

Overview



Transparency:

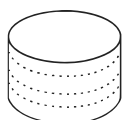
61 /100

(Open Budget Index score)



Public Participation:

9 /100



Budget Oversight:

78 /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 9th edition of the OBS covers 125 countries.

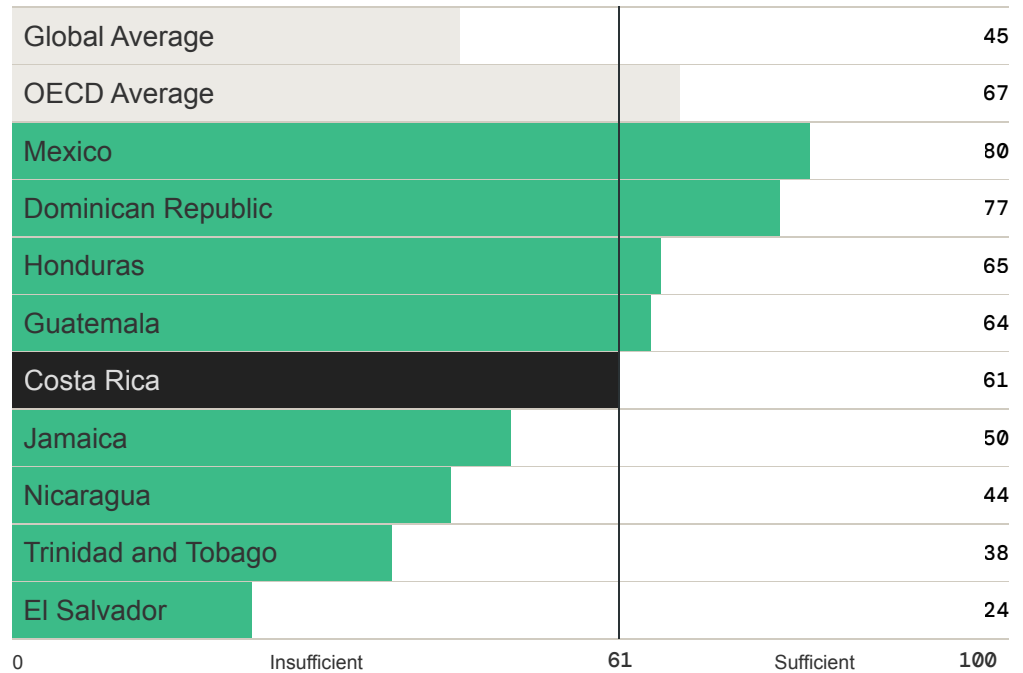
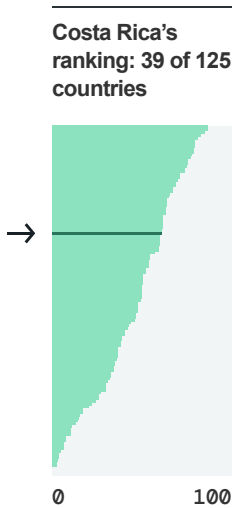
Visit www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey for more information, including the full OBS methodology, the 2023 Global Report, findings for all surveyed countries, and the Data Explorer.

Transparency

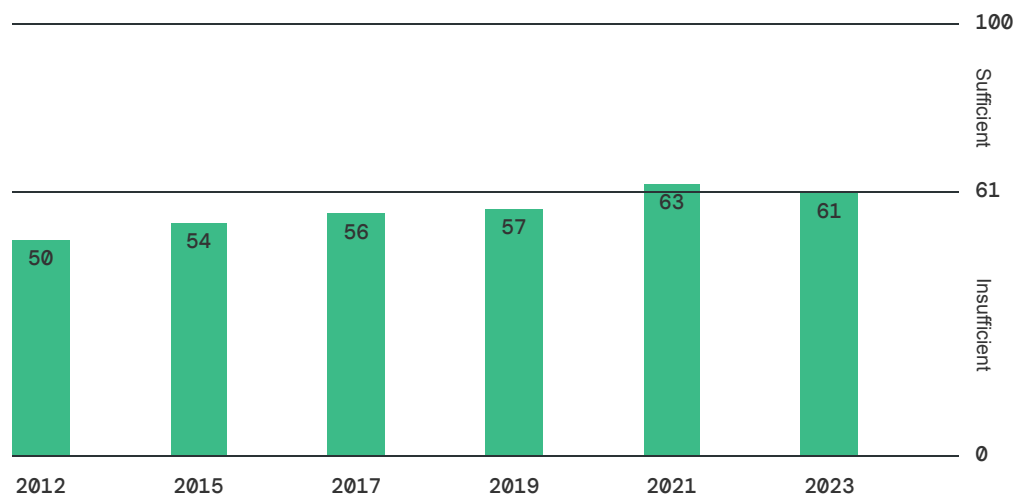
This part of the OBS measures public access to information on how the central government raises and spends public resources. It assesses the **online availability, timeliness, and comprehensiveness** of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale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

Costa Rica has a transparency score of **61** (out of 100).

Transparency in Costa Rica compared to others



How has the transparency score for Costa Rica changed over time?



Public availability of budget documents in Costa Rica

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

Document	2012	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
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 Costa Rica 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.	2023	72
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.	2023	68
Enacted Budget	The budget that has been approved by the legislature.	2023	89
Citizens Budget	A simpler and less technical version of the government's Executive's Budget Proposal or the Enacted Budget, designed to convey key information to the public.	2023	59
In-Year Reports	Include information on actual revenues collected, actual expenditures made, and debt incurred at different intervals; issued quarterly or monthly.	2022	63
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.	2022	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.	2021	64
Audit Report	Issued by the supreme audit institution, this document examines the soundness and completeness of the government's year-end accounts.	2021	43

Costa Rica's transparency score of **61** in the OBS 2023 is near its score in 2021.

What changed in OBS 2023?

Costa Rica has increased the availability of budget information by:

- Publishing the Pre-Budget Statement online.

However, Costa Rica has decreased the availability of budget information by:

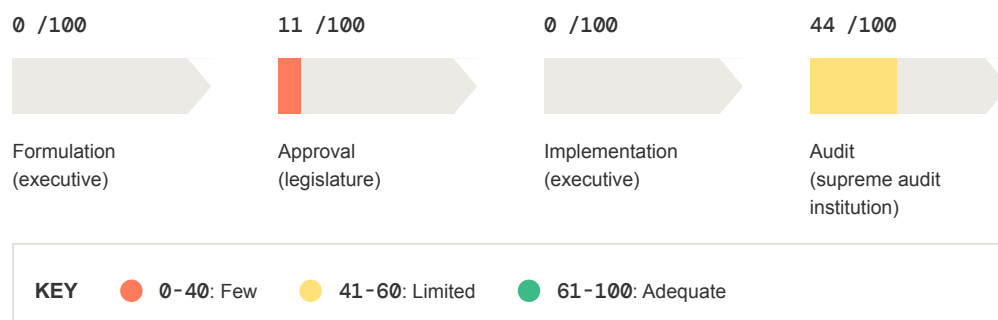
- Failing to publish the Mid-Year Review online in a timely manner.

Recommendations

Costa Rica should prioritize the following actions to improve budget transparency:

- Publish the Mid-Year Review online in a timely manner.
- Improve the comprehensiveness of the Audit Report, by including, among others, an executive summary of the document.
- Expand on the participatory nature of the Citizens Budget (CB), for example by identifying the public's requirements for budget information prior to the release of the document; incorporating information about the main policy initiatives in the budget; publicizing the CB via additional methods of dissemination; and by publishing simplified budget documents, such as citizen's versions of documents covering the audit phase of the budget cycle.

Extent of opportunities for public participation in the budget process



Recommendations

To further strengthen public participation in the budget process, Costa Rica's Ministerio de Hacienda should prioritize the following actions:

- Adopt mechanisms for the incorporation of citizen visions and social organizations in the different budget processes. For instance, pilot mechanisms to engage the public during budget formulation and to monitor budget implementation.
- Actively engage with vulnerable and underrepresented communities, directly or through civil society organizations representing them.

Costa Rica's Asamblea Legislativa has established public hearings related to the approval of the annual budget, but should also prioritize the following actions:

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

Costa Rica's Contraloría General de la República has established mechanisms for the public to assist in developing its audit program. It should prioritize the following actions to improve public participation in the budget process:

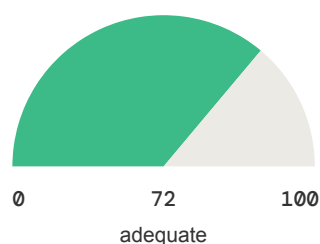
- Establish formal mechanisms for the public to contribute to relevant audit investigations.

Budget Oversight

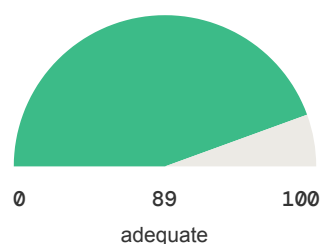
The OBS examines the role that legislatures and supreme audit institutions (SAIs) play in the budget process and the extent to which they provide oversight; each country is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 based on 18 equally weighted indicators. In addition, the survey collects supplementary information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

The legislature and supreme audit institution in Costa Rica, together, provide adequate oversight during the budget process, with a composite oversight score of **78** (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

Costa Rica's Asamblea Legislativa provides adequate oversight during the planning stage of the budget cycle and adequate oversight during the implementation stage. To further improve oversight, the following actions should be prioritized:

- The Asamblea Legislativa should debate budget policy before the Executive's Budget Proposal is tabled and approve recommendations for the upcoming budget.
- A legislative committee should examine in-year budget implementation and publish reports with their findings online.
- Strengthen the independence and capacities for audit and budget control of the Contraloría General de la República.

The emerging practice of establishing independent fiscal institutions

Costa Rica 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 2022 were assessed in the OBS 2023.
- 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 Costa Rica by a representative of the Ministerio de Hacienda.