

Overview



Transparency:

52 /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public Participation:

7 /100



Budget Oversight:

56 /100

About the survey

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

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

The survey helps local civil society assess and confer with their government on the reporting and use of public funds. This 8th edition of the OBS covers 120 countries.

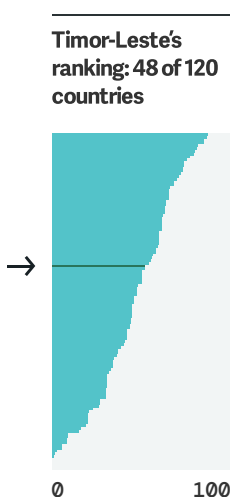
Visit www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2021 Global and Regional Reports, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

Transparency

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

Timor-Leste has a transparency score of **52** (out of 100).

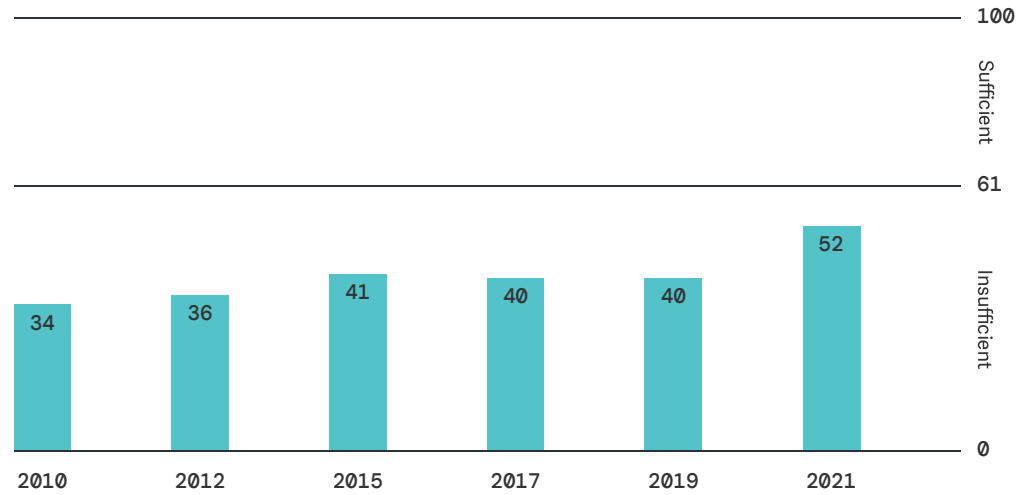
Transparency in Timor-Leste compared to others



Global Average	45
Indonesia	70
Philippines	68
Thailand	58
Timor-Leste	52
Malaysia	47
Vietnam	44
Cambodia	33
Myanmar	30

0 Insufficient 61 Sufficient 100

How has the transparency score for Timor-Leste changed over time?



Public availability of budget documents in Timor-Leste

KEY

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

Document	2010	2012	2015	2017	2019	2021
Pre-Budget Statement	●	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	●
Executive's Budget Proposal	●	●	●	●	●	●
Enacted Budget	●	●	●	●	●	●
Citizens Budget	⊘	⊘	●	●	⊘	●
In-Year Reports	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mid-Year Review	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	●
Year-End Report	●	⊘	●	●	●	●
Audit Report	⊘	⊘	●	●	●	●

How comprehensive is the content of the key budget documents that Timor-Leste makes available to the public?

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

Key budget document	Document purpose and contents	Fiscal year assessed	Document content score
Pre-Budget Statement	Discloses the broad parameters of fiscal policies in advance of the Executive's Budget Proposal; outlines the government's economic forecast, anticipated revenue, expenditures, and debt.	2021	Published Late
Executive's Budget Proposal	Submitted by the executive to the legislature for approval; details the sources of revenue, the allocations to ministries, proposed policy changes, and other information important for understanding the country's fiscal situation.	2021	59
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2021	100
Citizens Budget	A simpler and less technical version of the government's Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, designed to convey key information to the public.	2020	42
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2020	78
Mid-Year Review	A comprehensive update on the implementation of the budget as of the middle of the fiscal year; includes a review of economic assumptions and an updated forecast of budget outcomes.	2020	Published Late
Year-End Report	Describes the situation of the government's accounts at the end of the fiscal year and, ideally, an evaluation of the progress made toward achieving the budget's policy goals.	2019	52
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2019	48

Timor-Leste's transparency score of **52** in the OBS 2021 is substantially higher than its score in 2019.

What changed in OBS 2021?

Timor-Leste has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Citizens Budget and Year-End Report online.

Recommendations

Timor-Leste should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

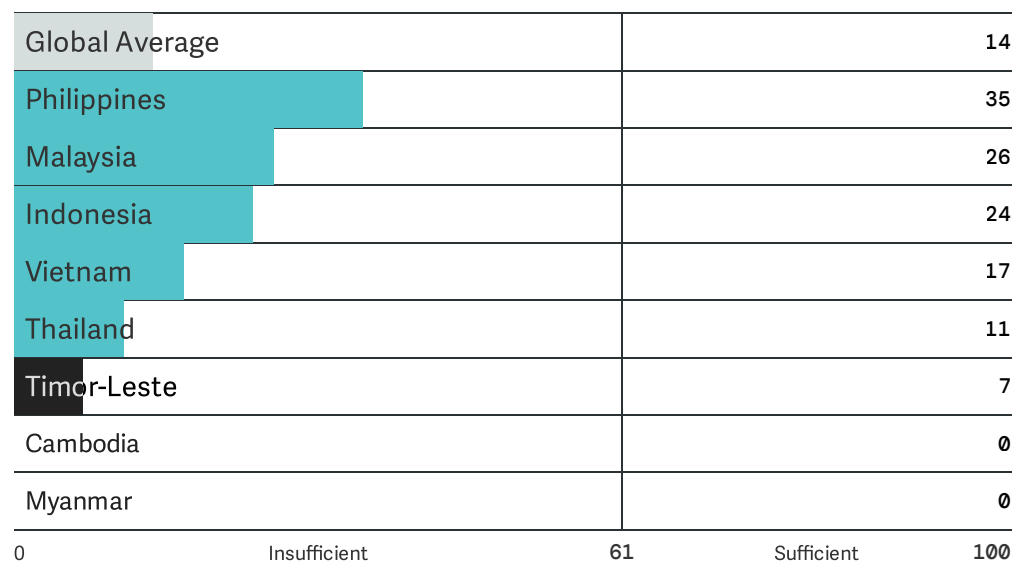
- Publish the Pre-Budget Statement online in a timely manner.
- Publish a comprehensive Mid-Year Review online in a timely manner.
- Include in the Executive's Budget Proposal: explanations about how proposed new policies for revenues and expenditures are reflected in the budget proposal; multi-year expenditure and revenue projections; and information on tax expenditures.
- Government should implement the provisions of the new budget framework law (Lei N. º 2/2022 de 10 de Fevereiro) to increase budget transparency and create meaningful opportunities for public participation in Timor-Leste.
- Publish a timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal.
- Disseminate the Citizens Budget widely to the public.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the information presented in the Year-End Report, particularly on debt, macroeconomic comparisons, non-financial data, and extra-budgetary funds.
- Improve follow-up to the Audit Report by having the executive publish online a report tracking actions it has taken to address audit recommendations or findings.

Public Participation

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

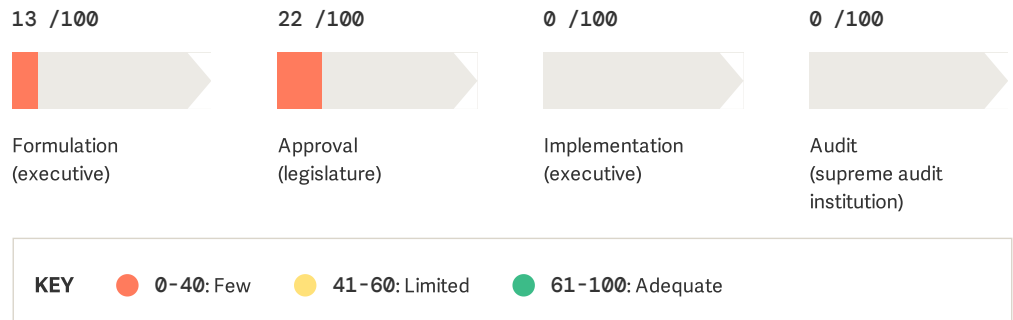
Timor-Leste has a public participation score of **7** (out of 100).

Public participation in Timor-Leste compared to others



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

Extent of opportunities for public participation in the budget process



Recommendations

Timor-Leste's Ministry of Finance has established public consultations during budget formulation but, to further strengthen public participation in the budget process, should also prioritize the following actions:

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

Timor-Leste's National Parliament has established submissions related to the approval of the annual budget, but should also prioritize the following actions:

- Allow all interested members of the public and civil society organizations to attend and testify during its hearings on the budget proposal prior to its approval, and allow the media to observe and cover the hearings.
- Allow members of the public or civil society organizations to testify during its hearings on the Audit Report.

Timor-Leste's Court of Appeals should prioritize the following actions to improve public participation in the budget process:

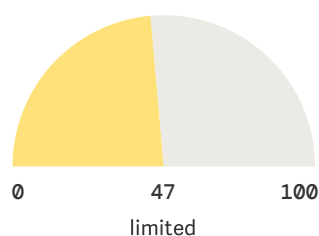
- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to assist in developing its audit program and to contribute to relevant audit investigations.

Budget Oversight

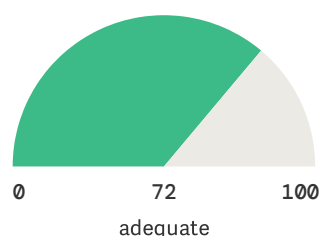
The OBS examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information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

The legislature and supreme audit institution in Timor-Leste, together, provide limited oversight during the budget process, with a composite oversight score of **56** (out of 100). Taken individually, the extent of each institution's oversight is shown below:

Legislative oversight



Audit oversight



KEY ● 0-40: Few ● 41-60: Limited ● 61-100: Adequate

Recommendations

Timor-Leste's National Parliament provides limited oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and weak oversight during the implementation stage. To improve oversight, the following actions should be prioritized:

- The legislature should debate budget policy before the Executive's Budget Proposal is tabled and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- Legislative committees should publish reports with their analysis of the Executive's Budget Proposal online.

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

To strengthen independence and improve audit oversight by the Timor-Leste Court of Appeals, the following actions are recommended:

- Ensure audit processes are reviewed by an independent agency.

The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions

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

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

Methodology

- Only documents published and events, activities, or developments that took place through 31 December 2020 were assessed in the OBS 2021.
- The survey is based on a questionnaire completed in each country by an independent budget expert:
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- To further strengthen the research, each country's draft questionnaire is also reviewed by an anonymous independent expert, and in Timor-Leste by a representative of the Ministry of Finance.