive to promote public participation during the formulation of the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics – and for this reason the other questions assessing the executive's engagement with the public during budget formulation can be answered on the basis of engagement on topics other than the six listed above – for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be only the ones listed above. If the executive's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

b. The executive's engagement with citizens covers at least three (but less than six) of the above-mentioned topics.

Source:

Budget representations that are sought by HM Treasury relate to policy suggestions - i.e. covering revenue policies, social spending policies, public investment projects and public services.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-representations-guidance/guidance-for-submitting-your-budget-or-autumn-statement-representation>

In this they state: "You may wish to consider:

- * likely effectiveness and value for money
- * revenue implications for the Exchequer
- * wider macroeconomic implications (for economic stability and growth)
- * sectoral impacts
- * distributional impacts
- * administrative and compliance costs and issues
- * legislative and operational requirements
- * environmental impact"

This covers all six of the issues set out above.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

Under the OBS methodology, only one type of participation mechanism can be examined to respond to the associated questions. For those questions, IBP is accepting the policy consultations noted in Q125 rather than the budget representations. Accordingly, IBP has adjusted the score from an "a" to a "b," as the policy consultations did not cover all topics.

128. Does the executive use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf.

Please consider only participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency designated by the government to implement participation mechanisms ("the executive") is currently using to allow the public to participate in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget. If the executive has designated a central coordinating agency to implement participation mechanisms throughout the national budget process, researchers may consider these mechanisms. Participation mechanisms used only by line ministries should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one mechanism used by the executive, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the implementation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as revenue administration, public service delivery, public investment project implementation, including procurement, and the administration of social transfer schemes.

To answer "a," the executive must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the implementation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government official. Examples include public meetings, online, deliberative exchanges, procurement complaint mechanisms, and social monitoring and dialogue.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input on the implementation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which the executive seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include public hearings, surveys, focus groups, report cards, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if the executive has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to provide input on budget implementation, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured, happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) The executive consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the executive determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", the researcher must have evidence that the government is holding participation mechanisms that have some sort of public record (held in public, minutes of meetings released to public) so that all CSOs and members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

Examples include hotlines, Facebook announcements, one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

c. Yes, the executive uses participation mechanisms during the budget implementation phase, but either these mechanisms capture only some ad-hoc views, or the executive invites specific individuals or groups for budget discussions (participation is not, in practice, open to everyone).

Source:

HM Treasury conducts a set of consultations on tax policy measures (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>) - and members of the public can respond to these, although in practice only few will (though advocacy groups will respond).

But it does not always carry out the equivalent for changes to public service spending or to benefit policy.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I would also say the process of budget submissions is a system for citizens and CSOs to submit their views on budget implementation as part of the discussion about what should be in the next budget. However, the system definitely does not allow face to face exchange of views.

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

For cross country consistency, IBP is revising the score from "b" to "c" to reflect the infrequency of consultations on issues related to the implementation of the budget.

129. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 128, does the executive take concrete steps to receive input from vulnerable and underrepresented parts of the population on the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle of "Inclusiveness", and examines the executive's effort to actively reach out to citizens who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes. The emphasis here is on national government's efforts to obtain input from members of the public who are from socially vulnerable groups and/or underrepresented in national processes during the implementation of the annual budget.

To answer "a," the executive must actively seek out individuals from vulnerable and underrepresented community and/or civil society organizations representing vulnerable and underrepresented individuals and communities. The researcher must provide evidence to show the government's efforts and actions. The researcher must speak with the relevant government official(s), and subsequently double check with an alternative source, such as representatives from vulnerable/underrepresented groups.

Answer "b" applies if the national executive does not take concrete steps to incorporate vulnerable/underrepresented individuals, or organizations representing them, into participation mechanisms or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

b. The requirements for an "a" response are not met.

Source:

Groups representing vulnerable parts of the population may well respond to consultations - and it is possible that HMT encourages them to do so. But not clear how active this is in all cases.

Comment:

Peer Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer
Opinion: Agree

130. During the implementation of the annual budget, which of the following topics does the executive's engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Changes in macroeconomic circumstances
2. Delivery of public services
3. Collection of revenue
4. Implementation of social spending
5. Changes in deficit and debt levels
6. Implementation of public investment projects

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider all of the mechanisms currently used by the executive to promote public participation during the implementation of the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics -- and for this reason the other questions assessing the executive's engagement with the public during budget implementation can be answered on the basis of engagement on topics other than the six listed above -- for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be ONLY the ones listed above. If the executive's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

c. The executive's engagement with citizens covers at least one (but less than three) of the above-mentioned topics.

Source:

HMT consultations are focused on tax policy measures related to revenues.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: This is again open to interpretation. My understanding of the budget submissions process is that anyone can write in about anything, so that would score an A in terms of covering all those areas - indeed, I don't think that there are areas which are specifically not allowed for budget submission discussion. As the reviewer points out, there is a more structured process for tax policy measures alongside general budget submissions. This means that the score could be an A, given that budget submissions (which would also deal with current year budget implementation insofar as it affects next year's budget) would allow space for interested parties to raise pretty much anything.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

131. When the executive engages with the public, does it provide comprehensive prior information on the process of the engagement, so that the public can participate in an informed manner?

Comprehensive information must include at least three of the following elements:

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Constraints
4. Intended outcomes
5. Process and timeline

GUIDELINES:

This question relates to the GIFT principle of "Openness," and addresses whether the executive provides relevant information on the process of the engagement before public participation takes place, in order to help citizens engage effectively. The question addresses whether the "rules of the public engagement" are clearly spelled out, in advance and in detail, so that those members of the public who want to engage know how to do so, in terms of when they can do so, what they are expected to provide input on, by when, to whom, etc. This question does not cover the substance of the engagement, which is covered by questions 127 and 130.

Non-comprehensive information means that the government provides information that includes at least one but less than three of the elements listed above.

Purpose refers to a brief explanation of why the public engagement is being undertaken, including the executive's objectives for its engagement with the public.

Scope refers to what is within the subject matter of the engagement as well as what is outside the subject matter of the engagement. For example, the scope may include how a current policy is administered but exclude the specifics of the policies themselves.

Constraints refers to whether there are any explicit limitations on the engagement. An example of a constraint could be that any policy changes must not cost (or forgo revenue) more than a specific amount or have no net fiscal cost.

Intended outcomes refers to what the executive hopes to achieve as a result of the engagement. Examples of intended outcomes could be revising a policy to better reflect citizen or service-user views or to improve the way in which a particular program is administered.

Process refers to the methods by which the public engagement will take place and the discrete steps in the process. For example, the process may simply be a one-off Internet-based consultation, with a summary published of public inputs and the official response. The process may involve simultaneous or overlapping steps, and may be conducted in one round or in two or more rounds of engagement.

Timeline refers to the specific dates on which the discrete steps in the process will take place, or during which they will be completed, and clear start and end dates for the overall engagement.

Answer "d" applies if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation or formulation stage.

Answer:

a. Comprehensive information is provided in a timely manner prior to citizens engagement in both budget formulation and implementation phases.

Source:

Good documentation is provided by HMT for each consultation. These can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>

More generally the Government has published a set of consultation principles here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

The Government publishes a consultation description ahead of the consultations. As an example the March 2018 Spring Statement launched a consultation on "Tackling the plastic problem". A record 162,000 responses were received: HMT's summary is published here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-the-plastic-problem>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

132. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 125, does the executive provide the public with feedback on how citizens' inputs have been used in the formulation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the executive provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received, which ones are used in the formulation of the annual budget, and how/why.

By "written record", we mean a document that is produced and released by the lead budget agency (Ministry of Finance, Treasury) that has set up and holds the participation activity.

Answer "a" applies when the executive provides a written document with:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how)*

Answer "b" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report, such as a document with a few paragraphs, on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used.*

Answer "c" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation stage.

Answer:

a. Yes, the executive provides a written record which includes both the list of the inputs received and a detailed report of how the inputs were used in the formulation of the annual budget.

Source:

A detailed report is published by HMT after the ending of the consultation window. These can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>

Comment:

For each individual consultation, once the Government has digested the evidence that has been submitted, it publishes a summary. For example if you click on the consultation on "Tackling the Plastic Problem" it takes you to this website <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-the-plastic-problem> where there is a summary of the submissions and a separate

Government Response. A list of respondents is also provided.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: If you extend the definition of consultations to include general budget submissions from any interested party then - from memory and HMT would need to confirm - HMT also publishes a summary of its budget submissions received and its responses to them.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

133. With regard to the mechanism identified in question 128, does the executive provide the public with information on how citizens' inputs have been used to assist in monitoring the implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the executive provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received during the implementation of the annual budget, which ones are taken into account to improve budget monitoring, and how/why.

By "written record", we mean a document that is produced and released by the lead budget agency (Ministry of Finance, Treasury) that has set up and holds the participation activity.

Answer "a" applies when the executive provides a written document with:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how)*

Answer "b" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received (e.g., a written transcript) from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report, such as a document with a few paragraphs, on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were or were not taken into account by the executive during budget monitoring.*

Answer "c" applies when the executive provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs (e.g., a written transcript) received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget implementation stage.

Answer:

a. Yes, the executive provides a written record which includes both the list of the inputs received from the public and a detailed report of how the inputs were used to assist in monitoring the annual budget.

Source:

Again these are in the detailed reports published by HMT. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the public consultation process in UK is one where each consultation is closed with a report that details the list of respondents, a summary of inputs received and gives the government's response. See Q132.

134. Are participation mechanisms incorporated into the timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Sustainability," "Timeliness" and "Complementarity" and addresses whether the executive is able to link participation mechanisms to the administrative processes that are used to create the annual budget.

Please note that "timetable" refers to a document setting deadlines for submissions from other government entities, such as line ministries or subnational government, to the Ministry of Finance or whatever central government agency is in charge of coordinating the budget's formulation. This document is sometimes referred to as the budget calendar and is the same document referenced in Question 53.

Answer "a" applies if the national executive establishes a clear set of guidelines that enable citizens and civil servants to understand when participation mechanisms should be used to enable citizen inputs to be incorporated into the annual budget. For answer choice "a", the timetable must be available to the public prior to the budget preparation process beginning.

Answer "b" applies if the executive does not establish a clear set of guidelines that enable citizens and civil servants to understand when participation mechanisms should be used to enable citizen inputs to be incorporated into the annual budget or if the executive does not use public participation mechanisms during the budget formulation or implementation stage.

Answer:

a. Yes, the executive incorporates participation into its timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal and the timetable is available to the public.

Source:

As part of the move to having a single fiscal event each year the Treasury has set out a clear timetable for how consultation is built into the tax policy making process.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process#the-consultation-process>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: If the participation mechanism is expanded to include general budget submissions from any interested party then these are also outlined in the new timetable for the budget process.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that the consultation process is discussed in Chapter 3 of the cited policy paper on the budget timetable.

135. Do one or more line ministries use participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during the formulation or implementation of the annual budget?

GUIDELINES

While questions 125 – 135 focus only on participation mechanisms that the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency currently use to allow the public to participate in the national budget process, this question asks about participation mechanisms used by line ministries to allow the public to participate in national budget processes. Thus, participation mechanisms used by the Ministry of Finance, lead budget agency, or central coordinating agency should not be used to answer this question. If there is more than one mechanism used by a line ministry or if multiple line ministries use participation mechanisms, please select the deepest or most interactive mechanism that reflects the government's efforts to incorporate citizens' input into the formulation and/or implementation of the annual budget.

This question reflects the GIFT principles on "Inclusiveness" and "Timeliness" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the executive are truly interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the executive.

The drafting of this question and its answers are partially drawn from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, in particular with regards to the concepts of "involvement" (option "a" in the responses) and "consultation" (option "b"). See:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

To answer "a," a line ministry must use open participation mechanisms that involve the public in the formulation or implementation of the annual budget. This means that a public process is in place whereby CSOs and/or individual members of the public and government officials interact, and have the opportunity to

express their opinions to each other in what can be considered a public dialogue between them (i.e., in-person and online discussion forums). Additionally, the mechanism should be open to any CSO and/or individual members of the public who wish to participate. By selecting this answer, the researcher must present evidence to support the presence of a public dialogue among citizens and government official. Examples include public meetings and online deliberative exchanges.

Answer "b" applies if an open consultation mechanism is in place whereby members of the public (i.e., individuals and/or CSOs as well as academics, independent experts, policy think tanks, and business organizations) can provide their input in the formulation or implementation of the annual budget. This answer applies if the government is using a mechanism that is structured and well established, and not ad-hoc. The researcher must present evidence to support the presence of consultative processes through which a line ministry seeks out inputs from citizens. Examples include surveys, focus groups, report cards, published policy consultation exercises, and online platforms that government officials actively manage to solicit inputs.

Answer "c" applies if a line ministry has established a mechanism or mechanisms to allow citizens to participate in the budget formulation phase, but:

1) The mechanisms are not structured and happen only on ad-hoc basis, or not regularly.

and/or

2) A line ministry consults with and/or interacts with, citizens, but there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, and the line ministry determines fully or partially such selection process by inviting specific groups (for example by making an open call but just to experts from a particular sector, or naming specific organizations). While it is not possible for all citizens and/or CSOs to participate in this or other phases of the budget process, options "a" and "b" apply if the government does not exercise any discretion in determining who is allowed to participate. While there is likely going to be self-selection, it is important that the selection is not made by the executive.

In cases where there is discretion in who is allowed to participate, to select answer choice "c", there should be some sort of public record (held in public, minutes of meetings released to public) so that the all CSOs and individual members of the public can have knowledge of the meeting, who participated, and what was discussed.

The researcher must present evidence to support selection of a "c" response.

Examples of mechanisms that might qualify as a "c" response include hotlines, Facebook announcements, and one-off meetings with NGOs in which there is a public record.

Answer:

b. Yes, at least one line ministry uses open participation mechanisms through which members of the public provide their inputs on the budget.

Source:

The tax policy consultations are often run by HMRC rather than HMT (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-the-status-of-tax-policy-consultations>).

Measures that relate to other government departments are also sometimes - though certainly not always - consulted on.

Comment:

Departmental spending plans for the four years from April 2016 to March 2020 were set out in the Spending Review of 2015 the Budgets since then have not really been about public service spending.

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Comments: I agree - Budget events are not really about the details of public spending as these are dealt with by individual departments and determined at a high level by the spending review. Departments will hold all kinds of consultation and stakeholder management groups over the spending review period to determine their policies, procedures, and spending decisions - there are so many spending institutions and so many policy areas where they will have contact with interested stakeholders that it is very difficult to say what the 'rule' is for each of them.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that consultations are held by various departments following the same guidelines as noted in Q131. For example, see this consultation by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs related to agriculture policy in light of Brexit. The consultations informed the Agriculture bill that was tabled in Parliament in September 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment>. For a list of all consultations, see: <https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations>

136. Does the legislature or the relevant legislative committee(s) hold public hearings and/or use other participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during its public deliberations on the formulation of the annual budget (pre-budget and/or approval stages)?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle on "Sustainability," "Transparency," and "Complementarity" and assesses the extent to which the participation

mechanism(s) used by the legislative are interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the legislature, rather than being limited to allowing the public to attend or hear public budget deliberations.

Please consider participation mechanisms that the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) has put in place and is using to allow the public to participate in their deliberations on the annual budget. This includes deliberations during the pre-budget phase (i.e., when the executive is still in the process of formulating the draft budget) and the budget discussions after the budget has been tabled to parliament and before it is approved. In the comment box, please specify during which stage of the budget cycle the legislature has put in place a public participation mechanism.

Mechanisms through which members of the public reach out to individual Members of Parliament as opposed to the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) or unofficial hearings organized by a subset of committee members should not be considered in answering this question.

If there is more than one mechanism, please select a mechanism that best shows/reflects the legislature's efforts to incorporate citizens into the formulation of the annual budget. The participation mechanisms can involve a range of different issues, such as revenues, policy selection, and macro-fiscal planning (please note that the issue of coverage is covered in a subsequent question).

To answer "a," the legislature must hold public hearings where citizens are allowed to testify. This answer applies only if the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can testify (for example, participation takes place on a first-come-first-served basis).

Answer "b" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;
- Testimony is not allowed from members of the public or CSOs; but
- There are other means used by the legislature to receive and collect views from citizens and CSOs on the budget, and the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can provide input. The researcher must provide evidence to support the presence of those alternative processes through which the legislature seeks inputs from citizens. For example, there should be a public record indicating that views from citizens and the public were sought.

Answer "c" should be selected if the following applies:

- The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;
- Testimony is not allowed from members of the public or CSOs;
- No other means are used by the legislature to receive and collect views/input from citizens and CSOs on the budget, but
- The legislature invites a few individuals/groups to provide input (through public hearings or elsewhere)

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget

Answer:

b. Yes, public hearings are held. No testimony from the public is provided during the public hearings, but contributions from the public are received through other means.

Source:

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee collects oral evidence in public from invited parties. But anyone can submit written evidence. Details of their inquiry into the 2018 Budget - including the written evidence that they received - can be found at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-2018-17-19/publications/>. General instructions on public submissions are provided here: <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/committees/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

137. During the legislative deliberations on the annual budget (pre-budget or approval stages), which of the following key topics does the legislature's (or relevant legislative budget committee) engagement with citizens cover?

For the purpose of this question, key topics are considered to be:

1. Macroeconomic issues
2. Revenue forecasts, policies, and administration
3. Social spending policies

- 4. Deficit and debt levels
- 5. Public investment projects
- 6. Public services

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Timeliness". Please consider the range of mechanisms currently used by the legislature to promote public participation during legislative deliberations on the annual budget.

Please note that while the public engagement can/may cover other topics, for the purpose of answering this question, "key topics" are considered to be only the ones listed above. If the legislature's engagement with the public covers topics other than the six listed above, please specify these topics in the comments.

Note also that this question assesses only the coverage of public engagement (i.e., "what issues is the public invited to engage on?") and issues related to the depth of engagement or selectivity of engaged are not dealt with by this question.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget.

Answer:

c. The legislature seeks input on at least one (but less than three) of the above-mentioned topics.

Source:

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee holds inquiries into the annual Budget and Pre Budget Statements. These focus on all of the issues set out above.

The TSC publishes the written evidence that it receives. For its inquiry into the 2018 Budget it published submissions from the Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) and three accounting bodies (AAT, ACCA and ICAEW) - see <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-2018-17-19/publications/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

Under OBS methodology, the response is to be based on the topics actually discussed at legislative hearings in which civil society participates or provides evidence, rather than on the topics the committees are open to discuss. Given the civil society testimony cited, only topics (1) and (2) were covered. Accordingly, IBP adjusted to score from an "a" to a "c."

138. Does the legislature provide feedback to the public on how citizens' inputs have been used during legislative deliberations on the annual budget?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the legislature provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received and how inputs were used during legislative deliberations (please note that these deliberations can refer to the pre-budget and approval phases). By "written record" in this question, we mean a document that is produced and released by the legislature.

Answer "a" applies when the legislature provides a written document with:

- *The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how).*

Answer "b" applies when the legislature provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) and*
- *A not-so-detailed report on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used in legislative deliberations on the annual budget (please note that these deliberations refer to the pre-budget and approval phases).*

Answer "c" applies when the legislature provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received from the public (e.g., a written transcript) or*

- A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the annual budget.

Answer:

c. Yes, the legislature provides a written record which includes either the list of the inputs received or a report or summary on how they were used.

Source:

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee publishes the written evidence it receives, and the oral evidence it is given to it. It then cites from this evidence in its report. But it does not provide a report explicitly stating how the evidence was used.

For the inquiry into the 2018 Budget the submitted evidence is available here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-2018-17-19/publications/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP notes that similar materials were published for the Budget 2017 Inquiry. See <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/treasury-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/budget-autumn-2017-17-19/>

139. Does the legislature hold public hearings and/or use other participation mechanisms through which the public can provide input during its public deliberations on the Audit Report?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principle on "Sustainability," "Transparency," and "Complementarity" and assesses the extent to which the participation mechanism(s) used by the legislative are interactive and involve a two-way conversation between citizens and the legislature, rather than being limited to allowing the public to attend or hear public budget deliberations.

A key constitutional role of the legislature in almost all countries is to oversee the government's management of public resources. While the Supreme Audit Institution is responsible for checking the government's accounts and publishing the outcome of their audits, for accountability purposes it is essential that the legislature reviews and scrutinizes those reports, and checks on whether the executive is taking the appropriate corrective actions based on the Supreme Audit Institution's recommendations.

Holding public hearings to review audit findings allows the public to learn more about how the government has managed its resources for the budget years that have ended, and demand accountability in case of mismanagement and irregularities. Reviewing and discussing those reports in public is therefore a key responsibility of a legislature.

Please note that by "Audit Report" we refer to the same audit report assessed in the transparency section of this Survey, i.e., one of the eight key budget documents that all governments (in this case, the Supreme Audit Institution) must produce, according to best practice.

Please consider participation mechanisms that the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) have put in place and using to allow the public to participate in their deliberations on the Audit Report.

Mechanisms through which members of the public reach out to individual members of parliament as opposed to the legislature (both in its whole institution or its relevant budget/public accounts/finance committees) or unofficial hearings organized by a subset of committee members should not be considered in answering this question.

To answer "a," the national legislature must hold public hearings where citizens are allowed to testify. This answer applies only if the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can testify (for example, participation takes place on a first-come-first-served basis).

Answer "b" should be selected if the following applies:

- *The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;*
- *No testimony is allowed from the public; BUT*
- *There are other means used by the legislature to receive and collect views from citizens and CSOs on the budget, and the legislature does not exercise discretion in determining which citizens and/or CSOs can provide input. The researcher must provide evidence to support the presence of those alternative processes through which the legislature seeks inputs from citizens. For example, there should be a public record indicating that views from*

citizens and the public were sought.

Answer "c" should be selected if the following applies:

- *The legislature holds public hearings on the budget;*
- *No testimony is allowed from the public;*
- *No other means are used by the legislature to receive and collect views/input from citizens and CSOs on the budget, BUT*
- *The legislature invites a few individuals/groups to provide input (through public hearings or elsewhere)*

Answer "d" applies if the requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if the legislature does not use public participation mechanisms during its deliberations on the Audit Report.

Answer:

b. Yes, public hearings on the Audit Report are held. No testimony from the public is provided during the hearings, but contributions from the public are received through other means.

Source:

The Public Accounts Committee takes oral evidence from senior officials from departments. These are done in public and it is possible to watch a recording of the sessions on-line, and the transcripts are published.

For each inquiry they take written evidence, which can be from members of the public, and these are published on their website. For example for their current inquiry into the spending plans of the Department of Health and Social Care these can be found here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/inquiry11/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

140. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can suggest issues/topics to include in the SAI's audit program (for example, by bringing ideas on agencies, programs, or projects that could be audited)?

GUIDELINES:

This question assesses whether the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) has established mechanisms through which the public can provide suggestions on issues/topics to be included in its audit program. When deciding its audit agenda, the SAI may undertake audits for a sample of agencies, projects, and programs in the country; and such a selection could be based on complaints and suggestions made by members of the public. To receive such suggestions, the SAI may create formal mechanisms, like setting up a website, hotline, or office (or assigning staff to liaise with the public).

Answer:

a. Yes, the SAI maintains formal mechanisms through which the public can suggest issues/topics to include in its audit program.

Source:

The National Audit Website, under "contact us" contains both a form for the public to contact them if they have "concerns about public spending and conduct" and also details of how to make "whistleblowing disclosures": <https://www.nao.org.uk/contact-us/>
<https://www.nao.org.uk/contact-us/whistleblowing-disclosures/>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

141. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) provide the public with feedback on how citizens' inputs have been used to determine its audit program?

GUIDELINES:

This question reflects the GIFT principles of "Transparency" and "Sustainability", and examines the extent to which the Supreme Audit Institution provides information to citizens on which public inputs were received, which ones are used to determine the Supreme Audit Institution's audit program. By "written record" in this question, we mean a document that is produced and released by the Supreme Audit Institution.

Answer "a" applies when the Supreme Audit Institution provides a written document with:

- *The inputs received from the public and*
- *A detailed report on how the inputs were used or not used (such report should include information on which inputs were used or not used, why, and how).*

Answer "b" applies when the SAI provides a written document that includes:

- *The inputs received from the public and*
- *A not-so-detailed report on how public inputs were used or not used. This document only gives a general idea on how those inputs were used or not used to determine the SAI's annual audit program.*

Answer "c" applies when the SAI provides a written document that includes:

- *The received from the public or*
- *A report (being it detailed or not-so-detailed) on how public inputs have been used or not used.*

Answer "d" applies if requirements for a "c" response or above are not met or if maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can suggests issues/topics to include in the SAI's audit program.

Answer:

c. Yes, the SAI provides a written record which includes either the list of the inputs received or a report or summary on how they were used.

Source:

The NAO's 2017-18 annual report says

"* Correspondence: we deal with a high volume of correspondence from members of the public and MPs, representing a key point of direct contact. Coupled with intelligence from our work, correspondence is useful for bringing issues to our attention. It can lead to investigations or value-for-money studies."

and

"We provided 108 responses to correspondence from MPs, and 877 responses to correspondence from the public. We also responded to 87 enquiries under the Freedom of Information Act."

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NAO-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2017-18.pdf>

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Disagree

Suggested Answer:

d. The requirements for a "c" response or above are not met.

Comments: Based on the paragraph cited by the researcher, I don't think a C score is warranted, given that the paragraph doesn't list the detail of the inputs received or really provide a 'report' or 'summary' on how they were used.

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

IBP Comment

IBP agrees with the researcher. While NAO may not publish or disclose the responses, those who sent suggestions received a response. To be consistent with how similar approaches in other countries have been scored, a "c" response is most appropriate.

142. Does the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) maintain formal mechanisms through which the public can contribute to audit investigations (as respondents, witnesses, etc.)?

GUIDELINES:

This question mirrors question 140, but instead of covering public assistance in formulating the SAI's audit program, it focuses on whether the Supreme Audit Institution has established mechanisms through which the public can participate in audit investigations. In addition to seeking public input to determine its audit agenda, the SAI may wish to provide formal opportunities for the public and civil society organizations to participate in the actual audit investigations, as witnesses or respondents.

Answer:

a. Yes, SAI maintains formal mechanisms through which the public can contribute to audit investigations.

Source:

For each study that the National Audit Office is doing (<https://www.nao.org.uk/work-in-progress/>) there is a webpage that briefly describes the study, including when it is scheduled to report, and states

"If you would like to provide evidence for our study please email the study team on enquiries@nao.org.uk, putting the study title in the subject line. The team will consider the evidence you provide; however, please note that due to the volume of information we receive we may not respond to you directly. If you need to raise a concern please use our contact form."

Comment:

Peer Reviewer

Opinion: Agree

Government Reviewer

Opinion: Agree